

Lewi Pethrus' Ecclesiological Thought 1911-1974: A Transdenominational Pentecostal Ecclesiology

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a diachronic investigation of Lewi Pethrus' ecclesiological thought from 1911 to 1974. The research employs Roger Haight's transdenominational ecclesiology as its methodological framework. Since Haight's methodology is based on a concrete ecclesiological method that emphasises the importance of a historical consciousness in ecclesiology, the study particularly focuses on the formative contexts that shaped Pethrus' ecclesiology. The emphasis on formative contexts not only explains why certain ecclesiological concepts arose at particular points in Pethrus' life but also clarifies why concepts were abandoned or developed over time. A vital part of Haight's methodology is also to examine the religious values that remain constant and significantly form ecclesiological views. The thesis argues that Pethrus' ecclesiology is shaped by a Pentecostal form of spirituality that has 'loving Christ and loving neighbour' as its core values. The combination of a Pentecostal form of spirituality and formative contexts is what makes Pethrus' ecclesiology 'Pentecostal' and gives it its inner logic. The thesis concludes by taking this inner logic of Pethrus' ecclesiology and hypothetically applying it to a global setting. The result is a contribution toward a transdenominational Pentecostal ecclesiology that has important implications for any attempt to construct a global Pentecostal ecclesiology.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CM	Charismatic Movement
DK	Den Kristne (The Christian)
EH	Evangelii Härold (The Gospel Herald)
MCC	Mission Covenant Church
SFM	Swedish Free Mission
SPM	Swedish Pentecostal Movement
TNIDPCM	The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements
WCC	World Council of Churches
ÖM	Örebro Mission Society

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 State of Research on Pentecostal and Lewi Pethrus' Ecclesiology

Until recently, Pentecostal ecclesiology was a relatively unexplored area of study. Within the last few years, however, scholarly interest in the subject has mushroomed, leading to chapter-length discussions in books,¹ PhD dissertations,² scholarly articles,³ and theological conferences.⁴ When first addressed, it was generally assumed that early Pentecostals neglected ecclesiology⁵ or treated it as 'an afterthought'.⁶ In response to Clark Pinnock's proposal toward a Pentecostal ecclesiology, R. Hollis Gause voiced an important corrective when he stated that 'within Pentecostal literature there may be a paucity of academic writing on the subject of ecclesiology, however one must not overlook the histories of the development of Pentecostal denominations and congregations, the organization and

¹ See, for instance, Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *An Introduction to Ecclesiology: Ecumenical, Historical & Global Perspectives* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 68-78; Frank Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit: A Global Pentecostal Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 155-256; Amos Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh: Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 121-166.

² Shane Clifton, 'An Analysis of the Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia' (Ph.D. dissertation, Australian Catholic University, School of Theology, 2005); David Morgan, *Priesthood, Prophethood and Spirit-led Community: A Practical-Prophetic Pentecostal Ecclesiology* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Durham, 2007); Andrew Lord, 'Network Church: A Pentecostal Ecclesiology Shaped by Mission' (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Birmingham, School of Philosophy, Theology and Religion, 2010).

³ Peter Althouse, 'Towards a Pentecostal Ecclesiology: Participation in the Missional Life of the Triune God', *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 18 (2009): 230-245; Simon Chan, 'Mother Church: Toward a Pentecostal Ecclesiology', *Pneuma*, Vol. 22, Issue 1 (Fall 2000): 177-208; Simon Chan, 'Spirit, Church, and Liturgy: The Making of a Pentecostal Ecclesiology,' paper presented at the EPCRA conference, September, 2007; Wolfgang Vondey, 'Pentecostal Ecclesiology and Eucharistic Hospitality: Toward a Systematic and Ecumenical Account of the Church,' *Pneuma* 32 (2010): 41-55.

⁴ The first conference that was exclusively devoted to Pentecostal ecclesiology was held at the University of Bangor, Wales, UK, on 28-29 June 2010. The papers presented at the conference were later edited by John Christopher Thomas and published in book form by CPT press entitled *Toward a Pentecostal Ecclesiology: The Church and the Fivefold Gospel*. A second conference was held in Riga, Latvia 2-5 November 2011, which approached the topic from a broader perspective, inviting speakers from outside the Pentecostal movement to address ways of bridging the ecclesiological divide between charismatic and mainline churches.

⁵ Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *An Introduction to Ecclesiology: Ecumenical, Historical & Global Perspectives* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 73; Peter Hocken, 'Church, Theology of the,' *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, rev. and exp. ed., eds. Stanley M. Burgess and Eduard M. Van Der Maas (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 544.

⁶ Amos Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh: Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 121.

disciplinary manuals of denominations and congregations, and such materials as can be found in the official journals of the denominations and in archival materials'.⁷ Soon thereafter, Dale M. Coulter provided a more specific rebuttal, observing from a Church of God context that ecclesiology was in fact one of the most debated issues among two of the denomination's most noticeable figures, R. G. Spurling and A. J. Tomlinson.⁸ More recently, William Kay has showed that ecclesiology was also a central concern to the early British Pentecostal pioneer, Donald Gee, who published three books on the topic at the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s.⁹ Thus, the assumption that early Pentecostals neglected ecclesiology has now been so strongly refuted that it is seldom advanced. In spite of the voices that argue for more *historical* studies of Pentecostal ecclesiology, Andrew Lord's recent survey of the state of Pentecostal ecclesiology shows that biblical and theological investigations heavily outnumber historical ones.¹⁰

Another telling feature of the discussions is that they are almost exclusively framed within the English-speaking world. However, within Scandinavian Pentecostalism in general and Swedish Pentecostalism in particular, ecclesiology was never a fringe issue but remained central for several decades of its early history. Ecclesiology or, more specifically, the independent local church concept, was the early movement's most distinctive trait and eclipsed many other Pentecostal concerns.¹¹ The importance of the independent local church

⁷ R. Hollis Gause, 'A Pentecostal Response to Pinnock's Proposal,' *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*, vol. 14, no. 2 (2006): 184.

⁸ Dale M. Coulter, 'The Development of Ecclesiology in the Church of God (Cleveland, TN): A Forgotten Contribution?' *Pneuma* 29 (2007): 59-85.

⁹ Kay, William K. 'Concluding Reflections.' In *Toward a Pentecostal Ecclesiology: The Church and the Fivefold Gospel*, ed. John Christopher Thomas, 285-290 (Cleveland, CPT Press, 2010), 288.

¹⁰ Lord, 62-75.

¹¹ Nilsson observes, 'Since the very beginning in 1913, when the Filadelfia church in Stockholm was expelled from the Swedish Baptists, the most prominent question has been the free and independent local church, free from denominational structures and influences. This subject has completely overshadowed typical Pentecostal issues like the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the Second coming of Jesus.' Nils-Olov Nilsson, 'The Development of the Church Concept in the SPM: 1913-1948,' *Cyberjournal for Pentecostal-Charismatic Research* 11 (2002).

concept is strikingly seen in Rhode Struble's doctoral dissertation from 1982, which is entirely devoted to the topic.¹² Nils-Olov Nilsson and Carl-Erik Sahlberg have also given substantial attention to the issue.¹³ Even though these studies approach the issue from the perspective of Swedish Pentecostalism, the person who contributed most to its prominence was undoubtedly Lewi Pethrus. Lewi Pethrus might be an unfamiliar person for most people, including contemporary Swedish Pentecostals. Joel Halldorf notes for example that 'His [Pethrus'] books are hardly read, his sermons seldom listen to, and not even his most important teachings are adhered to within the movement of which he once was in charge'.¹⁴ However, David Bundy notes that 'Pethrus led his own congregation [Filadelfia, Stockholm] to become the largest in the pentecostal world (until c. 1975) and the pentecostal movement in Sweden to become the largest Free Church in Sweden, primarily by his ability to relate the church to all aspects of life'.¹⁵ Bundy further observes that Pethrus' 'holistic vision for the Christian life [...] won him a hearing throughout Europe, North America, and the Third World'.¹⁶ Despite Bundy's comment of Pethrus' international stature and 'ability to relate the church to all aspects of life,' discussions about Pethrus' ecclesiology seldom exceed the narrow focus of the independent local church concept. This skewed emphasis is understandable because of the doctrine's national and international significance.¹⁷ However, it

¹² Rhode Struble, *Den samfundsfria församlingen och de karismatiska gåvorna och tjänsterna: Den svenska pingströrelsens församlingssyn* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1983).

¹³ Nils-Olov Nilsson, *The Swedish Pentecostal Movement 1913-2000: The tension between radical Congregationalism, Restorationism and Denominationalism*, Florida: 2001; Carl-Erik Sahlberg, *Pingströrelsen och tidningen Dagen: Från sekt till kristet samhälle 1907-63* (Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet, 1977).

¹⁴ Joel Halldorf, 'Lewi Pethrus and the Creation of a Christian Counterculture,' *Pneuma* 32 (2010): 365.

¹⁵ David Bundy, 'Pethrus, Petrus Lewi,' *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (TNIDPCM), rev. and exp. ed., eds. Stanley M. Burgess and Eduard M. Van Der Maas (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 987.

¹⁶ Bundy, 'Pethrus, Petrus Lewi,' 987.

¹⁷ Joseph Colletti has for example investigated the impact of the independent local church concept on Scandinavian-American Pentecostalism and David Bundy has studied its importance in relation to Scandinavian Pentecostal mission. See, Joseph Colletti, 'Lewi Pethrus: His Influence upon Scandinavian-American Pentecostalism,' *Pneuma* 5 (1983): 18-29; 'Scandinavian Missions To Latin America,' *TNIDPCM*, Stanley M. Burgess and Eduard M. Van Der Maas, eds (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 1040-1041; David Bundy,

does not accurately depict Pethrus' entire ecclesiology. One notable exception is found in Carl-Gustav Carlsson's doctoral dissertation, *Människan, samhället och Gud: Grunddrag i Lewi Pethrus kristendomsuppfattning* [The Person, the Society and God: Basic Features of Lewi Pethrus' Concept of Christianity]. Carlsson's study is a more systematic treatment of Pethrus' ecclesiology, analysing it based on the four-fold *notae ecclesiae* of the Apostolic and Nicene creeds: unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity.¹⁸ Carlsson adds a fifth category, freedom, in order to give his study a more complete picture. Even if Carlsson's study is more comprehensive than many others, because of its problematic methodology¹⁹ vital insights into Pethrus' ecclesiology are therefore lost. Consequently, scholars have emphasised certain aspects of it, but important ecclesiological concepts such as his 'one city – one (mega) church' model, his perception of 'Sweden as a Christian state,' his political ecclesiology, and his 'bottom-up' ecumenism have never been researched in-depth. Thus Pethrus' ecclesiology deserves a more thorough investigation in its own right. Additionally, the few historical studies of Pentecostal ecclesiology that exist today tend to focus on the early Pentecostal movement, neglecting later developments.²⁰ Everett A. Wilson warns that such a narrow focus creates a problem for Pentecostal historiography: 'While there is good reason to investigate the movement's initial contexts, energies, and aspirations to learn what we can of its infancy, Pentecostalism must not be allowed to become the exclusive possession of a given era, a

Visions of Apostolic Mission: Scandinavian Pentecostal Mission to 1935 *Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis. Studia Historico-Ecclesiastica Upsaliensia*, 45 (Uppsala: Uppsala University Library, 2009).

¹⁸ Carl-Gustav Carlsson, 'Människan, samhället och Gud. Grunddrag i Lewi Pethrus kristendomsuppfattning' (Ph.D. Dissertation, Lund: Lunds Universitet, 1990), 107.

¹⁹ Even though Carlsson readily admits that using the four-fold definition of the church from the Apostolic and Nicene creeds is contrary to Pethrus' own convictions concerning written creeds, he still uses it to structure his ecclesiology. Carlsson's categories cover many important aspects of Pethrus' ecclesiology, yet they are not broad enough to provide a comprehensive understanding of Pethrus' ecclesiology. Furthermore, the goal of Carlsson's treatment is primarily to demonstrate how anthropology shaped Pethrus' understanding of ecclesiology and not a study of his ecclesiology in its own right. The most notable flaw with Carlsson's presentation, however, is his neglect of contextualising his ecclesiology. Since the historical circumstances surrounding the rise and decline of certain ecclesiastical issues are not addressed, the study only provides a partial picture.

²⁰ See section 7.2 below.

specific tradition or a sectarian style, a given privileged set of participants. [...] No matter how faithful the treatments of Pentecostalism are to the initial events, without reference to later developments their explanations are partial and truncated'.²¹

This brief overview of the state of Pentecostal ecclesiology today shows that in-depth historical analyses of Pentecostal ecclesiologies are seriously wanting, and important gaps in the overall understanding of Pentecostalism need to be filled in. There is also a need for studies in Pentecostal ecclesiology to go beyond the early movement and describe the developments from early days to modern times. Furthermore, if scholars desire to portray an accurate picture of Pentecostal ecclesiology, their studies should not focus solely on prominent themes while ignoring minor ones. This leads to a neglect of the rich ecclesiological diversity that exists within Pentecostalism. In fact, since Pentecostalism is not a 'church-based movement,'²² which would ensure its uniformity, but a 'spiritual renewal movement'²³ that has been incorporated into a multitude of religious contexts, it is incorrect to talk about a *distinctive* Pentecostal ecclesiology. Rather, it is more correct to talk about a multitude of Pentecostal ecclesiologies. Consequently, the field of Pentecostal ecclesiology would benefit greatly from a more comprehensive approach that also considers Pentecostal ecclesiologies outside the English-speaking world. Finally, in order to avoid generalisations, unnecessary omissions, and pre-critical assumptions, studies of Pentecostal ecclesiology also must give due recognition to methodology. It will be argued below that the most efficient way to avoid these problems is to apply an inductive method that considers *both* the unity *and* the

²¹ Everett A. Wilson, 'They Crossed the Red Sea, Didn't They? Critical History and Pentecostal Beginnings,' in *The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made to Travel*, eds. Murray M. Dempster, Byron D. Klaus and Douglas Petersen (Oxford: Regnum, 1999), 106-107.

²² Jonathan Black, 'Toward the Possibility of a Pentecostal Ecclesiology: Some Lessons from the British Apostolics,' paper presented at the Pentecostal Theological Colloquium, Continental Theological Seminary, March 2009, 6.

²³ See section, 7.1 below.

diversity that arise out of primary source materials.²⁴ Importantly, a *theological* inductive method will not exclude a biblical or theological assessment of the material but only employ a normative analysis *after* the inductive study has been conducted.

1.2 Purpose of Thesis

The primary purpose of the research is to remove the lacunae that surround Pethrus' ecclesiology. The research will therefore present a comprehensive view of the ecclesiological themes that marked different periods of his life. Since Pethrus' ecclesiology will be analysed diachronically, a major aspect of the research is to show how ecclesiological ideas remained constant, changed, or were abandoned over time. The diachronic analysis will also highlight the contribution of formative contexts to the diversity in Pethrus' ecclesiology. Thus, significant time will be spent on elucidating the personal, historical, religious, and sociological factors that influenced his ecclesiology. Another major purpose of the diachronic analysis is to show how core beliefs behind Pethrus' ecclesiology serve as the unifying centre of his ecclesiology. The thesis will demonstrate that this unifying centre consists of a particular form of spirituality that has 'loving Christ' and 'loving neighbour' as its primary focus. The project will further note that these religious affections are interpreted through a number of hermeneutical lenses which give them a distinct 'Pentecostal' flavour. *This project will argue that the combination of Pethrus' Pentecostal spirituality and formative contexts form his ecclesiology.* In fact, it will be demonstrated that Pethrus' Pentecostal spirituality creates its unity whereas formative contexts create its diversity. The resulting synthesis is an ecclesiology of 'unity in diversity'. Even if the synthesis does not end up in a 'robust' ecclesiology, it will be argued that it has an 'inner logic'. A last, but crucial, observation will

²⁴ Since the following study is limited to a historical investigation of Pethrus' ecclesiology, empirical methodologies will not be considered here. However, as will be shown in the conclusion, empirical research is of vital importance in order to investigate contemporary Pentecostal ecclesiologies.

show that there is an integral link between core religious values, spirituality, Pentecostal identity and ecclesiological beliefs. The link between these elements is what makes Pethrus' ecclesiology 'Pentecostal'.

Since the purpose of this project is not only to investigate Pethrus' ecclesiology but also to consider its larger implications for a global Pentecostal ecclesiology, the formula of Pentecostal spirituality and formative contexts will be theoretically applied to a global setting. In fact, the formula will serve as a basis for a possible 'transdenominational Pentecostal ecclesiology'. The concept is borrowed from Roger Haight's 'transdenominational ecclesiology' but applied to a Pentecostal context. The purpose of a transdenominational ecclesiology is to recognise the vast ecclesiological diversity that exists within global Pentecostalism, yet to go beyond that diversity to look at the movement's essential unity. Since a transdenominational ecclesiology carries important methodological considerations for constructing a global Pentecostal ecclesiology, these considerations will be used in the last part of this project as a framework for evaluating contemporary suggestions toward a Pentecostal ecclesiology. Before turning to the methodology of this project, it is important to note some of the delimitations that have been employed.

1.3 Delimitations

Pethrus was a prolific writer. He wrote books, articles, editorials, sermons, letters, songs, etc. His literary production lasted more than sixty years; additionally, many of his sermons were preserved in audiotape form. In order to present an accurate picture of Pethrus' ecclesiology without embarking on the impossible task of going through all available material, the following study will be delimited to Pethrus' published materials. It will focus particularly on his books, and the articles and editorials found in the journals *Evangelii*

Härold, *Den Kristne*, and the newspaper *Dagen*. Since these publications were the main avenues Pethrus used to convey his ecclesiological views, delimiting the investigation to these sources still ensures a high degree of comprehensiveness.

Moreover, the project is exclusively an investigation of Pethrus' ecclesiology. It does not intend to portray new biographical information or eliminate missing gaps in his overall theology. The study generally assumes the accurateness of previous investigations and purposefully omits in-depth discussions on even controversial topics, such as his experience of Spirit baptism and his conflicts with notable church leaders.

Finally, an explanation is also needed regarding the translation of quotes. Translating quotes always carries a risk of omitting nuances, emphases, and subtle meanings. In order to avoid these problems, this project has attempted to stay as close to the original text as possible without being restricted to a literal translation. The emphasis has been on conveying the meaning of the text and not a word-by-word translation. It is important to note here that this practice has been applied to Pethrus' terminology regarding the church. The most frequent designation of the church in Pethrus' writings is by far *Guds församling* (God's congregation). He deliberately uses this terminology to distinguish it from the term *kyrka* (church), which carries implications of a church building or a formalised religious organisation. When Pethrus uses the term *kyrka*, it is often in a negative sense. The change in terminology becomes a convenient way to level an implicit critique against other churches.²⁵ However, since 'church' does not carry the same negative connotation in English, and since the immediate context almost always clarifies what terminology he uses, the term *Guds församling* has been translated as 'church' throughout this project.

²⁵ See for example, Pethrus, 'Blir pingstväckelsen en kyrka,' *Dagen* 8 March, 1967, 2; Pethrus, *Ekumeniska mötet i Bibelns ljus*, 1925, 16.

1.4 Methodology

In order to analyse Pethrus' ecclesiology in its own right and its larger implications for a global Pentecostal ecclesiology, the study will employ Roger Haight's 'transdenominational ecclesiology' as its methodological framework.²⁶ Haight's transdenominational ecclesiology is a continuation of the methodology he outlined in the first volume entitled, *Historical Ecclesiology*.²⁷ Since the purpose of this research is to assess Pethrus' historical ecclesiology and its possible contributions toward the creation of a transdenominational Pentecostal ecclesiology, both aspects of his methodology must be elucidated here.

Haight's transdenominational ecclesiology is based on a methodology that tries to depict what the church actually is, as opposed to what it is supposed to be. He explains the different approaches in terms of 'an ecclesiology from above' versus 'an ecclesiology from below'.²⁸ According to Haight, an ecclesiology from above is an abstract ecclesiology that can be depicted according to six general characteristics. First, an ecclesiology from above tends to be a-historical. As such, it often ignores cultural and historical contexts and is generally preoccupied with defining 'the essential nature and structure of the church'.²⁹ Second, an ecclesiology from above often views its own ecclesiology as normative and other ecclesiologies as deviations from that norm.³⁰ Third, an ecclesiology from above employs 'doctrinal language as common medium of self-understanding'³¹ that leads to an understanding of the church as the realm of the sacred and the world as the realm of the secular.³² Fourth, an ecclesiology from above regards the birth and the development of the

²⁶ Roger Haight, S. J. *Ecclesial Existence: Christian Community in History*, vol. 3 (New York: Continuum, 2008), 1-24.

²⁷ Roger Haight, S. J. *Christian Community in History: Historical Ecclesiology*, vol. 1 (New York: Continuum, 2004).

²⁸ Haight, vol. 1, 17.

²⁹ Haight, vol. 1, 19.

³⁰ Haight, vol. 1, 19-20.

³¹ Haight, vol. 1, 19.

³² Haight, vol. 1, 20-21.

church as a work of the members of the Trinity without reference to actual history.³³ Fifth, an ecclesiology from above keeps the ascended Christ at the centre of its ecclesiology and treats the role of the Spirit as subsidiary.³⁴ Sixth, an ecclesiology from above views the authority of the church in hierarchical terms, beginning with God and continuing down through the ranks of the church, ending with the laity. New ministries have to find themselves in this immutable authority structure.³⁵

As opposed to an ecclesiology from above, Haight suggests six alternative factors that ‘make contextual thinking unavoidable’³⁶ and prescribe an ecclesiology from below. First, an ecclesiology from below considers the historical context. It takes into account issues such as ‘historical consciousness,’³⁷ ‘globalization and pluralism,’ ‘other churches,’ ‘other religions and ‘the world,’ human suffering on a global scale,’ ‘the experience and situation of women,’ and ‘secularization and individualism’.³⁸ According to Haight, the reason an ecclesiology from below emphasises context is because ‘a coherent theological method begins by making explicit the context in which we live so that it can come to bear on our understanding self-consciously and critically’.³⁹ Second, an ecclesiology from below recognises that the object of ecclesiology is not an abstract ideal but the ‘empirical church’ or the ‘concrete community in history’.⁴⁰ An ecclesiology from below therefore acknowledges that the church is not only a theological reality but also ‘a human, social and historical reality’.⁴¹ For Haight, a coherent ecclesiological method must therefore ‘integrate’ and not only ‘balance’ these two

³³ Haight, vol. 1, 21-22.

³⁴ Haight, vol. 1, 22-23.

³⁵ Haight, vol. 1, 18-25.

³⁶ Haight, vol. 1, 26.

³⁷ Haight explains ‘historical consciousness’ as a recognition of the ‘particularity, individuality, and unrepeatability of every event.’ Haight, vol. 1, 27.

³⁸ See, Haight, vol. 1, 26-35

³⁹ Haight, vol. 1, 26.

⁴⁰ Haight, vol. 1, 35-36.

⁴¹ Haight, vol. 1, 38.

perspectives.⁴² Third, an ecclesiology from below tries to integrate historical and sociological research with theological investigations in order to avoid ‘theological reductionism’.⁴³ Haight argues that this ensures ‘a fruitful tension between the ideal and the real in ecclesiology’.⁴⁴ Additionally, a method from below also employs an ‘apologetic’ and a ‘hermeneutical’ aspect. The apologetic aspect tries to explain the beliefs of the church in comprehensible language for people inside and outside the church and, when necessary, defend them against attacks and marginalisation.⁴⁵ The hermeneutical aspect tries to bring forth the church’s historical self-understanding and correlate it with its contemporary understanding.⁴⁶ Fourth, an ecclesiology from below employs four types of sources: Scripture, church history, confessional doctrines, and historical experience.⁴⁷ Although Scripture is viewed as normative, an ecclesiology from below acknowledges that all ‘four sources [...] supply data about the church that are rich and diverse’.⁴⁸ Fifth, as opposed to a ‘Christocentric’ ecclesiology from above, an ecclesiology from below appeals to a ‘pneumatocentric’ ecclesiology that ‘allows full range to human freedom in the development of the church as an organization’.⁴⁹ According to Haight, having a pneumatocentric rather than a Christocentric ecclesiology does not undermine Christ’s importance for the church or create a dualism in the Godhead. Rather, it ‘suggests more the work of God from within the community, less an external power operating on the community’.⁵⁰ In fact, an ecclesiology from below considers the church as ‘a human social-historical reality but one with theological depth and height’.⁵¹ Finally, an ecclesiology from below acknowledges that the church is an historical reality that

⁴² Haight, vol. 1, 39.

⁴³ Haight, vol. 1, 45.

⁴⁴ Haight, vol. 1, 45.

⁴⁵ Haight, vol. 1, 47.

⁴⁶ Haight, vol. 1, 47.

⁴⁷ Haight, vol. 1, 48-51.

⁴⁸ Haight, vol. 1, 52.

⁴⁹ Haight, vol. 1, 53.

⁵⁰ Haight, vol. 1, 54.

⁵¹ Haight, vol. 1, 54.

always changes and develops. The church is therefore in constant tension between its 'sameness' and its 'difference'.⁵² The task of an ecclesiology from below is therefore to trace the 'changes and continuities that mark Christian history'.⁵³

From his description of an ecclesiology from below, Haight provides a number of concrete steps to conducting an analysis of historical ecclesiology that he applies to his own study. He first arranges his material chronologically. The material is then divided into 'manageable blocks,' which is analysed according to its 'historical context, the developments that occurred within the church, and aspects of the ecclesiological self-constitution and self-understanding of the period'.⁵⁴ Haight explains that the purpose of this approach 'is to arrive at an appreciation of the developing and changing character of the church in the course of its history'.⁵⁵

Before turning to aspects of Haight's transdenominational ecclesiology, it is important to note that Haight's methodology is written from a Roman Catholic perspective. His arguments against a Christological understanding of the church, the tendency to view its own ecclesiology as normative, and the perception of the hierarchical structure of the church reflect this Roman Catholic perspective. Yet his comments concerning an ecclesiology from above's preoccupation with the essence of the church, its use of doctrinal language, and its emphasis on the work of the Trinity in the development of the church apply to ecclesiology from above in general. It should also be noted that his method is based on the work of Joseph Komonchak,⁵⁶ which has also been an inspiration for ecclesologists such as Nicholas Healy and Shane Clifton. Similarly to Haight, Healy and Clifton are also critical of idealistic,

⁵² Haight, vol. 1, 54.

⁵³ Haight, vol. 1, 54.

⁵⁴ Haight, vol. 1, 65.

⁵⁵ Haight, vol. 1, 65.

⁵⁶ See, Joseph Komonchak, *Foundations in Ecclesiology* (Boston: Boston College, 1995).

‘blueprint,’ ecclesiologies that do not consider the concrete church.⁵⁷ Since Clifton’s methodology is especially tailored toward the Pentecostal movement, it is a valuable source for analysing Pethrus’ ‘Pentecostal’ ecclesiology. In fact, Clifton’s methodology provides a more detailed description of conducting an ecclesiological investigation from below than Haight.⁵⁸ Yet, since Haight’s methodology contains more thorough guidelines for constructing a ‘transdenominational ecclesiology,’ Clifton’s methodology will only be used to give further clarity to Haight’s ecclesiology from below.

Turning now to Haight’s transdenominational ecclesiology, we note that a ‘transdenominational ecclesiology’ is an attempt to construct an ecclesiological method that analyses the commonality in all churches. Based on the example of the ecumenical movement, Haight argues that churches share a common ‘ecclesial existence’⁵⁹ despite vast ecclesiological diversity. Haight recognises that his approach is an abstraction, since ‘no such [transdenominational church] actually exists;’⁶⁰ yet he insists that the ecclesial existence is ‘nonetheless real [since it is] the fundamental core of the actual churches’.⁶¹ The purpose of a transdenominational ecclesiology is therefore to look beyond the diversity and ‘to reach for

⁵⁷ Nicholas M. Healy, *Church, World and the Christian Life: Practical-Prophetical Ecclesiology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 25-51; Clifton, ‘An Analysis of the Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia,’ 48-78.

⁵⁸ Clifton argues that a concrete ecclesiological method begins by ‘telling the story of the church with perhaps intimations into the future’. The narrative also includes the church’s self-understanding of that story, ecclesiological ideals, symbols, doctrines, and how these elements interact with praxis. Having told the story, Clifton notes that the ecclesiologist needs to employ a theological and sociological analysis of the material. ‘Perspectives, interests, agendas,’ and ‘what is moving forward in decline or redemption’ are therefore assessed. Furthermore, since the church is both a divine and human reality, the ecclesiologist also needs to investigate the social factors that bring about stability and change. The investigation is particularly interested in ‘transcendent and limiting values’ that undergird ‘ecclesial culture’. Shane J. Clifton, ‘Pentecostal Ecclesiology: A Methodological Proposal for a Diverse Movement.’ *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 15 (2006): 213-232.

⁵⁹ To prove his point, Haight refers to the contested issue of adult versus infant baptism. Although churches may disagree as to the mode of baptism, many aspects of the nature of baptism are still agreed upon. Roger Haight, S. J. *Ecclesial Existence: Christian Community in History*, vol. 3 (New York: Continuum, 2008), 11.

⁶⁰ Haight, vol. 3, 11.

⁶¹ Haight, vol. 3, 12.

the historical and qualitative substance that binds the churches together as church'.⁶² Haight readily admits that a transdenominational ecclesiology will be articulated in general terms and expressed in multiple ways.⁶³ However, identifying a 'common identity amid real diversity'⁶⁴ is an important study, since it provides a window into the 'fundamental core' that forms ecclesial practices.⁶⁵ Consequently, a transdenominational ecclesiology is a method of correlation that assumes the existence of multiple concrete ecclesiological investigations from below that analyse 'the unity in diversity' of each study. Haight explains that the sources for a transdenominational ecclesiology are no different from ecclesiology in general, since both use 'historical and contemporary documents' in their investigations.⁶⁶ He further notes that a transdenominational ecclesiology has three 'logical processes in dealing with the sources,' namely a comparative, a normative, and an apologetic element.⁶⁷ The methodology is essentially comparative because it 'must weigh a considerable amount of diverse evidence arising from the various churches' to reach its conclusions.⁶⁸ Second, the method is normative because 'theology is not only a historical but also a normative discipline that does not necessarily characterize the way things are, as would descriptive social science, but the way things should be'.⁶⁹ The normative aspect of the methodology therefore introduces an important critical aspect of the historical material that is ultimately based on the authority of the New Testament.⁷⁰ Finally, Haight argues that the method needs an apologetic element that 'contains the reasons that make plain the positions taken'.⁷¹ The apology then becomes 'a method of correlation [that] places in conjunction the propositions of faith and the conditions

⁶² Haight, vol. 3, 13.

⁶³ Haight, vol. 3, 17-18.

⁶⁴ Haight, vol. 3, 13.

⁶⁵ Haight, vol. 3, 11-12.

⁶⁶ Haight, vol.3, 14.

⁶⁷ Haight, vol.3, 17.

⁶⁸ Haight, vol. 3, 17.

⁶⁹ Haight, vol. 3, 17.

⁷⁰ Haight, vol. 3, 18.

⁷¹ Haight, vol. 3, 18.

of the everyday world'.⁷² Having outlined Haight's transdenominational ecclesiology, we can now turn to a discussion of how it has been applied in this project.

1.5 Progression of Thesis

The material of the investigation has been delimited to Pethrus' earliest ecclesiological publications in 1911 to his final contributions in 1974. The material has been arranged chronologically and divided into 'manageable blocks' according to visible transitions in Pethrus' life and ecclesiological thought. Although obvious overlapping occurs from block to block, each period has been analysed in its own right, and its general ecclesiological theme has been identified. Consequently, chapter three focuses on Pethrus' early ecclesiology from 1911 to 1933, which manifests an understanding of the church as a spiritual community. The period 1933-1934 is described as a transition because of Pethrus' slight change in attitude toward other churches. Chapter four discusses Pethrus' ecclesiology from 1934 to 1958, which reflects an understanding of the church as an agent of expansion and social transformation. The last diachronic chapter deals with his ecclesiology from 1959-1974, when the church is viewed as a global fellowship of saints. Another transition occurs in 1958-1959 because of the broader ecumenical and ecclesiological vision that is visible in Pethrus' life after he resigned from the pastorate in 1958.

In order to provide a necessary 'historical consciousness,' the project will begin by highlighting six historical and personal influences on Pethrus' ecclesiology. The chapter will show that these influences, or historical contexts, contribute to the diversity in his ecclesiological expressions. Although numerous contexts could be listed, the section will particularly emphasise the influences of ecclesiological traditions, restorationism,

⁷² Haight, vol. 3, 18.

Pentecostalism, pragmatism, individualism/experientialism, and dispensationalism because of their prominence in Pethrus' ecclesiology.

Having provided a broad historical consciousness, the project will turn to an in-depth analysis of Pethrus' ecclesiology during these three periods of his life. To set each period in its historical context, each chapter will begin with a historical narrative that addresses the social, political, economic, and religious circumstances that affected and often spawned Pethrus' ecclesiological thinking. The historical narrative not only functions as a means of telling 'the story' of the circumstances that shaped Pethrus' ecclesiology, but it also ensures that human, social, historical, and theological perspectives are not only balanced but integrated in the analysis.⁷³ Agreeing with Haight and Clifton that an essential part of the researcher's work is not only to portray the 'actual' history of the church but also its self-understanding of that history;⁷⁴ an important part of the historical narrative will be to analyse Pethrus' understanding of historical events. Finally, the historical narratives will also address the ecclesiological 'changes and developments' that occur from one period to the next. Clifton notes that tracing 'the decline or redemption' has important 'implications for how one tells the story of the church since the focus of the narrative will, where possible, be upon transitions'.⁷⁵

After the description of the historical narrative, the ecclesiological themes of each epoch will be described and assessed as comprehensively as possible. The study 'will include reflection upon historical perspectives on ecclesiological ideals and symbols, as well as the manner in which these ideals and symbols interact with praxis'.⁷⁶ It is important to note that the study is qualitative in nature and does not primarily concern itself with the issue of whether Pethrus is telling the 'truth'. Thus, the description of Pethrus' ecclesiology is his own

⁷³ Haight, vol. 1, 39.

⁷⁴ Haight, vol. 1, 26; Clifton, 'An Analysis of the Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia,' 52.

⁷⁵ Clifton, 56.

⁷⁶ Clifton, 52.

perspective and not necessarily the perspective of others. However, it is important to recognise that Pethrus often writes many years after the event and is therefore likely to create a revisionist account.⁷⁷ Consequently, the study will make note of obvious inconsistencies, biases, and personal and theological agendas, all of which contribute to the overall historical narrative. Yet, the study is primarily concerned about the ecclesiology Pethrus wanted to portray. When ecclesiological themes appear in more than one period, an important aspect of the study will be to describe the reason(s) for the changes or the lack thereof. Rather than designating a specific section as an analysis of each ecclesiological theme, the analysis will be interspersed throughout most discussions. However, a separate analytical section will be provided for ecclesiological topics of major significance.

Following the three diachronic chapters, chapter six will analyse the ‘sameness’ and the ‘difference’ in Pethrus’ ecclesiology, based on insights from the diachronic chapters. The chapter will argue that the religious affections of ‘loving Christ’ and ‘loving neighbour’ are the ‘the historical and qualitative substance’ that binds Pethrus’ ecclesiology together and provides its essential unity. The chapter will further note that the way in which these religious affections are interpreted gives them a distinct ‘Pentecostal flavour’ and carries important implications for Pethrus’ understanding of Pentecostal ecclesiality and identity. Having assessed the essential unity in Pethrus’ ecclesiology, it will be argued that formative contexts contribute to its essential ‘difference’ or diversity. The final section of the chapter will provide a synthesis of Pethrus’ core religious values and formative contexts that gives his ecclesiology an ‘inner logic’ of unity in diversity.

Based on the ‘inner logic’ of Pethrus’ ecclesiology, the seventh chapter will address the possibility of a transdenominational Pentecostal ecclesiology. The chapter will argue that it is

⁷⁷ See, Jan-Åke Alvarsson, ‘Att skriva sin historia – om revisionismen inom pingströrelsen,’ *Tro & Liv*, vol 2 (2007): 4-20.

possible to look beyond the Pentecostal movement's many ecclesiologies to its foundational unity as a spiritual renewal movement. Yet, in order to assess the movement's essential unity, numerous concrete ecclesiological investigations from below first need to be undertaken, especially outside the Western world. It will also assess a number of contemporary suggestions toward a global Pentecostal ecclesiology based on implications from Haight's transdenominational ecclesiology. The suggestions will be analysed in light of four categories, ranging from radical ecclesiologies from above to radical ecclesiologies from below. The section will emphasise that, although ecclesiologies from above provide an important normative aspect, a moderate form of an ecclesiology from below is best suited to construct a transdenominational Pentecostal ecclesiology.

CHAPTER 2

FORMATIVE CONTEXTS

2.1 Introduction

Lewi Pethrus' ecclesiology is not a systematic, closely defined, rationally consistent, chronologically coherent, or even exegetically based, treatment of the church. Rather, Pethrus' ecclesiology arose in the context of internal and external turmoil, forged by numerous factors such as historical, social, political, religious, and theological trends of the day. In his study of Pethrus' preaching, Sune Fahlgren suggests that it finds itself in 'the intersection between [seven] formative contexts,' namely 'Baptism, Nordic Pentecostalism, international Pentecostalism, the Holiness Movement, Biblicism, Apocalypticism, and religious liberalism'.¹ Healy observes, however, that defining the ecclesiological context is a 'highly complex' task that 'includes many church elements, such as [...]: the church's history, both local and worldwide; the background beliefs and the economic and social status of its members; recent developments among its leadership; styles of argumentation in theology [...]; styles of worship, and the like'.² Despite this important caveat regarding the complexity of the task, Fahlgren provides a helpful framework for gaining an overview of the formative contexts that shaped Pethrus' ecclesiology. However, since the intent here is to assess the formative contexts that particularly shaped Pethrus' ecclesiology and not his theology or life as a whole, the chapter will centre on six personal and historical contexts that are especially noticeable in his ecclesiological writings, namely ecclesiological traditions, restorationism, Pentecostalism, pragmatism, individualism/experientialism, and dispensationalism because of their prominence in Pethrus' ecclesiology. The discussion will be purposefully broad in order

¹ Sune Fahlgren, *Predikantskap och församling : Sex fallstudier av en ecklesial baspraktik inom svensk frikyrklighet fram till 1960-talet* (Falun: ScandBook, 2006), 246.

² Healy, 39.

to ensure a good overview. Specific political and social influences will be highlighted in the contextual narratives. Before proceeding, it is important to mention that these formative contexts should not be viewed as independent from each other. A high degree of ‘cross-pollination’ naturally occurs between them. Thus, when considering the historical influences on Pethrus ecclesiology for example, the different traditions will be discussed separately for the sake of clarity, but this is not to imply that their ideas originated independently from each other.

2.2 Ecclesiological Traditions

2.2.1 Radical Pietism

Like all individuals, Pethrus was influenced by the trends, ideas, and beliefs of his time. One of those beliefs was radical Pietism. Since radical Pietism arose as a reaction to ‘scholastic’ Lutheranism, it is important to sketch their interaction and the legacy of radical Pietism in Sweden. After the official acceptance of the Augsburg confession at the Diet of Uppsala in 1598, Lutheranism took centre-stage in Swedish religious life. It did not take long, however, before Lutheran doctrines were legislated, with severe penalties for unfaithful adherence.³ According to Erik Nyhlén, the motivating factor for such drastic measures was a fear of a Catholic or a Calvinist Counter-Reformation, which contributed to an institutionalisation process whereby individuals were forced to conform to Lutheran norms without a corresponding experience of the heart.⁴

At the end of the seventeenth century, however, winds of change slowly began to blow. Through returning prisoners of war and notable ecclesiastical and political figures such as Nils Grubb, Erik Tolstadius, Elias Wolcher, Jonas Rothåf, and Georg Lybecker, the news

³ Erik Nyhlén, *Svensk frikyrka* (Stockholm: Bokförlaget prisma, 1964), 11.

⁴ Erik Nyhlén, 11-12.

of the religious ideas of Philip Jacob Spener and August Hermann Francke, who stressed a religion of the heart rather than a mere cognitive consent to Lutheran doctrines, were beginning to be heard.⁵ Pietism, as the new movement was derogatory called, found fertile ground in the Swedish religious soil. Soon scores of people gathered in homes for Bible study and prayer, forming cell groups according to Spener's *collegia pietatis*.⁶ Even though the Pietists' meetings were by no means subversive, on 12 January 1726, the Swedish government issued an edict (*konventikelplakatet*) that forbade all religious meetings outside the Lutheran church. The edict signalled the end of the conservative period of Swedish Pietism and gradually opened the door for radical Pietism.⁷ Nathan Odenvik shows that even a few years before the edict was issued, radical Pietism began to emerge in the form of pamphlets that condemned the Lutheran church. Odenvik highlights one pamphlet in particular, translated from German in April 1721, which critiques priests and lay people, who rely exclusively on 'empty rituals [...] but do not seek to restore the spiritual temple, [which is] 'the cleansed heart by the Holy Spirit through faith'.⁸ He further notes the pamphlet's radical statement that 'such people can by no means constitute Christ's church since they have Beelzebub as their lord'.⁹ According to Odenvik, the pamphlet uses a number of biblical texts to make the very first appeal for true Christians to leave the Swedish Lutheran church.¹⁰ Although it is almost impossible to verify Odenvik's claim of originality, the pamphlet clearly shows a new desire to separate from the Swedish Lutheran church.

⁵ Harry Lenhammar, *Sveriges Kyrkohistoria: Individualismen och upplysningens tid*, vol. 5 (Stockholm: Verbum förlag, 2000), 20-31. See also, Benjamin A. Pugh, 'A History of the Blood: The Story of the Blood of Christ in Transatlantic Evangelical Devotion,' *Evangelical Review of Theology*, 31, vol. 3, (2007): 241.

⁶ Struble makes the important observation that at the Pentecostal conference in Berlin in 1917, it was decided that, 'the foundational form for the church was the family and the house church,' which indicates the Pentecostal movement's indebtedness to Pietism. Struble, 72.

⁷ Nathan Odenvik, *Gråkoltarna* (Stockholm: Förlaget filadelfia, 1936), 15.

⁸ Odenvik, 18.

⁹ Odenvik, 18.

¹⁰ Odenvik, 18-19.

In January 1727, radical Pietism gained impetus through the arrival of Johann Konrad Dippel. Although his stay was brief and highly controversial, Dippel's visit not only dissipated radical Pietism in Sweden but also contributed in promoting his teacher Gottfried Arnold's restorationist ecclesiology.¹¹ Between 1699 and 1700 Arnold published his two-volume *magnum opus*, *Unparteyische Kirchen- und Ketzer-Historie* [Impartial History of the Church and of Heresy], in which he levelled a stern critique against organised Christianity.¹² According to Arnold, the ceremonies, creeds, institutions, and doctrines of the established churches, especially the Roman Catholic Church were a clear departure from the ideal pattern of the Early Church, which emphasised regeneration for church membership.¹³ In Arnold's understanding, the decline of the Church began with the conversion of Constantine in the fourth century, yet the Church as a whole did not become ubiquitously corrupt but contained certain legitimate elements, often manifested in movements labelled 'heretical' by the established churches. Arnold's assumption of a true and a false church popularised the notion of a visible and an invisible church, which would later become an integral part of Free Church ecclesiology.¹⁴ Even though radical Pietism largely disappeared after the exile of Dippel and the Swedish radical Pietist, Sven Rosén, in 1741,¹⁵ it is clear that its ecclesiological emphasis did not. Arnold's theology of the Church laid the foundation for the future of Free Churches in general and Pethrus' restorationist ecclesiology in particular.¹⁶ As Nils-Olov Nilsson observes, through individuals such as Hans Nielsen Hauge, Lars Levi Laestadius, Henric

¹¹ Arnold's writings were first introduced in Sweden by Johann Fischer, a Swedish military officer, who encountered Arnold's writings while being stationed in the Baltic States. Lenhammar, 23.

¹² Nyhlén, 16.

¹³ Nyhlén, 16.

¹⁴ Nyhlén, 16.

¹⁵ For an in-depth discussion of the events surrounding the exile of Dippel and Rosén and the decline of radical Pietism in Sweden, see Lenhammar, 65-77.

¹⁶ Pethrus, *De kristnas enhet*, 1919, 15. See also section, 2.3.

Schartau, Carl Rosenius, and Paul P. Waldenström the Pietistic legacy was perpetuated in Sweden.¹⁷

Pethrus' indebtedness to radical Pietism is obvious from his heavy emphasis on regeneration as a prerequisite for inclusion in the local and the universal church. His adamant insistence on the church as a community of saints coheres with the primary ecclesiological tenets of radical Pietism. In addition, Pethrus' strong restorationist outlook owes a lot to this ecclesiological heritage. Finally, the individualism that permeates Pethrus' ecclesiology traces itself back to radical Pietist roots. Interestingly, although Pethrus fully agrees with Lutheran soteriology and rejects, for instance, Dippel's remodification of the doctrine of substitutionary atonement from objective to subjective atonement,¹⁸ his early ecclesiology squares significantly more with radical Pietism than Lutheranism.

Even though Pietistic ecclesiology is rooted in Western Protestantism, it has had its fair share of critics. The Orthodox theologian and philosopher, Christos Yannaras is especially devastating in his critique of Pietism, which he labels as an 'ecclesiological heresy'.¹⁹ He asserts that 'Pietism undermines the ontological truth of Church unity and personal communion, if it does not deny it completely; it approaches man's salvation in Christ as an individual event, an individual possibility of life'.²⁰ Yannaras' criticism of the Pietistic legacy certainly applies to Pethrus' ecclesiology as well. He correctly notes the tendency to overemphasize individualism and perfectionism in Pietistic circles. However, Yannaras fails to observe how much his own Orthodox ecclesiological tradition influences his evaluation of Pietism. Pietists such as Pethrus wanted to mirror their ecclesiology on the example of the

¹⁷ Nilsson, 101.

¹⁸ Even though Pethrus never mentioned Dippel's view, his rejection of Waldenström's almost identical view logically implied a rejection of it.

¹⁹ Christos Yannaras, 'Pietism as an Ecclesiological Heresy,' *The Freedom of Morality* (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, NY: 1984), 119-136.

²⁰ Yannaras, 122.

Early Church, and therefore never even dreamed of aligning their ecclesiology with its ‘trinitarian prototype’.²¹ Simon Chan agrees with Yannaras that Orthodoxy is a ‘promising path’ for Pentecostals to ‘develop a [more] sustainable ecclesiology’.²² Granted, Orthodoxy could certainly provide necessary correctives to Pentecostal and Pietistic ecclesiology, but since Orthodox ecclesiology does not take Scripture as its sole departure point, and often ignores the devastating consequences of sin, a shared ecclesiology between the two traditions looks highly improbable.

2.2.2 Moravianism

As radical Pietism slowly dissipated from the Swedish religious scene, a more moderate form of Pietism, Moravianism, began to take its place. Like the Pietists, the Moravians were highly critical of the established churches’ ‘calcified’ religion. However, they also opposed Pietism’s legalism and tendency to overestimate the personal benefits of good works, as well as radical Pietism’s quietism.²³ Through the influence of Zinzendorf, whose godfather was none other than Philip Jacob Spener himself, the Moravians adopted a middle ground between these two extremes in order to avoid legalism and quietism. Therefore, the atoning work of Christ and foreign mission became the Moravians’ most distinguishing hallmarks.

The Moravian influence began at a very early stage in Sweden. Hilding Pleijel notes that the notable Swedish mining assessor Carl Henrik Grundelstierna was present at the meeting when Zinzendorf officially became the leader of the Moravians in 1727.²⁴ After a two-year stay with the Moravians, Grundelstierna returned to Sweden in 1729, yet he did little to

²¹ Yannaras, 122-123.

²² Simon Chan, ‘Spirit, Church, and Liturgy: The Making of a Pentecostal Ecclesiology,’ paper presented at the EPCRA conference, September, 2007, 5-6.

²³ Nyhlén, 19.

²⁴ Hilding Pleijel, *Svenska kyrkans historia: Karolinsk kyrkofromhet, pietism och herrnhutism 1680-1772* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells boktryckeri, 1935), 377.

disseminate Zinzendorf's beliefs'.²⁵ In fact, the greatest impact of Moravianism in Sweden came through the efforts of Zinzendorf and missionaries from Herrnhut themselves. Zinzendorf's desire to unite all the 'truly regenerate' Christians in Sweden in a supra-confessional church led him to commission missionaries and undertake a personal visit to Sweden.²⁶ Although unsuccessful in his attempt at uniting the Pietistic strands in Sweden, following 1734 Moravian evangelicalism began its 'victory parade through the Swedish countryside'.²⁷ Similarly to radical Pietism, the 'Moravian victory parade' soon quieted down and did not dislodge Lutheranism from its elevated place in Swedish religious life. However, Moravianism left a permanent imprint on the religious consciousness in the country, especially through its devotional literature and hymnody.²⁸

If Pethrus were indebted to radical Pietism for his belief in the 'pure church,' his indebtedness to Moravianism was even greater. As will be observed below, Christ's atoning work on the cross was for Pethrus not only the essence of Pentecostalism but also the very heart of the Christian faith.²⁹ For Pethrus, Christ's atoning death was not only something to be sung about and meditated on,³⁰ but it was the act that ultimately instituted the church and remained its core message.³¹ The 'Christo-centrism' that so evidently shapes Pethrus' theology harvests from the rich Christological heritage sowed by the Moravians.³²

²⁵ Lenhammar, 84.

²⁶ Lenhammar, 84.

²⁷ Pleijel, 384. Lenhammar notes that Moravian evangelicalism owed some of its popularity to the efforts of Arvid Gradin, a professor at Uppsala University and the shoemaker, Elias Östergren, who travelled throughout the Swedish countryside spreading Moravian beliefs. Lenhammar, 85.

²⁸ Nyhlén, 22.

²⁹ Pethrus, *Medan du stjärnorna räknar*, 1953, 179. See also, Pethrus, 'En underbar syn, *EH*, 28 March, 1918, 50.

³⁰ Pethrus' eucharistic theology displays this Moravian preoccupation. See section, 2.2.2.

³¹ See, Pethrus, 'Kristus vårt försoningsoffer,' *EH*, 4 April, 1918, 53-54; Pethrus, 'Guds församling,' *EH*, 1 September, 1927, 439-440.

³² For instance, Pethrus' first song contains clear evidences of Moravian 'blood and wound' mysticism. The last line of the chorus reads: 'My eternal song shall then be about the blood, which flowed from my Saviour's wound'. Pethrus, *Medan du stjärnorna räknar*, 1953, 180. See also, Pethrus, 'Väckelsekristendom,' *DK*, September 1956, 241; Zander Åberg, 'Kristi försoning främst på "Kölingaredsveckan",' *EH*, 19 June, 1947, 589.

Moreover, the Moravians' emphasis on mission found one of its strongest supporters in Pethrus. The missionary efforts produced by Pethrus and the Filadelfia church were remarkable.³³ Without a doubt, Swedish Pentecostal mission deserves an in-depth study of its own, as David Bundy's work shows.³⁴ However, for our purposes, it is crucial to note that Pethrus' belief in mission, *as the most important task of the church*, strongly resembles Moravianism.³⁵ The Moravians demonstrated that the fruit of regeneration manifests itself in a heartfelt concern for domestic and foreign mission, a conviction Pethrus shared. He remarked for example, 'what a wonderful grace it is to be part of God's great work of salvation [which was] the purpose of his [Christ's] death and resurrection'.³⁶ He also lamented when a church's loses its passion for 'soul-winning' and merely falls into empty methods and rituals, because 'the most important thing of all is that people are brought to real salvation'.³⁷ Consequently, Pethrus concluded that the church shall be a 'rescue station for shipwrecked souls,' and 'the great goal for every service should be the salvation of souls'.³⁸ Having briefly examined the influences of Pietism and Moravianism on Pethrus' ecclesiology, I will now turn to the two final historical strands that perhaps more than any shaped Pethrus' thinking of the church, namely Baptist and Holiness theologies.³⁹

³³ Pethrus describes the intense missionary interest of the early Swedish Pentecostals in his memoirs. He tells about missionaries being commissioned from the Filadelfia church to Brazil, China, South Africa, Rhodesia (modern-day Zimbabwe), and the Congo, some even during the height of the First World War. See, Pethrus, *Hänryckningens tid*, 215-221.

³⁴ David Bundy, *Visions of Apostolic Mission: Scandinavian Pentecostal Mission to 1935*, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis. Studia Historico-Ecclesiastica Upsaliensia, 45 (Uppsala: Uppsala University Library, 2009).

³⁵ Pethrus, 'Guds församling,' *EH*, 8 September, 1927, 456.

³⁶ Pethrus, *Gud med oss*, vol. 1, 1931, 43-44.

³⁷ Pethrus, *Gud med oss*, vol. 1, 1931, 45.

³⁸ Pethrus, *Gud med oss*, vol. 1, 1931, 45.

³⁹ It might be argued that American Evangelicalism also deserves particular attention, especially in light of its contribution to Pethrus' independent church concept. However, American Evangelicalism primarily shaped Pethrus' pneumatology rather than his ecclesiology. In fact, American Evangelicalism (i.e., Durham's ecclesiology) was not the only contributing element in his independent church concept. See further, 3.6 below.

2.2.3 Baptist Ecclesiology

Pethrus was raised in a Baptist family and served as a minister in Baptist churches until his excommunication in 1913. His rich Baptist heritage naturally affected his ecclesiology. Although not identical, Baptist ecclesiology shares common characteristics with Anabaptist ecclesiology. Anabaptist ecclesiology traces its roots to Ulrich Zwingli and the Swiss reformation. Early Anabaptist leaders such as Conrad Grebel, Felix Manz and George Blaurock were convinced that infant baptism lacked biblical grounding. They insisted that faith must precede baptism. Roger Haight correctly notes that behind the Anabaptists' rejection of infant baptism lay a significantly different understanding of the church as opposed to the Roman Church and the magisterial reformers.⁴⁰ He perceives that the opposite ecclesiologies 'play out in different organizational systems. The one is the territorial church, a church coterminus with the state, or city-state, with a system of parishes that include all. The other is the conventicle, the voluntary association standing over against society...'⁴¹ Drawing on insights from Littell, Haight further notes that the Anabaptists' radically different understanding of church coincided with their fundamental desire of returning to the true example of the Early Church, a goal they believed the magisterial reformers had failed to attain.⁴² Haight's observations provide the essential background to the Free Church concept. The church is, first of all, a community of the redeemed that stands apart from, and to a large extent opposite to, political institutions. Second, membership is based on a personal confession of faith which is manifested, in most cases, in the act of adult baptism. Apart from these two distinguishing features, Kärkkäinen also observes that Free Church ecclesiology often understands consecration in terms of dedication to God and separation from the world,

⁴⁰ Roger Haight, S. J. *Ecclesial Existence: Christian Community in History*, vol. 2 (New York: Continuum, 2005), 223-224.

⁴¹ Haight, 224.

⁴² Haight, 224.

and church discipline and mission as the essential components that preserve and extend the church.⁴³

Baptist ecclesiology, which traces its roots back to Puritan Separatism and Anabaptism, naturally exemplify these distinguishing features. Scholars tend to agree that these two strands came together in the ecclesiology of John Smyth, who formalised Baptist ecclesiology into its present shape. For the sake of brevity and clarity, a quick outline of Haight's summary of John Smyth's ecclesiology will make Pethrus' indebtedness to Smyth's ecclesiologies recognisable. Haight notes that:

Smyth defines the church as the company of the elect; the invisible communion with Christ is by the Spirit and faith, and the visible church is a visible communion of saints. [Smyth believed] three elements determine [a church's] authenticity: true matter, form, and properties. (1) True matter consists in the members who are the saints; they are 'men separate from all knowne syn' and practicing the known will of God. (2) True form, inwardly, consists in the presence of the Spirit, faith and love. Outwardly, true form is found in the covenant: 'a vowe, promise, oath, or covenant betwixt God and the Saints'. [...] (3) The properties of the church are participation in the benefits of Christ's salvation through the means of salvation: word, sacraments, prayers, and ordinances of Christ. The properties also include participation in the powers of Christ: to receive new members, to preserve them within the community, and to cast out or excommunicate. Smyth emphasized the autonomy and the authority of the congregation as a whole as the source of whatever authority the ministers might enjoy. [Smyth affirmed that] there are two offices in the church, bishop, or elders, and deacons, performing spiritual and temporal ministries respectively. Smyth [...] construes sacraments as external signs or pointers to what transpires essentially in and through the subjectivity of the believer. Smyth [...] strongly asserted the separation of church and state.⁴⁴

As will be shown below, Pethrus' ecclesiology clearly manifested some of these aspects of the Free Church tradition. He emphasised the autonomy of the local church, an almost identical understanding of the church's matter, form and properties, as well as a similar perception of the church's purpose, governance and relationship to the world. Yet it is important to note here that Pethrus' ecclesiology not always stayed within these boundaries.

⁴³ Kärkkäinen, *An Introduction to Ecclesiology*, 62-64.

⁴⁴ Haight, vol.2, 252-260.

He did not advocate a separation of church and state,⁴⁵ and his focus on the universal church was, according to Carl-Gustav Carlsson, uncharacteristic of Swedish Baptist ecclesiology during his time.⁴⁶ Pethrus' ecclesiology also assumed a strong Pentecostal flavour that made it deviate from its Free Church roots. For instance, Pethrus agreed with Smyth that the 'inward form of the church consists in the presence of the Spirit, faith and love,' but he did not speak of its outward form in terms of covenant or oath, but rather in terms of spiritual offices and joint ventures. His particular understanding of 'healing in the atonement' also gave his Eucharistic theology an extent of originality. Consequently, Pethrus' ecclesiology cannot be generically described as 'Baptistic' even though it adhered to many of its basic tenets.

2.2.4 Holiness Movement

Although not as prominent as the Baptist influence, the Holiness Movement also had an effect on Pethrus' ecclesiology. William Faupel has outlined the tension that existed in American Wesleyan and Reformed Holiness circles at the end of the 19th century regarding Spirit baptism as 'cleansing' versus 'power'. He argues that the tension coincided with a 'paradigm shift' from a post-millennial to a pre-millennial worldview. The shift toward a pre-millennial urgency of Christ's imminent return to earth tilted the understanding of Spirit baptism toward power instead of cleansing.⁴⁷ Even if Pethrus fully adopted a pre-millennial eschatology,⁴⁸ he did not fully side with 'power' over against 'purity' but maintained an important holiness aspect in his ecclesiological vocabulary. Carlsson notes, for example, that Pethrus was well acquainted with the writings of D. L. Moody and R. A. Torrey, who favoured 'power' over 'purity,' yet he also read the writings of Charles Finney, A. J. Gordon,

⁴⁵ Pethrus, *Vår ställning till andra kristna*, 1931, 12.

⁴⁶ Carlsson, 118.

⁴⁷ D. William Faupel, *The Everlasting Gospel: The Significance of Eschatology in the Development* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 77-114.

⁴⁸ See section, 2.7 below.

and A. B. Simpson, and kept ‘close contact’ with the Methodist T. B. Barratt, all of whom preserved the element of purity in their theologies.⁴⁹ He also observes that Pethrus’ emphasis on Spirit baptism’s ability to ‘cleans the heart,’ and his strong emphasis on ‘complete surrender,’ owes itself to Barratt’s and Simpson’s influence.⁵⁰ As will be shown further below, the aspect of holiness was particularly important until the middle of the 1930s. His emphasis on the church as a pure fellowship of saints (no sinners), his stress on church discipline, and the tendency to distinguish between the ‘Spirit-baptised’ and the ‘non Spirit-baptised’ points to Holiness ecclesiology. The latter distinction significantly owed itself to Keswick (‘higher life’) theology, which shows that Pethrus incorporated ideas of sanctification from both Wesleyan and Reformed holiness circles.⁵¹ Even if the emphasis on the church’s subjective holiness diminished slightly in later years, due to a greater recognition of the church’s objective holiness in Christ, the stress on holiness remained firm even after the 1930s, especially as a means of separating from the world.

2.3 Restorationism

As early as 1924 Efraim Briem, professor of religious history at the University of Lund, boldly stated that the Swedish Pentecostal movement’s (SPM) church organisation was one of the most radical attempts ever made to restore the New Testament church model.⁵² Briem’s statement accurately described not only the SPM’s motivation as far as church polity was concerned, but also Pethrus’ overall ecclesiastical vision. In his book *Medan du stjärnorna räkna* [While You Count the Stars], written in 1953, Pethrus confirmed the seriousness by which he undertook the challenge of restoring the practices of the Early Church in his early

⁴⁹ Carlsson, 92.

⁵⁰ Carlsson, 92-93.

⁵¹ Fahlgren, 244.

⁵² Efraim Briem, *Den moderna pingströrelsen* (Stockholm: Svenska kyrkans diakonistyrelses bokförlag, 1924), 157.

ministry. He described how it became ‘a matter of life changing importance’ to restore, not only Christ’s teaching, but also the spiritual experiences of the first Christians.⁵³ He even admitted that it became ‘the chief goal for his entire life and ministry’.⁵⁴ In an interview with Ivar Lundgren in 1973 just a few months before Pethrus’ death, he reiterated that restorationism was the issue for which he had contended since his early youth. He even went so far as to claim that restorationism was the key issue for all of Christianity.⁵⁵ Although deviations from this restorationist vision are visible in his subsequent writings,⁵⁶ restorationism was the ecclesiological ideal that Pethrus postulated as foundational for his ministry.

For Pethrus, the NT did not only contain the description of the church but also the detailed guidelines for its structure and mission. In the book *Västerut* [Westwards] Pethrus posed the rhetorical question: ‘Would God, who has given laws for everything in this world, laws which are of the most immutable kind, have abandoned his own great work of salvation on earth without guidelines for its ministry? That would be unthinkable’.⁵⁷ That God would give precise laws to rule creation and not give similar precise laws to govern his own great work of salvation through the church would be an absurd idea. Since the NT was the only place where these guidelines could be found, the NT became the ‘undeniable pattern’⁵⁸ by which the local church should mirror its beliefs and practices. Yet, restorationism not only

⁵³ Pethrus, *Medan du stjärnorna räknar* (Stockholm: C. E. Fritzes bokförlag, 1953), 171-172.

⁵⁴ Pethrus, *Medan du stjärnorna räknar*, 1953, 172.

⁵⁵ Ivar Lundgren, *Lewi Pethrus i närbild: Ett intervjusamtal och en bildkrönka* (Bergen: Den kristna bokringen, 1973), 44. Note that the same restorationist vision is found both in writings from 1916 and from 1970. Pethrus, ‘Har Kristi församling rätt att vara fri?’, *EH*, 6 April, 1916, 58; with Pethrus, *Timmermannen från Nasaret*, vol. 1 (Bergen: Den Kristna bokringen, 1970), 79-84. Sverre Larsson, a personal friend of Pethrus, states that Pethrus’ ‘guiding star’ was a desire to return to apostolic Christianity. Sverre Larsson, *Så minns vi Lewi Pethrus: En bok införhundraårsdagen av hans födelse*, Jörgen Källmark ed. (Stockholm: Den Kristna bokringen, 1983), 165.

⁵⁶ See sections 4.4.3 and 5.4.

⁵⁷ Pethrus, *Västerut: En resenärs erfarenheter* (Stockholm: Förlaget filadelfia, 1937), 173.

⁵⁸ The term ‘ideal pattern’ was borrowed from Exodus 25:9 where Moses is given the exact blueprint for the construction of the tabernacle. Early Pentecostals, such as Pethrus, believed that just as Moses had received the detailed guidelines for the construction of the tabernacle, so the Apostles had received the same detailed guidelines for constructing NT churches. See Struble, 65.

provided a positive vision of what the church should look like but also an explanation why it did not. According to Pethrus, the church had apostatized from the NT pattern ‘in successive steps [...] as living faith and separation from the world disappeared and were replaced by worldliness and unbelief’.⁵⁹ From Pethrus’ explanation, it may be observed that restorationism has two essential elements, one positive and one negative: The positive being the return to the pure and original order of the Scriptures, and the negative being the ‘purifying [of] religious forms and testing [of] practices and beliefs against the New Testament’.⁶⁰ To fully comprehend Pethrus’ ecclesiological vision, both of these two aspects of restorationism need to be more thoroughly assessed.

2.3.1 The Positive Side of Restorationism

Pethrus’ ecclesiology is profoundly influenced by the longing to return to the ideal pattern of the apostolic church as outlined in the Scriptures. That longing can be narrowed down to a longing for a restoration of spirituality and a restoration of the Scriptures.

2.3.1.1 Restoration of Spirituality

Like most early Pentecostals, Pethrus turned primarily to the book of Acts to discern the true nature and purpose of the church. Pethrus described, in a poetic fashion, the marvel of reading the book of Acts. Reading Acts was ‘like wandering around in a beautiful garden, full of life and beauty. Sprouts and buds bloom, and flowers yield their fragrance wherever one turns’.⁶¹ Acts was thus ‘full of life, hope, purity and freshness.’⁶² In fact, it was ‘a wonderful,

⁵⁹ Pethrus, *Medan du stjärnorna räknar*, 1953, 171.

⁶⁰ Edith L. Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith: The Assemblies of God, Pentecostalism, and American Culture* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 13.

⁶¹ Pethrus, *Vinden blåser vart den vill*, 1936, 5.

⁶² Pethrus, *Vinden blåser vart den vill*, 1936, 5.

profound, glorious and living revival.’⁶³ Today’s church was, therefore, ‘not doomed to laziness, drought, and apathy, [...] but she could live in this pleasant and glorious condition – the condition of revival, where God’s life blossoms and the spiritual life develops.’⁶⁴ In another passage, he depicted the NT church as living under an open sky.⁶⁵ He contended that the believers in the Early Church were so acutely aware of divine realities in their every-day lives that one could easily say that they lived under an ‘open sky’. Pethrus even claimed that the first Christians lived such a vibrant spiritual life that the powers of the entire spiritual world moved among them.⁶⁶ Furthermore, the Early Church had a profound sense of the call of God, they desired no worldly benefits, they passionately believed in peoples’ need of salvation, they affirmed that Christianity improves people’s social conditions, and they longed for Christ’s second coming.⁶⁷

In his sermon *Kampen för den överlämnade tron* [*The Struggle for the Faith Handed Down*], Pethrus answered an accusation against perceiving the NT as the pattern for Christian faith, life and ministry. Based on Jude 3, Pethrus responded that the faith has once and for all been given to the saints.⁶⁸ If anybody were to misunderstand what he meant, Pethrus clarified that this faith had nothing to do with dead human creeds but with a living faith that attained to spiritual realities and transformed a person’s entire life. Such a faith was a precious inheritance worth fighting for.⁶⁹ In a contrast to today’s church, Pethrus indicated that the Spirit-baptized church in Jerusalem with its healings, prophesying, speaking in tongues, separation from the world, and experience of persecution was the true model of a church that had preserved the true faith.

⁶³ Pethrus, *Vinden blåser vart den vill*, 1936, 6.

⁶⁴ Pethrus, *Vinden blåser vart den vill*, 1936, 6.

⁶⁵ Pethrus, *Framgångens hemlighet*, 1938, 108-119.

⁶⁶ Pethrus, *Framgångens hemlighet*, 1938, 111.

⁶⁷ Pethrus, *Framgångens hemlighet*, 1938, 111-119.

⁶⁸ Pethrus, *Kampen för den överlämnade tron*, 1929, 1-19.

⁶⁹ Pethrus, *Kampen för den överlämnade tron*, 1929, 2.

From the citations above, we observe that Pethrus' fascination with the apostolic church was primarily a fascination with their spirituality. It was the first Christians' God-consciousness, their Spirit-filled life, their concern for the propagation of the Gospel, and their compassion for the poor and the socially oppressed that made them an example to follow. Consequently, his desire to restore the beliefs and practices of the apostolic church was based on the conviction that the apostolic church manifested a spirituality that was fully under the lordship of Christ. Such dependence and awareness of spiritual realities in everyday life were simply unparalleled in history, making the apostolic church the 'ideal pattern' for all time.

Steven L. Ware has argued that ecclesiastical restorationism originated as a sub-category to spiritual restorationism.⁷⁰ Ware's observation is crucial, because it highlights the important role restorationist spirituality had in the formation of ecclesiology among early Pentecostals. Here Pethrus was no exception. Pethrus exemplified in his writings an almost slavish preoccupation with modelling his ecclesiology on the spiritual example of the Early Church. Pethrus stated the rationale behind such a preoccupation with a rhetorical question: 'If the church in Jerusalem is not the ideal pattern for all time, how else would we know what it should look like?'⁷¹ In the same context, Pethrus continued by saying that God must have presented the church perfect since it would otherwise imply a deficiency in God himself.⁷² The 'perfection' he is addressing here refers primarily to the apostolic church's spirituality, but also to God's providential care in bringing it about. In fact, it was not so much the apostolic church itself that should receive the credit for its spirituality, but rather God who

⁷⁰ Steven L. Ware, *Restoring the New Testament Church: Varieties of Restorationism in the Radical Holiness Movement of the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries, Purity and Power, Revisioning the Holiness & Pentecostal Charismatic Movements for the Twenty-First Century* (Cleveland, TN: Church of God Theological Seminary, 1998), 11-12.

⁷¹ Pethrus, *Kampen för den överlämnade tron*, 1929, 3.

⁷² Pethrus, *Kampen för den överlämnade tron*, 1929, 6.

worked in the church by his Spirit. What the apostolic church should be commended for was its example of availing itself to the influence of the Spirit.⁷³ Thus Pethrus viewed his ecclesiology as a similar attempt to be fully submitted to God's Spirit in every area.

When analysing Pethrus' restorationism it is clear that he regarded the first Christians' acute awareness of spiritual realities as providing an automatic sanction to their beliefs and practices. Since the apostolic church experienced such a mighty 'move of God' and was so acutely aware of divine realities, it implied that they had God's approval on what they preached and practiced. Contemporary Christians must therefore obey and not question their example. When reading Pethrus' writings, it is easy to suggest that he idealised and exaggerated the experiences of the first Christians *ad absurdum*. However, on occasion, Pethrus warned against idealising the Early Church to the point that it would become an unobtainable ideal. He readily admitted that the New Testament church had serious flaws such as lukewarmness, divisiveness, slander, as well as secret and obvious backsliders.⁷⁴ This is not to say that Pethrus believed that *he himself* idealised the Early Church. On the contrary, the context of the statement shows that his objection was only levelled against those who elevated the Early Church to unattainable heights. Rather, the imperfections of the Early Church simply proved that no church has ever been perfect, which, in fact, supported the idea that it was possible for today's *imperfect* churches to emulate its example. However, to propose that another church in history could serve as a model for today's churches would be illegitimate, because no other church has ever been able to attain a similar level of spirituality as the Early Church, not even Pentecostal churches.⁷⁵

⁷³ Carlsson has observed that abandonment to God's will is also a central concept in Pethrus' anthropology. Carlsson, 66-74.

⁷⁴ Pethrus, *En säningsman gick ut*, 1956, 29.

⁷⁵ Lewi Pethrus, *Hos Herren är makten*, 1955, 273-274.

2.3.1.2 Restoration of the Scriptures

A proper understanding of Pethrus' ecclesiology will not be achieved without considering Pethrus' use of the Bible. Pethrus' attempt to restore the Bible to its 'rightful place' in the church is an ancient concern that can be traced to the days of the Renaissance.⁷⁶ The longing of the humanists of the Renaissance was to return to the glorious days of antiquity.⁷⁷ Reformers such as Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli all shared this longing, yet they primarily applied it to the study of Scripture. Consequently, Luther's dictum, *Sola Scriptura*, became a cornerstone in the polemic against the Catholic Church, which believed Scripture and tradition should receive the same weight in interpretation.

Luther's insistence on *Sola Scriptura* had one of its greatest advocates in Pethrus. Pethrus was not ashamed to confess that Pentecostals in Sweden and the rest of the Nordic countries 'have not let themselves get lost in spiritual excesses, as have revivals in the past and some Pentecostals in other countries, but have kept the Bible as their sole authority'.⁷⁸ When discussing the Bible's role in ecclesiology Pethrus stated: 'If we study our Bible carefully, we find not only the main directions for a congregation's faith and life, but there we also have the guidelines for every situation in which God's church may end up'.⁷⁹ The Bible was thus a detailed manual by which churches should determine every ecclesiastical issue. Often Pethrus advocated a restricted ecclesiology, which only allowed the church to practice what the Scriptures specifically taught; and not the more liberal view which allowed the church to practice what the Scriptures did not specifically prohibit.⁸⁰ He occasionally took his

⁷⁶ In an allegorical description of the Pentecostal movement, Pethrus used the term a 'renaissance of faith' to describe it. See Pethrus, *Timmermannen från Nasaret*, vol. 1, 83.

⁷⁷ Justo L. González, *The Story of Christianity: The Reformation to the Present Day*, Vol. 2 (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1985), 10.

⁷⁸ Pethrus, *Medan du stjärnorna räknar*, 1953, 206.

⁷⁹ Pethrus, *En säningsman gick ut*, 1956, 44.

⁸⁰ In a debate with John Magnusson, the general secretary of ÖM, Pethrus vehemently opposed Magnusson's liberal use of the Scriptures. Magnusson's belief that a church was entitled to organize its missionary efforts in whatever way it deemed suitable, as long as it did not contradict Scripture, was not only

restricted ecclesiology to an extreme and sought biblical justification for almost every ecclesiastical issue;⁸¹ yet at other times he argues, for example, for opening a Pentecostal bank on solely pragmatic and historical grounds.⁸² Even though Pethrus was not always consistent in his application of restorationist principles, his motivation was clear – the church should draw its beliefs and practices directly from the Scriptures.

In order to comprehend the Scriptures' role in Pethrus' ecclesiology, it is important to also address his understanding of the perspicuity of Scripture. At the time of the Reformation, the Catholic Church argued that only the pope was able to properly understand and interpret the Scriptures. Luther, who believed that the Scriptures should be available to everyone, argued that laypersons and clergy alike might comprehend the Scriptures through the illumination of the Holy Spirit who speaks through the Scriptures.⁸³ Luther made a distinction between the objective clarity of Scripture and the subjective clarity of the interpreter. Without the Holy Spirit's illumination, the clear teaching of Scripture would never be understood.⁸⁴

Pethrus' ecclesiology is based on an almost naïve view of the clarity of Scripture. Pethrus presupposed that if Christians would simply keep themselves to the pure teachings of the Scriptures, they would not be led astray by false teachings. For Pethrus, the truths of Scripture were obvious, unambiguous, and explicit.⁸⁵ Simple explanations, devoid of

'unbiblical' to Pethrus, but also opened itself up for God's judgement. Using the illustration of Moses hitting the rock when commanded to speak to the rock (Numb. 20), Pethrus showed that failure in following the exact guidelines outlined in God's Word was not only disobedient but also dangerous. Pethrus, 'Allt längre från sanningen,' *EH*, 3 March, 1938, 173.

⁸¹ For example, Pethrus even found support in the book of Acts for keeping church attendance and renting facilities for church services. See Pethrus, *Medan du stjärnorna räknar*, 1953, 176; Lewi Pethrus, *Hänryckningens tid*, 1954, 132-133.

⁸² Pethrus, *Hos Herren är makten*, 1955, 242-243. See section, 2.5.

⁸³ Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will, Luther's Works*, Amer. ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), 33:24-28.

⁸⁴ Paul Althaus, *Theology of Martin Luther* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 76-78.

⁸⁵ Pethrus, *En säningsman gick ut*, 1956, 46-47.

complicated expositions by theologians and philosophers, were viewed as correct.⁸⁶ As opposed to Luther, Pethrus did not elaborate on the need for the Spirit's illumination in order to interpret the Scriptures correctly. Neither do we find any discussion on the possible influences of biases, selfish motives, tradition or culture in the process of interpretation. He simply assumed that anyone who really desired to know what the Bible taught could find that out. It is no wonder, therefore, that he sometimes accused people of different ecclesiological convictions of disregarding the clear teachings of the Scriptures.⁸⁷ Moreover, since Pethrus was a diligent student of the Word, he seldom doubted his own interpretation or left the door open for an alternative explanation. Pethrus' ecclesiology was then firmly 'biblical' since it was based on the clear teaching of the Scriptures. Carlsson rightly observes that Pethrus' hermeneutical presuppositions were flawed. Carlsson notes that he did not perceive that his interpretation was conditioned by his own context and personal convictions, and was often conducted in a proof-text fashion, supporting already preconceived ideas.⁸⁸ As our study will show, Pethrus' ecclesiological framework was not founded on the clear teachings of Scriptures alone but was significantly influenced by a concoction of personal convictions, Pentecostal presuppositions, and pragmatic concerns.

2.3.2 The Negative Side of Restorationism

The word 'restorationism' implies that there has been some kind of apostasy during the church age. Intrinsic to the whole concept of restorationism is the idea that at a certain point

⁸⁶ In a discussion regarding the *logos* concept in John 1, Pethrus stated that scholars' sophisticated explanations must be wrong simply because ignorant people could not understand their conclusions. Pethrus, *Kristi vittnesbörd om Mosebäckerna*, 1933, 81.

⁸⁷ For example, in an article addressed to Gustaf Mosesson, Pethrus argued that if denominations were biblical they should be mentioned in the Scriptures. Since they were not, Mosesson's belief in the existence of denominations was unbiblical. Pethrus, "'Andligt rus": Svar till rektor Mosesson,' *EH*, 9 January, 1919, 6.

⁸⁸ Carlsson, 296-299.

in history, the church apostatised from ‘the faith handed down to the saints’ and added human traditions. For Pethrus, this apostasy took place in a number of consecutive steps:

The first stage in the apostasy of the church was the loss of spiritual gifts. Speaking in tongues was the first gift to be abandoned, followed soon thereafter by the gift of prophecy and the gift of healing. Based on Irenaeus’ testimony, Pethrus believed that miracles still happened in the 2nd century but that they soon ceased after that. Not long after the spiritual gifts had been forsaken, the truths about Spirit baptism, sanctification, believer’s baptism, and the truth about the faith itself were also lost.⁸⁹ A rapid decline took place after the council of Nicea in 325 AD when the church formalised spiritual truths into dead creeds and began constructing denominations.⁹⁰ Up until that time, the church had largely remained a charismatic church living under an ‘open sky’. The decline lasted throughout medieval times until the beginning of the Reformation when Luther restored the doctrine of justification by faith alone. Pietists and Methodists then restored the doctrines of the New Birth, sanctification, and partly the truth of the separation of church and state. After this, the Baptists restored believer’s baptism and the Pentecostals restored the truths about the gifts and the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.⁹¹ However, as opposed to many other Pentecostals, Pethrus did not suggest that the Pentecostals movement was the final piece in the restorationist puzzle.⁹² In fact, such a view would convey spiritual arrogance and shackle God’s free Spirit whose desire was to constantly reveal additional spiritual truth.⁹³

⁸⁹ Pethrus, *Medan du stjärnorna räknar*, 1953, 171-172.

⁹⁰ Pethrus, *De kristnas enhet*, 1919, 10.

⁹¹ Pethrus, *De kristnas enhet*, 1919, 14.

⁹² Hocken, ‘Church, Theology of the,’ 545.

⁹³ It should be noted here that Pethrus referred to the Pentecostals as having a ‘full gospel’ in 1918. However, the term does not occur in later writings. See, Pethrus, ‘Splittringar,’ *EH*, 3 October, 1918, 158; Pethrus, *De kristnas enhet*, 1919, 14.

As much as Pethrus extolled the spiritual aspects of the apostolic church, he was equally saddened by the spiritual decline during the Middle Ages.⁹⁴ In response to such an understanding of church history, Andrew Walker asks: ‘Perhaps they do not know that Calvin and Wesley were saturated in theology of the Chalcedonian thinkers?’⁹⁵ Walker’s poignant question highlights the important observation that medieval Christianity was not as dark as Restorationists might suggest. It is questionable whether such an insight would have made a difference for Pethrus, however. In Pethrus’ mind, it was clear that the church had lost the spiritual fervour it once possessed since there was currently hardly any evidence of belief in or practice of the charismatic gifts and Spirit baptism.⁹⁶

The role the negative side of restorationism plays in Pethrus’ ecclesiology was that church doctrines and practices must be thoroughly purified from human ideas and principles. Unless ecclesiological issues could be directly supported by the clear teachings of the Scriptures, they must be discarded since they hindered the Spirit’s movement and the purity of the church. The purification of the church from human accretions ultimately served the purpose of preserving, restoring, and protecting the church’s spiritual life. Before proceeding to discuss Pentecostalism’s influence on Pethrus’ ecclesiology, the issue of the normativeness of the Early Church needs to be addressed.

⁹⁴ Pethrus, *De kristnas enhet*, 1919, 14.

⁹⁵ Andrew Walker, *Restoring the Kingdom: The Radical Christianity of the House Church Movement*, 2nd ed. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1989), 139.

⁹⁶ Pethrus, *Urkristna krafikällor*, 1925, 34; Pethrus, *Pingstväckelsen och gudomlig helbrägdagörelse*, 1926, 15.

2.3.3 Normativeness

Numerous scholars have criticised the view of making the apostolic church's beliefs and practices normative for all ages.⁹⁷ Shane Clifton's critique of restorationist ecclesiology summarizes the main objections: 'The problem [...] is not only the failure to account for the cultural and social distance between the Early Church and the Church of today; it is also that this approach misunderstands the ecclesial diversity and developments that are apparent in the New Testament writings'.⁹⁸ Clifton's critique of restorationist ecclesiology is valid because it objects to the common misunderstanding among restorationists that the NT depicts a unified church, and that the apostolic church can be replicated in today's world in spite of vast social and cultural differences. However, Clifton's objections may apply to the notion of adopting the apostolic church's practices, but they do not sufficiently address Pethrus' fundamental premise that the *spiritual* experiences of the apostolic church were replicable and normative for contemporary churches. One of Pethrus' most common arguments for the repeatable experience of Spirit baptism was his parallel between Jesus' death on the cross and Spirit baptism. Christ's death on the cross took place once and for all but needs to be experienced by each person individually. Similarly, the outpouring of the Spirit took place once and for all on the Day of Pentecost, but it also needs to be individually appropriated.⁹⁹ Additionally, both Donald Dayton and Ulrik Josefsson observe that most Pentecostals would answer this kind of critique by proposing that the times and situations are different, but the experiences are repeatable because they originate in an unchangeable God.¹⁰⁰ We need to admit that the debate is almost impossible to solve since the opposing views are based on two entirely

⁹⁷ For a brief survey of the main opponents and proponents in the 'normative' debate, see Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 192-195.

⁹⁸ Shane Clifton, 'Pentecostal Ecclesiology: A Methodological Proposal for a Diverse Movement,' *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 15 (2007): 215.

⁹⁹ See for example, Pethrus, 'Nödvändiga förutsättningar för dop i den Helige Ande,' *EH*, 19 July, 1928, 452.

¹⁰⁰ Donald Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury Press, 1987), 25; Josefsson, 184.

different methodologies. The claim that New Testament spirituality is normative for today's church simply falls outside any historical or scientific means of verification. Amassing a vast amount of witness in favour of the 'Pentecostal experience' does not remove its subjectivity. Since experience remains an integral part of Pentecostals' truth claims, the discussion of the normativeness of the 'Pentecostal experience' will continue unabated, yet with little hope of a resolution as long as opposing methods of hermeneutics and epistemology are utilised.¹⁰¹

2.4 Pentecostalism

2.4.1 Introduction

The reason early Pentecostals, like Pethrus, so readily adopted a restorationist understanding of church history is because it gave purpose and meaning to the Pentecostal movement. The restorationist longing to restore the church to its former glory provided a sense of historical significance to the revival. Kenneth J. Archer goes a step further and argues that the Pentecostal story or narrative finds its specific place in the larger Christian 'metanarrative'.¹⁰² Archer argues that the Pentecostal movement was not just any other revival but a mighty act of God of critical importance in redemptive history. In fact, it was perceived as *the* precursor before Christ's Second coming.¹⁰³ Since the Pentecostal revival was perceived as having eschatological importance, the Pentecostal revival became a lens by

¹⁰¹ For an in-depth discussion on the problems surrounding Pentecostal hermeneutics, see Scott A Ellington, 'History, Story, and Testimony: Locating Truth in a Pentecostal Hermeneutic' *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 2, Fall 2001: 246-251.

¹⁰² By 'metanarrative' Archer means the larger Christian story of creation, fall, redemption, and final consummation. Kenneth J. Archer, 'Pentecostal Story: The Hermeneutical Filter for the Making of Meaning' *Pneuma* 26, No. 1 (2004): 41-42.

¹⁰³ Pethrus also reiterated such an understanding. In an article describing his first visit to the Azusa street mission in Los Angeles, Pethrus praised the glorious (Pentecostal) revival that would complete the restoration of the church before Christ's second coming. Pethrus, 'Los Angeles. Azusa-missionen och Angelus tempel,' *EH*, 31 July, 1924, 361.

which Scripture and experiences were interpreted.¹⁰⁴ Pethrus' personal reflections on his early understanding of the Pentecostal movement affirm this notion:

The revival was for us a treasure that we were willing to sacrifice everything for. We saw in it true and living Christianity that the New Testament presents. For many of us it was a question that could be formulated like this: Either New Testament Christianity, which the Pentecostal movement preaches, or no Christianity at all! We meant that there exists no other true Christianity than the one that has its strength in the Spirit's power, something that is characteristic of the Pentecostal revival. It was our conviction that this revival was the salvation for today's Christianity as well as for the world we live in. We believed that it was a genuine work of God, to the same extent as the ministry that the apostles and their contemporaries performed in biblical times.¹⁰⁵

When determining the formative contexts of Pethrus' ecclesiology, it is not sufficient to merely acknowledge that the Pentecostal revival was an important formative context; we must also analyse the manner in which it influenced its construction. In order to do so, it is crucial to examine how Pethrus' view of the revival changed over time. Since the Pentecostal revival was a major hermeneutical framework in Pethrus' ecclesiology, any such change must be noted. Moreover, since the aim of our study is not only to analyse Pethrus' Pentecostal ecclesiology per se, but also to relate it to contemporary Pentecostal ecclesiology, a thorough study needs to be made of Pethrus' perception of the Pentecostal revival as such. Since no universally accepted definition of Pentecostalism exists, predominantly due to its 'fluidity' in doctrine and its globally diverse and contextually determined expression,¹⁰⁶ the need for an in-depth study of Pethrus' view of the Pentecostal revival is significantly enhanced. It might be argued that such a study is redundant since Pethrus falls under the category of a 'classical Pentecostal'. However, Pethrus outlived many of the early 'classical' Pentecostals by several decades, observing not only the Pentecostal movement's initial stage, but also its expansion and solidifying stages. Hence, Pethrus' perspective on the Pentecostal movement is

¹⁰⁴ Archer, 'Pentecostal Story: The Hermeneutical Filter for the Making of Meaning', 43.

¹⁰⁵ Pethrus, *Medan du stjärnorna räknar*, 1953, 282.

¹⁰⁶ See, Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 10-15.

significant, not only to determine Pethrus' ecclesiology but also from a theological and historical perspective. The study will focus on three aspects of Pethrus' understanding of the revival: the origin, the essence, and the purpose of the Pentecostal revival, and how they shaped the formation of his ecclesiology.

2.4.2 The Origins of Pentecostalism

Pethrus' writings manifest three major origins of the Pentecostal movement: divine, historical and sociological. We will look at all three in turn.

2.4.2.1 Divine Origin

In Pethrus' early writings, the idea that the Pentecostal revival was of divine origin is prominent.¹⁰⁷ Pethrus rejected the idea that the Pentecostal revival was merely a human phenomenon since it could be traced to a church in Los Angeles. Pethrus explained that the reason the revival began in Los Angeles was because those Christians were open to God's voice, shared the knowledge and the conviction of a 'new' Pentecost, were fully surrendered to God, and persevered in seeking Christ.¹⁰⁸ From the example of Joseph Smale who, according to Pethrus, *almost* led his congregation to the full experience of Pentecost but failed because he did not persevere, Pethrus observed that God could have sent the Pentecostal revival to any church that manifested the same example as William Seymour's church in Los Angeles.¹⁰⁹ Thus for Pethrus, the revival was not a 'made in America' phenomenon, to

¹⁰⁷ A major reason Pethrus stressed the divine origin of the Pentecostal revival at this time was because it provided a justification for the movement's existence. See section 3.1, below.

¹⁰⁸ Pethrus, 'Pingstväckelsen,' *EH*, 20 July, 1916, 117-118.

¹⁰⁹ Pethrus, 'Pingstväckelsen,' 117-118.

borrow Allan Anderson's phrase,¹¹⁰ but a gift of God to those who persevered in seeking his face.

In 1918, Gustaf Mosesson, the principal of the Mission Covenant Church (MCC) theological institute, wrote two articles in *Svenska Morgonbladet* regarding the Pentecostal movement. Mosesson levelled a number of critiques against the movement, one being its unoriginality in comparison with other revivals in the past. In response to Mosesson, Pethrus countered that no other revival has had the same worldwide expansion, and people who were at first sceptical have seen its fruit and been convinced of its divine origin.¹¹¹ In a series of articles written as a response to Johan Rinman's publication *Vår tids s.k. pingströrelse* [Our Time's so-called Pentecostal movement] Pethrus reaffirmed his conviction that the Pentecostal revival was of divine origin. This time, Pethrus refuted Rinman's claim that the revival must be a work of the devil because of its glossolalia, its tendency to conjure up religious frenzy, and its habit of causing divisions among established denominations. By discrediting Rinman's source and personal knowledge of the movement, as well as emphasising the revival's dedication to prayer according to Luke 11:11-13, Pethrus again highlighted that the Pentecostal revival was indeed a work of the Spirit of God.¹¹²

Another, and for Pethrus the most compelling argument for the divine origin of the Pentecostal revival was its unending character.¹¹³ In an article in January 1918, Pethrus warned against revivals that spring up because of the efforts of a particular evangelist but

¹¹⁰ Allan Anderson, 'The Hazards of Writing a Book on Global Pentecostalism,' *Pneuma* Vol. 28, No. 2 (Fall 2006): 287.

¹¹¹ Pethrus, "'Andligt rus": Svar till rektor Mosesson,' 1919, 6.

¹¹² Pethrus, 'Pingstväckelsen: Är den djävulens verk?' *EH*, 10 June, 1920, 89-91; Pethrus, 'Pingstväckelsen: Bliva vi föremål för demonbesättning och självsuggestion, om vi framhärda i uppriktig bön?,' *EH*, 17 June, 1920, 93-94.

¹¹³ Pethrus, 'Pingstväckelsen,' *EH*, 5 August, 1920, 121.

quickly died out after he was gone. Such revivals were ‘soulish’¹¹⁴ phenomena rather than true revivals.¹¹⁵ In contrast, the Pentecostal revival had continued unabated for many years without any sign of ceasing.¹¹⁶

A final argument for the divine origin of the revival was its humble and despised character. In 1949 Pethrus commented: ‘Nothing is a surer sign of a genuine, divine revival than that it appears in a way that creates distrust and contempt for itself’.¹¹⁷ The fact that God had allowed the Pentecostal revival to begin in a wooden shack, among a congregation that had a black, limp, one-eyed pastor as a leader was a sure sign of its divine origin.¹¹⁸ In fact, Pethrus noted that just as religious and intellectual leaders were despising the Pentecostal movement in its day, in the same way the priests and the teachers of the Law despised Jesus in his day.¹¹⁹

2.4.2.2 Historical Origins

Even though Pethrus continued to speak of the Pentecostal revival’s divine origin later in life, it became less frequent in later writings. During the early years, Pethrus’ writings abounded with polemical references in defence of the revival. In the middle of the 1930s, when the outside criticism of the revival largely subsided, references to the revival still occurred, but with less frequency and with less polemical language. At the beginning of the 1930s, when the need for defending the Pentecostal movement’s *raison d’être* still existed, yet did not require the same isolationist stance but benefitted from a more positive approach

¹¹⁴ By this term, Pethrus meant that the revival could have some visible results, but since it was a work of people rather than a work of God, the revival did not transform people’s lives, and thus did not deserve to be called a ‘revival’.

¹¹⁵ Pethrus, ‘Väckelser,’ *EH*, 9 January, 1920, 1.

¹¹⁶ Pethrus, ‘Väckelser,’ 1920, 1.

¹¹⁷ Pethrus, ‘Väckelsens källa,’ *EH*, 1 December, 1949, 853.

¹¹⁸ Pethrus, ‘Väckelsens källa,’ 1949, 854.

¹¹⁹ Pethrus, ‘Väckelsens källa,’ 1949, 853-853; Pethrus, ‘Pingstväckelsen: Är den djävulens verk?’, 1920, 93.

to other denominations, Pethrus began emphasising SPM's historical roots.¹²⁰ In a speech to an audience in the Filadelfia church in January 1931, labelled *Our Position Toward Other Christians*, he acknowledged the Pentecostal revival's indebtedness to the Lutheran church as well as to the Swedish Free Churches. Pethrus praised the Swedish Lutheran church for 'justification by faith alone' and '*Sola Scriptura*,' which was the soil from which the Pentecostal movement had sprung.¹²¹ He went on praising George Scott, the first Methodist to preach the doctrines of the New Birth and sanctification in Sweden before being chased out of the country. Baptists such as F. O. Nilsson and Anders Viberg received praise for their perseverance in preaching believer's baptism in spite of severe persecution. Having surveyed the influence of people such as these, Pethrus concluded:

It is in such soil that the Pentecostal revival has grown up, and that is why the Pentecostal revival and its people owe a lot of gratitude to these our predecessors, and we should praise God for them. If Pentecostals believe that the Pentecostal revival and its ministry that has followed it would be something completely independent, which did not have anything to do with what preceded, they would commit a big mistake. They are children of saints in the past, who have fought and sacrificed themselves and have been faithful to the truths that the Lord made alive to them. It is wonderful to see that all these living truths that God revealed to them are still alive, remain, and are incorporated in the Pentecostal revival and its proclamation.¹²²

In the beginning of 1938, following an attempt to incorporate Örebro Mission Society (ÖM) into the Pentecostal movement,¹²³ Pethrus wrote three articles in *Evangelii Härold* with the title *De svenska frikyrkorna och pingstväckelsen* [*The Swedish Free Churches and the Pentecostal Revival*]. In the third article, Pethrus expanded on his previous thoughts and criticised new spiritual movements for their habit of disregarding their historical roots. Pethrus also criticised the denominations for being embarrassed by the new movements that

¹²⁰ See sections, 3.1 and 4.1 below.

¹²¹ Pethrus, *Vår ställning till andra kristna*, 1931, 4.

¹²² Pethrus, *Vår ställning till andra kristna*, 1931, 6.

¹²³ Pethrus' historical arguments must be understood in light of his motivation of extending the Pentecostal movement's influence. See section, 4.1 below.

originated from them. Pethrus made his point clear with a poignant family illustration: ‘The father should not be embarrassed about his children and assume his fatherly responsibilities, because in the “facial expressions” of new revival movements, one can always see clear evidence of their origin’.¹²⁴ Thus denying one’s roots was not only unfair and myopic but also harmful to oneself.¹²⁵ Having made this crucial observation, Pethrus proceeded to argue that Pentecostals have their distinct ‘truths,’ but they only have a coherent gospel together with the cherished truths of other denominations.¹²⁶ In fact, Pethrus did not hesitate to acknowledge his own and the Filadelfia church’s indebtedness to their Baptist roots: ‘The congregation’s life and ministry have been influenced by the religious position we imbibed with the mother’s milk. Most of us, who from the beginning belonged to the church’s leadership, are born and raised by Baptists, and that this has left its mark upon our doctrine and church life is undeniable’.¹²⁷ Later in life Pethrus concluded, ‘If we Pentecostals distance ourselves from our predecessors in matter of doctrine, then the result will be that we will have hardly anything more than Spirit baptism, the spiritual gifts and the independent local church left on our statement of faith. [...] The New Testament truths that the Pentecostal movement have brought to the contemporary Christian proclamation have only its value in relation to Christian theology as a whole’.¹²⁸ From what we have seen above, it is evident that Pethrus believed that the Pentecostal revival was not solely a divine phenomenon but a revival that stood on the shoulders of revivals in the past, both historically and theologically.

¹²⁴ Pethrus, ‘Väckelsen i Filadelfiakyrkan i Stockholm,’ *EH*, 17 February, 1938, 126.

¹²⁵ Pethrus, ‘Väckelsen i Filadelfiakyrkan i Stockholm,’ 1938, 126.

¹²⁶ Pethrus, ‘Väckelsen i Filadelfiakyrkan i Stockholm,’ 1938, 126.

¹²⁷ Pethrus, ‘Inför Filadelfiaförsamlingens i Stockholm 25-årshögtid,’ *EH*, 29 August, 1935, 645.

¹²⁸ Pethrus, ‘Sanningens pelare och grundfäste,’ *Dagen*, 31 March, 1962, 2.

2.4.2.3 Sociological Origins

In addition to the Pentecostal revival's divine and historical roots, Pethrus also considered the Pentecostal revival as an answer to the spiritual needs of the people in the beginning of the 20th century. This insight he borrowed from Efraim Briem¹²⁹ yet expanded on it to make an appeal for the necessity of the Pentecostal revival and the futility of fighting against it. In the first article in the series regarding *The Swedish Free Churches and the Pentecostal Revival*, Pethrus used the insight from Briem to blame many of the initial problems between the Free Churches and the Pentecostals on the Free Churches' apparent obliviousness to this spiritual need. Pethrus' harsh remarks served the purpose of getting the Free Churches to come out from behind their denominational walls, and after 30 years finally cease their hostility and acknowledge that the Pentecostal revival met a spiritual need.¹³⁰ Pethrus did not state the cause for the spiritual hunger in the beginning of the 20th century at this particular point. However, in another article commemorating the fortieth anniversary of the movement in 1947, he repeated Briem's observation once again but added that materialism, industrialism, and higher criticism had caused a spiritual recession of unprecedented proportions.¹³¹

The preceding discussion has shown that Pethrus viewed the Pentecostal revival as having divine, historical and sociological roots. However, it has not addressed the *essence* of it, which is instrumental in order to understand Pethrus' 'Pentecostal' ecclesiology.¹³²

¹²⁹ See Briem, 3-4. See also, Pethrus, *Vår ställning till andra kristna*, 1931, 3-4.

¹³⁰ Pethrus, 'De svenska frikyrkorna och pingstväckelsen I (pingstväckelsen motsvarar ett andligt behov i tiden),' *EH*, 27 January, 1938, 68-69. See for example, Pethrus, *En säningsman gick ut*, 1956, 15; Pethrus, *Kristi vittnesbörd om Moseböckerna*, 1933, 103-106.

¹³¹ Pethrus, 'Efter fyrtio år,' *EH*, 22 May, 1947, 481. Pethrus, 'Gud med oss: En återblick,' *EH*, 19 September, 1957, 2. Though Pethrus sometimes made it seem like the observations of the socio-economic factors of the revival originated with him, it is clear that he also borrowed these from Efraim Briem. See, Pethrus, *Verklig väckelse*, 1951, 41-46.

¹³² See chapter 6, below.

2.4.3 The Essence of Pentecostalism

Analysing Pethrus' view of the essence of Pentecostalism is not an easy task. Having once been asked to explain the essence of the Pentecostal, Pethrus replied enigmatically, 'The Pentecostal revival is best understood on your knees,'¹³³ endorsing an experiential rather than rational analysis of the revival. However, Pethrus did not always follow his own advice but proposed a variety of core characteristics of the revival.

A first clue to Pethrus' understanding of the essence of the revival may be seen in his preference for the term *pingstväckelsen* (the Pentecostal revival) rather than *pingströrelsen* (the Pentecostal movement). It is debatable whether these should be perceived as synonymous or as two distinct terms. If perceived as two distinct terms, the former would stress the revival's supernatural and religious aspects, whereas the latter would signify its local and corporate expression. Carlsson objects to making a distinction between the two, since it gives the false notion that 'the experience of God – in particular the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and *charismata* – can be isolated from the person's cultural, social, personal and theological background'.¹³⁴ Carlsson's observation is an important corrective against the tendency to divide the revival between the 'theoretical' and the 'actual'. Yet, it is clear from Pethrus' writings that even when he was using the term 'Pentecostal movement,' he only used the term to refer to the religious and supernatural aspects, as the following quote suggests: 'The Pentecostal Movement's inner core and goal has been, and is, a deepening of the spiritual life in the Christian church, a richer prayer life, a richer life of faith and the restoration of Christian ministry to the ecclesiastical model, which is written down in the New Testament'.¹³⁵ Therefore, when Pethrus referred to the 'Pentecostal revival,' which is by far

¹³³ Pethrus, 'Gemenskap och isolering,' *EH*, 19 March, 1925, 143.

¹³⁴ Carlsson, 29.

¹³⁵ Pethrus, 'Äro baptistsamfundet och pingstväckelsen två olika anderiktningar?,' *EH*, 26 January, 1939, 70.

more predominant in his writings, or the ‘Pentecostal movement,’ both terms signified the spiritual aspects without consideration of its local expression. Pethrus stated, ‘The Pentecostal revival is supremely anchored in the divine and eternal things far from people and human objects’.¹³⁶ Thus, the ‘Pentecostal revival’ was a spiritual concept to which individuals and churches needed to conform. Even after the Pentecostal Movement had become an established religious group, Pethrus insisted that the two terms were identical.¹³⁷

Pethrus’ fear of spiritual stagnation and institutionalisation of the Pentecostal revival further illuminates his understanding of it. In 1967 Pethrus lamented: ‘[In some parts of Sweden] they have a Pentecostal church rather than a Pentecostal revival. The trend in this area will be decisive for the future of the Swedish Pentecostal revival’.¹³⁸ This dire observation shows that for Pethrus the Pentecostal revival was in essence something distinct from its local expression. A Pentecostal church that had become institutionalised could not rightfully be called a Pentecostal church. Quite inconsistent with his practice, Pethrus occasionally criticised the term *väckelse* [revival] in preference for the term *rörelse* [movement], since the word ‘movement’ was the only word that had support in the New Testament.¹³⁹ However, this observation did not signify a change of understanding of the Pentecostal revival but supported the idea that the revival and Christianity as a whole was ‘an outpouring of spiritual life’.¹⁴⁰

From the above citations, we notice that for Pethrus the Pentecostal revival was something that worked within and among believers. Although the revival was something intangible that transformed churches, individuals, and societies,¹⁴¹ it still had some distinct

¹³⁶ Pethrus, *Lewi Pethrus som ledarskribent* (Stockholm: Förlaget Filadelfia, 1954), 35-36.

¹³⁷ Pethrus, ‘Pingstväckelse eller pingströrelse,’ *Dagen*, 28 December, 1973, 2.

¹³⁸ Pethrus, *Brytningstider – segertider*, 210.

¹³⁹ Pethrus, ‘Väckelse-rörelse,’ *DK*, November 1949, 321-322.

¹⁴⁰ Pethrus, ‘Väckelse-rörelse,’ 1949, 321-321.

¹⁴¹ Pethrus, *Gå ut på gator och gränder*, 1925, 118.

features. For Pethrus, the revival's Christological focus was at the heart of its essence. He retold, for instance, the story when he first encountered the Pentecostal revival in Oslo under the ministry of T. B. Barratt. What convinced Pethrus of the veracity of the revival was the place Christ and his blood had in its message. A revival that extolled Jesus and his blood had to be from God.¹⁴² The revival's Christological focus not only convinced Pethrus as to the revival's divine origin, but it also explained why T. B. Barratt became the central figure for the new movement. Pethrus testified that he could not recall anyone who had been more eager to put Jesus in the centre than T. B. Barratt.¹⁴³ In fact, of all the sermons he had ever heard, he admitted that none left a bigger impression on him than Barratt's sermon 'Jesus in the Centre,' preached in Stockholm sometime after World War I.¹⁴⁴ Referring to Barratt's book 'Jesus, the First and the Last,' Pethrus concluded that this book not only summarised T. B. Barratt's ministry but also explained the very essence of the Pentecostal revival. Anticipating his readers' response, Pethrus admitted that the message had often focused on the gifts and the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, yet he claimed that Jesus had always been the main message.¹⁴⁵

In 1948, Pethrus wrote an article with the title, 'What is central in the Pentecostal revival?' In this article, Pethrus placed his idea of the Pentecostal revival's Christological core in its larger context. He again emphasised that the 'charismatic elements' of the revival had been central to its message, but he argued that they could not define the revival as a whole. Rather, for Pethrus, 'The Pentecostal revival has always appeared as Christianity itself. [...] And what is central to Christianity must also be central to the Pentecostal revival'.¹⁴⁶ Pethrus stated:

¹⁴² Pethrus, 'Pingstväckelsen och försoningen,' *DK*, April 1947, 129-130.

¹⁴³ Pethrus, 'Pingstväckelsen och försoningen,' 1947, 129-130.

¹⁴⁴ Pethrus, 'Pingstväckelsen och försoningen,' 1947, 130.

¹⁴⁵ Pethrus, 'Pingstväckelsen och försoningen,' 1947, 130.

¹⁴⁶ Pethrus, 'Vad är det centrala i pingstväckelsen?,' *DK*, September, 1948, 257.

What is central in the Pentecostal revival are not these things [speaking in tongues, the gifts and Spirit baptism] or other similar [things]. No, the central in the Pentecostal revival is He who came from heaven, who came to save a fallen world, who died on the cross, who resurrected on the third day, who ascended to heaven and who from heaven on the day of Pentecost poured out the Holy Spirit. He is the Pentecostal revival's centre, the living Christ.¹⁴⁷

This definition of the revival is a development from his early writings, which abound with references to the centrality of Spirit baptism, speaking in tongues, spiritual gifts, and physical healing,¹⁴⁸ although traces of a Christocentric understanding of Pentecostalism may be discerned earlier.¹⁴⁹ As late as 1938, Pethrus claimed, 'For us, who have been gripped by the truth of Spirit baptism, it has been one of the Bible's most important truths'.¹⁵⁰ In 1946, Pethrus even stated that admission to Pentecostal churches in the early stages of the movement did not depend on denominational affiliation but solely on people's experience of, or longing for, the Spirit's fullness.¹⁵¹ Pethrus, obviously aware of this change of opinion, later explained that the over-emphasis on certain key truths was justified until they had become accepted and adopted by a majority of Christians. However, once accepted, the revival needed to move on and experience more spiritual truth, which was essential in order to prevent the revival from stagnating.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁷ Pethrus, 'Vad är det centrala i pingstväckelsen?', 1948, 258. See also, Pethrus, 'Välkomsttal till europeiska konferensen,' *EH*, 8 June, 1939, 481; Pethrus, *En säningsman gick ut*, 1956, 63.

¹⁴⁸ See for example, Pethrus, 'De sndlige gåvorna. Oskiljaktliga med ett bibliskt församlingsliv,' *EH*, 3 February, 1916, 11; Pethrus, 'Andens dop är för alla,' *EH*, 5 June, 1919, 92; Pethrus, 'De andliga gåvornas praktiska värde,' *EH*, 8 July, 1920, 105; Pethrus, 'Pinstväckelsen: Tungotalet,' *EH*, 29 July, 1920, 117.

¹⁴⁹ In his collection of sermons from 1931, *Gud med oss* [God with Us], Pethrus notes: 'To be like Jesus is our goal. Our goal is neither to receive forgiveness for our sins, nor to be redeemed, nor to be baptised in the Spirit and speak in tongues, and nor to receive the gifts of the Spirit. No, our goal is to become like Jesus.' Pethrus, *Gud med oss*, 1931, vol. 3, 644.

¹⁵⁰ Pethrus, 'De svenska frikyrkorna och pingstväckelsen II (Pingstväckelsen såsom en bärare av en speciell gudomlig sanning),' *EH*, 10 February, 1938, 109. In this article, Pethrus argues that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is the movement's *raison d'être*. Yet, the comment is clearly contradictory to his other statements.

¹⁵¹ Pethrus, *Lewi Pethrus som ledarskribent*, 30.

¹⁵² Pethrus, 'Nyttestamentlig helgelse: Inledningsanförande vid bibelstudieveckan i Kölingared,' *EH*, 23 June, 1949, 430. Pethrus, *Framgångens hemlighet*, 1938, 136

Other key elements in the essence of the Pentecostal revival were prayer and the Word.¹⁵³ Based on Acts 4, and 1 Tim. 2:1-4 Pethrus argued that prayer and the Word were both the means for gaining and sustaining a revival. As opposed to some who believed that the experience of Spirit baptism and spiritual gifts were sufficient, Pethrus argued that without prayer all these things were of little value to the individual and God's work in the world.¹⁵⁴ Consequently, when the revival came in 1907, it brought a new emphasis on prayer, confession, reconciliation and submission to God.¹⁵⁵ In fact, those who experienced the revival received 'a new Bible'.¹⁵⁶

This brief overview indicates that Pethrus' understanding of the essence of the Pentecostal movement changed over time. He initially perceived the Pentecostal revival almost exclusively in terms of Spirit baptism, spiritual gifts, speaking in tongues, healing, etc. As time progressed, a more balanced view of the revival was adopted, emphasising Christology, prayer, the Word, and the Gospel. Towards the end of his life, Pethrus defined the essence of the Pentecostal movement as 'the experience of the innermost core of Christianity',¹⁵⁷ which succinctly summarises Pethrus' 'final' view of the essence of the Pentecostal revival.

As we will see in the next chapter, Pethrus' progressive definition of the Pentecostal movement was especially evident in his ecclesiology. In the early years, there was a clear division between the 'Spirit-baptised' and the 'non Spirit-baptised'. This distinction largely disappeared in his later writings, opening the way for a more positive attitude toward other denominations and ecumenism.

¹⁵³ Pethrus, *Verklig väckelse*, 1951, 127.

¹⁵⁴ Pethrus, *Verklig väckelse*, 1951, 130.

¹⁵⁵ Pethrus, 'Äro baptistsamfundet och pingstväckelsen två olika anderiktningar?', 1939, 71.

¹⁵⁶ Pethrus, "'Andligt rus": Svar till rektor Mosesson,' 1919, 6.

¹⁵⁷ Pethrus, 'Mig har Gud lärt,' *Dagen*, 19 September, 1969, 2.

2.4.4 The Purpose of Pentecostalism

As we noted above, early Pentecostals considered one of the key purposes of the revival as God's means of restoring the truths about Spirit baptism, speaking in tongues, the gifts of the Spirit, healing, and so on, to the church. It was God's way of restoring the church to its original purity and power.¹⁵⁸ That Pethrus shared this conviction, and understood it to be of paramount importance, is evident from the very outset of his literary production. In an article titled *Framåt till pingsten* [Ahead Toward Pentecost], Pethrus boldly asserted that the greatest need of the church was to recover 'Pentecost' before Christ's second coming.¹⁵⁹ However, the Pentecostal revival served more purposes than merely a revival of certain 'Pentecostal' beliefs concerning the work of the Spirit. Another important purpose, especially emphasised during the first two decades of the SPM, was the revival's ability to break denominational barriers. Pethrus' second article in *Evangelii Härold* was appropriately named *Brytningstider* [Times of friction]. Pethrus admitted that the Pentecostal revival had indeed torn down denominational barriers, but to little regret because any healthy organism needed room and freedom to grow.¹⁶⁰ The purpose of the Pentecostal revival was, therefore, not only to restore forgotten truths but also to tear down ungodly structures.

A third, and closely related, purpose was the Pentecostal revival's ability to bring about true *spiritual* unity. Denominational affiliation could only achieve superficial unity whereas the Pentecostal revival opened the door for true biblical unity that was a unity of the Spirit.¹⁶¹

The Pentecostal revival also had the purpose of deepening the relationship between God and humanity.¹⁶² In 1919 Pethrus stated, 'The Pentecostal movement was a mighty wake-up

¹⁵⁸ Pethrus, 'Oklarhet i fråga om Andens dop och pingstväckelsen,' *EH*, 29 January, 1925, 50.

¹⁵⁹ Pethrus, 'Framåt till "pingsten",' *EH*, 17 August, 1916, 134.

¹⁶⁰ Pethrus, 'I brytningstider,' *EH*, 6 January, 1916, 1-2. In his book *De kristnas enhet* [*The Unity of the Christians*], published in 1919, Pethrus is even more explicit, when he states that 'the liberation movement that now takes place in our country serves the purpose of liberating the Christian churches from denominationalism, and it has its origin in the spiritual revival that has extended over the world since 1906'. Pethrus, *De kristnas enhet*, 1919, 19.

¹⁶¹ Pethrus, 'Andens enhet,' *EH*, 26 February, 1920, 29.

call to the church of God in our time for the need of a new outpouring of the Spirit – a wake-up call, *not primarily to new endeavours for world evangelisation, but first and foremost, for a more abundant spiritual life for the individual and the church* [my emphasis].¹⁶³ Later Pethrus stated, ‘The Pentecostal revival of our time has like other Pentecostal revivals in the past a special task, namely to renew God’s people and let them experience Christianity in all its richness and fullness – for it can only happen when receiving a baptism in the Holy Spirit’.¹⁶⁴ Pethrus also proposed that the revival had a ‘negative’ side since it exposed sinners and brought ‘pseudo-Christians’ into the light.¹⁶⁵ Since the Spirit’s role was not only to edify but also to bring peoples’ sins into the light,¹⁶⁶ a time of revival naturally revealed hidden sin.

Although Pethrus believed the primary purpose of the Pentecostal revival was for the individual and the church, he did not deny that a significant reason for the revival was soul-winning¹⁶⁷ and world evangelism. Scholars have often observed the importance of world evangelisation for early Pentecostals.¹⁶⁸ Pethrus readily affirmed this, stating that the Pentecostal revival has had a ‘missionary spirit’ from its very beginning.¹⁶⁹ However, he also noted that due to its sincerity, warmth and pious nature, the movement had a great tendency toward isolationism.¹⁷⁰ Even if he was sympathetic with those who wanted to distance themselves from the world because of all its evil, he emphasised that Pentecostals should not ‘forget that Christianity was both giving as well as receiving’.¹⁷¹ For Pethrus, finding a

¹⁶² Pethrus, ‘Ständig väckelse,’ *EH*, 21 December, 1922, 198.

¹⁶³ Pethrus, ‘Pingströrelsen och de gamla samfundet,’ *EH*, 18 September, 1919, 144.

¹⁶⁴ Pethrus, *Verklig väckelse*, 1951, 127.

¹⁶⁵ Pethrus, *Kristen församlingstukt*, 1930, 42-43.

¹⁶⁶ Pethrus, *Kristen församlingstukt*, 1930, 31; Pethrus, ‘Hoppet om mera enhet bland de kristna,’ *EH*, 16 February, 1939, 138.

¹⁶⁷ ‘Soul-winning’ is Pethrus’ predominant term for evangelism. ‘Soul-winning’ is an unfortunate term since it only ascribes value to the immaterial aspect of a person and overlooks the consequences of redemption for the human body.

¹⁶⁸ See for example, Faupel, *The Everlasting Gospel*, 20; Frank Macchia, ‘Theology, Pentecostal’ *TNIDPCM*, 1138-1140.

¹⁶⁹ Pethrus, *Gå ut på gator och gränder*, 1949, 9, 40-41.

¹⁷⁰ Pethrus, *Gå ut på gator och gränder*, 1949, 9, 40-41.

¹⁷¹ Pethrus, *Gå ut på gator och gränder*, 1949, 10-12.

balance between the two was essential for Christian ministry.¹⁷² In order for the Pentecostal movement to be preserved as a living revival, Pentecostals had to submit to the law of the Spirit, which demanded willingness for expansion and development.¹⁷³

A final important aspect of the Pentecostal revival was its role in revival history. In 1967, Pethrus stated that he had always maintained that the church could expect a worldwide revival in the last days,¹⁷⁴ of which the Pentecostal revival had been an important forerunner.¹⁷⁵ Basing his argument on the phrase ‘over all flesh’ in Joel 2:28, Pethrus argued that God would pour out his Spirit on *all people* and not only on all believers. To avoid any implication of universalism, Pethrus quickly remarked that not everyone would be saved; all would be mightily influenced by the Spirit. The reason the Pentecostal revival was *not* the fulfilment of Joel’s prophecy was that it had primarily been a revival for believers and not a ubiquitous outpouring of the Spirit on all humankind.¹⁷⁶ Although Pethrus maintained that he had always believed this, his other writings point to a more gradual development. Early on in life, Pethrus perceived the Pentecostal revival as *the* end-time revival before Christ’s Second coming.¹⁷⁷ In later writings, his understanding of the Pentecostal revival shifted from being *the* revival to being *a* revival in preparation of a final, worldwide, revival. In 1916, he affirmed the belief that Joel 2:28 was not completely fulfilled at the Day of Pentecost but that the Pentecostal revival was in the progress of fulfilling it.¹⁷⁸ In 1939, it is possible to discern a slight change of understanding. Referring once again to Joel’s prophecy, Pethrus argued that the Pentecostal revival, which began on the Day of Pentecost, had been partially interrupted but a day was coming [in the near future] when the Pentecostal revival would continue again

¹⁷² Pethrus, *Gå ut på gator och gränder*, 1949, 31-33.

¹⁷³ Pethrus, *Gå ut på gator och gränder*, 1949, 46-48.

¹⁷⁴ Pethrus, *Brytningstider – segertider*, 1969, 194.

¹⁷⁵ Pethrus, *Brytningstider – segertider*, 1969, 197-198.

¹⁷⁶ Pethrus, *Brytningstider – segertider*, 1969, 198.

¹⁷⁷ See Pethrus, ‘Los Angeles. Azusa-missionen och Angelus tempel,’ 1924, 361; Pethrus, ‘Den nuvarande situationen,’ *EH*, 20 May, 1925, 258.

¹⁷⁸ Pethrus, ‘Framåt till “pingsten”,’ *EH*, 17 August, 1916, 133.

in an even greater measure.¹⁷⁹ Here the Pentecostal revival is no longer perceived as presently fulfilling Joel's prophecy but a revival that will do so in the future. In 1951, Pethrus gave a more nuanced picture of the revival by placing its importance in revival history: 'The Pentecostal revival, which began in the beginning of this century and soon spread out over the whole world is, like all other revival movements, no isolated phenomenon. It fulfils, in our view, an important role in the world revival for which Christianity has always aimed'.¹⁸⁰ Later in the same book, Pethrus even stated that there have been many revivals like it in history; the only difference being its long duration and worldwide impact.¹⁸¹ Here we notice that Pethrus considered the Pentecostal revival just like all other revivals except for its remarkable results. He now quite firmly believed in a great 'world revival'. However, the Pentecostal revival was not viewed as something that has somehow failed as a phenomenon, as he insinuates in 1967. Pethrus' rather bizarre universalistic view of Joel 2:28 in 1967, must be understood, apart from a biblicistic interpretation of the Scriptures, in light of the Charismatic Movement and popular dispensationalism of the time.¹⁸² The Charismatic Movement's entrance into the mainline denominations in America, combined with dispensationalism's foreboding prophecies of impending apocalyptic events, brought the two strands of a universal and end-time revival together.¹⁸³ Thus Pethrus readjusted his theological understanding of Joel 2:28 to give theological meaning to immediate events. Finally in 1973, Pethrus removed the Pentecostal revival completely from his language. Joel's prophecy was now solely linked with end-time eschatological events without any reference to the Pentecostal revival.¹⁸⁴

¹⁷⁹ Pethrus, 'Hoppet om mera enhet bland de kristna,' *EH*, 16 February, 1939, 137-138.

¹⁸⁰ Pethrus, *Verklig väckelse*, 1951, 43.

¹⁸¹ Pethrus, *Verklig väckelse*, 1951, 126.

¹⁸² Pethrus' belief in a great worldwide revival before the consummation did not replace his previous pre-millennial views for a post-millennial one. He simply did not work with predetermined theological categories.

¹⁸³ Pethrus, *Brytningstider – segertider*, 1969, 199.

¹⁸⁴ Pethrus, *A Spiritual Memoir*, 1973, 47.

2.5 Pragmatism

Pethrus is well known for his pragmatism. As we will see below, Pethrus' pragmatism often explains rational and theological inconsistencies. At one point Pethrus can argue for a certain position and later argue for the exact opposite. The rationale for such behaviour is often understood in their larger contexts. Since a significant amount of Pethrus' writings arose as a result of battles with individuals or denominations, a general rule-of-thumb when it comes to understanding his position is to examine the titles of his publications during or just after the conflict.¹⁸⁵ This rule-of-thumb applies not only to personal conflicts but also to immediate social and religious concerns as well.¹⁸⁶ Since Pethrus found himself in a restorationist tradition, the immediate pragmatic concerns demanded some kind of biblical justification. For instance, following the excommunication of Franklin in 1929,¹⁸⁷ Struble notes how Pethrus reworked Jesus' command in Matthew 18 to mean that the last decision-making body in terms of church discipline was not the church but its representatives, because if the person under discipline is given a right to speak he may mislead weak Christians.¹⁸⁸ Struble correctly observes that Pethrus' interpretation of Matthew 18 stemmed from a fear that if Franklin were allowed to speak, the church might not remain unanimously opposed to Franklin.¹⁸⁹ Thus the pressing needs of the moment forced Pethrus to a sort of 'spiritual utilitarianism' where the 'spiritual' ends justified the means. This is not to say that Pethrus' arguments were premeditated misinterpretations of Scripture. Rather, Pethrus' arguments

¹⁸⁵ For example, as a result of the battle with Franklin, Pethrus published *Predikanten och hans utbildning* [The Preacher and His Education], *Kristen församlingstukt* [Christian Church Discipline], *Vår ställning till andra kristna* [Our Position Toward other Christians]; and his battle with Sven Lidman led to *Gå ut på gator och gränder* [Go out in the Streets and Alleys] and *Den anständiga sanningen* [The Decent Truth].

¹⁸⁶ Here it is possible to mention *Verklig väckelse* [True Revival], which came about as a result of the Latter Rain revival, and *I dag lek – I morgon tårar* [Today play – Tomorrow Tears] and *Ny mark* [New Ground], which are books written as a response to the 'de-christianisation' of Swedish society.

¹⁸⁷ For a discussion concerning the circumstances surrounding the excommunication of Franklin, see section 3.1 below.

¹⁸⁸ Struble, 104. See also, Pethrus, 'Församlingens ledning,' *DK*, May 1945, 185-187.

¹⁸⁹ Struble, 105.

were contextually conditioned, reflecting presently held convictions, and not necessarily in line with previous beliefs. A good illustration of this is Pethrus' attitude toward isolationism. Following the excommunication of Franklin in 1929, Pethrus received stern criticism from the Free Churches. In response to the criticism, Pethrus was able to write about the many blessings that flowed from the Pentecostals' isolationist attitude toward the Free Churches.¹⁹⁰ After the conflict with Sven Lidman in 1948,¹⁹¹ who preferred a more introspective emphasis in the Pentecostal movement, Pethrus argued that the most significant battle the Pentecostal movement ever had to fight was its struggle against 'unbiblical and harmful isolation'.¹⁹² Here we see a typical example of how different situations produce contradictory responses. The pragmatic emphasis of winning the argument at hand or justifying a predetermined stance is guiding the argumentation. In both instances, Pethrus is using Scripture to support his arguments.

Another side of Pethrus' pragmatism is his constant preoccupation with finding equilibrium. He is opposed to any kind of excesses, whether spiritual,¹⁹³ ecclesiological,¹⁹⁴ or political.¹⁹⁵ Reflecting on his role as a leader of the Pentecostal movement, Pethrus even claimed that one of his most important tasks has been to keep it from falling into excesses.¹⁹⁶ It is therefore not surprising to find Pethrus arguing for a 'truth' which he perceives as having been neglected until it becomes an accepted position in the SPM. However, if the argument tends to fall in the other ditch, he has no problem arguing for 'the other side' until a healthy balance is restored.

¹⁹⁰ Pethrus, 'En välsignelsebringande isolering,' *EH*, 2 March, 1933, 145-146.

¹⁹¹ For a brief discussion on Pethrus' conflict with Sven Lidman, see section 4.1 below.

¹⁹² Pethrus, *Gå ut på gator och gränder*, 1949, 8.

¹⁹³ Pethrus was neither 'a sinner nor a fanatic'. Pethrus, *Varken syndare eller svärmare*, 1943, 10-13.

¹⁹⁴ Pethrus believed the church was the only ecclesiastical organisation mentioned in the NT, but he objected to people who over-emphasised the local church so that it became an institution. See section 5.4 below.

¹⁹⁵ Pethrus admonishes people to vote, but does not want to be a politician. Pethrus, 'Pinstväckelsen och samhällsfrågorna,' *DK*, June 1944, 65-66.

¹⁹⁶ Pethrus, *Varken syndare eller svärmare*, 1943, 10-13.

Pragmatism is not only a valid method of argumentation, but in Pethrus' writings pragmatism is also considered a virtue. Josefsson has shown that in Swedish Pentecostalism eagerness, activity, and hurriedness were important aspects of its identity.¹⁹⁷ He states that the combination of a negative outlook on society and the belief in the imminent coming of Christ among early Swedish Pentecostals created an emphasis on activity, which primarily manifested itself in frantic efforts of evangelism.¹⁹⁸ Josefsson goes on describing how relaxation, sickness, and even heaven scared Swedish Pentecostals because of its implied inactivity.¹⁹⁹ Pethrus' ecclesiology is significantly influenced by this emphasis on activity. Pethrus stated that 'immobilization is characteristic of death, but where there is life, there is movement'.²⁰⁰ In another article entitled, *Aktiv tro* [Active Faith] he argued that activity was a sign of true faith and that the fault with most Christians was that they were too ineffective. In language almost improper for a Pentecostal, he warned both individual believers and churches that an inactive faith would not go unpunished, and it led to lazy and worthless Christians without hope of accomplishing anything for God.²⁰¹ A healthy church is therefore a church that is constantly active and making a difference in society and people's lives.

2.6 Individualism and Experientialism

In his systematic exposition of Pethrus' theology, Carlsson uses Pethrus' quote, 'As is the individual, so is the church,' as an umbrella statement to sum up his view of the holiness and the purity of the church, and to highlight his preoccupation with the individual.²⁰² Carlsson's quote is taken from a context where Pethrus reflected on Saint Augustine's

¹⁹⁷ Josefsson, 324-327.

¹⁹⁸ Josefsson, 324.

¹⁹⁹ Josefsson, 324-325.

²⁰⁰ Pethrus, 'Väckelse-rörelse,' *DK*, November 1949, 321.

²⁰¹ Pethrus, 'Aktiv tro,' *DK*, September 1949, 257.

²⁰² Carlsson, 109; Pethrus, *A Spiritual Memoir*, 1973, 13.

assertion that ‘the church was holy even if the members were not’ - an assertion Pethrus could not adhere to since ‘there is no such abstract church apart from the members’.²⁰³ Carlsson correctly notes that Pethrus could not accept that ‘the mystery of the church would mean sinful people coming *together* and becoming anything except what they are as individuals, namely the Body of Christ’.²⁰⁴ It is important to clarify here that Augustine’s comment is referring to the church’s transcendent holiness as an elect body in Christ. Augustine is therefore not saying that there is such a thing as an ‘abstract church without members’ as Pethrus claimed. What Pethrus failed to see was that Augustine was talking about the church’s objective holiness whereas his own concern was about the church’s subjective holiness.²⁰⁵ It is clear from the larger context that Pethrus was not denying the *universal* church’s transcendent holiness. Rather, Pethrus’ focus was on the *visible* church’s tendency to stifle the creativity and motivation of individual members.²⁰⁶ His statement ‘As is the individual, so is the church’ simply made the point that the spiritual health of the local church depended on the sincerity and devotion of its members. Furthermore, when Pethrus later talked about the tension between the collective and the individual, he had in mind the struggles that often ensued in churches and denominations when an individual was asking for progress. The collective, unwilling to change, drowned the individual to the point where the person lost his or her motivation and became a mindless ‘parrot’ of the collective.²⁰⁷ Thus, the problem Pethrus was dealing with in this context was solely a problem for the local church and not the universal.

²⁰³ Carlsson, 109.

²⁰⁴ Carlsson, 110.

²⁰⁵ A biblical distinction between the objective and subjective holiness of a church can be found in 1 Corinthians. Paul has no problem calling the church ‘saints’ (1 Cor. 1:2) because they have been sanctified in Christ Jesus (objective holiness). On the other hand, the Corinthian church’s many moral failures are serious reminders of their lack of subjective holiness.

²⁰⁶ Pethrus, *A Spiritual Memoir*, 1973, 13, 67-74.

²⁰⁷ Pethrus, *A Spiritual Memoir*, 1973, 159.

At any rate, Carlsson is correct that individualism is highly emphasised in Pethrus' ecclesiology. Although he overstates his case when he argues that, 'Pethrus' emphasis falls on the individual even when the universal church is in question,'²⁰⁸ his insight that Pethrus' perception of the church may be described as a '*macro-man*'²⁰⁹ accurately reflects much of his ecclesiological reflections. Consequently, since Pethrus' main preoccupation related to the individual's importance for the church, the individual's purity, initiative, and wholehearted consecration to God became his main concerns²¹⁰ – concerns that reflected the influence of Pietistic and Free Church emphases.

Simon Chan's criticism of Pentecostals' tendency to overemphasise the individual and social aspects of the church particularly applies to Pethrus. Chan argues that the church 'tends to be seen as essentially a service provider catering to the needs of individual Christians, [... and] when the church is seen as existing for individuals, then the focus of ministry is on individuals: how individual needs can be met by the church. [...] Rarely are individuals thought of as existing for the church'.²¹¹ Pethrus' definition of the purpose of the church not only underscores Chan's fears but also highlights his individualistic ecclesiology, as the following quote shows: 'The primary purpose of the church is not church discipline but rather care for the members. It is the church's great mission to save souls, not just by winning them to Jesus and to the church, but to keep saving them when necessary since they have become a part of the church'.²¹²

Another crucial factor in the construction of Pethrus' ecclesiology was his personal experiences. For Pethrus, 'only one gram of experience is worth more than a whole ton of

²⁰⁸ Carlsson, 110. In one of Pethrus' longest discussions on the universal church, no particular emphasis on the individual may be discerned. See Pethrus, *En säningsman gick ut*, 1956, 39-41.

²⁰⁹ Carlsson, 111.

²¹⁰ Carlsson, 109-112.

²¹¹ Simon Chan, 'Mother Church,' 178.

²¹² Pethrus, *A Spiritual Memoir*, 1973, 140.

theory without experience. [...] Experience is the best of mentors'.²¹³ The importance of personal experience in the formation of Pethrus' ecclesiology can be seen, for instance, in the events following a visit of the healing evangelist, Smith Wigglesworth. In 1921, Pethrus was interrogated by the police in relation to a number of healing services conducted by Wigglesworth. In defence of the services, Pethrus appealed to the Scriptures, arguing that since Sweden was a Christian state and based its constitution upon the Scriptures, if it could be proven that physical healing had support in the Scriptures, he should be free to continue his services. Naturally, Pethrus was able to show that healing was commonly practiced in the New Testament and was quickly exonerated. The experience with the police taught him the value of a Christian state. From then on Pethrus argued, almost exclusively on *pragmatic* grounds, for the benefits of having a Christian state rather than an ungodly one.²¹⁴ This position angered the Free Churches who fought for their denominations to receive official recognition on the same basis as the Swedish Lutheran church.²¹⁵ Since the SPM was not organised as an official denomination, the Free Churches' concerns did not affect them. Thus, no pragmatic benefits were gained from a separation of church and state, but a continuation of it served as another incentive for the Free Churches to abandon their denominations.

An even more crucial experience affecting Pethrus' ecclesiology was the opposition he faced in the beginning of his ministry. Although Pethrus encountered Durham's non-denominational ecclesiology as early as 1909-1910,²¹⁶ the experience of being excommunicated from the Baptist Union significantly enhanced it.²¹⁷ Additionally, receiving

²¹³ Pethrus, 'Den nya rörelsen: Utmärkande drag i densamma,' *Brudgummens Röst*, March 1916, 35.

²¹⁴ Pethrus, *Vår ställning till andra kristna*, 1931, 13-14.

²¹⁵ Pethrus, *Vår ställning till andra kristna*, 1931, 13. Swedish Free Churches were not recognised until 1951.

²¹⁶ Pethrus, *Ett sagolikt liv*, (Stockholm: Bonniers boktryckeri, 1976), 77-78.

²¹⁷ It is conceivable that Pethrus exaggerated Durham's influence since he did not resort to his views until 1916 and only argued for an already accepted Baptist principle in 1913. The fact that he only used some of Durham's arguments in his book *De kristnas enhet* in 1919 combined with the fact that he affirmed other influences than Durham further point to an exaggerated indebtedness to Durham. However, in his memoirs

criticism from the press and other Free Churches further created an isolationist and elitist attitude.²¹⁸ In 1918, Pethrus stated, for instance, that only Spirit-baptised believers were capable of preaching a ‘full gospel,’²¹⁹ a statement that perfectly encapsulates Pethrus’ attitude of the time. Individualism and experientialism were thus two important formative contexts that shaped Pethrus’ ecclesiology in distinct ways.

2.7 Dispensationalism

Nils-Olov Nilsson rightly argues that dispensationalism is not one of Pethrus’ most important topics.²²⁰ Yet, in order to give a comprehensive analysis of Pethrus’ ecclesiology, we cannot ignore it altogether. It is true that Pethrus spends significant time on the topic of Christ’s second coming in his first book *Jesus kommer* [*Jesus is Coming*], but his discussions concerning eschatology do not follow a typical pre-tribulational, pre-millennial scheme. In a study of Pethrus’ early eschatology, Nilsson points out that Pethrus affirmed a pre-millennial, mid-tribulational rapture of the church. That is, there will be a time of great tribulation before Christ’s second coming, of which believers will suffer the first half before being raptured, and a millennium after Christ’s second coming during which Christ will reign physically on earth together with the saints.²²¹ In the same book, Pethrus also spent time explaining the conditions during the Millennium and his understanding of the final judgement. Without repeating Nilsson’s observations, it is sufficient to note that Pethrus did not strictly follow a typical dispensational interpretation of end-time events but interpreted them with some liberty.

Pethrus stated that Durham’s articles had been of ‘decisive importance’. See sections 3.1 and 3.6.1; Pethrus, *Medan du stjärnorna räknar*, 1953, 176. See also, Sundstedt, vol. 2, 208-212.

²¹⁸ See section 3.1.

²¹⁹ Pethrus, ‘Splittrinar,’ 1918, 158.

²²⁰ Nilsson, 75.

²²¹ Nilsson, 69-73.

However, the all-important question of Israel and the church needs a more detailed explanation. Nilsson suggests that Pethrus believed that God was dealing with Israel and the church as two distinct peoples.²²² That observation needs modification. Nilsson correctly notes that Pethrus perceived the nation of Israel as being fully restored soon after the rapture of the church at the mid-point of the great tribulation.²²³ However, he fails to note the crucial role physical Israel plays *before* the great tribulation. First, Pethrus' fascination with the return of the Jews to Palestine stemmed from his belief that the return of the Jews would signal the end of the current dispensation and usher in the end-times.²²⁴ Pethrus called this dispensation 'the dispensation of the heathen' based on Luke 21:24.²²⁵ The 'dispensation of the heathen' began when the Jews rejected Christ as their king, which resulted in God making the heathens the messengers of the gospel and his dispersing of the Jews around the world.²²⁶ Building his argument on a dispensational interpretation of Daniel's 70 weeks,²²⁷ Pethrus argued that the current dispensation was parenthetical until the Jews returned to Jerusalem.²²⁸ The return of the Jews to Jerusalem was therefore not only an important event in order to fulfil Old Testament prophecies²²⁹ but also as a signal of the beginning of a new dispensation for the church. Hence, the return of the Jews to the land was a crucial 'sign of the times' even

²²² Nilsson, 75.

²²³ Nilsson, 76. This is the time when 'all Israel will be saved' (Rom. 11:25-27) and again become the carriers of the gospel. See, Pethrus, 'Judarnas återvändande till sitt land. Judarnas plats i Guds frälsningsplan,' *EH*, 26 April, 1923, 193.

²²⁴ Pethrus, 'Judarnas återvändande till sitt land. England håller sitt löfte till judarna,' *EH*, 25 January, 1923, 38; Pethrus, 'Judarna och judemissionen. Anförande vid bibelstudieveckan i Nyhem 1948,' *EH*, 23 June, 1948, 409.

²²⁵ Pethrus, 'Judarnas återvändande till sitt land. England håller sitt löfte till judarna,' 1923, 37.

²²⁶ Pethrus, *Jesus kommer*, 1912, 73-74.

²²⁷ Pethrus, *Jesus kommer*, 1912, 72. Daniel 9:24-27 talks about 70 weeks being decreed for Jerusalem and its people from the moment of the decree until the consummation of the age. Dispensationalism divides the 70 weeks into three sections: 69 weeks as having lapsed from Artaxerxes' decree to rebuild Jerusalem (458 B.C.) until Christ's death (A.D. 33), a parenthetical period of the 'heathen' or the church age, and a last seven containing the great tribulation.

²²⁸ Pethrus, *Jesus kommer*, 1912, 73-74.

²²⁹ Pethrus regarded this event as fulfilling OT prophecies such as Jer. 31:40; Isa. 11:11, 60:8-11. See Pethrus, 'Judarnas återvändande till sitt land. Bibeln talar om Israels återvändande,' *EH*, 22 March, 1923, 133.

for Christians.²³⁰ Nilsson, quoting Sahlberg, argues that Pethrus abandoned or at least purposefully deviated from his ‘apocalyptic’ outlook after 1930 in favour of his newfound interest in politics as a means of social improvement.²³¹ Nilsson and Sahlberg base this idea upon the premise that an interest in politics is ‘this worldly’ whereas apocalyptic is ‘other-worldly’. However, looking at Pethrus’ comments following the United Nations’ decree that allowed the Jews to return to Palestine, we see that Pethrus did not deviate from his previous views but reaffirmed them even more strongly.²³² In fact, his writings manifest a clear progression of thought: In 1912, he first stated his view of the apocalyptic importance of the Jews’ return to Palestine. In 1923, following a trip to Palestine and General Allenby’s liberation of Palestine from the Turks, he regarded it as even more imminent.²³³ In 1948, he believed the new final dispensation was ‘just around the corner,’ merely waiting for the Jews to be the sole authority over Jerusalem.²³⁴ Consequently, instead of arguing that Pethrus’ newfound interest in politics was ‘anti-dispensational,’²³⁵ it is more accurate to say that it was a shift of interest rather than a shift of understanding. Pethrus simply did not connect the two on a cognitive level but dealt with them separately on an *ad hoc* basis. Consequently, when Pethrus reaffirmed his belief in the impending change of dispensations in 1948, he did not reject his previous political statements but merely perceived them as two independent entities.

Second, and maybe even more importantly, Nilsson’s claim that Pethrus perceived the church and Israel as two distinct peoples of God is not as clear-cut as Nilsson states. In 1948, addressing the question of mission to the Jews, Pethrus objected to starting special Messianic churches but encouraged Jewish converts to join the church, because ‘*the apostles had a lot to*

²³⁰ Pethrus, ‘Judarnas återvändande till sitt land. England håller sitt löfte till judarna,’ 1923, 37.

²³¹ Nilsson, 71; Sahlberg, 34-35.

²³² Since Nilsson’s study does not go beyond 1930, he misses this significant point. However, it is true that Pethrus changed his view later in his life but not before having an interest in politics. See, Pethrus, *A Spiritual Memoir*, 1973, 46.

²³³ Pethrus, ‘Judarnas återvändande till sitt land. England håller sitt löfte till judarna,’ 1923, 38.

²³⁴ Pethrus, ‘Judarna och judemissionen. Anförande vid bibelstudieveckan i Nyhem 1948,’ 1948, 409.

²³⁵ Nilsson, 75.

do to break down the dividing wall between Jews and gentiles, and we should not rebuild such a dividing wall again [...]'.²³⁶ Although Pethrus' immediate concern was related to the construction of independent Jewish churches, his statement digresses from dispensationalism with its clear-cut distinction between the church and Israel. Granted, it is difficult to ascertain the exact ecclesiological implications of Pethrus' statement. However, it is conceivable that Pethrus regarded saved and Spirit-baptised Jews²³⁷ as belonging to the church, and unbelieving Jews as outside the church but having a special role in God's redemptive economy during the Millennium.²³⁸ In the 1970s, when he dismissed the idea that the physical return of the Jews to Jerusalem would usher in a new dispensation,²³⁹ he again made a demarcation between Israel and the church, but then they were viewed as two groups cooperating as God's tools of blessing for the world.²⁴⁰ From what we have seen above, Pethrus was far from consistent in his view of Israel and the church. At times, he made a clear distinction between the two groups, and at other times they were almost intrinsically linked. The problem was largely due to his a pre-critical approach to the text, where current events were the main guide for interpreting the biblical text. Nevertheless, it is clear that Pethrus regarded physical Israel as playing an important role *before* the great tribulation, whether it was as a sign of a new dispensation or as co-worker with the church.

Yet Nilsson correctly observes that, 'Lewi Pethrus held very moderate dispensational convictions, and never went to extremes in any of his teachings'.²⁴¹ It is true that Pethrus utilised the same literal method of interpretation, but he did not always copy their conclusions. Pethrus affirmed the notion that it was 'God's invisible hand' that guided the

²³⁶ Pethrus, 'Judarna och judemissionen. Anförande vid bibelstudieveckan i Nyhem 1948,' 1948, 410.

²³⁷ Pethrus, 'Judarna och judemissionen. Anförande vid bibelstudieveckan i Nyhem 1948,' 1948, 410. Pethrus talks about 'saved and Spirit-baptised' Jews in this context.

²³⁸ See, Pethrus, 'Judarnas återvändande till sitt land. Judarnas plats i Guds frälsningsplan,' 1923, 193.

²³⁹ Pethrus, *A Spiritual Memoir*, 1973, 46.

²⁴⁰ Pethrus, *A Spiritual Memoir*, 1973, 60.

²⁴¹ Nilsson, 75.

decisions of politicians to fulfil biblical prophecies.²⁴² However, it is only in the context of addressing the return of the Jews to Jerusalem that he referred to history in terms of distinct dispensations, which is the hallmark of classical dispensationalism.²⁴³ The absence of references to the first five (and often seventh) eras of classical dispensationalism shows that Pethrus was only adopting its futuristic elements and not dispensationalism as an entire system. As far as Pethrus' ecclesiology is concerned, Pethrus' fluctuating dispensationalism contributed almost nothing to his overall understanding of the church. His treatments of eschatological issues were clearly separate from ecclesiological issues, with the possible exception of Christ's second coming. It is not surprising, therefore, to find 'incompatible' ideas contemporaneously applied.

2.8 Summary

Having surveyed six of Pethrus' formative contexts, we can conclude that a mix of historical strands profoundly influenced Pethrus' ecclesiology. Baptist ecclesiology served as a core influence, yet Pietistic, Moravian, and Holiness influences are also visible. Restorationism provided a framework for perceiving church history in terms of polarities between apostasy and revivalism. He believed the apostolic era to be the spiritual 'high tide' of church history but it turned into a spiritual 'low tide' after the conversion of Constantine in the fourth century. From the Reformation onwards, the tide was viewed as rising until it reached its highest level at the beginning of the Pentecostal revival. Whereas some Early Pentecostals believed that the tide had already reached its highest peak and was soon to be crowned by Christ's second coming, Pethrus believed it could rise even further. Since the

²⁴² Pethrus, 'Judarnas återvändande till sitt land. England håller sitt löfte till judarna,' 1923, 38.

²⁴³ Dispensationalism regards salvation history in seven distinct eras: The era of innocence, conscience, civil government, promise, law, grace and the kingdom. See, F. L. Arrington, 'Dispensationalism,' *TNIDPCM*, 585.

Early Church was the ‘crowning jewel’ of church history, the goal of every modern-day church was to model its spirituality and practical ministry in every detail. The negative perception of later church history created a strong aversion against dead religiosity and human fabrications such as creeds and denominations.

Pethrus’ understanding of the Pentecostal revival was wide-ranging and shifted from era to era. His view of the origin of the revival varied from everything from divine, historical to socio-economic factors. The revival was Christological in its core with an emphasis on prayer and the Word. However, the Pentecostal revival was not the same as the church, but an outpouring of spiritual life that transformed people and churches. Early in life, Pethrus understood the role of the revival as a resurrection of dormant apostolic pneumatology but later shifted to a Christological focus with a multifaceted emphasis. Toward the end of his life, he viewed the revival as having a special role in God’s plan of redemption, but was ‘just another’ revival in the long line of revivals that prepared for a final ‘Great Revival’.

Pragmatism was a major cause behind seemingly irreconcilable contradictions. Since great importance was placed on the pragmatic value of winning immediate arguments, he occasionally manifested a ‘spiritual utilitarianism’ where the spiritual ends justify the pragmatic means, although it entailed contradicting previously held beliefs. He also shared a strong affinity for the individual as opposed to the collective. This does not mean that he was denying the universal aspects of the church, but rather that the individual must be allowed to have freedom and flexibility in the local church.

Pethrus’ ecclesiology was also significantly influenced by his experiences. His experiences of opposition from press and church alike created a firm belief in the Pentecostal revival’s distinctiveness early on. The opposition negatively affected his understanding of denominationalism but contributed to a positive view of the State Church.

Finally, Pethrus manifests a moderate dispensational ecclesiology that was mostly unrelated to his other ecclesiological views. His moderate dispensationalism was in constant fluctuation, changing with subsequent historical events. Since he was not working with predetermined systematic categories, his views were often spread out over a wide theological landscape. Yet, his views were not so dispersed that they cannot be categorised. His dispensationalism hardly ever trespassed on other ecclesiastical domains, except perhaps for Christ's second coming.

Having outlined the six predominant factors which contribute to the ecclesiological diversity in Pethrus' writings, the next three chapters will analyse his specific ecclesiological emphases during the periods 1911-1933, 1933-1958, and 1959-1974. Each chapter will begin with a historical narrative which sets the discussion in its proper historical context, and then move on to an examination of the ecclesiological ideas that subsided and emerged in each period. The bulk of the individual chapters will analyse the major ecclesiological ideas of each period. The purpose of the chapters is to demonstrate the rich diversity in Pethrus' ecclesiology but also to identify the core values that created its underlying unity.

CHAPTER 3

LEWI PETHRUS' ECCLESIOLOGICAL THOUGHT 1911-1933: THE CHURCH AS THE SPIRITUAL COMMUNITY

3.1 Contextual Narrative

At the turn of the 20th century, Sweden was a country in rapid upward mobility. The nation went from being an agricultural society in the middle of the 19th century to a modern industrial state before the outbreak of World War I.¹ The increase of wealth that the steel and wood industries generated, combined with the modernisation of farms and an improved infrastructure, encouraged urbanisation of unprecedented proportions.² Unfortunately, the hope of a better life in the city did not materialise for many people. The modernisation of the industry rendered their services redundant. Rather than trying to fulfil their hopes in Sweden, a significant proportion of the population set their hopes on a better life in America. More than a million people left the Swedish shores from 1870 to 1915. The modernisation of society brought an increase of wealth for the privileged, but it also contributed to stratification between the employers and the employees. Exploitation of the labour force was common; poor working conditions were rampant; health care was inadequate; and the rights of workers were almost non-existent. The situation of the workers led to the establishment of labour unions that insisted on social reforms. Although changes were slow, the new social relationships between employers and employees that developed after the 1880s, and the

¹ Lars Magnusson, *An Economic History of Sweden* (London: Routledge, 2000), 106.

² Jan Åke Alvarsson notes that the population of Stockholm tripled from 1850 to 1907. See, Jan-Åke Alvarsson, 'Pingstväckelsens etablering i Sverige: Från Azusa Street till Skövde på sju månader,' in *Pingströrelsen: Händelser och Utveckling under 1900-talet* (Örebro: Libris förlag, 2007), 1:33.

‘introduction of political, administrative, and legal institutions,’ laid the foundation for the Swedish welfare system in the middle of the 20th century.³

Pethrus was born on 11 March 1884, right in the midst of these turbulent times. Being raised by parents of the working class, he experienced first-hand the difficulties that accompany the underprivileged. His memoirs describe how his father unsuccessfully attempted to leave agricultural work for a job in the factories.⁴ To overcome the bitterness of failing to acquire a better-paid job he, like so many other workers, sought comfort in alcohol.⁵ Even if his father stopped drinking after having being converted, his parents’ financial situation improved very little.⁶ The harsh financial realities forced Pethrus to take up his first employment at a shoe factory in Vänersborg at the age of fifteen. Moving from his parents’ home in Västra Tunhem to Vänersborg not only provided insights into the conditions of the working class, but it also coincided with a deep spiritual hunger that brought him to a conversion experience.⁷ Time would soon reveal that the pleas of the poor and the spiritual plea of his own heart would leave a permanent imprint on his religious values and change the course of his life. From this time on, ‘loving Christ’ and ‘loving neighbour’ became the source from which the motivation of his actions flowed.⁸

Deciding to resign his job in Vänersborg and move to Norway in the summer of 1900 turned out to be a decisive step in his life. He discovered that Norway was a more conducive context for his newfound passion for Christ and political activity. The services in Fredrikshald provided further impetus to his spiritual life,⁹ and a later appointment at another shoe factory in Kristiania (Oslo) in 1901 exposed him to the concerns of the labour unions. As opposed to

³ Lars Magnusson, ‘The Swedish Model in Historical Context,’ *Kobe University Economic Review* 52 (2006): 1.

⁴ Pethrus, *Den anständiga sanningen*, 1953, 156.

⁵ Pethrus, *Den anständiga sanningen*, 1953, 157.

⁶ Pethrus, *Den anständiga sanningen*, 1953, 197-199.

⁷ Pethrus, *Den anständiga sanningen*, 1953, 219.

⁸ Pethrus, *Medan du stjärnorna räknar*, 1953, 71-75.

⁹ Pethrus, *Ett sagolikt liv*, 1976, 37.

some Christians in Sweden, who viewed social democracy as ‘anti-Christian,’ he never considered the two as contradictory, but he ‘had an intuitive impression that Christianity and social justice were intimately related’.¹⁰ Since he considered himself a person of the working class, he actively participated in the political meetings of the Norwegian labour unions.¹¹ Although his concerns for politics never disappeared, some turn of events directed his path away from politics to ‘the way of the cross and the Pentecostal movement’.¹² His political activity only significantly resurfaced in 1941.

The years between his move to Norway and the beginning of the Pentecostal movement in 1907 witnessed great changes in Pethrus’ life. His passion for the Lord was recognised by the Baptist pastor Adolf Milde, who allowed him to gain his first ministerial experience by preaching in local Baptist churches in Norway.¹³ Pethrus’ first sermon, preached in Arendal, Norway, was taken from John 12 and entitled, ‘We want to see Jesus’.¹⁴ Even if the sermon only lasted five minutes, its Christocentric focus would become symptomatic for much of his subsequent preaching.¹⁵ On a boat trip back to Oslo from a series of meetings in Lillesand in 1902, he beheld a magnificent sunrise. Awestruck by the tangible presence of God and the majesty of his creation, he uttered words ‘he did not understand’.¹⁶ Even if he did not understand what had happened at the time, he later claimed the experience as his Spirit baptism with the evidence of speaking in tongues.¹⁷ After receiving an invitation to become pastor of the Baptist church in Bengtsfors, Sweden, he left the shoe business in Norway

¹⁰ Pethrus, *Den anständiga sanningen*, 1953, 288.

¹¹ Pethrus, *Den anständiga sanningen*, 1953, 289.

¹² Pethrus, *Den anständiga sanningen*, 1953, 289.

¹³ Pethrus’ first sermon, preached in Arendal, Norway, was taken from John 12 and entitled, ‘We want to see Jesus.’

¹⁴ Pethrus, *Medan du stjärnorna räknar*, 1953, 17.

¹⁵ Pethrus, *Medan du stjärnorna räknar*, 1953, 17; see section, 6.2.1.

¹⁶ Pethrus, *Ett sagolikt liv*, 1976, 45-46.

¹⁷ Douglas Jacobsen, quoting Donald Dayton, notes that it was only after the beginning of the Azusa Street revival in 1906 that Pethrus ‘received the categories’ to interpret his experience of speaking in tongues as the evidence of Spirit baptism. Douglas Jacobsen, *Thinking in the Spirit: Theologies of the Early Pentecostal Movement* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003), 3.

behind. The stay in Bengtsfors was brief but positive.¹⁸ However, his decision to leave his position to begin theological studies at Bethel Seminary in Stockholm in 1904 was far less of a positive experience. Reading Viktor Rydberg's *Bibelns lära om Kristus* [The Bible's teaching of Christ] that doubted Christ's divinity, and spending time with more 'liberated' class mates, plunged his life into spiritual darkness.¹⁹ After an intense spiritual struggle, the light returned after a personal encounter with Jesus and an exposure to the works of Charles Finney and A. J. Gordon.²⁰ In fact, the experience revived the practice of his core values of loving Christ and neighbour: 'With this experience Christianity became life to me again. [...] My heart was full of love toward my neighbour and my ministry, and my simple sermons produced visible fruit. My preaching turned into a message of revival for believers who had had many, and strong, ties to Jesus but had nevertheless lost Him.'²¹ The biggest turnaround, however, happened while being considered as pastor for a Baptist church in Lidköping in 1907. Having received news about a new revival in Oslo that caused 'hysteria' and which was marked by strange phenomena such as speaking in tongues, he decided to investigate for himself.²² The meetings in Oslo not only reinvigorated his faith but also firmly established his belief in Spirit baptism and spiritual gifts, or 'God's sources of power' as Pethrus called them.²³ The most decisive moment took place, however, when the Methodist pastor T. B. Barratt directed three poignant questions to Pethrus: Do you want to become whatever for Jesus? Do you want to do whatever for Jesus? Do you want to go wherever for Jesus?²⁴ He answered all three questions in the affirmative.²⁵ Pethrus returned to Lidköping as a

¹⁸ Pethrus, *Ett sagolikt liv*, 1976, 48.

¹⁹ Pethrus, *Ett sagolikt liv*, 1976, 50-54.

²⁰ Pethrus, *Ett sagolikt liv*, 1976, 54-56.

²¹ Pethrus, *Medan du stjärnorna räknar*, 1953, 75.

²² Pethrus, *Ett sagolikt liv*, 1976, 58-63.

²³ Pethrus, *Ett sagolikt liv*, 1976, 62-63.

²⁴ Pethrus, *Ett sagolikt liv*, 1976, 62.

²⁵ Reflecting on the characteristics of the revival in Norway, Pethrus later commented that the 'first and greatest' impression on him was its emphasis on Christ's redemption. Another feature was the 'freedom and joy'

determined Pentecostal. However, Bundy notes that Pethrus did not ‘arrive at the desired *experience* [emphasis mine]’ in Oslo, which left him frustrated enough ‘to break off his engagement with Lydia Danielsen [... and return] to his parent’s home, without a job and without the spiritual experience of glossalalia’.²⁶ It was only after receiving the official invitation as pastor of the Baptist church in Lidköping that ‘he experienced the [...] the hoped for glossolalia’.²⁷

From 1907 until 1912, the Pentecostal movement found its way into most of the established denominations in Sweden. Having first gained a foothold in a Baptist church in Skövde, the Pentecostal revival soon spread to other parts of the country. Through the efforts of John Ongman, Örebro soon became the centre for the early movement, even being called Sweden’s ‘Los Angeles’.²⁸ The movement did not stay within the confines of the Baptist Union, however, but also spread to other denominations. Pethrus personally experienced the ‘transdenominational’ character of the new revival. He received preaching invitations from MCC and the Holiness Covenant Church. According to Pethrus, ‘The same revival [and] the same spirit gripped people everywhere’.²⁹

According to Pethrus, his first years in Lidköping were a time of personal blessing and theological enrichment. He thoroughly studied the Scriptures but also the accounts of the revival in America and England that were published in the first Pentecostal magazines.³⁰ In 1909-1910, the writings of William Durham ended up in his hands. As will be discussed further below, Durham’s publications came to exercise an influence on his understanding of

that the individuals who had experienced Spirit baptism manifested. His positive attitude toward the revival was primarily because it resonated with his core religious values. See Pethrus, *Medan du stjärnorna räknar*, 1953, 93.

²⁶ Bundy, *Vision of Apostolic Mission*, 384.

²⁷ Bundy, *Vision of Apostolic Mission*, 384.

²⁸ Jan-Åke Alvarsson, ‘Pingstväckelsens etablering i Sverige: Från Azusa Street till Skövde på sju månader,’ 1:22-24. For a discussion on John Ongman’s influence on the Baptist Union and establishment of the Örebro Mission Society, see section 4.1 below.

²⁹ Pethrus, *Ett sagolikt liv*, 1976, 71.

³⁰ Pethrus, *Ett sagolikt liv*, 1976, 70.

the independent local church and moved ecclesiology to the forefront of his theological agenda.³¹

The realities of ministry soon vanquished his ministerial paradise and drove him to the brink of a burnout. However, ‘divine providence’ intervened to prevent him from quitting the ministry for a carefree job in manual labour.³² In 1910, the Pentecostal movement had gained a strong foothold in Stockholm. The difficulties the revival caused among the Baptists in the city encouraged Selma and Albert Engzell to establish a new ‘Pentecostal-friendly’ Baptist church. Having stayed with the Engzell’s on a visit to the capital in 1909, Pethrus received an invitation in 1910 to become the church’s new pastor. This came as blessing from heaven and liberated him from his strenuous duties in Lidköping. Pethrus assumed his new position as pastor of the Seventh Baptist Church of Stockholm (Filadelfia) on 8 January 1911.³³ His time in Lidköping had put ecclesiology on the forefront of his theological agenda; his move to Stockholm now put ecclesiology on the forefront of his practical agenda. Theological and practical aspects of his ecclesiology soon manifested themselves in some of his first publications.

In an editorial for *Brudgummens Röst* [the Voice of the Bridegroom] in 1911,³⁴ Pethrus noted that a lot of confusion existed concerning the Pentecostal movement.³⁵ For Pethrus, the confusion had a devastating effect on the church, since she needed ‘all the power and the gifts that are promised in God’s Word, if she were [...] to be able to represent her Lord and Master

³¹ See section, 2.6 for a possible alternative scenario.

³² Pethrus, *Ett sagolikt liv*, 1976, 79-82.

³³ Pethrus, *Ett sagolikt liv*, 1976, 79-85.

³⁴ Pethrus was invited by Carl Hedeén, who was also a ‘Pentecostal-friendly’ Baptist pastor in Stockholm, to be part of the editorial committee of the new magazine in 1911. *Brudgummens Röst* replaced the first Swedish Pentecostal magazine *Glöd från Altaret* [Embers from the Altar] that had been decommissioned because of insufficient funds. Alvarsson, ‘Pingstväckelsens etablering i Sverige: Från Azusa Street till Skövde på sju månader,’ 1:39.

³⁵ Lewi Pethrus, O. L. Björk, and Carl Hedeén, ‘Anmälan,’ *Brudgummens Röst*, February 1911, no. 1, 1.

in a perverse and corrupt generation'.³⁶ He hoped that the publication of *Brudgummens Röst* would provide a way to combat this confusion. The purpose of the journal was to 'relay, as faithfully as possible, what the Bridegroom says to his awaiting multitude in this age, and that the whole church [...], may rub the sleep out of her eyes and stand up and prepare herself for the reunion with her beloved Bridegroom, so that he will not find her unprepared at his coming'.³⁷ The purpose of the Pentecostal revival was therefore not merely perceived as a matter of rectifying deficient pneumatology, but a work of God that purified and empowered the church for its God-given mission before the final coming of Christ. The Pentecostal revival was therefore not perceived as instituting a new church but as being providentially given to the church.³⁸ However, this particular understanding of the Pentecostal revival was seriously tested during the next few years and was eventually abandoned for an isolationist attitude.

Although the Pentecostal revival was able to get a foothold in a number of denominations, it gained most ground among the Baptists. It did not take long before the issue of Spirit baptism as a subsequent experience to conversion caused Baptists to divide into two groups, 'the Spirit-baptised' versus 'the non Spirit-baptised'.³⁹ The ensuing struggle led many of the 'Spirit-baptised' to feel more closely related to 'Spirit-baptised' believers of other denominations rather than with their fellow Baptists.⁴⁰ The conflict forced churches to take a stance toward 'the new movement' and their responses varied from outright rejection to

³⁶ Lewi Pethrus, O. L. Björk, and Carl Hedeén, 'Anmälan,' 1911, 1.

³⁷ Lewi Pethrus, O. L. Björk, and Carl Hedeén, 'Anmälan,' 1911, 1.

³⁸ Pethrus' statement confirms Hollenweger's observation that, '[The Pentecostal] movement did not want to found new churches, but to bring new life to existing ones'. Walter J. Hollenweger, 'From Azusa Street to the Toronto Phenomenon: Historical Roots of the Pentecostal Movement,' in Jürgen Moltmann and Karl-Josef Kuschel, eds. *Pentecostal Movements as an Ecumenical Challenge* (London: SCM Press, 1996), 9.

³⁹ The name used for Pentecostals in Sweden '*pingstvännen*' [friends of Pentecost] can be traced to this initial controversy.

⁴⁰ Sahlberg, 21.

unconditional acceptance.⁴¹ A way to deal with the problem without causing internal conflicts was to establish independent Pentecostal churches that were still part of the Baptist Union. Filadelfia became such a church.⁴² Even though this temporary solution was tolerated for a while, the rift ‘the new movement’ created in the Baptist Union was simply too great to overlook in the end. Somewhat surprisingly, Spirit baptism or other controversial features of Pentecostalism did not become the official reason for the breakdown between the Baptist Union’s leadership and the ‘Spirit-baptised;’ it was Filadelfia’s practice of open rather than closed communion.⁴³

The controversy regarding open or closed communion actually began at the national conference of the Swedish Baptist Union in 1858. Delegates from Germany and England were divided as to whether the Eucharist should be withheld from Christians who had not been baptised as adults. The Germans favoured closed communion and the British open communion. Although a majority of the delegates preferred closed communion, it was decided that each church should decide what stance to take in the matter.⁴⁴ As years went by, more and more Baptist churches adopted a more rigid interpretation of closed communion. For instance, John Ongman argued that credobaptised believers, who were not members of a Baptist church, could exceptionally partake of communion. However, if such persons refused to become members of a Baptist congregation, they ought to be denied participation in the Eucharist.⁴⁵ The more rigid interpretation of closed communion within the Baptist Union signalled a shift away from the original concern over infant baptism to denominational membership. It must be remembered, however, that this shift was a matter of preference rather

⁴¹ Sahlberg, 18-19.

⁴² Sahlberg, 21-22.

⁴³ Alvarsson suggests that Pethrus had somehow ‘offended’ several of the Baptist leaders and that the leaders perhaps held mixed feelings of ‘jealousy, fear, and admiration,’ toward Pethrus because of Filadelfia’s 500 percent growth in two years. See, Alvarsson, ‘Pingstväckelsens etablering i Sverige: Från Azusa Street till Skövde på sju månader,’ 39.

⁴⁴ Struble, 22-23.

⁴⁵ Struble, 22-23.

than established doctrine.⁴⁶ Pethrus disagreed with this rigid interpretation of closed communion. For him, there was no biblical ground for barring true, credobaptised believers from communion. His deviating view, and to a very large extent the Pentecostal revival's 'dividing spirit',⁴⁷ caused the Baptist Union to take drastic measures. After a long and intense discussion on 28 April 1913, the Baptist Union decided to excommunicate the Filadelfia church from the Baptist Union.

It is important to note here that the excommunication of the Filadelfia church was not unanimously accepted within the movement itself. Struble notes that 'many considered the excommunication as a violation against the [Baptists' own] autonomous church principle'.⁴⁸ Because of the discontentment and the growing acceptance of the Pentecostal message, an increasing number of churches decided to leave the Baptist Union. To the dismay of the leaders of the Baptist Union, the excommunication of the Filadelfia church backfired and sped up the fragmentation of the denomination rather than slowing it down. The 'Pentecostal-friendly' leader of ÖM, John Ongman, made three attempts to reintroduce the Pentecostal movement within the Baptist Union but to no avail.⁴⁹ The Pentecostal movement had 'ventured out into glorious freedom,' and returning to that old 'yoke of slavery' was simply unthinkable.⁵⁰

After the excommunication in 1913, the discussion regarding the organisation of the 'Spirit-baptised' became inevitable. As previously noted, William Durham's articles ruminated in Pethrus' mind as early as 1909-1910. By 1913, his views concerning the independent local church, liberated from any kind of denominational structure, had become

⁴⁶ Struble, 24.

⁴⁷ Sundstedt, 111-112.

⁴⁸ Struble, 31. Colletti, 19.

⁴⁹ Struble, 44.

⁵⁰ Struble, 37.

firmly established.⁵¹ However, their implementation only became important after Filadelfia's excommunication in 1913. Having rejected every form of denominationalism, the Pentecostal movement now faced the challenge of preserving the unity while guarding against the establishment of another denomination. Sahlberg observes that this challenge was achieved through the creation of a number of joint ventures. Within six years of the excommunication, the Pentecostal movement had its own publishing house (*Förlaget Filadelfia*, 1912), its own hymnal (*Segertoner*, 1914), its own Bible school (1915), its own newspaper (*Evangelii Härold*, 1915), and its own national conferences (*Kölingared*, 1916, *Husboliden*, 1919)⁵² - ventures that predominantly owed their existence to Pethrus' industriousness. Alvarsson remarks that this period ended the 'pioneer era,' which was defined by an ecumenical openness and a broad leadership base. He describes the years following the establishment of *Förlaget Filadelfia* in 1912 until 'the Kölingared declaration'⁵³ in 1919, which marked the official beginning of the SPM, as the 'formative period'.⁵⁴ The formative period was particularly marked by enhanced reclusiveness, but Alvarsson also notes that it propelled Pethrus into an undisputed leadership position in the movement. During the pioneer era Pethrus was just one among several leaders, but at the end of the formation period, only one of the early leaders remained, namely Andrew Johnson, whose influence also slowly faded away thereafter.⁵⁵

Following the Kölingared declaration in 1919, Pethrus published his book *De kristnas enhet* [The Unity of the Christians], which clarified the Pentecostal Movement's stance

⁵¹ Pethrus, *Medan du stjärnorna räknar*, 1953, 175-176.

⁵² Sahlberg, 29.

⁵³ The declaration was called, 'Why we take a definite stand against denominationalism' and was signed by 103 Pentecostal pastors. Although it did not incorporate all Swedish Pentecostal churches at the time, the declaration was representative enough to constitute the beginning of the SPM. Alvarsson, 42.

⁵⁴ Alvarsson, 'Pingstväckelsens etablering i Sverige: Från Azusa Street till Skövde på sju månader,' 1:42-43.

⁵⁵ Alvarsson, 'Pingstväckelsens etablering i Sverige: Från Azusa Street till Skövde på sju månader,' 1:42-43.

against denominationalism. Having rejected denominationalism, he proposed that unity, which he and the Pentecostal Movement had been accused of destroying,⁵⁶ was spiritual rather than organisational.

The publication of *De kristnas enhet* signalled, on the one hand, the beginning of the Pentecostal Movement in Sweden,⁵⁷ and on the other hand, the end of any possible reunification or organisational affiliation with the existing denominations.⁵⁸ The years leading up to 1933 were marked by extensive internal and external conflicts and an intentional demarcation from the rest of Swedish religious life.⁵⁹ The issue regarding mission organisations became particularly tense and led to the movement's first⁶⁰ major conflict between Pethrus and Franklin in 1929.⁶¹ Filadelfia's position was strengthened in the movement as several of its joint ventures were incorporated under Filadelfia's umbrella.⁶² The

⁵⁶ See, Pethrus, 'Splittringar,' 1918, 157-158.

⁵⁷ See, Alvarsson, 'Pingstväckelsens etablering i Sverige: Från Azusa Street till Skövde på sju månader,' 1:42.

⁵⁸ Sahlberg, 32.

⁵⁹ See section, 3.1. Sahlberg notes that the independent local church concept particularly affected the relationship with the Baptist Union and MCC, whereas the doctrine regarding Spirit baptism particularly affected the relationship with the Swedish Holiness Covenant Church, the Evangelical Free Church and the Lutheran Church. Sahlberg, 32-34.

⁶⁰ Pethrus had previously experienced other conflicts (e.g. Esther and Alfred Gustafsson), but his conflict with Franklin superseded the others. See, Roland and Marianne Gäreskog, *Lewi Pethrus i konflikt: Om några konflikter år 1929 mellan Lewi Pethrus och kända personer inom pingströrelsen* (Linköping: Marol, 2005).

⁶¹ The immediate disagreement between Pethrus and Franklin regarded the 'be or not to be' of an established mission organisation. However, the problem ran deeper than this, even to the point of threatening the Pentecostal movement's independent church ecclesiology. From 1913 until 1930, Pethrus' independent local church concept was a major topic of discussion. Pethrus' ecclesiological concept received condemnation from virtually all directions outside the movement. The main area of contention *within* the movement, on the other hand, pertained to foreign mission. The question did not only regard whether local churches should be fully responsible for commissioning, supporting, and maintaining foreign missionaries, but the question was also further complicated due to the fact that certain colonial rulers would not acknowledge independent missionaries unless they belonged to a mission organisation. In an attempt to resolve the situation, the Filadelfia church established *Svenska Fria Missionen* 'Swedish Free Mission' (SFM). Originally, the SFM was merely founded as an aid and intermediary between the individual missionary and the local church, without any governing function. Since it was to submit to the governance of a local church (Filadelfia), it did not, according to Pethrus, contradict the movement's original stance against mission organisations. However, due to circumstances beyond our ability to elucidate here, the SFM, under the leadership of Franklin, turned into a full-fledged mission organisation. After a heated battle with Franklin in 1929, Pethrus excommunicated Franklin from the Filadelfia church, and the SFM was once again incorporated into the ministry of the Filadelfia church. From then on, the supporting, the maintaining and the commissioning of missionaries remained within the confines of the local church.

⁶² Gunilla Nyberg Oskarsson, 'Fler än 340 församlingar bildades under tio år: Den nya rörelsen växte snabbt trots inre kriser,' (Örebro: Libris förlag, 2007), 1:48.

well-known author Sven Lidman joined the movement in 1920, and he became one of Pethrus' closest companions until their disastrous falling-out in 1948.⁶³ The issue of theological seminaries also rose to prominence since it had been a major issue in the conflict surrounding Franklin.⁶⁴ Other distinct features of the 1920s were the movement's growth and the strengthening of its networks.⁶⁵

To give a general overview of the ecclesiological situation after 1913 until 1929, Struble notes, 'The period between 1913-1919 was characterised by a theoretical and theological fixation of the independent ecclesiological concept [whereas] the years 1919-1929 were characterised by a practical fixation of the independent ecclesiological concept'.⁶⁶ Although Struble's synopsis accurately describes the SPM's focus, it does not do full justice to Pethrus' ecclesiology as a whole. Pethrus' ecclesiology during these first years of ministry reflected a general consistency concerning its most fundamental concepts. Almost all of his ecclesiological observations were founded on the basic idea of the church as a 'spiritual community'. Spirituality, or 'loving Christ and neighbour in a Pentecostal way' was the most important purpose of the church.⁶⁷ Thus no matter if it related to water baptism, church governance, ecumenism, or the Lord's Supper, the idea of the church as a spiritual community lay beneath them all. However, this is not to say that Pethrus' ecclesiology during the period was somehow static. On the contrary, the struggles he faced, particularly after the excommunication of Filadelfia 1913 and the falling-out between him and Franklin in 1929,

⁶³ See section 4.1.

⁶⁴ Nyberg Oskarsson, 64-65. In 1929, Pethrus published his book *Predikanten och hans utbildning* [The Preacher and His Education] in which he outlined his views of seminary training. Although he was no advocate of ignorance, he argued that the New Testament did not speak of seminaries, and seminary students were in danger of relying on their knowledge rather than on the Spirit. Seminary education also had a tendency to shape students in the same mould whereas God created everything in rich diversity. There was also no proof for the assertion that trained pastors provided better spiritual results for the churches. Pethrus, *Predikanten och hans utbildning*, 1929, 5-72.

⁶⁵ Nyberg Oskarsson, 48-59.

⁶⁶ Struble, 70-71.

⁶⁷ See section, section 6.2 below.

radicalised Pethrus' ecclesiology in significant ways. The most notable ecclesiological change occurred in the relation to other Christians (ecumenism). Before 1913, the Pentecostal movement was perceived as something *for* the churches. After 1913, it was perceived as something *sifting* the churches. Following 1913, Pethrus repeatedly encouraged 'the Spirit baptised' to leave their denominations for 'freedom' in independent Pentecostal churches.⁶⁸ Many Pentecostals followed Pethrus' lead and isolated themselves around Spirit baptism and non-denominationalism. Struble explains that a predominant reason for this isolationist attitude was 'a fear of losing the charismatic element and that the work would subside'.⁶⁹ Thus, denominationalism came to be viewed as something that suffocated spirituality and limited the success of the Pentecostal movement.⁷⁰ Another important reason was a perception of being persecuted by the world and other Christians.⁷¹ Josefsson observes that the opposition strengthened the Pentecostals' sense of superiority and self-identity, since persecution and opposition were indicators of vitality.⁷² 'True Christianity always swam against the current'.⁷³ However, Josefsson also notes that there was an undercurrent of wanting to achieve a greater sense of respectability.⁷⁴ Thus the tension between the joys of isolationism and the longing for greater acceptability marked the 1920s. In fact, the publication of Pethrus' book, *Vår ställning till andra kristna* [Our Position toward Other Christians] in 1931, which outlined the arguments for the movement's right to exist, may be viewed as the culmination of this tension.

⁶⁸ Pethrus, 'Ett brännande spörsmål,' *EH*, 7 November, 1918, 177.

⁶⁹ Struble, 70.

⁷⁰ For instance, Pethrus argued that Alexander Boddy's decision to remain within the Anglican Church had had a 'devastating effect' on the success of the Pentecostal movement in England. Pethrus, 'Londonbrev,' *EH*, 31 January, 1924, 49.

⁷¹ Pethrus, 'Förföljelsen mot pingstväckelsen,' *EH*, 24 March, 1920, 45-46; Pethrus, 'Förföljelse,' *EH*, 12 October, 1922.

⁷² Josefsson, 297-298.

⁷³ Josefsson, 298.

⁷⁴ Josefsson, 299.

Another important development was Pethrus' view on the sacraments. The issue of open versus closed communion in 1913 pointed to the need of clarifying their significance. As will be shown below, apart from his almost 'mystical' approach to the elements, the influence of holiness teaching provided a 'unique' flavour to Pethrus' eucharistic theology. However, he did not stray far from his Baptist roots regarding water baptism. Church discipline was another issue that preoccupied his time during this epoch. Controversial excommunications and the issue of congregational purity demanded an explanation. As will be discussed in the following chapter, his preference for preserving a Christian state also originated here.⁷⁵ Finally, the period 1911-1933 was also a time when he contemplated ecclesiological metaphors. They served as an important theoretical basis for his concrete ecclesiology.

The discussion below will examine these issues more comprehensively. Section 3.2 will analyse Pethrus' theoretical understanding of the church based on his preferred ecclesiological metaphors. Section 3.3 will look at Pethrus' implicit ecclesiology through the lens of his use of the terms 'the Spirit baptised' and the 'non Spirit-baptised'. Sections 3.3 to 3.6 will address some of the most prominent ecclesiological topics that dominated the period.

3.2 Metaphors of the Church

Nicholas Healy observes that it is a common practice among contemporary ecclesologists to work with certain primary metaphors 'to explain and to explore the nature and the activity of the church'.⁷⁶ Healy is critical of this approach since it only addresses the church in abstract and idealised ways and does not consider the actual concrete expression of the church.⁷⁷ The problem between the ideal and the concrete is also visible in Pethrus' use of ecclesiological metaphors, but they are not totally without value since his basic theological

⁷⁵ See section, 4.4.

⁷⁶ Healy, 27.

⁷⁷ Healy, 36ff.

concepts were drawn from them. Nevertheless, Pethrus' use of ecclesiological metaphors was not consistent and often changed in order to give weight to immediate arguments. Thus, rather than shaping ecclesiological reflections, the metaphors were often employed to prove a predetermined position.

3.2.1 The Church as the Body of Christ

Although it is likely that Pethrus regarded the body of Christ as an ontological reality rather than a mere metaphor, it is clear that it was one of his preferred ecclesiological concepts. To understand his preference for this concept, one must consider the importance of Christology in his ecclesiology. In an article based on Ephesians 5:25-27, Pethrus highlighted three aspects of Christ's love for the church. His three points followed the *Ordo Salutis* of most Protestant churches and discussed Christ's redeeming love in the acts of (1) justification, (2) sanctification, and (3) glorification.⁷⁸ Even though the article was entitled 'Jesus and the Church,' it exclusively addressed Christ's redeeming love without saying anything in particular regarding the church. Nevertheless, the article highlights the centrality of Christology and soteriology in Pethrus' theology and the ease with which he applied it to ecclesiology. This supports Hollenweger's notion that Pentecostals view the church as 'the host redeemed by the blood'.⁷⁹ The church as the body of Christ was therefore a metaphor that resonated with the essential core of his theology. More specifically, however, the metaphor was one of his primary means of advocating the importance of the universal church and counteracting a too heavy emphasis on the local church.

⁷⁸ Pethrus, 'Jesus och församlingen,' *EH*, 26 June, 1919, 103.

⁷⁹ Walter J. Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1988), 424. The importance of the atonement in Pethrus' ecclesiology was enhanced by the fact that Pethrus understood the church as being built and sustained by Christ's death on the cross. Pethrus, 'Guds församling,' *EH*, 1 September, 1927, 439.

Based on Matthew 16:8, Ephesians 1:22-23, and 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, Pethrus argued that all believers (past, present, and future) belonged to the universal church, of which Christ was the head and the individuals the body.⁸⁰ By faith in Christ, the believer became a member of Christ's body, 'regardless whether he had ever seen or heard of a local church'.⁸¹ Pethrus further stressed that by being 'engrafted into this living organism [the universal church], a dual fellowship was created'.⁸² The individual was, on the one hand, connected to Christ as the head of the body; on the other hand, he was linked to each member since they all belonged to the same body. For Pethrus, this dual fellowship was of 'immeasurable importance for our spiritual lives,' and 'the whole body suffered' if it were damaged.⁸³ As will be further discussed below, this *spiritual* unity of the body of Christ constituted for Pethrus the essence of Christian unity, and pointed to its pre-eminence over any other form of unity. However, the notion that Paul would have used the 'body of Christ' analogy to refer to local churches was something he found ludicrous: 'Imagine what monster one would get if one considers Christ as head for so many bodies'.⁸⁴ For Pethrus, the *Totus Christus* only referred to the universal church.⁸⁵ Thus, he could not accept the idea that 'the whole of what it means to be church comes to realization in a local church, or in "a part" of the whole Christian movement'.⁸⁶ Yet, his arguments resonate with Simon Chan's notion that 'the primary focus of the ecclesial life is not church hierarchy but *koinonia* characterized by *agape*'.⁸⁷

⁸⁰ Pethrus, *De kristnas enhet*, 1919, 26-28.

⁸¹ Pethrus, *De kristnas enhet*, 1919, 26-28.

⁸² Pethrus, *De kristnas enhet*, 1919, 28-29.

⁸³ Pethrus, *De kristnas enhet*, 1919, 28-29.

⁸⁴ Pethrus, *De kristnas enhet*, 1919, 26-28.

⁸⁵ For an in-depth discussion of the relationship between Christ's body and the church, see Michael S. Horton, *People and Place* (London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 155-189.

⁸⁶ Haight, vol. 3, 41.

⁸⁷ Chan, *Liturgical Theology*, 29; Pethrus, *De kristnas enhet*, 1919, 30-31.

3.2.2 The Church as the Mystery of God

Another recurring theme in Pethrus' ecclesiological writings is the idea of the church as the mystery of God. Based on Ephesians 3:6, Pethrus explained that 'the mystery of God' referred to 'God's plan of saving Jews and Gentiles in the same manner, and bringing them together as a united congregation on earth'.⁸⁸ He proceeded to explain that the word 'mystery' was not borrowed from the ancient mystery religions but from the military arena, and thus indicated highly confidential military secrets.⁸⁹ The church was therefore God's strategic plan of winning a Bride for Christ, which had been revealed through Christ's coming to the world.⁹⁰

Even though Pethrus never mentioned this understanding of the church in more 'down-to-earth' discussions, the idea of the 'mystery of God' served as an important umbrella to bring together some of his most prominent ecclesiological beliefs. For instance, his restorationism found its justification in it. The logic of the connection between the 'mystery of God' and restorationism went as follows: Since the church was a result of a predetermined plan, it was also constructed according to a predetermined pattern, namely the ideal pattern of the Early Church. Therefore, when Christians tried to mirror their ecclesiology on the model of the Early Church, they acted in accordance with God's original plan.⁹¹ Second, Pethrus' independent local church concept also found its merit in the metaphor. Pethrus noted what a difference it was 'to build churches after the ideal pattern described in the New Testament [i.e. independent local churches] in comparison to other religious peoples' human organisations. That was to truly build according to God's plan'.⁹² Finally, his Christological ecclesiology was also submerged under the metaphor. Pethrus showed that the entire witness

⁸⁸ Pethrus, 'Guds församling,' 1927, 439.

⁸⁹ Pethrus, 'Guds församling,' 1927, 439.

⁹⁰ Pethrus, 'Guds församling,' 1927, 439.

⁹¹ Pethrus, 'Guds församling,' 1927, 439.

⁹² Pethrus, 'Guds församling,' 1927, 439.

of Scripture, apart from Genesis 1-2, was preoccupied with God's plan of redeeming a people for Christ. Thus, from Genesis to Revelation, the message of the Bible was about 'God selecting a people, how Christ would be born among this people, and how he chooses his church'.⁹³

3.2.3 The Church as the Pillar and the Foundation of the Truth

Another of Pethrus' favourite images of the church was Paul's saying in 1 Timothy 3:15 that describes the church as the 'pillar and the foundation of the truth'. For Pethrus, this description of the church spoke both of the church's existence as well as its purpose. In fact, the two were so integrally connected that the one could not exist without the other. Pethrus explained, 'The task of the church was to be 'the pillar and the foundation of the truth'. To the degree she fulfilled this, she deserved her *raison d'être*, but if she engaged in other tasks, there was no reasonable ground for her existence'.⁹⁴ This uncompromising statement was born out of many years of intense polemic with the Swedish Free Churches. Pethrus' underlying idea was that denominations originated because of a battle over some newfound truth. If the emphasis on that particular truth disappeared, the reason for that denomination's existence was therefore lost. This was not to say that all sincere Christians within that denomination were lost. In fact, he even claimed that he had met as many spiritually vibrant Catholics as Protestants on his life journey.⁹⁵ Thus, the issue was rather 'how much biblical truth the denominations represented'.⁹⁶ The implication of Pethrus' argument is clear. Pentecostal churches represented more biblical truth than the established denominations and

⁹³ Pethrus, 'Guds församling,' 1927, 439.

⁹⁴ Pethrus, 'De fria församlingarnas uppgift,' *EH*, 9 March, 1933, 172.

⁹⁵ Pethrus, 'De fria församlingarnas uppgift,' 1933, 173.

⁹⁶ Pethrus, 'De fria församlingarnas uppgift,' 1933, 173.

were therefore the ones who ultimately fulfilled the task of being ‘the pillar and the foundation of the truth’.

It is interesting to note that ‘the truth’ in this context is understood in terms of biblical truth(s) that a certain religious group represent apart from the individual. However, in earlier writings where the same metaphor is used, ‘the truth’ is not understood in terms of doctrine but in terms of ethics. In that context, Pethrus explained that the truth was not to be found either in politics, science, or academics, but in people who had been truly saved and were ‘true and honest’.⁹⁷ The individual had a tremendous responsibility to remain true and honest because otherwise the church could not remain as ‘the pillar and foundation of the truth’.⁹⁸ As will be shown below, administering church discipline was thus essential in order to keep the members pure and the church as ‘the pillar and foundation of the truth’.⁹⁹

The above examples show that Pethrus used metaphors in a pragmatic and fluid way. Pethrus had no problem interpreting the same biblical metaphor in contradictory ways in order to achieve a pragmatic end. Even a cursory reading of the text clearly shows that Paul is not saying that the church with the *most* biblical truths is ‘the pillar and foundation of the truth’ or that the ethical behaviour of church members would somehow jeopardise that truth. Rather, Paul simply conveys that the Gospel is the ‘truth’ and that the church is the vessel of that truth.

3.2.4 The Church as the Bride of Christ

The image of the church as a bride of Christ was a metaphor Pethrus used to particularly emphasise the church’s separation from the world. He based this notion on a Christological (allegorical) interpretation of the bride in Song of Songs 8:5. The image

⁹⁷ Pethrus, *Kristen församlingstukt*, 1930, 38-39.

⁹⁸ Pethrus, *Kristen församlingstukt*, 1930, 40.

⁹⁹ See section, 3.6.3.

pointed to the church's liberation from sin into a sanctified and joyous life in Christ.¹⁰⁰ The church had 'come out of the desert' of 'worldliness and false Christianity' just as the bride in Song of Songs 8:5.¹⁰¹ This pure bride had always been 'a mystery for the world,'¹⁰² since the world could not grasp the reason for her transformation.¹⁰³ Yet, if the church turned back into the desert of worldliness and sin, she no longer resembled the bride of Song of Songs but the prostitute of Revelation 17. To prevent this from happening, the church had to 'rely on her friend, the bridegroom, Jesus Christ,' who could lend a helping hand in time of need.¹⁰⁴ The church was therefore in grave danger of not only losing her purity if she compromised with the world but also her very identity as a bride of Christ.

In sum, having briefly noted Pethrus' most frequently used metaphors, we observe that they are used to describe the essence, the purpose and the destiny of the church. The 'body of Christ' analogy is used to describe the church's essence as a redeemed community in Christ (the universal church) as well as to emphasise the church's spiritual unity. The 'mystery of God' analogy functions as an umbrella statement to provide a broader conceptual framework for the church's existence, linking it to God's plan of salvation. The 'pillar and the foundation of the truth' concept brings out the church's ultimate purpose. Pethrus used it in a fluid way to ensure that it gave meaning to the individual believer as well as to the SPM. Finally, the image of the church as the bride of Christ stresses the church's purity and separation from world, and the danger that compromising with sin holds for the welfare and identity of the church.

¹⁰⁰ Pethrus, *Gud med oss*, vol. 2, 1931, 247.

¹⁰¹ Pethrus, *Gud med oss*, vol. 2, 1931, 249-250.

¹⁰² Pethrus, *Gud med oss*, vol. 2, 1931, 249-250.

¹⁰³ Pethrus, *Gud med oss*, vol. 2, 1931, 247-248.

¹⁰⁴ Pethrus, *Gud med oss*, vol. 2, 1931, 252-254.

3.3 ‘Spirit-Baptised’ versus ‘Non Spirit-Baptised’ Dualism

The early Pentecostal understanding of the revival carried with it an implicit ecclesiology of superiority that tended to alienate Pentecostals from other Christians. This was partially an indebtedness to the ‘higher life’ theology of the Holiness Movement, but it was also a way to distance themselves from other Christians and stress the importance of the Pentecostal movement. This was done by employing different terminologies for the two groups, namely ‘the Spirit-baptised’ and the ‘non Spirit-baptised’. This dualistic mentality is evident already in the second article Pethrus published in *Evangelii Härold* entitled *I brytningstider* [In Times of Friction]. He argued that the Pentecostal revival had come to sift ‘the remnant,’ (the Spirit-baptised) from an otherwise apostate Church (the non Spirit-baptised).¹⁰⁵ He likened his own hostile reception from the established denominations to the Jewish leadership’s treatment of Jesus, which implied that the Baptist leadership was as devoid of spiritual insight as the Jewish leadership was in Jesus’ day.¹⁰⁶ Although he acknowledged that they had some theological knowledge, he was convinced that they would never humble themselves to admit the Pentecostal revival’s divine origin.¹⁰⁷ In fact, by relegating Spirit baptism to the apostolic age, the Baptist leadership was sinning against the Holy Spirit.¹⁰⁸ On the other hand, the ‘Spirit-baptised’ had broken through the denominations’ restricting barriers ‘like a mighty river’.¹⁰⁹ Yet the ‘collateral damage’ that the river inflicted on the denominations was more than warranted because the church was a living organism that needed freedom to grow.¹¹⁰ In an article a month later, Pethrus further argued that since the Bible spoke of both the gifts and Spirit baptism, no one could claim to be truly biblical unless

¹⁰⁵ Pethrus, ‘I brytningstider,’ 6 January, 1916, 1.

¹⁰⁶ Pethrus, ‘I brytningstider,’ 1916, 1.

¹⁰⁷ Pethrus, ‘I brytningstider,’ 1916, 1.

¹⁰⁸ Pethrus, ‘I brytningstider,’ 1916, 1.

¹⁰⁹ Pethrus, ‘I brytningstider,’ 1916, 2.

¹¹⁰ Pethrus, ‘I brytningstider,’ 1916, 2.

they gave room to their practice.¹¹¹ In fact, he even went so far as to claim that a person was not truly saved unless he had experienced Spirit baptism.¹¹²

It is apparent that Pethrus' negative experiences with the established denominations drastically affected his ecclesiology. The church was perceived as a community of Spirit-baptised believers. Anyone who took an opposite (Cessationist) view concerning Spirit baptism was perceived as sinning against the Holy Spirit and was therefore under God's judgement. His harsh language must also be understood in light of his view of the Pentecostal revival. Since the Pentecostal revival was an eschatological event that was divinely ordained to prepare for the imminent return of Christ, opposing it was viewed as opposing the very plan of God. A person doing that, while still claiming to be a Christian, was therefore a liar and an instrument of evil.

Pethrus' comments also reflect an extreme form of Pietistic ecclesiology, namely that the church was a community of saints without any sinners. This understanding may be seen in an article from 1917 in which Pethrus addressed the issue of planting new Pentecostal churches. He commented that people leaving their denominations to form Pentecostal churches must do it for the right reasons. If ambiguous or impure motives existed, the Pentecostal movement would not gain but suffer from these inclusions.¹¹³ Discontentment with one's denomination was therefore not a valid reason to leave one's church but only if one was spiritually suffocating in the old denomination.¹¹⁴ People who left their churches out of revenge or impure motives did not fit among the 'Spirit-baptised' because they undermined

¹¹¹ Pethrus, 'De andliga gåvorna. Oskiljaktliga med ett bibliskt församlingsliv,' *EH*, 3 February, 1916, 17

¹¹² Pethrus, 'De andliga gåvorna. Oskiljaktliga med ett bibliskt församlingsliv,' 1916, 17. In 1918, Pethrus even stated that only the Spirit-baptised were truly qualified to preach the Gospel. See, Pethrus, 'Splittringar,' 1918, 158.

¹¹³ Pethrus, 'Om nya församlingars bildande,' *EH*, 18 January, 1917, 9.

¹¹⁴ Pethrus, 'Om nya församlingars bildande,' 1917, 9.

the spiritual integrity of the church.¹¹⁵ Thus Pentecostals were not to fall for the temptation of adding members for the sake of an increased membership. Pethrus concluded that ‘we should not think that something is won by merely leaving the denomination, but only if we are filled with the Holy Spirit and power, and having the message of full salvation, and the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and gifts, something which the denominations officially denies’.¹¹⁶ Thus in the early years of the Pentecostal movement, Pethrus’ ecclesiology manifested an idealised notion of the pure, ‘Spirit-baptised,’ church. Any notion of the church being a *corpus permixtum*¹¹⁷ was entirely rejected. Pethrus claimed that the church should only ‘consist of truly saved, baptised, Spirit-baptised, and sanctified souls – who were one in Spirit’.¹¹⁸ Sin was not viewed as something inherent to Pentecostals but something that merely stained the Pentecostals’ otherwise white garments.¹¹⁹

It is interesting to note that in article in *Brudgummens Röst* from 1916, Pethrus tried to deny that Pentecostals perceived themselves as superior to other Christians. Pethrus admitted that the ‘Spirit-baptised’ had committed mistakes and outright sins against other Christians.¹²⁰ He rejected the presupposition that the ‘Spirit-baptised’ were somehow superior to other Christians. In fact, he maintained that Pentecostals had always argued that Spirit baptism was a matter of normal Christian experience and could therefore not be a reason for pride.¹²¹ He also objected to the notion that Spirit baptism raised a believer to a spiritual level where no mistakes were possible. He warned that trusting in an experience rather than in Jesus would soon lead to ruin.¹²² Spirit baptism was ‘a foundational experience and not a diploma in

¹¹⁵ Pethrus, ‘Om nya församlingars bildande,’ 1917, 9.

¹¹⁶ Pethrus, ‘Om nya församlingars bildande,’ 1917, 9.

¹¹⁷ That is, a church consisting of both saints and sinners.

¹¹⁸ Pethrus, ‘Äro de söndringar, som uppkomma genom pingstväckelsen, ett bevis för att densamma är av ondo?’, *EH*, 24 June, 1920, 98.

¹¹⁹ Pethrus, ‘Jesus och församlingen,’ *EH*, 31 July, 1919, 116.

¹²⁰ Pethrus, ‘Den nya rörelsen: Misstag som förekommit,’ *Brudgummens Röst*, June 1916, 82.

¹²¹ Pethrus, ‘Den nya rörelsen: Misstag som förekommit,’ 1916, 82.

¹²² Pethrus, ‘Den nya rörelsen: Misstag som förekommit,’ 1916, 82.

spiritual maturity'.¹²³ He even went so far as to admit that he and other Pentecostals had wrongly accused opponents of the Pentecostal revival of only having fleshly motives.¹²⁴ Having such preconceived ideas would therefore incorrectly judge 'many of God's beloved children, many dear brothers and sisters'.¹²⁵

However, Pethrus' humble attitude was seldom manifested in any of his other writings from the same time. Pethrus' rejection of spiritual superiority was undone by the fact that he implied that other Christians had not even reached a foundational level of spiritual maturity if they had not experienced Spirit baptism. If the 'Spirit-baptised' and the 'non Spirit-baptised' were 'brothers and sisters' as Pethrus claimed, the distinction would have been unnecessary. In fact, Pethrus' language of a 'new Pentecost'¹²⁶ clearly conveyed that Christ was establishing a new 'Spirit-baptised' church, constructed according to the New Testament model. The implication of such a statement was that all other churches were spiritually dead and a hindrance to the Kingdom of God. Granted, Pethrus' critique was primarily levelled against the Baptist Union, but his over-generalizations guaranteed that all other churches were included in the criticism.

3.4 The Lord's Supper

As noted above, the importance of the Lord's Supper came to the fore at the outset of the Pentecostal movement in Sweden. The rather insignificant issue regarding open communion marked the beginning of a new direction for the entire SPM.¹²⁷ However, the

¹²³ Pethrus, 'Den nya rörelsen: Misstag som förekommit,' 1916, 82.

¹²⁴ Pethrus, 'Den nya rörelsen: Misstag som förekommit,' 1916, 82.

¹²⁵ Pethrus, 'Den nya rörelsen: Misstag som förekommit,' 1916, 82.

¹²⁶ Pethrus, 'I brytningstider,' 1916, 1.

¹²⁷ The discussion of open and closed communion should not be confused with the contemporary discussion of open and closed communion. Today 'open communion' primarily refers to the practice of allowing non-Christians to partake of the Eucharist based on the 'hospitality of Jesus.' In our discussion, open communion refers to the practice of granting all baptised believers, *irrespective of denominational affiliation*, access to the Lord's Supper. For a contemporary discussion of 'open communion,' see James Farwell, 'Baptism, Eucharist,

conflict provided Pethrus with a good opportunity to present his overall understanding of the sacrament.

3.4.1 Open and Closed Communion

On 7 May 1913, Pethrus published an article in *Svenska Tribunen* that describes his biblical and theological reasons for practicing open communion. Pethrus first corrected the misunderstanding that his congregation had practiced open communion in the sense of unrestricted access to the elements for anyone. On the contrary, he had only permitted adult credobaptised individuals to have access to the Lord's Supper.¹²⁸ He then affirmed that the controversy was about denominational unity rather than church unity. With a touch of irony, Pethrus raised the issue of whether Baptists believed that the Eucharist was only for them, since they refused true believers access to the elements unless they were members of the Baptist Union.¹²⁹ In the rest of the article, Pethrus argued that the Baptists' faulty understanding of the Eucharist stemmed from an overemphasis on the local church at the expense of the universal church. By stressing the universal church, Pethrus attempted to show that the Lord's Supper was a gift of the Lord to the universal church, and not to a local church or a specific denomination, which made the Baptist's preference for closed communion untenable.¹³⁰

Pethrus began by noting that Matthew 16:18, 'on this rock I shall build my church,' was a reference to the universal church. He argued that Christ's promise to build his church could not be limited to the church in Jerusalem, as certain Baptists claimed, because it rendered

and the Hospitality of Jesus: On the Practice of 'Open Communion,' *Anglican Theological Review*, 86, vol. 2, (Spring, 2004): 215-238.

¹²⁸ Pethrus, 'Filadelfia i Stockholm och nattvardsfrågan,' *Svenska Tribunen*, 7 May, 1913.

¹²⁹ Pethrus, 'Filadelfia i Stockholm och nattvardsfrågan,' 1913.

¹³⁰ Pethrus, 'Filadelfia i Stockholm och nattvardsfrågan,' 1913.

Christ's promise that 'the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against her' useless.¹³¹ Moreover, 'my church' in this context included 'every soul that has according to the Bible's teaching been incorporated into the living organism, which is the Church of Jesus Christ'.¹³² Pethrus argued that the same universal concept of the church was found in Colossians 1:24, which spoke of the church as Christ's body, as well as in Ephesians 5:23-27, 29, 32. Jesus was only referring to the local church in Matthew 18:17.¹³³ If, therefore, the universal church was the recipient of the Lord's Supper and not only the church in Jerusalem or Corinth (1 Corinthians 11:17-34), the Baptists' insistence on closed communion was unsustainable. Having shown that the Lord's Supper was given to the universal church, Pethrus proceeded to explain, based on Acts 2:38 and John 3:3, 5, that three experiences made us members of the universal church: (1) repentance, (2) baptism, and (3) the gift of the Spirit.

Apart from baptism, which he explained in some detail,¹³⁴ Pethrus did not give any clarification of the other two experiences. In light of the controversy surrounding the Pentecostals' particular understanding of Spirit baptism, the omission of an explanation of the third criterion was rather remarkable. Pethrus merely noted that repentance and the gift of the Spirit were located in the invisible world, whereas baptism was the only visible proclamation of salvation to the world.¹³⁵ The absence of a discussion of the need to experience the 'gift of the Spirit' was most likely because it would have detracted from the immediate purpose of refuting closed communion. Having laid down the three criteria for church membership in Acts 2.38 and John 3.3,5, Pethrus concluded that 'it was not the matriculation in a church's membership roll but the obedience of Jesus' command that made us members of God's

¹³¹ Pethrus, 'Filadelfia i Stockholm och nattvardsfrågan,' 1913.

¹³² Pethrus, 'Filadelfia i Stockholm och nattvardsfrågan,' 1913.

¹³³ Pethrus, 'Filadelfia i Stockholm och nattvardsfrågan,' 1913.

¹³⁴ See section 3.5 below.

¹³⁵ Pethrus, 'Filadelfia i Stockholm och nattvardsfrågan,' 1913.

church'.¹³⁶ Therefore, he had no mandate to exclude individuals who were true members of Christ's church from communion.¹³⁷

From Pethrus' description of open communion, it is evident that for him the Lord's Supper was solely to be administered to credobaptised believers. Although not specifically stated, the implication was that paedobaptised believers were not allowed to partake of communion. The Lord's Supper was therefore only a sacrament for 'true' believers who had repented and received the gift of the Spirit. Credobaptism assured the congregation that the individual was a recipient of these two 'invisible' experiences and hence a member of the universal church. Consequently, the Lord's Supper was an act of remembrance and not a means of imparting grace in order to deal with temporal sins, as in Roman Catholic theology.

3.4.2 Act of Remembrance

Apart from the controversy surrounding open communion, Pethrus' writings give surprisingly little theological attention to the Lord's Supper. Pethrus held two seminars on the subject in February 1912, the first of which was later presented in two articles in *EH* in 1916. The extent of the discussion was limited to four points, which by no means provided a comprehensive analysis of every aspect of the Eucharist. Although brief, the presentation offered enough theological material to give a good picture of Pethrus' early beliefs regarding the Lord's Supper.

His first point stressed that the Lord's Supper was an act of remembrance. In order to achieve a correct sense of remembrance, he advised his hearers, similarly to the Catholic

¹³⁶ Pethrus, 'Filadelfia i Stockholm och nattvardsfrågan,' 1913.

¹³⁷ Pethrus, 'Filadelfia i Stockholm och nattvardsfrågan,' 1913.

mystic Ignatius of Loyola,¹³⁸ to picture themselves in the Eucharistic narrative. When the believer sat down to partake of the Lord's Supper, Pethrus suggested that the passion of Christ was supposed to be like 'a painting that was unveiled before one's inner eye'.¹³⁹ This inner 'remembering' was the very heart of the Lord's Supper. If someone did not participate in this 'inner pilgrimage to the cross'¹⁴⁰ while partaking of the Lord's Supper, but remained focused on worldly things, such a person was not only unworthy of the Lord's Supper and but also an unworthy member of the church.¹⁴¹ In addition, Pethrus emphasised that the Eucharist taught believers that the Christian faith was about communion with the person of Jesus and not only about believing in doctrines concerning Jesus.¹⁴²

When looking at Pethrus' view of the Lord's Supper, it is apparent that he was indebted to a long Eucharistic tradition tracing itself back to the Swiss Reformation. Although not exclusively 'Zwinglian'¹⁴³ in his Eucharistic beliefs, 'memorialism' was strongly emphasised. Moreover, the Moravians' stress on contemplating the passion and the cross of Christ also took centre-stage. Yet the severity by which Pethrus came against any relaxed attitude toward the Lord's Supper most likely reflected his own and the Pentecostal Movement's demand for holiness and sincerity.

¹³⁸ See, for example, the third week of Ignatius of Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises*. Elisabeth M. Tetlow, transl., *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1987), 65-72.

¹³⁹ Pethrus, 'Nattvardens betydelse,' *EH*, 24 February, 1916, 30.

¹⁴⁰ Pethrus, 'Nattvardens betydelse,' 1916, 30.

¹⁴¹ Pethrus, 'Nattvardens betydelse,' 1916, 30.

¹⁴² Pethrus, 'Nattvardens betydelse,' 1916, 30.

¹⁴³ It is doubtful Zwingli's actual Eucharistic belief can be limited to mere 'memorialism'. Carter Lindberg, for instance, notes that, 'In Zwingli's theology and liturgy the focus is on the community of those who confess their faith in Christ and commit themselves to discipleship. Zwingli's emphasis on the corporate life (a reflection of Swiss communalism) leads to the view of the eucharist as the action of the congregation rather than to the congregation [emphases Lindberg]'. Carter Lindberg, *The European Reformations*, 2nd ed. (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 180-181.

3.4.3 Participation in Christ's Body and Blood

In his second point, Pethrus affirmed that the Lord's Supper was a participation of Christ's body and blood. Instead of engaging in a scholarly debate regarding Christ's presence in the elements, Pethrus deliberately avoided it by taking 1 Corinthians 10:16 at face value, simply reiterating that the Lord's Supper was a participation in Christ's body and blood. Two lines later Pethrus still entered the debate by arguing that the Lord's Supper was useless unless accompanied by faith. He denied any real physical presence of Christ in the element, thereby rejecting both transubstantiation and consubstantiation.¹⁴⁴ Somewhat inexplicably, Pethrus still maintained that something was communicated from God, *ex opere operato*, when partaking of the elements even if Pethrus could not explain how. He likened it to God's Word, which could enter a person's life and transform it although it was written in a book like all other books.¹⁴⁵ Thus, behind the visible and mundane elements of the Eucharist resided a divine power that communicated the blessings of Christ's death when believers received the elements by faith.

The deliberate avoidance of a theological discussion regarding Christ's presence in the elements was most certainly an accommodation to his audience's negative attitude against controversial doctrines and perhaps his limited knowledge of the debate.¹⁴⁶ The avoidance of any deeper theological reflection and the emphasis on reliving the passion of Christ reflected not only a proclivity toward mysticism¹⁴⁷ but also a Pietistic influence. Although Dale Brown argues that early Pietists were not ashamed of professing a traditionally Lutheran view of the

¹⁴⁴ Pethrus, 'Nattvardens betydelse,' *EH*, 24 February, 1916, 30.

¹⁴⁵ Pethrus, 'Nattvardens betydelse,' *EH*, 2 March, 1916, 37.

¹⁴⁶ Pethrus' comment 'as some of the Reformers have claimed' does not show depth of knowledge. Pethrus, 'Nattvardens betydelse,' 1916, 37.

¹⁴⁷ Pethrus acknowledged that his 'theological disposition had been one of a mystic,' although he had never been an 'enthusiast' (*schwärmer*). Pethrus, *Medan du stjärnorna räknar*, 1953, 282.

Lord's Supper,¹⁴⁸ it is clear that Pietism's negative attitude against controversial doctrines may be seen in Pethrus' presentation.

3.4.4 Physical Healing in the Bread

Having presented his two first points about the Lord's Supper, he acknowledged that his third point was a bit odd and was to be rejected if it did not align with God's Word or brought any blessings with it.¹⁴⁹ Pethrus made the claim that each of the elements of the Lord's Supper had their distinct function. The wine, which symbolised Christ's blood, represented spiritual healing; and the bread, which symbolised Christ's body, represented physical healing. To support his view, Pethrus stated that the whole person was redeemed at Christ's atonement. Just as the whole person was affected by the fall, so the whole person was redeemed at the cross.¹⁵⁰ Referring to Romans 8:23, Pethrus noted that in this life our bodies were subject to death. Through Christ's atoning death, symbolised in the breaking of the bread, Christians had a continual remedy from physical diseases.¹⁵¹ In a rather bizarre reading of 1 Corinthians 11:29-30, Pethrus provided another 'proof-text' for his view. According to Pethrus, the reason the Corinthian believers were sick, weak and had succumbed to death was that they had treated the 'body of the Lord,' that is, the bread of the Eucharist, in an unworthy manner. He specifically emphasised that Paul only mentioned the Corinthians' abuse of the 'body' and *not* the 'blood' of Christ.¹⁵² Therefore, the blood symbolised spiritual healing and the body physical healing. To anyone who might find his view offensive, Pethrus stated in a

¹⁴⁸ Dale W. Brown, *Understanding Pietism* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1978), 50.

¹⁴⁹ Pethrus, 'Nattvardens betydelse,' 1916, 37.

¹⁵⁰ Pethrus, 'Nattvardens betydelse,' 1916, 37.

¹⁵¹ Pethrus, 'Nattvardens betydelse,' 1916, 37.

¹⁵² Pethrus, 'Nattvardens betydelse,' 1916, 37.

pragmatic fashion that his view could not be a dangerous heresy because it carried such blessed results.¹⁵³

Pethrus' discussion on the bread and the wine of the Eucharist is particularly interesting because it merges the Pentecostal understanding of 'healing in the atonement' with the Eucharist. Kärkkäinen notes that 'Pentecostals at times envision partaking of the Lord's Supper as a place of healing, [but] often the relationship between healing and the celebration of the Lord's Supper is missed completely'.¹⁵⁴ However, Pethrus is an exception to the rule. In fact, his reflections present a rather 'unique' interpretation of the relationship between the Eucharistic elements and physical healing. An explanation of Pethrus' 'unique' view may be found in history and in his common-sense application of it.

From the outset of the Pentecostal movement there was a strong tendency to link physical healing with the atoning work of Christ. Key texts such as Isaiah 53:5, Matthew 8:17 and 1 Peter 2:24 were often cited in support of the doctrine. The belief that Christ died for our sins as well as our sicknesses, according to David Petts, most likely 'originated in the Holiness Movement in America towards the end of the nineteenth century'.¹⁵⁵ However, Anderson notes that the doctrine had prior roots in the European Healing Movement of the early 19th century. It was the notoriety of Johann Christian Blumhardt of Germany and Dorothea Trudel of Switzerland that significantly contributed to its popularity among early Pentecostals.¹⁵⁶ As noted above, Pethrus affirmed 'healing in the atonement' primarily because of his 'holistic' view of Christ's atonement. Since the Eucharist symbolised the atonement, extending his holistic understanding of the atonement to the individual elements

¹⁵³ Pethrus, 'Nattvardens betydelse,' 1916, 37.

¹⁵⁴ Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, 'The Pentecostal View,' in Gordon T. Smith, ed. *The Lord's Supper: Five Views* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008), 126-127.

¹⁵⁵ David Petts, *Just a Taste of Heaven: A Biblical and Balanced Approach to God's Healing Power* (Mattersey, England: Mattersey Hall, 2006), 123.

¹⁵⁶ Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 30-33.

was nothing more than following the rules of deductive reasoning. Pethrus' 'eucharistic syllogism' appeared as follows:

First premise: The Lord's Supper symbolises Christ's atonement.

Second premise: Christ's atonement secured healing for both spirit and body.

Third premise: The wine represents the spirit of Christ; the bread represents the body of Christ.

Conclusion: The wine procures spiritual healing; the bread procures physical healing.¹⁵⁷

That Pethrus maintained this belief later on in life is evident from his autobiography, where he retells an incident from 1918 when the Spanish flu ravaged the country. Disregarding the recommendation to close public buildings, Pethrus insisted that his Bible school remain open. To counteract the disease that had already affected a number of students, Pethrus ordered the Eucharist to be served. Having explained to the students that the Eucharist was an aid for their faith, and that the bread could provide both health and protection for their bodies, they all partook of the elements by faith. Because of the service, no other student contracted the disease and those who had been contaminated soon recovered.¹⁵⁸

From this story we can see that Pethrus not only reiterated his understanding of the Lord's Supper as outlined in his seminar from February 1912, but he also developed it to suggest that the bread provided a protection against physical diseases. Even though he quoted Isaiah 53:5 as a proof-text for his practice, it is clear that the students' recovery was used as the strongest argument to support the doctrine.

3.4.5 Proclamation of Christ's Death

In his fourth and final point, Pethrus stated that the Lord's Supper was a proclamation of Christ's death. The Eucharist was the individual's confession to the rest of the congregation that he or she was a partaker and believer in Christ's death. The believer attested to what

¹⁵⁷ Pethrus, *Hänryckningens tid*, 1954, 152.

¹⁵⁸ Pethrus, *Hänryckningens tid*, 1954, 147-154.

Christ's had done for him or her personally.¹⁵⁹ The believer's proclamation was also a testimony to people outside the church that Christ had also died for them. Finally, the Eucharistic celebration was a witness to the entire angelic world and ultimately to the Son and the Father that the individual shared in the redemption of Christ.¹⁶⁰

Having analysed Pethrus' Eucharistic theology, its individualistic emphasis stands out. Rather than viewing the Eucharist as 'a communal remembrance of Jesus' gift of himself for others,'¹⁶¹ he perceived it as a meal that brought personal enrichment, both spiritually and physically. Pethrus nowhere advocated a corporate perspective on the Eucharist or contemplated the meal as a participation of the Trinitarian communion. Only the individual was supposed to make a spiritual journey to the cross during the Lord's Supper and proclaim his or her acceptance of Christ's death to the believing and the unbelieving world.

3.5 Water Baptism

Pethrus' view of water baptism was thoroughly grounded in the Anabaptist tradition. It largely mirrored the Schleithem confession of the Swiss Anabaptists in 1527:

Baptism shall be given to all those who have been taught repentance and the amendment of life and [who] truly believe that their sins are taken away through Christ, and to all those who desire to walk in the resurrection of Jesus Christ and be buried with Him in death, so that they might rise with Him; to all those who with such an understanding themselves desire and request it from us; hereby is excluded all infant baptism, the greatest and first abomination of the pope. For this you have the reasons and the testimony of the writings and the practice of the apostles.¹⁶²

Water baptism was therefore 'an outward, visible act, through which the soul confesses in a visible way for its surrounding, what she in secret has experienced – divorce from sin and

¹⁵⁹ Pethrus, 'Nattvardens betydelse,' 1916, 38.

¹⁶⁰ Pethrus, 'Nattvardens betydelse,' 1916, 38.

¹⁶¹ Matthew Whelan, 'The Responsible Body: A Eucharistic Community,' *Cross Currents*, Vol. 51, No 3, (Fall 2001): 360.

¹⁶² 'Schleithem Confession (Anabaptist, 1527),' *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online*, <http://www.gameo.org/encyclopedia/contents/S345-Text.html> (accessed on 5 July 2012).

union with God. The past is buried and she resurrects to a new life'.¹⁶³ Pethrus admitted that in the early stages of the SPM relatively few believers advocated believer's baptism because the revival first entered into state or Free Churches that preferred that mode of baptism. However, Pethrus claimed that they never had abandoned, and they did not even think about abandoning their Baptist position.¹⁶⁴

For Pethrus, baptism was not a salvific event. He argued that biblical texts such as Acts 22:16 and 1 Peter 3:21 could not be used in support of baptismal regeneration. Commenting on the text in 1 Peter 3:21, Pethrus noted that, although the text stated that, 'baptism now saves you,' there were at least three reasons why the text could not imply baptismal regeneration. First, the immediate context showed that it did not refer to 'the removal of dirt from the body, but a pledge of a good conscience towards God'.¹⁶⁵ The text did not imply that baptism saved from sin, but that it saved the person '*from an evil conscience*'¹⁶⁶ [emphasis Pethrus]. Thus, obeying the Lord in the act of baptism did not justify but saved the individual from the sin of disobedience.¹⁶⁷ Second, the context also stated that the ark saved Noah, and not the water. For Pethrus, Christ was our 'ark of salvation' and only he could save us.¹⁶⁸ Third, basing his argument on the Reformation principle of the 'analogy of faith,' Pethrus argued that the Bible unilaterally proclaimed that only the blood of Jesus saves from sins and not the water of baptism (1 John 1:7).¹⁶⁹ Consequently, an individual was saved before baptism and could remain saved without baptism. However, since baptism was an act of obedience and a visible proclamation of one's rejection of the world, Pethrus regarded it as an

¹⁶³ Struble, 254.

¹⁶⁴ Pethrus, *Hänryckningens tid*, 1954, 62-63.

¹⁶⁵ Pethrus, 'Vattendopet,' *EH*, 16 August, 1917, 133.

¹⁶⁶ Pethrus, 'Vattendopet,' 1917, 133.

¹⁶⁷ Pethrus, 'Vattendopet,' 1917, 133.

¹⁶⁸ Pethrus, 'Vattendopet,' 1917, 133.

¹⁶⁹ Pethrus, 'Vattendopet,' 1917, 133.

essential step for an individual's sanctification.¹⁷⁰ Yet Pethrus was quick to note that it was not the water but the Word that sanctified, a truth he believed Luther shared but regrettably did not practice.¹⁷¹

Moreover, Pethrus perceived believer's baptism to be the threshold to the local church.¹⁷² In the article in *Svenska Tribunen* in 1913, he stated that baptism was 'the biblical church's visible border'.¹⁷³ The sequence of the events in Acts 2:38-41 demonstrated that membership in a local church depended on personal faith publically proclaimed through the act of baptism. The audience's response to Peter's sermon indicated a clear repentance – baptism – addition to the church progression.

Rather than elaborating on the ecclesiological significance of viewing water baptism as the entrance into the community of faith, Pethrus emphasised the relatively minor issue that the numbering and the addition of the 3,000 members on the Day of Pentecost justified the use of a membership roll of baptised believers.¹⁷⁴ The reason for stressing this minor issue was that he had not always held this position. In 1907, he adopted Erik Andersen-Nordkvelle's position that permanent memberships, registrations and matriculations were unbiblical. According to Andersen-Nordkvelle, only people who regularly attended the services were counted as members.¹⁷⁵ Having further reflected on the Acts 2:38-41 passage, he rejected Andersen-Nordkvelle's position that 'the New Testament only contained spiritual

¹⁷⁰ Pethrus, 'Jesus och församlingen,' 1919, 104.

¹⁷¹ Pethrus, 'Jesus och församlingen,' 1919, 104. It is doubtful Pethrus fully understood Luther's view of baptism. Pethrus quoted and *affirmed* Luther's statement that 'it is not the water, but the Word that is with and around the water which sanctifies'. Pethrus seems not to understand that Luther believed that the Word was *contained* in the water and by the practice of infant baptism proclaimed remission of sin. Thus, in Luther's view, the infant was justified by grace through faith alone when the Word was preached through the practice of infant baptism. Even though Luther's view was rather bizarre, it was consistent with his understanding of the Word.

¹⁷² Pethrus, 'Vattendopet,' 1917, 133.

¹⁷³ Pethrus, 'Filadelfia i Stockholm och nattvardsfrågan,' 1913.

¹⁷⁴ See also, 'Vattendopet,' 1917, 133-134.

¹⁷⁵ Pethrus, *Ett sagolikt liv*, 1976, 77.

requirements for membership,¹⁷⁶ even though he agreed that a church's membership roll was not to be viewed as 'the Lamb's book of life'.¹⁷⁷

As briefly mentioned above, baptism was also a prerequisite for participation in communion. His memoirs testify to the depth of his conviction in this regard. Pethrus describes an incident from a service at T. B. Barratt's church in Oslo. After Pethrus concluded his sermon, the church prepared the communion table. All of a sudden, he found himself in a real dilemma since neither Barratt nor a majority of the congregation were baptised as adults. In order not to offend Barratt and the rest of the congregation, he decided to partake of communion. However, as soon as he returned to Stockholm Pethrus felt compelled to tell the elders about his irregular behaviour. He assured them that he had not changed his position but that his actions were only motivated by Christian charity.¹⁷⁸

In sum, although significantly influenced by his Baptist heritage, Pethrus' restorationist outlook predominates in his discussions regarding water baptism. Since the book of Acts was the 'ideal pattern' for the church, the Acts 2:38-41 text excluded 'any form of infant baptism and guaranteed that there were no un-baptised individuals in the Early Church'.¹⁷⁹ Consequently, Pethrus often cut short any potential discussion with quick and uncritical references to the book of Acts. His discussions regarding water baptism also exhibited a strong individual emphasis. Simon Chan notes that many evangelicals and 'some in the post-Constantinian church' stress too heavily the individual benefit of baptism.¹⁸⁰ Pethrus' view of baptism might deserve some of that criticism. For Pethrus, baptism was solely perceived as an outward act displaying an inward change. For instance, the historical notion of baptism as a

¹⁷⁶ Pethrus, *Ett sagolikt liv*, 1976, 78.

¹⁷⁷ Pethrus, *Medan du stjärnorna räknar*, 1953, 176.

¹⁷⁸ Pethrus, *Hänryckningens tid*, 1954, 63.

¹⁷⁹ Pethrus, 'Vattendopet,' 1917, 133.

¹⁸⁰ Simon Chan, *Liturgical Theology: The Church as Worshiping Community* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 118.

sacrament that symbolises a Christian's entrance into the body of Christ is entirely missing. However, Pethrus' writings on water baptism were often contextually conditioned and did not need an in-depth theological discussion to achieve their purpose. In fact, Pethrus described in his memoirs that he twice engaged Lutheran ministers in public debate on the topic of water baptism in 1909-1910. However, since he was primarily writing for a lay audience, he decided to preserve the more amusing aspects of the debates rather than theological arguments.¹⁸¹ Thus he might have had a more thorough theology of water baptism than what is preserved in his personal writings.

3.6 Ecclesiastical Polity

Nils-Olov Nilsson labels Pethrus' view of the local church as 'radical congregationalism'.¹⁸² By this term he means a local and independent congregational church 'free from denominational structures and influences'.¹⁸³ 'Radical congregationalism' may be a legitimate way to describe Pethrus' independent local church concept.¹⁸⁴ Yet, it does not accurately describe his overall understanding of ecclesiastical polity. In fact, Pethrus regarded the church as governed by a conglomerate of divine and human persons, and he rejected any idea that the church was exclusively a pure democracy.¹⁸⁵ Drawing upon insights from the Swiss church historian Karl Rudolf Hagenbach, Pethrus noted that the local church was not strictly governed by an aristocratic, democratic, or monarchical system of government but rather by a blend of the three types.¹⁸⁶ Since Christ was King, he ultimately ruled the church. The local church's monarchical governance was evident in Christ's kingship. Even though

¹⁸¹ Pethrus, *Medan du stjärnorna räknar*, 1953, 177-178.

¹⁸² Nilsson, 108.

¹⁸³ Nilsson, 127.

¹⁸⁴ It is doubtful Pethrus perceived it as 'radical' but rather as 'biblical.'

¹⁸⁵ Pethrus, 'Guds församling,' *EH*, 1 September, 1927, 440.

¹⁸⁶ Pethrus, 'Guds församling,' 1927, 440.

Christ was the primary ruler of the church, God appointed elders and leaders who represented the aristocratic system of government. Moreover, God also appointed apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers according to Ephesians 4:11 to provide spiritual leadership for the rest of the church.¹⁸⁷ However, God did not neglect the ordinary members of the church but distributed spiritual gifts to both men and women. The fact that the New Testament allowed the whole church to participate in the selection of deacons manifested a democratic system of government (Acts 6:3-5).¹⁸⁸

To depict Pethrus' 'broader' understanding of ecclesiastical polity, the following section will address his independent local church concept as well as his views on elders and deacons and church discipline. Since Christ's kingship received limited attention during this period, the discussion will centre on the 'aristocratic' and 'democratic' elements of his church polity. However, as our study will show, Pethrus addressed the 'monarchical' aspect of the church in more depth in later years, but then he preferred to talk about Christ's rule of the church in architectural rather than monarchical terms.¹⁸⁹

3.6.1 The Independent Local Church Concept

Pethrus' independent local church concept is by far the most well known aspect of his ecclesiology, as Struble's work shows. David Bundy's recent study also points to the importance the concept had on foreign mission fields.¹⁹⁰ Since the historical circumstances of the doctrine have already been addressed above and its ecumenical implications will be discussed further below, only the doctrine's essential aspects will be presented here.

¹⁸⁷ Pethrus, 'Guds församling,' 1927, 440.

¹⁸⁸ Pethrus, 'Guds församling,' 1927, 440-441.

¹⁸⁹ See section, 4.2.2.1.

¹⁹⁰ See, David Bundy, *Visions of Apostolic Mission: Scandinavian Pentecostal Mission to 1935*.

In his book *De kristnas enhet*, Pethrus began his defence of ‘radical congregationalism’ by noting that the New Testament was binding on contemporary Christians and ‘decided what could be tolerated or not’.¹⁹¹ It was therefore imperative to remove everything that did not conform to the Scriptures, since all such accretions hindered the spiritual life development of the church.¹⁹² Having referred to authorities such as C. H. Spurgeon, C. E. Benander, K. R. Hagenbach, John Ongman, and P. Waldenström,¹⁹³ who all acknowledged that no structures existed above or alongside local churches in biblical times, Pethrus stressed: (1) Denominations were not mentioned in the New Testament and were therefore unbiblical. (2) Denominations were solely a human creation and therefore a threat against the Kingdom of God. (3) Denominationalism did not create unity but perpetuated divisions.¹⁹⁴ Because the Pentecostal movement had been accused of causing divisions, Pethrus particularly stressed that the ‘new movement’ was not the cause for the divisions. In fact, the problem related to a fundamental flaw with denominationalism.¹⁹⁵ Denominations gathered around a number of specific truths that were written down in creeds. Since all biblical truth could not be contained in the creeds, they became a source for divisions when new truths were discovered.¹⁹⁶ Apart from suffocating the Spirit’s desire for renewal, denominationalism also invalidated Christian unity since ‘no one was willing to do anything that could weaken one’s own

¹⁹¹ Pethrus, *De kristnas enhet*, 1919, 3.

¹⁹² Pethrus, *De kristnas enhet*, 1919, 3.

¹⁹³ That Pethrus singled out these authorities in his defence of the independent local church concept was no coincidence. Spurgeon’s example of remaining outside the British Baptist Union showed that Pethrus was not the first Baptist who had decided to remain outside the Baptist Union. The ‘Prince of Preachers’ had even preceded him. The fact that the principal of the Baptist seminary in Sweden, C. E. Benander, rejected denominationalism showed that even one of the Baptists’ foremost theologians did not agree with his denomination’s stance. The reference to John Ongman’s critique of regional missionary organisations was particularly ironic, since Ongman had recently tried to convince Pethrus to change his mind and return to the Baptist Union. The allusion to P. Waldenström, the founder of the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden (MCC), also showed that the pioneer of that denomination supported his position.

¹⁹⁴ Pethrus, *De kristnas enhet*, 1919, 3-25.

¹⁹⁵ Pethrus, *De kristnas enhet*, 1919, 16-17.

¹⁹⁶ Pethrus, *De kristnas enhet*, 1919, 16-17.

denomination'.¹⁹⁷ To avoid these problems, the only solution was to dismantle the denominations.¹⁹⁸

It is interesting to note that although Pethrus admitted being influenced by Durham's non-denominational ecclesiology, he did not mention Durham's name and only referred to some of his main arguments. Pethrus omitted, for instance, Durham's notion that denominations centralised power in the hands of a few people, who tended to become puffed up and lose their spiritual power. He also omitted the idea that denominationalism caused church members to idealise their leaders, which negated the principle of the equality of all believers.¹⁹⁹ However, Pethrus added an argument at the end of his book that Durham did not mention, namely mission organisations. According to proponents of denominationalism, denominations were needed since local churches were not capable of sustaining missionaries. Pethrus responded that the Bible did not speak of any other mission organisation apart from the local church.²⁰⁰ There was also no proof for the assertion that governing authorities would more easily recognise regional mission organisations than local churches. In fact, Filadelfia's experience in Brazil proved otherwise.²⁰¹ Moreover, nothing indicated that local churches were less capable of handling practical issues like finances and missionary properties.²⁰² On the contrary, missionaries that were directly commissioned from local churches generated greater interest, improved communication, encouraged more intercession, saved precious

¹⁹⁷ Pethrus, *De kristnas enhet*, 1919, 20-21.

¹⁹⁸ Pethrus, *De kristnas enhet*, 1919, 15-16.

¹⁹⁹ Nilsson, 111.

²⁰⁰ Pethrus, *De kristnas enhet*, 1919, 58-60.

²⁰¹ Filadelfia had commissioned five missionaries to Brazil. Filadelfia's attestation was sufficient for the Brazilian authorities in order for the missionaries to do their work. Thus a local church could function in the same legal and representative capacity as a mission organisation. Pethrus, *De kristnas enhet*, 1919, 62. However, Gunilla Nyberg-Oskarsson notes that in 1919 the Filadelfia church was unable to send missionary candidates to Congo but had to accept an invitation from the MCC in order for the candidates to begin their work. In fact, in 1921-1922, ten Swedish Pentecostal missionaries were not able to acquire working permits in Congo, which pointed to the fact that the local church was not always a sufficient solution to the commissioning of missionaries. The problems in Congo (and Rhodesia) eventually led to the establishment of SFM in 1924 and the subsequent conflict with A. P. Franklin. Thus, issues were often more complicated than Pethrus portrayed them. See, Nyberg-Oskarsson, 68-80.

²⁰² Pethrus, *De kristnas enhet*, 1919, 60-63.

resources, and improved solidarity.²⁰³ Thus, mission organisations did not justify denominational structures.

Even if mission organisations were an important topic in the discussion regarding denominationalism, Pethrus' key concern related to the importance of spiritual as opposed to denominational unity. Having refuted denominational unity, he proposed that spiritual unity had an inward and outward element. Inward unity related to the spiritual unity shared as members of the body of Christ, whereas outward unity related to the spiritual offices that united congregations in a network structure. As will be discussed further below, his emphasis on inward unity would leave a permanent mark on his ecumenical thinking, whereas his arguments concerning outward unity changed the SPM into a 'network church'.²⁰⁴

3.6.1.1 Inward Unity

Just as in the conflict regarding open and closed communion, Pethrus began his defence of spiritual unity by referring to the universal church. On the principle of the unity of the universal church, Pethrus concluded that almost all ecumenical efforts focused on outward, organisational unity, whereas the Bible spoke of inward, spiritual, unity as members of the body of Christ. Pethrus illustrated: 'People who disagree do not become one by dressing in identical clothes. But change their minds, give them one and the same spirit, then they shall be one even if they are not dressed the same'.²⁰⁵ Moreover, what was true for the universal church was also true for the local church. The love of Christ was a better adhesive for local churches than all human efforts.²⁰⁶ Paul's metaphor of the church as the temple of the Holy

²⁰³ Pethrus, *De kristnas enhet*, 1919, 63-66.

²⁰⁴ See section, 7.2. Andrew Lord uses the term 'network church' to describe church communities that are connected through links such as leaders, journals and conferences. See Andrew Lord, 'Network Church: A Pentecostal Ecclesiology Shaped by Mission,' 97.

²⁰⁵ Pethrus, *De kristnas enhet*, 1919, 28-29.

²⁰⁶ Pethrus, *De kristnas enhet*, 1919, 33.

Spirit, ‘which is built on the foundation of the apostle and the prophets’ (Ephesians 2:20-21), also pointed to the Holy Scriptures as the material that joined the members of the local church together.²⁰⁷ The argument that denominations were needed in order to protect the church from heresies was therefore incorrect. Clinging to God’s clear Word was the greatest safeguard against heresies.²⁰⁸ Finally, the shared experience of ‘saving grace, water baptism, and Spirit baptism [...] could unite people like nothing else’.²⁰⁹

3.6.1.2 Outward Unity

Having established that spiritual or inward unity was the foundational unity among Christians, Pethrus made it absolutely clear that what he and the Pentecostal Movement rejected was *human* organisations ‘that tried to unite local churches into a denomination’.²¹⁰ They did not reject outward organisations ‘that had true unity as a goal,’ and which could be proven to be of divine and apostolic origin’.²¹¹

The first of these ‘truly biblical’ outward organisations was the spiritual offices according to Ephesians 4:11. Pethrus explained that the spiritual offices should not be confused with the spiritual gifts that were given to each one. The spiritual offices were only given to certain individuals in order to perform specific tasks. Yet their ministries were not confined to a specific local church but were given to the universal church.²¹²

The first office Pethrus mentioned was the apostolic office. Based on Acts 8:14-15 and 9:32, he explained that the task of an apostle was to travel around and establish new churches. However, this specific office was no longer available but ceased with Jesus’ twelve disciples.

²⁰⁷ Pethrus, *De kristnas enhet*, 1919, 33.

²⁰⁸ For discussion on Pethrus’ view of the perspicuity of Scripture, see section 2.3.1.2.

²⁰⁹ Pethrus, *De kristnas enhet*, 1919, 38-39.

²¹⁰ Pethrus, *De kristnas enhet*, 1919, 42-43.

²¹¹ Pethrus, *De kristnas enhet*, 1919, 42-43.

²¹² Pethrus, *De kristnas enhet*, 1919, 42-44.

In fact, Pethrus even asserted that a mistake was made when the disciples selected Matthias to replace Judas Iscariot, since that office should have belonged to Saul of Tarsus.²¹³ It should be noted here that these statements are somewhat surprising since nothing in Acts indicates that the Apostles made a mistake (Acts 1:21-26). David Petts notes that limiting the apostolic office to the twelve disciples overlooks that Jesus himself, as well as individuals subsequent to the twelve disciples, were called apostles.²¹⁴ Thus, Pethrus' 'cessationist' argument shows that restorationism was not always consistently applied. It is interesting to note that following the Easter Bradford meeting in 1922 that witnessed administrative changes in the British Apostolic Church, Pethrus wrote a number of articles warning against 'the recent work of the enemy'.²¹⁵ In the first of these articles, he retracted his cessationist position from 1919 and affirmed that there were indeed apostles besides the Twelve in New Testament times.²¹⁶ Having acknowledged the possibility of modern-day apostles, Pethrus made an important caveat. Based on Paul's Corinthian correspondence, Pethrus was willing to accept that an apostle may have some authority over the churches he established. However, the Apostolic teaching that an apostle may serve as a spiritual figurehead over churches he had not established, Pethrus rejected as completely misleading.²¹⁷ In sum, the apostolic office was an office that was given by God alone to serve the universal church, but as opposed to the twelve apostles, it did not carry governing authority.

Apart from the apostolic office, Pethrus also regarded the ministries of prophets, evangelists, and even pastors and teachers as outward unifying bonds between local churches.

He admitted that in the Free Church tradition it was generally accepted that the calling of

²¹³ Pethrus, *De kristnas enhet*, 1919, 43-44.

²¹⁴ David Petts, *Body Builders: Gifts to make God's People Grow* (Mattersey, England: Mattersey Hall, 2002), 24-29.

²¹⁵ See, Pethrus, "'Apostlar" som distriktsföreståndare över fria, andedöpta församlingar,' *EH*, 30 August, 1923, 411; Pethrus, 'Apostlaämbetet,' 8 April, 1926, 176; Pethrus, 'Apostlaämbetet,' 15 April, 1926, 189; Pethrus, 'Apostlaämbetet,' 22 April, 1926, 200; Pethrus, 'Apostlaämbetet,' 29 April, 1926, 213.

²¹⁶ Pethrus, "'Apostlar" som distriktsföreståndare över fria, andedöpta församlingar,' 1923, 411.

²¹⁷ Pethrus, 'Apostlaämbetet,' 1926, 189.

pastors and teachers tied them to a local church. However, since these ministries were mentioned in the context of Ephesians 4:11, they were a lot more mobile and were to be regarded as gifts for the universal church.²¹⁸ Additionally, based on the New Testament epistles and the book of Acts, Pethrus proposed that joint ventures such as circular letters and financial aid also served as outward bonds that united local churches.²¹⁹

3.6.1.3 Ecumenism

The publication of *De kristnas enhet* had obvious ecumenical implications, but it also served as a watershed in Pethrus' stance toward ecumenism. As observed earlier, the Pentecostal movement was initially a spiritual renewal movement that found its way into several denominations. Its vision was to revive Christ's sleeping Bride before the imminent return of the Bridegroom. It is interesting to note that Pentecostalism's ecumenical vision coincided with the broader ecumenical interest of the time. The discovery that the missionary task was better achieved together rather than independently generated 'an energy' that was 'pooled' together at the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910²²⁰ and led to the birth of the ecumenical movement. Although Pethrus initially shared this ecumenical energy, he and the SPM were on a different trajectory that culminated in a rejection of the efforts of the ecumenical movement, as seen in Nathan Söderblom's *Life and Work* conference in 1925.

As previously noted, the reason for rejecting the efforts of the ecumenical movement was a combination of Filadelfia's excommunication in 1913, the movement's desire to find its own identity, its sense of spiritual superiority, and its experience of opposition from the outside world. However, the publication of *De kristnas enhet* in 1919 witnessed that the main

²¹⁸ Pethrus, *De kristnas enhet*, 1919, 46-47.

²¹⁹ Pethrus, *De kristnas enhet*, 1919, 49-51. Although not stated explicitly, in Pethrus' mind, the publication of *Evangelii Härold* served the same unifying purpose as Paul's letters in the New Testament.

²²⁰ Haight, vol. 3, 8.

factor for the revised ecumenical vision had everything to do with the movement's self-perception as a renewal movement of New Testament spirituality. For Pethrus, the Pentecostal movement was at the forefront of restoring New Testament spirituality to its rightful place in the church, and every hint of a reversal into the old ways of apostate Christianity had to be vehemently opposed. Christian unity was therefore based on believers' spiritual unity as members of the one body of Christ (the universal church).²²¹ All other forms of unity fell short of the unity the Bible prescribed.²²² In fact, Pethrus emphasised that Christians' spiritual unity had never been given full justice in all of church history.²²³ The church had rather focused on doctrines, creeds, and denominations, which only caused divisions and superficial unity.²²⁴ This backdrop explains why Pethrus insisted that other Christians 'disarmed' their denominations in order for 'a lasting peace' to exist between them and the Pentecostal movement.²²⁵

By the time of Nathan Söderblom's *Life and Work* conference in Stockholm in 1925, Pethrus' rejection of organisational unity had taken 'apocalyptic' proportions. In a sermon entitled *The Ecumenical Meeting in the Bible's Light*, he analysed the meeting in terms of John's description of the prostitute in Revelation 17. Although the meeting was not synonymous with the harlot, they shared three uncanny similarities.²²⁶ First, the goal of the meeting was to create 'one big federation of all denominations on earth,' which Revelation warned would take place in the last days.²²⁷ The meeting was thus a 'springboard for Antichrist'.²²⁸ Like a true conspiracy theorist, Pethrus surmised that the Catholic Church's absence from the meeting was part of a 'well conceived plan' to let all other churches first

²²¹ Pethrus, *De kristnas enhet*, 1919, 26-28.

²²² Pethrus, *De kristnas enhet*, 1919, 28-29.

²²³ Pethrus, *De kristnas enhet*, 1919, 28-29.

²²⁴ Pethrus, *De kristnas enhet*, 1919, 13-25.

²²⁵ Pethrus, *De kristnas enhet*, 1919, 23.

²²⁶ Pethrus, *Ekumeniska mötet i Bibelns ljus*, 1925, 3.

²²⁷ Pethrus, *Ekumeniska mötet i Bibelns ljus*, 1925, 5.

²²⁸ Pethrus, *Ekumeniska mötet i Bibelns ljus*, 1925, 5.

unite into one denomination, and then it would be easy to unite all churches under Rome.²²⁹ Second, Pethrus likened the meeting's financial and political discussions to the prostitute's association with the rich and powerful of the world. The church had therefore abandoned its spiritual power and compensated for the loss by relying on worldly powers.²³⁰ Finally, the elaborate garments of some of the delegates were analogous to the prostitute's fancy apparel. For Pethrus, these delegates were not dressed with Christ but more like the Old Testament priesthood.²³¹

Having noted these three common traits between the meeting and the prostitute in Revelation 17, Pethrus concluded that the meeting erased spiritual borders.²³² It did not consider whether a person was saved, which allowed 'ungodly people' to participate in the future of the church.²³³ Moreover, it permitted the inclusion of higher critics of the Bible who 'denied the inspiration of the Bible, Christ's divinity, the atonement, the resurrection, and the supernatural'.²³⁴ It also prepared the way for the introduction of the Catholic Church in Sweden, which was 'a horrible church whose hands dripped of blood' and which had 'millions of men and women's lives on its conscience'.²³⁵ As opposed to the ecumenical meeting's 'human unity,' Pethrus argued that the Lord had a much better solution, namely '*spiritual unity* – a true unity'.²³⁶

From these publications, it is possible to observe that Pethrus' shift in ecumenical vision was primarily related to a fear of compromising the Pentecostal movement's purpose of being a prophetic voice for New Testament spirituality. Participating in ecumenical endeavours that included unregenerated individuals, tolerated liberal theology, and encouraged fellowship

²²⁹ Pethrus, *Ekumeniska mötet i Bibelns ljus*, 1925, 8.

²³⁰ Pethrus, *Ekumeniska mötet i Bibelns ljus*, 1925, 10.

²³¹ Pethrus, *Ekumeniska mötet i Bibelns ljus*, 1925, 10-11.

²³² Pethrus, *Ekumeniska mötet i Bibelns ljus*, 1925, 12.

²³³ Pethrus, *Ekumeniska mötet i Bibelns ljus*, 1925, 12.

²³⁴ Pethrus, *Ekumeniska mötet i Bibelns ljus*, 1925, 13.

²³⁵ Pethrus, *Ekumeniska mötet i Bibelns ljus*, 1925, 15.

²³⁶ Pethrus, *Ekumeniska mötet i Bibelns ljus*, 1925, 19.

with apostate churches was a recipe for spiritual disaster. Unity was meaningless unless the Spirit united the hearts of believers ‘through the bond of peace’ (Ephesians 4:3). In fact, since the ecumenical movement was more interested in organisational unity than spiritual unity, it prepared the way for Antichrist rather than the Kingdom of God. This anti-ecumenical stance would remain intact until the discovery of the ‘one city – one (mega) church’ model in 1938.

3.6.2 Elders and Deacons

A foundational aspect of Free Church ecclesiology, namely that the church is ultimately governed by Christ, may be seen in Pethrus’ writings, yet not without reservation. Pethrus believed that the Christ’s monarchical rule was co-shared with elders and deacons, since Christ was no longer physically present on earth.²³⁷

In his memoirs, Pethrus admitted that he had a limited understanding of the New Testament’s instruction regarding elders and deacons during the first years of ministry at the Filadelfia church. Initially, he had a co-elder in Albert Engzell as well as a board of deacons as a ruling committee. Yet after careful study of the New Testament, he noticed that ‘the task of the deacons was more tailored toward material and philanthropical needs’.²³⁸ The elders, on the other hand, he understood as a group who had the pastor as one of its members, and who were responsible for teaching Scripture and discussing doctrinal matters before they were brought before the congregation. Based on these convictions, Pethrus explained that ‘the board of elders became the church’s ruling body that was responsible for the church’s governance and care’.²³⁹

²³⁷ Pethrus, ‘Andedöpta äldste och diakoner. Ett vilkor för seger i Guds församling,’ 1922, 193.

²³⁸ Pethrus, *Hänryckningens tid*, 1954, 166-167.

²³⁹ Pethrus, *Hänryckningens tid*, 1954, 167.

Josefsson and Fahlgren observe that the abovementioned change was ‘ambivalent’ and took place in successive steps.²⁴⁰ Filadelfia in Stockholm initially adopted the Baptist order of a senior pastor and a board of deacons, which was officially approved in 1916.²⁴¹ In 1921, Filadelfia changed this order by electing co-elders who, together with Pethrus, were responsible for the spiritual supervision of the church. Josefsson notes how the church minutes speak of joint elders and deacons meetings, and that the roles and the decisions were inconsistent and insufficiently defined.²⁴² In 1929, the tasks of the elders and the deacons were outlined, and in 1932, the new church polity was adopted in the church’s bylaws.²⁴³

Apart from some brief comments regarding the elders’ ministry being limited to the local church,²⁴⁴ Pethrus’ writings contain very little regarding the role of elders and deacons. The onetime Pethrus addressed the topic in somewhat greater length, the focus of the article only concerned the need of having ‘Spirit-baptised’ elders, which he perceived as imperative to have a victorious church.²⁴⁵ The absence of an in-depth discussion regarding elders and deacons was largely because it never became a matter of contention.²⁴⁶ However, the many changes regarding church polity show to what length Pethrus wanted to conform to the ideal pattern of the New Testament, and his emphasis on ‘Spirit-baptised’ elders mirrored his overall understanding of the church as a spiritual community.

²⁴⁰ Josefsson, 109; Fahlgren, 241.

²⁴¹ Josefsson, 109.

²⁴² Josefsson, 109.

²⁴³ Josefsson further notes that it was suggested that the elders should constitute the church’s board already in 1934. In 1936, new bylaws were adopted which stated that both the elders and the deacons should make up the church’s ruling board and share its responsibilities. In 1946, it was finally decided that the elders should constitute the ruling board and the deacons should serve as deputies. See, Josefsson, 109.

²⁴⁴ See for instance, Pethrus, ‘Apostlaämbetet,’ 1926, 200; Pethrus, *De kristnas enhet*, 1919, 47-48.

²⁴⁵ Pethrus, ‘Andedöpta äldste och diakoner. Ett vilkor för seger i Guds församling,’ 1922, 193.

²⁴⁶ In 1963, Pethrus briefly returned to the topic since there were local churches that could not find senior pastors. At this point, Pethrus argued that the New Testament never spoke of senior pastors over local churches but only of a group of elders who shared the leadership. Pethrus advised that one among the elders ought to be selected in order to lead the church services. Importantly, Pethrus only advocated this view *after* he had resigned as senior pastor of the Filadelfia church in Stockholm. See, Pethrus, ‘Församlingar utan föreståndare,’ *Dagen*, 16 July, 1963, 2.

3.6.3 Church Discipline

Pethrus' personal conflicts with prominent figures in the SPM have recently received an increasing interest from both academic and non-academic circles.²⁴⁷ In probably no other area has Lewi Pethrus received more criticism than in his involvement in the excommunication of church members. The excommunication of Franklin and Sven Lidman are the most outstanding examples because of their impact on the SPM. In these conflicts, the most recurring accusation against Pethrus concerned his uncompromising attitude towards people with a different opinion. Allegedly, any individual who opposed the movement's theological stance or Pethrus' leadership, or transgressed its numerous unwritten rules was quickly and severely punished without the possibility of presenting a proper defence.²⁴⁸ An excommunicated individual was shunned and isolated from any contact with the movement. Per-Olov Enquist's description of Swedish Pentecostals as a group of people 'staring into heaven and caring nothing for the people they tread underfoot'²⁴⁹ reflects the picture many outsiders have of Swedish Pentecostals in general and Pethrus in particular. Although Pethrus' practice of church discipline is important from a historical point of view, the purpose here is not to determine whether Pethrus' actions were correct or even consistent with his theology of church discipline. Rather, it is to show how church discipline functioned in his ecclesiology.

Following the excommunication of Franklin in 1929, Pethrus wrote a treatise concerning church discipline that was published in a series of articles in *Evangelii Härold* as

²⁴⁷ See for example, Marianne and Roland Gäreskog, *Lewi Pethrus i konflikt: Om några konflikter år 1929 mellan Lewi Pethrus och kända personer inom pingströrelsen* (Linköping: Marol, 2005) and Per-Olov Enquist, *Lewis resa* (Stockholm: Norstedts Förlag, 2001).

²⁴⁸ Bertil Carlsson, *Organisationer och beslutsprocesser inom pingströrelsen* (Järna: Järna Tryckeri AB, 1974), 24.

²⁴⁹ Enquist, 384.

well as in book form. To fully appreciate his emphasis on church discipline, it is imperative to first look at his understanding of the nature of God, sin, and the church.

Pethrus understood God's nature in dialectic yet mutually cooperative terms. He stressed that God was a God of love but also of justice and righteousness.²⁵⁰ He resented the modern tendency to reduce God to a kind and accommodating figure that 'resembled a weak contemporary person more than anything else'.²⁵¹ He also rejected the notion that a good God did not punish evil: 'It is precisely because he is good that he punishes evil. If God did not punish evil, he himself would be evil'.²⁵² He blamed the tendency to reduce God's righteousness to more 'acceptable' forms on contemporary Christianity's emphasis on tolerance and theologians' rejection of objective propitiatory atonement.²⁵³

As previously observed, Pethrus denied that the church was a mix of saints and sinners but rather regarded the church as a congregation of the holy.²⁵⁴ For Pethrus, the very definition of the church as group that was 'called out' and set apart for God meant that the church was an entity that was 'separated from the world, impurity, and sin'.²⁵⁵ People who were 'truthful and honest' constituted the church.²⁵⁶ Church discipline was therefore an absolute necessity since it kept the world away from the church. In fact, he perceived church discipline of such great importance that a church's identity depended on it: 'If the world enters the church and erodes the dividing wall between the church and the world, the church of God is no longer a church, and it is a mockery to call it a church of God'.²⁵⁷ Using the example of Judas Iscariot, Pethrus admitted that it was almost impossible to keep the local

²⁵⁰ Pethrus, *Kristen församlingstukt*, 1930, 7.

²⁵¹ Pethrus, *Kristen församlingstukt*, 1930, 7.

²⁵² Pethrus, *Kristen församlingstukt*, 1930, 7.

²⁵³ Pethrus had in mind P. P. Waldenström's understanding of the atonement. Waldenström denied that Christ's death on the cross was needed in order to appease God's wrath. See, Pethrus, 'P. P. Waldenström död,' *EH*, 19 July, 1917, 120.

²⁵⁴ See section, 3.3.

²⁵⁵ Pethrus, *Kristen församlingstukt*, 1930, 15.

²⁵⁶ Pethrus, *Kristen församlingstukt*, 1930, 41, 43.

²⁵⁷ Pethrus, *Kristen församlingstukt*, 1930, 16.

church entirely clean from impure people, but that did not mean that ‘we should not try to keep it as clean as we possibly can’.²⁵⁸ Thus, sin was understood as an unwanted intruder that corrupted and paralysed the church. The holiness of the church was nowhere understood in light of her identity with the Triune God but in the churches’ and the individuals’ faithful devotion to Christ and their separation from the world.²⁵⁹

For Pethrus, church discipline also served an important role for the function of the church. Based on 1 Timothy 3:15b, Pethrus noted that the church was called to be the ‘pillar and the foundation of the truth to the world’.²⁶⁰ Neglecting church discipline jeopardised that immense responsibility. Church discipline was therefore not only a matter of maintaining the purity of the church, but it also guaranteed that the truth was not withheld from the world.

3.7 Summary

Having examined both general and particular aspects of Pethrus’ ecclesiology from 1907-1933, the recurring ecclesiological idea was of the church as a spiritual community. Although he personally reflected on ecclesiological issues, influences from radical Pietism, Moravianism, Free Church ecclesiology and the Holiness Movement significantly shaped its diversity. The church was perceived as consisting of regenerated, and often ‘Spirit-baptised,’ believers who had confessed their allegiance to Christ through believer’s baptism. Christ’s atonement was the act that instituted the church and served as its primary message. The government of the church was regarded as ultimately in the hands of Christ. Yet Christ delegated his authority to elders and deacons, and he equipped church members by his Spirit to exercise their particular gifts and ministries in the edification of the local and the universal church. The independent local church was understood as the only model that reflected the

²⁵⁸ Pethrus, *Kristen församlingstukt*, 1930, 12.

²⁵⁹ Pethrus, *Kristen församlingstukt*, 1930, 18-19.

²⁶⁰ Pethrus, *Kristen församlingstukt*, 1930, 37-43.

ideal pattern of the Early Church. Any artificial organisation above or between local churches was considered unbiblical and a hindrance to the Spirit. Because denominations were perceived as a hindrance to the Spirit, Pethrus rejected all forms of ecumenism that did not correspond to the Pentecostal movement's understanding of spiritual unity. The complete rejection of any type of organisation outside the local church contributed to a strong isolationist attitude toward other Christians. Yet the movement's attitude strengthened its internal networks and sense of divine election. Although Pethrus affirmed that the survival of the universal church was guaranteed because of Christ's atonement, he argued that a local church's survival was only ensured by a strict implementation of church discipline. Sin was perceived as coming from the outside and contaminating an otherwise pure church. Thus, there was no acknowledgment of the church as a *corpus permixtum*. The preservation of a church's purity was primarily the responsibility of each individual member, yet it became the responsibility of the church leaders if publically violated.

CHAPTER 4

LEWI PETHRUS' ECCLESIOLOGICAL THOUGHT 1934-1958: THE CHURCH AS AN AGENT OF EXPANSION AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

4.1 Contextual Narrative

As the previous chapter showed, Lewi Pethrus' excommunication from the Baptist Union in 1913 cemented his belief in the autonomous local church, free from any denominational affiliation. Rather than bringing churches together, the vision of independent local churches 'united in the Spirit through the bond of peace' (Ephesians 4:3) created an uneasy tension between the Free Churches and the SPM that lasted well into the 1930s. Struble notes that a slight crack began to appear in the Pentecostal movement's isolationist attitude in 1933, because Pethrus sensed that its attitude was leading the movement down the dangerous path of denominationalism.¹ Pethrus explains in his memoirs how a number of Pentecostal churches even stopped welcoming Spirit-baptised individuals (*pingstbetonade*), because of the harsh treatment the churches received following the excommunication of Franklin in 1929. The reaction of the churches even affected Pethrus himself, who was criticised for being 'too tolerant with those who were not *one* [emphasis Pethrus] with the Pentecostal movement'.² Pethrus raised the issue at an elders' and deacons' meeting in March 1933 and a few months later at the national conference in Kölingared. He feared that if the Pentecostal movement isolated itself too much it would become another denomination and cut itself off from 'a large section [of Christianity] that truly belong to the body of Christ'.³ In fact, he surmised that such an extreme attitude contradicted the Pentecostal movement's initial longing, which was to welcome everyone who longed for a fuller work of the Spirit regardless

¹ Struble, 114-115.

² Pethrus, *Hos Herren är makten*, 1955, 48.

³ Pethrus, *Hos Herren är makten*, 1955, 50.

of denominational affiliation.⁴ Nils-Eije Stävare suggests that Pethrus' speech at the Kölingared conference served a 'strategic' religiopolitical purpose in attempting to prevent 'Pentecostal-friendly' individuals, who had withdrawn from the Swedish Mission Society, the Örebro Mission Society, and groups loyal to Södermalm's Free Church,⁵ to form a new Pentecostal denomination in direct competition to the Pentecostal Movement.⁶ Pethrus' 'openness' was therefore a calculated move to eliminate competition and to ensure that the 'already saved' were not 'lost'.⁷ Stävare might be correct that this religiopolitical purpose contributed to his actions. However, making this the sole purpose for his openness in 1933 limits his intentions too much. Pethrus warned of the dangers of isolationism even at the pinnacle of the movement's isolationism in 1931. He then warned that isolationism carried dangers as well as blessings, the dangers being the possible exclusion of well-intended Christians.⁸ Pethrus specifically mentioned that the exclusion of other Christians was something the movement 'had to be aware of'.⁹ Consequently, apart from the religiopolitical purpose, Pethrus' 'openness' was a response to a previously foreseen danger that had now materialised in the movement. At any rate, Pethrus' more open stance toward other Spirit-Baptised Christians became the first step toward a greater ecumenical interest at the end of the 1930s.

It should also be noted here that Pethrus' 'liberal' stance toward other Christians is also visible in his language. From the time of Pethrus' 'openness' in 1933 the distinction between

⁴ Pethrus, *Hos Herren är makten*, 1955, 49-50.

⁵ Södermalm's independent church had defended Franklin in his conflict with the Lewi Pethrus, and received him after his excommunication.

⁶ Nils-Eije Stävare, 'Sociala insatser och medlemsframgångar,' in *Pingströrelsen: Händelser och utveckling under 1900-talet*, vol 1, (Örebro: Libris Förlag, 2007), 122-123. See also, Alf Lindberg, 216.

⁷ Nils-Eije Stävare, 'Sociala insatser och medlemsframgångar,' 123.

⁸ Pethrus, *Vår ställning till andra kristna*, 1931, 31.

⁹ Pethrus, *Vår ställning till andra kristna*, 1931, 31.

the ‘Spirit-baptised’ and the ‘non Spirit-baptised’ ceased almost entirely in his writings.¹⁰ The disappearance of the distinction at this particular point in time indicates that the primary reasons behind the dualism were to validate the Pentecostal Movement’s existence, as well as to accentuate the importance of the Pentecostal Movement’s distinctive beliefs, such as Spirit baptism as a second work of grace, speaking in tongues as the initial evidence of Spirit baptism, and divine healing. Thus in 1933, when it became clear that the Pentecostal Movement was not a fad that would soon disappear,¹¹ the justification for the movement’s *raison d’être* was no longer needed, making the distinction between the ‘Spirit-baptised’ and the ‘non Spirit-baptised’ largely redundant. Moreover, the lessening of the ‘Spirit-baptised’ and ‘non Spirit-baptised’ dualism also corresponded with a deeper recognition of the church as a *corpus permixtum*. Though infrequent in the 1930s, in the 1940s and the 1950s,¹² Pethrus attributed the holiness of the church to a greater degree to God’s abiding presence in the church as a redeemed community in Christ, as opposed to the members’ individual holiness.¹³ This is not to say that Pethrus began to minimise the importance of personal purity for the welfare of the church but rather that Pethrus more willingly recognised flaws and errors within the Pentecostal movement while simultaneously defending its legitimacy.¹⁴

Having fought a great number of religious critics during the first two decades of the Pentecostal movement, the Filadelfia church and the SPM entered in the 1930s a period of rapid growth. In 1930, the Filadelfia church inaugurated its new church building, which was

¹⁰ Although infrequent, Pethrus’ dualism between the ‘Spirit-baptised’ and the ‘non Spirit-baptised’ occurs in later writings, but the sense of spiritual superiority is almost completely absent. See for example, Pethrus, ‘Missionärsparet Leanders övergång till Filadelfiaförsamlingen i Stockholm,’ *EH*, 16 January, 1936, 48; Pethrus, ‘Pingstväckelsen och extasen,’ *EH*, 23 April, 1936, 345.

¹¹ Struble, 70.

¹² Pethrus, ‘Hoppet om mera enhet bland de kristna,’ *EH*, 16 February, 1939, 138.

¹³ Pethrus, ‘De frikyrkliga och pingstväckelsen,’ *EH*, 26 August, 1943, 680; Pethrus, ‘De andliga ämbetena,’ *EH*, 1 July, 1948, 431; Pethrus, *En såningsman gick ut*, 1956, 28-30.

¹⁴ See for example, Pethrus, ‘De svenska frikyrkorna och pingstväckelsen: Pingstväckelsen motsvarar ett andligt behov i tiden,’ *EH*, 27 January, 1938, 69.

at the time, the largest religious auditorium in Scandinavia, seating more than 3,000 people.¹⁵ The Stockholm Filadelfia church was not the only Swedish Pentecostal church to undertake such an ambitious building project, but many other congregations followed its example, erecting buildings with a seating capacity that far outnumbered their current membership.¹⁶ The movement's increased membership was not only a result of aggressive evangelistic efforts and successful retention of 'second generation Pentecostals,'¹⁷ but also a consequence of the steady influx of Pentecostal-friendly (*pingstbetonade*) individuals from the Free Churches who welcomed the SPM's newfound openness.¹⁸ It is also worth mentioning, as Nils-Eije Stävare points out, that the willingness of Swedish Pentecostal churches to provide food and lodging for scores of unemployed people in the wake of the financial depression of 1929 significantly enhanced the movement's image among the general population.¹⁹

For Pethrus personally, the rapid growth of the movement created an occasion to formulate his church growth strategies. The previous emphasis on the independent local church model, with its 'unity in the Spirit' ideal, was reaffirmed and heralded as a foundational church growth principle, yet extended to include the 'one city – one (mega) church' model. Pethrus noted in his memoirs that the 'one city – one church' model became a key ecclesiological concept at the end of the 1930s, and especially during the discussions of a possible incorporation of the Östermalm's Free Church with the Filadelfia church in the beginning of the 1940s. Like so many Baptist churches before them, the Östermalm Free Church decided to break away from Stockholm's Fifth Baptist church in 1936 largely based on their theological preference for the 'Pentecostal message'. According to Pethrus, being

¹⁵ For the exact numbers of the growth of the Filadelfia church between 1930-1935, see Pethrus, *Hos Herren är makten*, 1955, 24-25.

¹⁶ Struble, 118-119.

¹⁷ Stävare, 124.

¹⁸ Alf Lindberg considers the influx of Spirit-baptised individuals from the Free Churches as one of the major reasons behind the SPM's growth in the 1930s. Alf Lindberg, *Väckelse, frikyrklighet, pingströrelse* (Södertälje: Nya Wiking tryckeri AB, 1985), 217. See also, Struble, 124-125.

¹⁹ Stävare, 91-92, 117. See also, Sundstedt, vol. 4, 125-157.

situated on the north side of Stockholm caused a dilemma for their newly appointed pastor, Elis Lindskog, who shared Pethrus' belief that there should not be more than one local church in each city.²⁰ The conversations between the two pastors eventually led to a complete merger between the churches in February 1941. It is conceivable, as Joel Halldorf points out, that Elis Lindskog's motivation for a merger was also driven by a hope of becoming one of Filadelfia's main pastors, in light of Pethrus' recent resignation as senior pastor of the Filadelfia church and his acceptance of a pastoral position in Chicago in 1940.²¹ The problems that followed in the wake of Pethrus' sudden²² return from America in October 1941, and Lindskog's insistence of the reestablishment of the Östermalm church in December 1944, give a lot of credence to such a theory.²³ Nevertheless, Pethrus' memoirs testify to the importance that the 'one city – one church' concept came to have in the beginning of the 1940s.²⁴ Pethrus notes, for example, that the 'recently discovered truth' of the 'one city – one church' model carried the same importance for his fellow co-worker, Paul Ongman,²⁵ as the independent church model had done in previous decades. Pethrus further states that for co-pastor, Allan Törnberg, the model was, 'very important detail in the divine plan' and could spell 'disastrous

²⁰ See, Pethrus, *Hos Herren är makten*, 1955, 137-154.

²¹ See, Joel Halldorf, 'Regn, regn, färdas över oss': Algot Nicklasson och förnyelseväckelsen inom pingströrelsen 1950-51 (Lund: Lunds Universitet, 2004), 26-27.

²² Pethrus' sudden return from America in October 1941 has generated significant debate among Swedish Pentecostal historians. Halldorf explains that Pethrus' departure in February 1941 related to the brewing conflict with Lidman and the opposition he faced regarding the creation of a daily newspaper. Rather than jeopardising an outright conflict with Lidman, which he was not sure to win, Pethrus favoured a peaceful resolution and asked for a three-year leave in order to take up the position in Chicago. Citing Adrian Holmberg, Halldorf argues that Pethrus' departure was an 'utter defeat' that left him broken and depressed in America. Although Halldorf gives no explanation for Pethrus' return to Sweden only six months after his arrival in Chicago in May 1941, he explains that the time Pethrus spent in the USA reinvigorated his strength to the point that he immediately undertook new ambitious projects upon his return to Sweden. However, Colletti explains Pethrus' reason for leaving Chicago in more nuanced terms. According to Colletti, Pethrus' time in Chicago was marked by significant literary productivity and his reason for leaving had to do with the political problems of relocating his family to Chicago. See, Halldorf, 'Regn, regn, färdas över oss', 25. Colletti, 25.

²³ Halldorf, 'Regn, regn, färdas över oss', 27-28.

²⁴ See Pethrus, 'Den nytestamentliga enhetstanken,' *EH*, 23 January, 1941, 68-70.

²⁵ Paul Ongman was the son of John Ongman, the founder of ÖM.

consequences' for Filadelfia unless it was followed.²⁶ As will be shown below, the 'one city – one (mega) church' model almost came to be synonymous with successful church growth. Yet the model was not only instrumental in forming Pethrus' church growth principles, but it also served as an important vehicle for awakening his interest in *visible* ecumenism. The model's explicit role in mending divisions among local churches significantly contributed to his willingness to initiate the first ecumenical conference with active Pentecostal participation in 1944.²⁷

In 1938, Pethrus devoted an entire booklet to explaining, what he called, 'the Secret of the Success' [*Framgångens hemlighet*].²⁸ His perception of the numerical success of the 1930s was not limited to one reason alone, but rather to a multiplicity of reasons. Attributing success to solely one area such as 'political, social or spiritual' was something that he considered a cardinal mistake, leading to 'disastrous consequences'.²⁹ On the contrary, the key for successful church growth he found in the Book of Acts and the New Testament epistles which, according to him, 'displayed unity and diversity in its most beautiful harmony'.³⁰ For Pethrus, obedience to the unity in diversity principle, not elevating one characteristic over another,³¹ guaranteed growth for any church.³² Although not stating this explicitly, to judge by the title of the book the SPM had obviously abided by this 'winning' formula.

²⁶ Pethrus, *Hos Herren är makten*, 1955, 149.

²⁷ For a further discussion on Pethrus' ecumenical initiative in 1944, see section 4.3 below.

²⁸ Pethrus, *Framgångens hemlighet*, 1938, 105.

²⁹ Pethrus, *Framgångens hemlighet*, 1938, 105.

³⁰ Pethrus, *Framgångens hemlighet*, 1938, 108.

³¹ Pethrus vaguely explains these characteristics as 'the material by which the church was built, the circumstances by which the disciples were introduced to Christianity, the different conditions in which they lived, the multiplicity of character which there developed, and the different tools which were there displayed.' Pethrus, *Framgångens hemlighet*, 1938, 108.

³² Pethrus, *Framgångens hemlighet*, 1938, 109.

The confidence exuded in the book was symptomatic of the SPM during a great part of the 1930s.³³ The success of the movement affected Pethrus in a negative way, however. Having been the movement's undisputed leader from its inception in 1919 (and then adding success to an already undisputed position),³⁴ Pethrus was emboldened to take actions that deviated from his own ecclesiological convictions. He began to exhibit the characteristics of a bishop or 'Pentecostal dictator' as Sven Lidman scornfully labelled him.³⁵ The most notable deviation became visible in his dealings with ÖM in 1937.³⁶ Having recently returned from a visit that lasted almost a year, to the United States, Pethrus made a trip to Örebro on 6 July in

³³ It is important to note here, as Sahlberg points out, that after 1933, the growth of the Filadelfia church stagnated and did not display the same success as other Swedish Pentecostal churches. Sahlberg argues that the limited growth was the chief reason Pethrus temporarily resigned as the church's pastor in 1935. See, Sahlberg, 86-87.

³⁴ See, Sahlberg, 57-58. Quoting Nils Bloch-Hoell and Emanuel Linderholm, Alf Lindberg contributes Pethrus' undisputed leadership to Pethrus' talent, piety, resolute will, firm calling, and personal trips and contacts with the local churches. Lindberg, *Väckelse, frikyrklighet, pingströrelse*, 174-175.

³⁵ Sven Lidman, *Resan till domen* (Stockholm: Lindbergs Tryckeriaktiebolag, 1949), 80.

³⁶ ÖM originated as an independent mission society within the confines of a local church, the Örebro Baptist Church. The creation of an independent mission society was by no means tension free since it coincided with the Baptist Union's attempts at establishing its own mission society. ÖM might have been a 'shooting star' in the history of the Swedish Baptist Union if it were not for the leadership and support of John Ongman. As the pastor of the newly formed Örebro Filadelfia church, Ongman highly endorsed missionary efforts while at the same time emphasising a local church's right to independent initiatives without the need of having to leave its denomination. Thus, in John Ongman and the Örebro Filadelfia church, ÖM found fertile ground for future expansion without a necessary separation from the Baptist Union. The tension that existed between the Baptist Union and ÖM did not end as a result of the society's link to Ongman and the Örebro Filadelfia church but rather perpetuated it. Under Ongman's influence, the members of the society adopted a favourable view of 'the new [Pentecostal] movement,' witnessed the establishment of a 'rival' Bible school for the training of future missionaries (*Örebro Missionskola*), and commissioned its own missionaries - events that caused significant resentment in the Baptist Union.³⁶ John Ongman's decision to resign as pastor of the Örebro Filadelfia church in order to devote himself fully to ÖM, combined with the transfer of missionaries from Örebro Filadelfia church to ÖM, became the catalysts by which the society freed itself from its link to a local church and formed itself as an independent mission organisation within the Baptist Union in 1918. This constitutional move strained the relationship with the Baptist Union even further. To make things even worse, the proliferation of ÖM continued unabated, seeing the implementation of a general secretary, the creation of a weekly magazine (*MissionBaneret*), and even its own hymnal (*Andliga Sånger*). The proliferation of ÖM created problems for the Baptist Union but also for local Baptist churches since they were now forced to choose which mission organisation to support. ÖM's openness toward the Pentecostal revival was a key factor in many churches' decisions to support ÖM. After the death of John Ongman in 1931, who had been a strong unifying factor, the division between ÖM and the Baptist Union became too great to bridge. In order to stem the tide of ÖM, the Baptist Union proposed a number of constitutional changes that would oblige local churches to establish more formal links with the Union. After a drawn-out process, the changes were officially accepted, leading to a complete separation between ÖM and the Baptist Union in 1937. The congregations that supported ÖM and withdrew from the Baptist Union in protest of its actions, now faced the same organisational dilemma as Pethrus faced in 1913, namely to join an already established denomination or to remain as independent churches. A third, very appealing, option was to become Pentecostal churches since they were now identical in both doctrine and organisation, apart from their belief in mission organisations. Lindberg, 118-130.

order to report for the readers of *Evangelii Härold* as to whether ÖM was interested in closer ties with the Pentecostal movement. His conversation with the general secretary of ÖM, John Magnusson, revealed that Pethrus' intention was not merely one of interest in the attitudes of the society, but rather of a full integration of ÖM in the Pentecostal Movement. The trip to Örebro did not turn out as Pethrus hoped. Magnusson explained that he could neither speak for the local churches since they were completely independent, nor for ÖM since 'it was not its custom to act by itself'.³⁷ Magnusson suggested instead that representatives from both sides should meet to further discuss the matter. Dissatisfied with Magnusson's response, Pethrus wrote a number of stinging articles against ÖM in *Evangelii Härold*. In them, he criticised ÖM for not having their own *raison d'être* because they did not meet any existing need that the Pentecostal Movement had not already met. Having two or more churches in the same city also contradicted the New Testament principle of 'one city – one church' and wasted precious resources in the maintenance of additional church buildings.³⁸ The greatest hurdle for an integration of ÖM in the Pentecostal movement, however, was its structure as a mission organisation. Because Magnusson rejected Pethrus' view that mission organisations were unbiblical just because they were not mentioned in the Bible,³⁹ an integration of ÖM in the Pentecostal Movement was therefore impossible as long as ÖM maintained their organisation. Although the idea of a possible integration was discussed on a local level in 1946,⁴⁰ the obstacle of organisation and the growing opposition toward Pethrus' ecumenical efforts within the ranks of the Pentecostal movement⁴¹ ended any hope of unification of the

³⁷ John Magnusson, 'Örebromissionen och pingstfolket,' *EH*, 19 August, 1937, 689.

³⁸ Pethrus, 'Örebromissionen och pingstfolket,' *EH*, 29 July, 1937, 625-627.

³⁹ Struble, 156.

⁴⁰ For a detailed description of the historical circumstances surrounding the unity conferences and the reasons for their failure, see section 4.3 below.

⁴¹ In an article in *Dagen* in 1953, Pethrus intimated that it was the opposition within the Pentecostal movement itself that brought an end to the ecumenical efforts of the 1940s. See, Pethrus, 'Frikyrkömötet och kristen enhet,' *Dagen*, 18 March, 1953, 3.

two movements. ÖM opted instead for preserving its freedom and continuing as its own denomination.

As stated above, Pethrus' dealings with ÖM showed a discrepancy between his concrete and idealised ecclesiology. For almost three decades, Pethrus had been the great proponent of the independent church model. However, when he approached ÖM *on his own initiative*, he acted as a bishop, assuming the role of an authoritative spokesperson for the entire movement, gainsaying the very essence of the independent church model. Alf Lindberg poignantly depicts the irony of the situation: '...the movement that more than any advocated that its churches were autonomous found itself represented by one sole person who, on his own accord, acted on their behalf'.⁴² However, the one who most vividly depicted the irony was Pethrus' closest co-worker, Sven Lidman, who called the entire attempt a 'religiopolitical *Anschluss*',⁴³ likening Pethrus' actions to Nazi Germany's annexation of Austria in 1938.⁴⁴ In addition, Pethrus' use of his church growth principles as a tool of argumentation indicates that his ecclesiological convictions often served pragmatic ends that were often synonymous with a greater expansion of the Pentecostal movement. The fact that he even violated such a highly esteemed ecclesiological ideal as the independent church model shows to what length he was willing to go for the advancement of the Pentecostal Movement. It is important to note, however, that at the ecumenical conference in 1946, he publically apologised for the way he had handled the situation in 1937.⁴⁵

From 1941 onward, Pethrus faced an enemy that he would fight with all his might for decades to come: worldliness in church and society. The 1930s was a decade of strong urbanisation and industrialisation that contributed to widespread secularisation in societal life.

⁴² Lindberg, 222.

⁴³ Lidman, 80.

⁴⁴ Lidman takes the irony even further when stating that, as opposed to the Austrians, ÖM resisted Pethrus' attempts of an annexation. Lidman, 80.

⁴⁵ Struble, 177.

The removal of mandatory catechism in public schools, the transfer of responsibility in social welfare away from the church in favour of the state, and the change from a producer to a consumer mentality, were just some areas in which secularisation was felt.⁴⁶ As the Pentecostal Movement permeated Swedish society, the inevitable consequence of its new existence was a greater susceptibility to the negative influences of the world.⁴⁷ The alarming trends from totalitarian regimes such as Germany and Russia augmented the fears even further.⁴⁸ Pethrus noted that he did not become aware of the rapid decline of morality in society and the ‘shallowness and spiritual sloth’⁴⁹ that had affected Swedish Pentecostals until after returning from his brief stay in America during the spring and summer of 1941. He explained that the fatigue he experienced before leaving for America prevented him from seeing the gravity of the situation.⁵⁰ However, returning reinvigorated from his short spell in America in the fall of 1941, he turned all his attention to combat this new ‘political’ threat.⁵¹

⁴⁶ Stävare, 90-91.

⁴⁷ Pethrus, *I dag lek, imorgon tårar*, 1942, 9-14.

⁴⁸ Halldorf, 23.

⁴⁹ Pethrus, *Hos Herren är makten*, 1955, 199.

⁵⁰ Pethrus, *Hos Herren är makten*, 1955, 199. Pethrus’ statement is not entirely correct since traces of his concern for the problems in society can be found in his earlier writings. See, Pethrus, *Ytlighet – Ett tidens tecken*, 1939.

⁵¹ Pethrus’ apparent ‘shift’ from a previously ‘apolitical’ to a politically engaged position has generated a lot of discussion among Swedish scholars. Of particular interest has been the search for the reasons, the time and the roots of the ‘shift’. Carlsson has thoroughly analysed the perspectives of Carl-Erik Sahlberg [*Pingströrelsen, kyrkorna och samhället: En studie kring tidningen Dagen 1964-1974*], Göran V. Johansson [*Kristen demokrati på svenska*], Göran Gustafsson [*Religion och politik: Studier kring samfundens inställning till Kristen Demokratisk Samling valåret 1964*], Curt Dahlgren [*Maranata: En sociologisk studie av en sekrörelses uppkomst och utveckling*], et al., and points out that there is a general tendency among scholars to view the shift as a development taking place from the early, immature, and ‘apolitical’ phase of Swedish Pentecostalism, during the first three decades of the movement, to a mature, politically active, phase of the 1940s onward. Joel Halldorf has recently followed this line of reasoning and argued that, ‘Pethrus’ direct political involvement meant a decisive break with the attitudes of the young Pethrus’. Joel Halldorf, ‘Lewi Pethrus and the Creation of a Christian Counterculture,’ 365. However, Carlsson notes that this theory is closely linked to theory of the dying of ‘apocalypticism’ in Swedish Pentecostalism. Based on Pethrus’ own writings, Carlsson presents four reasons that more objectively, and in my estimation, more accurately explain the cause of the ‘shift’ toward political engagement: First, Carlsson notes how Pethrus explains the lack of political engagement in the 1920s as a result of the resistance and the lack of resources of the new movement, although he acknowledges that political engagement might have been a subsidiary interest as well. Second, Carlsson notes that it is not the political ‘content’ in itself that changes but the forms and the extent of the political interest. The form and the extent of the political interest grow, in a trial-and-error fashion, from ‘the first step of only voting,’ to electing Christian party members, to forming a lobbying group *Kristet samhällsansvar* [Christian Responsibility in Society], to the final step of ‘initiating a Christian party’ in 1964. Third, Carlsson further observes that Pethrus’ political actions

In 1942, Pethrus published the book *Idag lek – i morgon tårar: Tankar kring tidsläget* [Today play – tomorrow tears: Thoughts concerning the current time] in which he outlined what he perceived to be the current threats against society and Christianity as a whole. Materialism, atheism, entertainment, alcohol, eroticism, delinquency, and increased urbanisation were just some of the things that threatened to ruin the church.⁵² For Pethrus, the danger especially extended to the younger generation, which was particularly susceptible to the temptations of the world.⁵³ In order to protect the church from the world's influence, Pethrus and the SPM employed both a defensive and an offensive tactic. The defensive tactic focused on erecting high walls of moral conduct around the churches. Entertainment such as movies, sports, dancing, drinking, gambling, and smoking were all perceived as avenues for the world to corrupt the individual and the church.⁵⁴ These things were regarded as the polar opposite of a 'rich spiritual life that a Christian should own'.⁵⁵ Firm rules of dress and personal appearance were also enforced on ministers and laypersons alike.⁵⁶ Any transgression of these rules was met with strict church discipline, with excommunication as a possible outcome.

On the other hand, the offensive centred on fighting the enemy on his own turf, namely in the public and political arena where these ungodly influences were understood to

must be understood in light of Pethrus' fight *for* the influence of Christianity in society, which became a more pronounced fight *against* the elements that hindered it, such as moral dissolution and secularisation. Finally, Carlsson notes that Pethrus' political engagement is tailored toward the ethical and only secondarily to the eschatological. In fact, as opposed to many other scholars, Carlsson argues that the eschatological never hindered the ethical emphasis but only influenced and directed its course. See, Carlsson, 199-205. See also in particular, Pethrus, 'Mina ändrade åsikter,' *Dagen*, 29 April, 1964, 2. For a recent survey of Lewi Pethrus' and the SPM's political engagement, see Magnus Wahlström, 'Kampen mot avkristningen: Olika vägar för rörelsens politiska engagemang,' *Pingströrelsen: Händelser och utveckling under 1900-talet* (Örebro: Libris förlag, 2007), 2:377-390.

⁵² See Pethrus, *I dag lek, i morgon tårar*, 1942, 7-150.

⁵³ See for example, Pethrus, 'Ungdomen och smutslitteraturen,' *Dagen*, 11 november, 1952, 3, 7.

⁵⁴ Pethrus, *I dag lek, i morgon tårar*, 1942, 36-39.

⁵⁵ Pethrus, *I dag lek, i morgon tårar*, 1942, 40-41.

⁵⁶ Lewi Pethrus, Elis Lindskog, Henning Thuling, 'Skicken eder efter denna världen: Ett ståndpunktstagande av filadelfiaförsamlingen i Stockholm,' *EH*, 9 December, 1943, 981; Pethrus, 'Gudstjänstens helgd,' *Dagen*, 31 July, 1953, 3.

originate.⁵⁷ The reason for this new offensive rested on the divine responsibility true Christians shared, not only in preaching the gospel as a means of social change, but also in promoting Christian values for the welfare of the society as a whole. The most ambitious project in the offensive against ungodly influences was the establishment of the daily newspaper *Dagen* in 1945.⁵⁸ *Dagen* surpassed any other project Pethrus had undertaken up until that time. In order to justify such an ambitious project Pethrus particularly emphasised *Dagen's* crucial role as a defender of the Gospel and a weapon against the moral corruption prevalent in the public sphere.⁵⁹ Thus, he repeatedly informed his readers that Sweden's dire moral condition justified heroic efforts on everybody's part.⁶⁰ In 1955, Pethrus was able to create another ally to the newspaper *Dagen* by bringing down the Swedish radio monopoly and beginning broadcasts from Tangier in Morocco. Just as during the establishment of *Dagen* a decade previously, the founding of the International Broadcasting Association (IBRA) was portrayed not only as an effective evangelistic tool to fulfil the great commission⁶¹ but also as an important vehicle in the systematic fight against the de-christianisation of society.⁶² The 1940s and the 1950s were therefore decades that clearly depicted Pethrus' industriousness in order to meet the challenges facing him.

However, his offensive tactic did not sit well with everyone in the movement. Having been a movement with a strong 'sectarian'⁶³ element, Pethrus' increased interest for socio-political issues was by no means unanimously accepted. Sven Lidman was particularly

⁵⁷ Pethrus, 'De kristnas medborgerliga ansvar och rättigheter,' *DK*, September 1944, 162.

⁵⁸ Magnus Wahlström notes that the establishment of the periodical *Den Kristne* in 1944 was the initial step 'in awakening the Swedish Pentecostal Movement toward societal issues'. Magnus Wahlström, 'Kampen mot avkristningen,' 382.

⁵⁹ Pethrus, 'Jubileumsnummer: Tioårshögtid i segerns tecken,' *Dagen*, 1 November, 1955, 1; Pethrus, 'Inför årsskiftet,' *Dagen*, 30 December, 1950, 3.

⁶⁰ For a thorough explanation of the causes and the circumstances surrounding the founding of the newspaper *Dagen*, see Sahlberg, 86-92.

⁶¹ Pethrus, 'En sällsam missionsuppgift,' *Dagen*, 24 June, 1955, 3.

⁶² Pethrus, 'Kristna utan ansvar,' *Dagen*, 8 February, 1957, 2.

⁶³ Sahlberg, 74.

opposed to it. In regard to Pethrus' intention of starting his daily newspaper *Dagen*, Lidman noted: 'A revival that goes out into the everyday yap of the street will sooner or later end up in the gutter!'⁶⁴ The more 'introverted' elements of the movement also resented Pethrus' ecumenical efforts during the 1940s. Nils-Eije Stävare makes the helpful observation that the essential difference between Lidman and Pethrus boiled down to 'originality versus change'.⁶⁵ That is, Lidman valued the apolitical, otherworldly, and introspective emphasis of early Pentecostalism whereas Pethrus treasured the transforming, and the morally and socially active aspects of Pentecostalism. The polar opposite approaches of Lidman and Pethrus created enormous tension between the two figureheads of the SPM and it steadily increased until it erupted in 1948. The eruption was not only the largest conflict that the SPM had seen up-to-date, leading to Lidman's excommunication from the Filadelfia church, but it also sent shockwaves throughout the movement that would be felt for years to come. The enormity of the event can be seen by the book-length explanations that appeared after the conflict. Lidman presented his view of the conflict in *Resan till domen* [The Journey to the Judgement] in 1949, and Pethrus presented his rebuttal *Den anständiga sanningen* [The Decent Truth] in 1953. In 1949, Pethrus published the book *Gå ut på gator och gränder* [Go out in the Streets and the Alleys] in which he specifically pinpointed the resistance against expansion as the ultimate cause behind the problems.⁶⁶ Although the conflict exceeded this specific problem (including personal and family related problems), because of its size and complexity as well as its limited relevance for Pethrus' ecclesiology, a full rendition of the conflict will not be

⁶⁴ Lidman, 140. Also cited by Nils-Eije Stävare. See, Nils-Eije Stävare, 'Ökat engagemang i samhällsfrågorna,' in *Pingströrelsen: Händelser och utveckling under 1900-talet*, vol 1, (Örebro: Libris Förlag, 2007), 164.

⁶⁵ Nils-Eije Stävare, 'Ökat engagemang i samhällsfrågorna,' 163.

⁶⁶ See, Pethrus, *Gå ut på gator och gränder*, 1949, 7-8.

given here.⁶⁷ The outcome of the conflict, however, saw the SPM largely come out in favour of Pethrus, adopting his expansionistic perspective. Even though a majority of the SPM took Pethrus' side, enough influential individuals⁶⁸ supported Lidman with the result that Pethrus felt the need to take precautionary measures. In order to consolidate the movement around himself, he employed the same tactic he had used two decades previously during the Franklin conflict, namely to isolate pockets of resistance and promote the notion that the Pentecostal movement was a minority group 'under siege' from the outside world. Two examples displayed this most poignantly.

First, the 'dissident' Östermalm Free Church, who had decided to accept Lidman as one of its members, was isolated from the rest of the movement.⁶⁹ The exclusion of Östermalm happened to coincide with the beginning of two significant revivals, namely the North American Latter Rain revival and the Swedish Renewal revival.⁷⁰ In spite of the opposition the Latter Rain revival had received from American Pentecostal denominations, Pethrus initially favoured both revivals. However, as soon as leaders of the two revivals associated themselves with Östermalm, Pethrus withdrew his (and the Pentecostal Movement's)

⁶⁷ For detailed accounts of the conflict, see for example Lindberg, *Väckelse, frikyrklighet, pingströrelse*, 247-253; Sahlberg, 113-114; Stävare, 'Ökat engagemang i samhällsfrågorna,' 160-172; Aronson, 60-98.

⁶⁸ Sahlberg notes that the entire editorial staff of *Evangelii Härold* resigned as well as Jack Hårdstedt, the former chief editor of *Dagen* Walter Axelsson, the accountant of the Filadelfia church Ernst Pettersson, and even Pethrus' own son, Oliver Pethrus. See, Sahlberg, 114.

⁶⁹ The isolation of the *Östermalm Free Church* became such a controversial issue that Pethrus had to publically refute that a systematic exclusion of the *Östermalm Free Church* took place. See, Pethrus, 'Östermalmförsamlingens isolering,' *EH*, 17 March, 1949, 180. However, Pethrus' strong warnings to the Latter Rain preachers Reginald Layzell and Donald Murphy against holding meetings at the *Östermalm Free Church* clearly show the opposite. See, Aronson, 81.

⁷⁰ The Swedish Renewal revival began in August 1950 during a tentmeeting campaign in Karlskoga, Sweden. Algot Nicklasson and Ragnar Ljunquist became the revival's key faces and its most distinctive feature was public confession of sin. The healing campaigns of William Freeman and William Branham in the spring of 1950 laid the groundwork for the revival, but the internal conflicts that the Lidman conflict had generated in the Pentecostal movement and a too heavy emphasis on public confession of sin caused the revival to end by 1952. The different emphases of the Swedish Renewal revival as opposed to the Latter Rain Revival are a strong argument for viewing them as separate revivals. For more information on the Swedish Renewal revival, see Aronson, 59-98; Djurfeldt, 177-195; Halldorf, 42-94.

support.⁷¹ Despite the fact that Lidman and Pethrus reconciled in 1953, only when Sven Lidman was removed as a member in 1959 was the relationship between Östermalm and Filadelfia finally restored and the purposeful exclusion of Östermalm removed.⁷²

Second, the arrival of the healing evangelist William Freeman in 1950 generated significant attention in the local press. The criticism Pethrus and Filadelfia received because of Freeman's meetings was interpreted as the Pentecostal movement being persecuted once again for its belief in physical healing. Consequently, Pethrus set out defending himself⁷³ and the Pentecostal Movement by appealing to their constitutional right for the practice.⁷⁴ His actions contributed to the strong church-world antithesis that existed in the Pentecostal movement during the 1950s. Pethrus' explanation for the need of establishing a 'Pentecostal bank,' *Allmänna Spar- och Kreditkassan*, in 1952 well portray the feelings prevalent at the time:

When we started our newspaper and we were occupied with the construction of the office space we needed, big hindrances presented themselves due to our poor line of credit. Even large financial institutes got themselves involved in what the newspaper wrote about us and caused us difficulties. Even the federal credit restrictions affected the situation in that direction. [...] As a lightning bolt the thought occurred to me, and I said: 'We should have our own bank!' That was the beginning of our *Spar & Kreditkassa*.⁷⁵

The conflict with Lidman also resulted in dire ecclesiological implications, since the Baptist Union and MCC had favoured Lidman's cause. Due to these denominations' preference for Lidman, the ecumenical advances of the 1940s were undone.⁷⁶ Sahlberg cites Pethrus' feelings in a letter to the Norwegian pastor Knut Petersén in April 1948:

⁷¹ Aronson, 61-92.

⁷² Aronson, 92.

⁷³ Pethrus, 'Personföljelse,' *Dagen*, 11 August, 1951, 3.

⁷⁴ Pethrus, 'Kristendom och politik,' *Dagen*, 30 June, 1950, 3.

⁷⁵ Pethrus, *Hos Herren är makten*, 1955, 242.

⁷⁶ Sahlberg, 129.

In regard to the ecumenical efforts with the Baptists it did not involve any alliance but a sense of unity that as many of these could unite, but then of course on the New Testament's, i.e. the Pentecostal Movement's ground. Now has however as good as all outward links been torn apart and we stand, when it comes to this issue, pretty much where we stood at the end of the 1920s; with the world and the denominations against us.⁷⁷

Thus, the ecumenical efforts the SPM had begun to participate in during 1946-1947 were abruptly halted, and by 1950 the SPM had no ecumenical work with the Free Churches.⁷⁸

Sahlberg also provides a second important ecclesiological reason for the breakdown of the ecumenical advances of the 1940s. In 1945, the Swedish government began preparatory work for a new religious legislation.⁷⁹ The discussions regarding the new religious legislation brought to the fore the opposing views of Pethrus and the Baptist Union concerning the relationship between church and state. In 1946, the issue became such a controversial topic that it ended the united front of the Baptist movements. Both sides accused the other for not having done enough in order to save the unity of the Baptist movements.⁸⁰ When the law was finally passed in 1951, it did not include a separation of church and state but rather removed the demand that all Swedish people must belong to a recognised denomination.

A side issue of the new religious legislation that would have great significance for the Pentecostal Movement was the granting of wedding licenses to the Free Churches. Since the Pentecostal Movement had no formal structure and the government refused to work with individual churches, a national board for the issuing of wedding licenses was established.⁸¹ The establishment of this board became the first official deviation from the independent local church model, since the board, which was comprised of representatives from eleven of the largest Pentecostal churches in Sweden, was entrusted with the authority to determine which

⁷⁷ Sahlberg, 115.

⁷⁸ Sahlberg, 117. Sahlberg also notes that the Free Church's criticism of William Freeman's services was yet another cause for the division between the Pentecostal Movement and the Free Churches. Sahlberg, 116.

⁷⁹ For a discussion of the importance of the religious legislation of 1951 for the SPM, see 4.4.1 below.

⁸⁰ Sahlberg, 126-127.

⁸¹ Djurfeldt, 207.

local churches were to be regarded as genuine Pentecostal churches, and hence receive wedding licences.⁸²

Although the events at the end of the 1940s and the beginning of the 1950s ended Pethrus' ecumenical efforts, it did not deter him from attempting another ecumenical effort in 1955. This time Pethrus was not as interested in enhancing unity among Christians as in seeking to rally support in the fight against the secularisation of society. Together with Lutheran bishop Sven Danell, Pethrus' ecumenical efforts led to the founding of the lobbying group *Kristet Samhällsansvar* [Christian Responsibility in Society] in 1955.⁸³ Pethrus interest in socio-political issues continued unabated until his retirement in 1958. Yet, even if he stepped down as pastor of Filadelfia in 1958, it did not mean that he retired from the Pentecostal spotlight, as our next chapter will show.

4.2 Church Growth Principles

4.2.1 Introduction

As noted in the contextual narrative, the 1930s were a decade of significant growth for the SPM, both in terms of numbers and in terms of influence. In line with Pethrus' *ad hoc* approach, the 1930s were a decade in which Pethrus was most active in outlining his views on church growth principles. Although his reflections became fairly scarce after the 1940s, he wrote an interesting article in the *Dagen* newspaper in 1957 reflecting on the numerical growth of the movement from its beginning until that time. He concluded that unity and expansion were the two most important factors in the movement's success.⁸⁴ The remarkable growth from a 'meagre' 19,646 in 1927 to an 'impressive' 60,998 in 1937, he attributed to the

⁸² Magnus Wahlström, 'Fria församlingar och starka organisationer: Gemensamma verksamheter alternativ till samfund,' in *Pingströrelsen: Händelser och Utveckling under 1900-talet* (Örebro: Libris förlag, 2007), 2:311.

⁸³ Djurfeldt, 209.

⁸⁴ Pethrus, 'Pingstförsamlingarnas tillväxt,' *Dagen*, 11 October, 1957, 2.

opposition the movement experienced at the end of the 1920s, as well as to the movement's own desire to grow as evidenced in its many building projects. However, he surmised that the comparatively minor growth of 19,045 members between 1937 and 1947 was largely due to the stagnation that set in and the internal conflicts that plagued the movement during this ten-year period. Nevertheless he marvelled that, in spite of all the difficulties, the movement had never experienced a decrease in growth.⁸⁵

Pethrus' analysis of the numerical growth of the SPM in terms of unity versus disunity and expansion versus stagnation certainly does not provide a complete picture of the causes behind the numerical fluctuation. However, it gives a good idea of Pethrus' perception of the changes. In fact, his writings regarding church growth principles largely centre on (spiritual) unity and expansion on the one hand, and the danger of disunity and stagnation on the other. In order to achieve a more comprehensive picture of his church growth principles, the discussion below will address these principles in terms of internal and external causes for church growth: the internal causes denoting the spiritual realities and conditions prerequisite for church growth, and the external causes the concrete methods for most effective growth.

4.2.2 Internal Causes for Church Growth

4.2.2.1 The 'Chief Architect' and the Co-workers

In Pethrus' mind, the Lord was ultimately the builder and owner of the church.⁸⁶ Citing Matthew 16:18, he emphasised that the church was the property and work of Jesus himself.⁸⁷ He stated: 'We have not bought souls with our own blood, [...] but they are bought with the blood of Jesus Christ, the blood of the Son of God, [...]. They are Jesus' property, and therefore is it so important, when it comes to the church, that we deal with it with the

⁸⁵ Pethrus, 'Pingstförsamlingarnas tillväxt,' 1957, 2.

⁸⁶ Pethrus uses the title 'Lord' often interchangeably with 'Jesus'.

⁸⁷ Pethrus, 'Herren leder sitt folk,' *EH*, 4 november, 1948, 717.

awareness that it is a work of God, a building of God'.⁸⁸ Thus, he strongly condemned the habit of American pastors of calling one's church 'my church,' since pastors were never owners but only shepherds of God's flock.⁸⁹

From the same Matthew 16:18 passage, Pethrus also deduced that Jesus was the 'Chief Architect' of the church who built the church according to his own blueprint. As the 'Chief Architect,' Jesus oversaw its construction, supplied the materials, and commissioned and equipped the workers for its continued progress and strengthening.⁹⁰ Jesus' role as the 'Chief Architect' not only defined the Lord's tasks in the construction of the church but also defined the members' roles as labourers. The labourers were not to perform the tasks of the 'Chief Architect' or other co-labourers; they were to faithfully abide by the instructions given them by the 'Chief Architect'.⁹¹ Thus, the members of the church were not passive bystanders but responsible co-workers with Christ in the construction of the church. The labourers were therefore to display faith in the 'Chief Architect's' ability to do his work and not stray from the blueprint manifested in the Bible. If the workers disobeyed the 'Chief Architect's' instruction and built according to their own blueprint, the Lord's work would be ruined.⁹²

The illustration of the 'Chief Architect' provides a general framework by which to understand Pethrus' church growth principles. The Lord was the ultimate agent ('Chief Architect') for the advancement of the church, but the importance of the individual members was by no means diminished by this fact. On the contrary, the individual members were not only able to hinder or contribute to the growth of the church, but, in Pethrus' words, 'pry his [Jesus'] work out of his hands'.⁹³ Carlsson elaborates quite extensively on Pethrus' notion of

⁸⁸ Pethrus, 'Herren leder sitt folk,' 1948, 718.

⁸⁹ Pethrus, 'Herren leder sitt folk,' 1948, 718.

⁹⁰ Pethrus, 'Herren leder sitt folk,' 1948, 718.

⁹¹ Pethrus, 'Herren leder sitt folk,' 1948, 718.

⁹² Pethrus, 'Herren leder sitt folk,' 1948, 718.

⁹³ Pethrus, 'Herren leder sitt folk,' 1948, 717.

the individual as a co-worker of God.⁹⁴ He accurately observes that Pethrus does not dwell on the issue as to whether God is able to use an individual against his will, but rather that God does not do anything apart from the individual's cooperation.⁹⁵ Although a metaphor, the abovementioned quote regarding the individual's ability to 'pry Jesus' work out of his hands' seems to indicate that Pethrus elevates the freedom of the individual above the state of a mere 'co-worker' to an agent with an ability to even immobilise the hand of God. Thus, God does not overpower the individual, but the individual has the freedom to impede God's work. Pethrus does not provide a theological justification for this claim but merely states that such an action would be 'very foolish and provide no visible results'.⁹⁶ As Carlsson notes, Pethrus' claim is a reflection of his underlying anthropology,⁹⁷ yet the main purpose for such drastic language is merely to create an awareness of the dangers of engaging in church ministry solely relying on human efforts and wisdom. Nevertheless, Pethrus' illustration of the 'Chief Architect' conveys the notion that nothing can stop the growth of the church except the workers themselves.

An issue that exemplifies Pethrus' 'Chief Architect/Co-workers' theology is his understanding of the spiritual gifts and offices. In Pethrus' mind, the gifts and the offices were two sides of the same coin: the office described the task to which the individual was called, and the gift described the equipment the Spirit-filled individual received to be empowered for service in the church.⁹⁸ The equipping of individuals with gifts and offices was a task of the 'Chief Architect' *alone* even though they needed the congregation's sanction.⁹⁹ The gifted individual was therefore 'strictly speaking, not a servant of the church, but God's servant in

⁹⁴ See Carlsson, 83-85.

⁹⁵ Carlsson, 84.

⁹⁶ Pethrus, 'Herren leder sitt folk,' 1948, 717.

⁹⁷ Carlsson, 84.

⁹⁸ Pethrus, 'De andliga tjänsterna,' *DK*, July 1946, 193.

⁹⁹ Pethrus, 'De andliga tjänsterna,' 1946, 193.

the church'.¹⁰⁰ The New Testament comprised the blueprint for the rightful exercise of the gifts and the offices, and the Early Church's rightful stance toward this divine blueprint was an essential ingredient to its strength and success.¹⁰¹ Just as the gifts and the offices were essential gifts from the 'Chief Architect' for the Early Church, in the same way they were important for the strengthening and progress of the modern church.¹⁰² A church that functioned as the 'Chief Architect' ordained would therefore be a successful church.

Yet, in order for the gifts and the offices to function as the 'Chief Architect' ordained, both the church and those who exercised the gifts had to abide by the instructions outlined in the New Testament. Pethrus noted that this had not happened on numerous occasions with detrimental consequences to the continued presence of the gifts and the offices in the Church. For instance, the church after the Early Church era apostatised from the New Testament pattern regarding the spiritual gifts and offices, having established a man-made priesthood that did not allow God to appoint the ministers of the church. To rectify the problem, God chose Luther and Wesley as his instruments, but their respective Churches dismissed them both.¹⁰³ Consequently, contemporary churches could also act in similar erroneous ways by not acknowledging an individual's giftedness,¹⁰⁴ by neglecting or denying the gifts' or the offices' importance or existence,¹⁰⁵ or by allowing sin or abuses of the gifts to flourish in the church.¹⁰⁶ The individual could also contribute to the cessation of the gifts, either by practicing an office or a gift that God had not provided, or by coveting somebody else's gift.¹⁰⁷ Pethrus' understanding of the gifts and the offices clearly illustrates his 'Chief

¹⁰⁰ Pethrus, 'De andliga tjänsterna,' 1946, 193.

¹⁰¹ Pethrus, 'De andliga gåvornas betydelse,' *DK*, July 1947, 243.

¹⁰² Pethrus emphasised that the offices and the gifts were given for all of God's work, both the local and the universal church. Pethrus, 'De andliga ämbetena,' *EH*, 1 July, 1948, 432.

¹⁰³ Pethrus, 'De andliga ämbetena,' *EH*, 1948, 432.

¹⁰⁴ Pethrus, 'Om Kristi kropps tillväxt,' 1934, 349.

¹⁰⁵ Pethrus, 'Försumma icke nådegåvorna,' *EH*, 18 January, 1934, 36.

¹⁰⁶ Pethrus, 'Försumma icke nådegåvorna,' *EH*, 1 February, 1934, 65.

¹⁰⁷ Pethrus, 'Om Kristi kropps tillväxt,' 1934, 349.

Architect' theology. The individual could not contribute anything to God's role in bestowing the gifts and the offices. However, the individual had the power to cause irreparable damage to the success and the strengthening of the church through disobedience.¹⁰⁸ Consequently, the gifts and the offices were keys to successful church growth,¹⁰⁹ but ungodly or misguided people could contribute to their absence in the church, even if God intended it otherwise.

4.2.2.2 Preserving the Revival

In his inaugural address to the national preacher's conference in Stockholm in 1934 entitled *Om Kristi kropps tillväxt* [Concerning the growth of the Body of Christ], Pethrus presented a number of conditions he perceived as essential for church growth. Beginning his address with the fundamental principle that 'only what is living grows,'¹¹⁰ he emphasised the importance of staying vibrant in faith and not stagnating as so many religious movements in the past which only remained as hollow shells.¹¹¹ Therefore, churches were not to rely on 'old experiences, old perceptions, old sermons, and old findings from the Scriptures,' since everything living needed fresh nutrition; and the stronger it got, the more it consumed.¹¹²

The desire to keep the Pentecostal revival alive was repeatedly emphasised during the first two decades. Although Pethrus did not emphasise the charismatic element as heavily in the beginning of the 1940s, it remained a vital part of his theological understanding even during the thirties, forties, and fifties. For instance, in 1941, when faced with the question that the Pentecostal revival might wind down like other revivals in the past, he objected that the Pentecostal revival had an advantage over previous revivals because of the truth of Spirit baptism. Spirit baptism was a 'monumental safeguard in order to keep the fire going and the

¹⁰⁸ Pethrus, 'Försumma icke nådegåvorna,' *EH*, 18 January, 1934, 36

¹⁰⁹ Pethrus, 'Inför Filadelfiaförsamlingens i Stockholm 25-årshögtid,' 1935, 645.

¹¹⁰ Pethrus, 'Om Kristi kropps tillväxt,' *EH*, 9 May, 1934, 348.

¹¹¹ Pethrus, 'Om Kristi kropps tillväxt,' 1934, 348.

¹¹² Pethrus, 'Om Kristi kropps tillväxt,' 1934, 348.

ministry alive'.¹¹³ Additionally in 1946, one of the most pressing reasons Pethrus opposed a separation of church and state was his desire to preserve the SPM as a revival movement.¹¹⁴ Even when Pethrus began to emphasise the importance of moral restoration of society in the 1940s, he did not replace the previous emphasis on the need for preserving the Pentecostal revival but rather added to it. In fact, in 1951 Pethrus opposed the idea that the two would somehow be incongruent:

Revival Christianity and reforming Christianity have often in the course of history been placed against each other as rivals and opponents, something that has not been nor is necessary. Revival [Christianity] has its place and the Christian reformation [has also] its [place] in the life and ministry of the church. Revival Christianity is however the church's inner life and spiritual essence. It is the devotional life in its full force, and it is recognised by a sincere prayer life, a vibrant courage of confession, and an irresistible zeal for the ministry, which all produce rich spiritual edification. But a rich spiritual life does not make reforming Christianity redundant. [...] The two mentioned focuses should therefore walk hand in hand *if the Christian church should have success* [emphasis mine].¹¹⁵

Furthermore, in 1952 Pethrus boldly proclaimed: 'The Pentecostal Movement is not a church and not even a denomination. It does not want to be one. It is a people's movement, which all spiritual revivals originally were, and it is this characteristic the movement is very keen on preserving'.¹¹⁶ Preserving the Pentecostal movement as a revival movement was therefore imperative for church growth: 'God wants that His Church shall live a rich and overflowing life, and one of this life's most powerful results is revival among the unconverted'.¹¹⁷

The abovementioned quotes indicate that Pethrus never abandoned his emphasis on the importance of preserving the Pentecostal movement as a revival movement. In fact, Pethrus perceived revivalism to be the church's essential essence, and any emphasis on ethical

¹¹³ Pethrus, 'Huru en församling blir framgångsrik i själavinnarearbetet,' *EH*, 2 May, 1941, 368.

¹¹⁴ See section 4.4.

¹¹⁵ Pethrus, *Verklig väckelse*, 1951, 27.

¹¹⁶ Pethrus, 'Pingstförsamlingarnas vigselrätt,' *Dagen*, 30 August, 1952, 3.

¹¹⁷ Pethrus, 'Ett stort behov inom pingstväckelsen,' *EH*, 2 December, 1937, 972.

reformation only built on this foundational cornerstone. Above all, preserving the revival was an absolute must for successful church growth. Yet, Pethrus did not consider the spiritual life of the church as automatic but particularly related it to the church's purity and dedication to prayer.

4.2.2.3 Purity

As previously noted, the emphasis on individual and ecclesiastical purity within the SPM did not lessen but took an even more distinct shape in the 1930s. Inward holiness was to be displayed in visible conduct such as dress, language, and abstinence from worldly activities like dancing, gambling, drinking and smoking, etc. Nils-Eije Stävare remarks that during the 1930s Swedish Pentecostals believed that 'God only used those who lived wholeheartedly for Him' and that 'the Holy Spirit never lived in an unclean house'.¹¹⁸ Pethrus' understanding of the importance of purity for the individual and the church did not change much either but remained essentially the same, apart from a greater appreciation of the church as a *corpus permixtum* in the 1940s.

In 1943, Pethrus described his broader theological understanding of purity in the book *Varken syndare eller svärmare* [Neither Sinner nor Enthusiast]. He argued that all human beings have an innate longing for purity, which God had satisfied by sending Jesus as a 'Reconciler'.¹¹⁹ However, for purity to take place, the individual had to encounter Jesus

¹¹⁸ Nils-Eije Stävare, 'Sociala insatser och medlemsframgångar,' 125. In his inaugural speech to the national convention in Kölingared in 1949, Pethrus reflected on the specific role holiness served in early Pentecostalism. He noted that many early Pentecostals adhered to the doctrine of the 'second work of grace' borrowed from Methodism, but that it was William Durham who largely changed this perspective by his insistence on Christ's 'Finished Work' at Calvary as the basis for Spirit baptism. However, Pethrus insisted that the correct interpretation was that 'we experience holiness in connection to Spirit baptism, *since the Spirit cannot fall on people who are impure* [emphasis mine]. But on the other hand, people can at the same time when they receive salvation from sin also be baptised in the Spirit. Holiness is encapsulated in the forgiveness of sins and regeneration, and therefore one can become saved and Spirit Baptised at the same time'. See, Pethrus, 'Nyttestamentlig helgelse,' 1949, *EH*, 429-430.

¹¹⁹ Pethrus, *Varken syndare eller svärmare*, 1943, 6-7.

personally.¹²⁰ Concerning ecclesiastical purity, Pethrus noted that a church might be in danger of setting the aim of purity either too low or too high. The danger of setting the aim of purity too low occurred when a church started allowing sins in their midst based on the hypothesis that ‘since nobody is perfect, there is no point in trying to keep the church holy’.¹²¹ For Pethrus, that would be to commit the same mistake as a housewife who decided to never clean her house again because she could not get it completely clean.¹²² On the other hand, Pethrus warned of the danger of setting the goal too high and falling into ‘*svärmeri* [enthusiasm],’ that is, the danger of thinking that one was beyond temptation.¹²³ However, the danger of setting the aim of purity too low was always greater than setting the goal too high.¹²⁴

In terms of the specific relationship between ecclesiastical purity and church growth, Pethrus viewed the two as closely intertwined. Reflecting on Filadelfia’s numerical success in 1935, he viewed its ‘pure foundation’ as one of the primary reasons for its success.¹²⁵ As opposed to other churches that were founded on internal struggles, Filadelfia was founded on a longing for a ‘life in the fullness of the Spirit’.¹²⁶ Thus, God rewarded the pure motives of the founders of Filadelfia with the blessing of church growth. The example of Filadelfia was one of the few instances when Pethrus noted a positive connection between ecclesiastical purity and church growth. On most other occasions a negative perspective was emphasised. In an article entitled *Förnyelse genom helgelse* [Renewal through Holiness], he employed an illustration of rose bushes that were smothered by wild shoots to show the effects of sin on the testimony of individual Christians in the church. He argued that just as beautiful rose bushes could lose their scent and dry up and die, in the same way Christians, who once spread their

¹²⁰ Pethrus, *Varken syndare eller svärmarer*, 1943, 6-7.

¹²¹ Pethrus, *Varken syndare eller svärmarer*, 1943, 10-12.

¹²² Pethrus, *Varken syndare eller svärmarer*, 1943, 10-12.

¹²³ Pethrus, *Varken syndare eller svärmarer*, 1943, 13.

¹²⁴ Pethrus, *Varken syndare eller svärmarer*, 1943, 14-15.

¹²⁵ Pethrus, ‘Inför Filadelfiaförsamlingens i Stockholm 25-årshögtid,’ 1935, 644.

¹²⁶ Pethrus, ‘Inför Filadelfiaförsamlingens i Stockholm 25-årshögtid,’ 1935, 644.

‘fragrance’ in the church, could wither up and die because of sins such as ‘evil lust, covetousness, pride, greed, malice, [etc]’.¹²⁷ Thus, the lack of purity not only affected the individual but the church as well. The knowledge of sin’s devastating effects on the church also forced Pethrus to repeatedly go back to the necessity of church discipline.¹²⁸ Pethrus explained in a hyperbolic fashion the benefit of church discipline for church growth: ‘There is nothing in the kingdom of God that bears more magnificent fruit than true Christian church discipline. It truly gives a wonderful reward for the effort and pain that it costs’.¹²⁹ In light of the Swedish renewal movement’s emphasis on confession of sin, Pethrus also commented on the importance of confession for church growth: ‘When Christians begin crying over their faults and shortcomings, then one can be sure that a spiritual springtime is at the door. [...] One shall not believe [however] that confession of sin is the same as revival. Confession of sin is a forerunner to the real revival, a very important part of the preparations for it’.¹³⁰

Having briefly surveyed Pethrus’ understanding of purity as an inward cause for effective church growth, the best summary of it is found in his own words: ‘It is very significant that the person who wants to live a rich life with God seeks to divorce himself from sin. It is exactly the same with a church: she must divorce herself from evil to the best of her ability’.¹³¹

4.2.2.4 Prayer

Ulrik Josefsson has thoroughly outlined the early Swedish Pentecostals’ understanding of prayer. He notes for example that prayer was considered essential for a ‘functioning

¹²⁷ Pethrus, ‘Förnyelse genom helgelse,’ *DK*, January 1947, 3.

¹²⁸ See for instance, Pethrus, ‘Församlingstukt,’ *Dagen*, 19 July, 1957, 6; Pethrus, ‘Kristen församlingstukt,’ *EH*, 28 May, 1953, 518.

¹²⁹ Pethrus, ‘Kunna vi bevara församlingen ren?’, *DK*, April 1943, 98.

¹³⁰ Pethrus, *Verklig väckelse*, 1951, 84.

¹³¹ Pethrus, *Varken syndare eller svärmare*, 1943, 11-12.

Christian life' and 'the measuring stick' for both people and religious services'.¹³² He also observes that early Pentecostals believed that 'it was only through prayer that anything could be accomplished and true victory be won'.¹³³ That Pethrus shared this perspective is evident from his book *Segrande bön* [Victorious Prayer] written in 1929. Pethrus states: 'Prayer was the way of the first Christians when it came to winning souls for God, and prayer has been throughout all ages the saints' most powerful weapon'.¹³⁴ This perspective was not lost in subsequent years but was emphasised even further. In a sermon preached 10 November 1935, Pethrus observed: 'If one excludes prayer from one's Christianity, one has excluded Christianity itself. Therefore, one can imagine how much the type of Christianity has lost, which has reservations against a real prayer life in the church'.¹³⁵ Later in the same sermon, he also noted: 'Prayer [in the Early Church] aimed outwardly in order to overcome the opposition in the souls of the people and in order to win them for Christ'.¹³⁶ In 1947 in his book *Bönen och själavinnandet* [Prayer and Soul-winning], he further highlighted the importance of prayer for soul-winning: 'If prayer is not the first, the most central, and the most dominating thing in our work of soul-winning, then all other means will become more or less fruitless'.¹³⁷ A few pages later, Pethrus put it bluntly: 'One can call preachers from the ends of the earth and have the best speakers that have ever existed, one can have the world's best singers to sing in the meetings, one can have rich men and women as members and receive big donations for the ministry through tithes and offerings – but the day the church ceases to live a dedicated prayer life, the church might as well close down'.¹³⁸ In 1958, Pethrus stressed the importance of corporate prayer once again: 'Prayer is such an extremely

¹³² Josefsson, 206.

¹³³ Josefsson, 209.

¹³⁴ Pethrus, *Segrande bön*, 1929, 29-30.

¹³⁵ Pethrus, 'En bedjande församling,' *EH*, 2 January, 1936, 4.

¹³⁶ Pethrus, 'En bedjande församling,' 1936, 5.

¹³⁷ Pethrus, *Bönen och själavinnandet*, 1947, 10-11.

¹³⁸ Pethrus, *Bönen och själavinnandet*, 1947, 26.

grave thing that when the church gathers for such a purpose, nothing except for sickness or other justifiable cause ought to withhold any of its members from participation'.¹³⁹ The prayer meeting was 'the most important meeting of all'.¹⁴⁰

For Pethrus, prayer was not only essential for church growth, but it also ensured the quality of the growth: 'A church can reach any size, it can have as many intelligent and rich and capable members as possible, it does not help a jot – there will be no real success unless one lives the life of prayer. [...] Everything that has been of real success and victory for God's kingdom, it has come about as a result of people among us who have prayed to God'.¹⁴¹ Pethrus also argued that a dedication to prayer manifested a church's weakness and dependency upon God, which was essential for church growth, since God and not human strength was the ultimate cause for quality church growth. Thus, a church could expand on the back of human strength but never truly grow without God.¹⁴²

4.2.3 External Causes for Church Growth

4.2.3.1 'One City – One (Mega) Church' Model

For Pethrus, growing healthy and vibrant churches was ultimately a work of the 'Chief Architect' who empowered and equipped individuals for fruitful service. Yet as noted above, the members' individual holiness and dedication to God were of utmost importance for the overall success of the church.¹⁴³ As important as the inner qualities were for the growth of the church, they only painted a partial picture of the New Testament's ideal pattern in terms of church growth. In addition, the New Testament provided distinct guidelines as far as the most

¹³⁹ Pethrus, 'Bönen,' *DK*, September 1958, 257.

¹⁴⁰ Pethrus, *Bönen och själavinnandet*, 1947, 31.

¹⁴¹ Pethrus, 'Ringa kraft – en öppen dörr,' *EH*, 4 February, 1943, 85.

¹⁴² Pethrus, 'Ringa kraft – en öppen dörr,' 1943, 85.

¹⁴³ For an elaborate discussion of Pethrus' perception of the individual as God's co-worker, see Carlsson, 82-89.

successful model in terms of structure and organisation as well. As will be shown below, the ideal structure was one (mega) church, with a cell group structure and connected outposts, as opposed to many small and competing churches within each city.

In an article published in *Svenska Morgonbladet* 19 January 1934, Baptist pastor Hjalmar Danielson described his reservations against ‘megachurches,’ which he considered inefficient, unable to keep track of its members, and unsuitable as missionary sending agencies. According to Danielson, the ideal church size was no more than 2,000 members, so that the church would not become ‘cumbersome,’ yet big enough in order to be able ‘to achieve something’.¹⁴⁴ Danielson further noted that when ‘critical mass’ of 2,000 members was reached, a new church should be established.¹⁴⁵ Since the Pentecostal movement was the only religious movement in Sweden apart from the Lutheran church with churches in excess of 2,000 members, Pethrus considered Danielson’s article as a direct attack on the Pentecostal movement. Danielson’s article created therefore an *ad hoc* opportunity for Pethrus to come to the defence of the ‘one city – one (mega) church’ model.

Pethrus first remarked that dividing an already existing megachurch was no easy task. Using Filadelfia as an example, he observed that even though the members of Filadelfia met at many different outposts in Stockholm, their love for one another and the common task of the church made them stick together even in the most difficult circumstances.¹⁴⁶ Second, in case of members ‘falling between the cracks’ in megachurches, Pethrus attributed this problem largely to the spiritual condition of the church. Pethrus argued that if the members ‘lived a devoted life to God,’ they would care for the ministry and each other, and notify one another if somebody went astray.¹⁴⁷ In order to remedy the problem of disappearing members,

¹⁴⁴ Pethrus, ‘Jätteförsamlingar,’ *EH*, 15 February, 1934, 110.

¹⁴⁵ Pethrus, ‘Jätteförsamlingar,’ 1934, 110.

¹⁴⁶ Pethrus, ‘Jätteförsamlingar,’ 1934, 110.

¹⁴⁷ Pethrus, ‘Jätteförsamlingar,’ 1934, 110.

Petrus suggested a cell group structure, *à la* Philip Jacob Spener. Using Filadelfia again as a model, he argued that Filadelfia was divided into two to three hundred cell groups¹⁴⁸ where mutual edification occurred and where the cell group leaders were particularly responsible for keeping an eye out for absent members. In cases of moral misconduct, the leaders shared the dual responsibility of taking initial steps in order to correct a straying member, and if that failed, to inform the official leadership of the church.¹⁴⁹ Furthermore, as opposed to many Free Churches, Petrus explained that Filadelfia did not have an ‘idealised’ membership roll since individuals whose addresses remained unknown after two years automatically forfeited their membership and were removed from the membership roll.¹⁵⁰ Third, regarding the inefficiency of local churches to function as a missionary sending agency, Petrus answered the accusation rather generally by highlighting the wastefulness of resources that a division of a megachurch like Filadelfia would entail. Dividing the 5,000 member strong Filadelfia church into ten congregations of five hundred members each, as suggested by Baptist leaders, would require a lot more funds in order to afford an additional sixteen pastors, ten janitors, ten cleaning ladies, etc.; let alone the money needed for the construction and the maintenance of so many extra church buildings. Thus, a lot of money could be saved for missionary work if divisions were avoided.¹⁵¹ Fourth, Petrus also suggested that the megachurch had spiritual advantages compared to the smaller church. Non-Christians could much more easily attend a megachurch service without having the embarrassment of being singled out as in a smaller church. The services themselves also contributed to a greater sense of inspiration than in a smaller church. People were more encouraged when seeing a large crowd gathered for

¹⁴⁸ Petrus began using a cell group structure from the moment he became the pastor for the Filadelfia church in 1911. He called the groups, *böneringar* [prayer groups] to emphasise their primary function. See, Petrus, ‘Individen, gruppen och församlingen,’ *Dagen*, 9 February 1972, 2. The existence of cell groups, as early as 1911, shows that the use of cell groups was implemented early on in the SPM.

¹⁴⁹ Petrus, ‘Jätteförsamlingar,’ 1934, 110-111.

¹⁵⁰ Petrus, ‘Jätteförsamlingar,’ 1934, 111.

¹⁵¹ Petrus, ‘Jätteförsamlingar,’ 1934, 111.

worship and more affected by the greater musical performances such services displayed.¹⁵² Fifth, Pethrus also observed that no compelling evidence could be found for the assertion that ten smaller churches would be more effective in reaching new members than one megachurch. In a polemically well-constructed argument, Pethrus showed that the Baptist Union's many churches in Stockholm were, even when counted together, fewer in number than Filadelfia alone, despite the fact that they had been around for several decades longer.¹⁵³ Thus, the Baptist's own history disproved the theory that smaller churches were more effective than bigger ones. Sixth, on a personal note, Pethrus asked the rhetorical question of what Danielson's response would have been if the issue were reversed and the large number of people had been coming to his church instead. Would he have sent the people away or tried to make them feel as welcomed as possible? Consequently, Pethrus concluded that Danielson's argument rested solely on the lack of success on their part.¹⁵⁴ In his last point, Pethrus addressed what he considered as Danielson's greatest weakness – the complete lack of biblical support. References such as Acts 2:41, 47; 1 Cor. 1:2; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:2; 1 Thess. 1:1; Tit. 1:5 not only showed that there was no more than one church in each city in biblical times, but also that these churches often exceeded more than 3,000 members as in the case of the church in Jerusalem.¹⁵⁵

In later writings, Pethrus reiterated many of his previous points regarding his preference for the 'one city – one (mega) church model,' especially emphasising the model's biblical orthodoxy and its ability to counteract what Pethrus considered as 'the prevailing tendency to

¹⁵² Pethrus, 'Jätteförsamlingar,' 1934, 111.

¹⁵³ Pethrus, 'Jätteförsamlingar,' 1934, 111.

¹⁵⁴ Pethrus, 'Jätteförsamlingar,' 1934, 111.

¹⁵⁵ Pethrus, 'Jätteförsamlingar,' 1934, 111. A month later, Danielson wrote a rebuttal of some of Pethrus' arguments claiming that he had never intended to single out the Filadelfia but only to present his views on the subject. Unconvinced by Danielson's 'pure' motives, Pethrus restated that there was no other way to read Danielson's article than as a direct attack against the Filadelfia church. See, 'Jätteförsamlingar,' *EH*, 15 March, 1934, 202-203.

divide churches within the Swedish Free Church movement'.¹⁵⁶ Regarding divisions, Pethrus observed, for example, that the 'one city – one (mega) church' model prevented unhealthy competition between churches and made sure that church members did not avoid discipline by joining another church.¹⁵⁷ Moreover, instead of planting new churches in the vicinity of other churches and thereby perpetuating divisions, merging neighbouring churches could be a testimony of Christian unity and yield 'unexpected consequences for the whole country'.¹⁵⁸ In an article published in the *Dagen* newspaper in April 1953, entitled *Splittring – tillbakagång* [Division – Decline], Pethrus particularly addressed the problem of divisions, levelling continued critique against the Free Churches' propensity toward decentralisation and their rejection of the 'one city – one (mega) church' model. He pointed out that the beginning of a movement's existence was usually marked by a healthy centralisation of the ministry in one location, but as time passed, tended to fragment into smaller and less effective factions.¹⁵⁹ The Swedish Free Churches' misconception of the advantages of a decentralised movement was therefore the reason for their lack of influence and numerical growth.¹⁶⁰ Having critiqued the Free Churches' decentralised model, he noted that Swedish Pentecostals preferred another model, namely big churches with many outposts. Although not stating it explicitly, Pethrus held that outposts had an advantage in that they did not divide the church but extended the mother church's influence rather than competing with it. Outposts also preserved the fellowship instead of severing it.¹⁶¹ Yet he warned that outposts might also fall into the trap of becoming too independent, which would cause them to suffer the same consequences as the

¹⁵⁶ Pethrus, *Hos Herren är makten*, 1955, 147.

¹⁵⁷ Pethrus, *Hos Herren är makten*, 1955, 147.

¹⁵⁸ Pethrus, *Hos Herren är makten*, 1955, 147.

¹⁵⁹ Pethrus, 'Splittring – tillbakagång,' *Dagen*, 8 April, 1953, 3.

¹⁶⁰ Pethrus, 'Splittring – tillbakagång,' 1953, 3.

¹⁶¹ See Pethrus, 'Jätteförsamlingar,' 1934, 110.

Free Churches.¹⁶² However, Pethrus admitted that two churches in the same city could ‘under certain circumstances’ be justified,¹⁶³ but that most divisions were without proper reason and only to be lamented.¹⁶⁴ Creating two churches out of one simply did not meet any need that the big church could not fill and was thus redundant and harmful to God’s purposes.¹⁶⁵

Pethrus’ biblical convictions about the ‘one city - one (mega) church’ model rested on the notion that the New Testament only spoke about one *local* church in each city. This is not to say that Pethrus denied the concept of the universal church. In fact, he acknowledged that the universal church was mentioned in places like Matthew 16:18, Acts 9:31, and Galatians 1:22 - the latter speaking about several local churches in one area (Judea), but not in one city.¹⁶⁶ In defence of his view, Pethrus cited texts such as Acts 2:46; 12:26; 13:1; 20:17; 20:28; and Revelation 2:1. Drawing particularly from Acts 2, he observed that ‘the church in Jerusalem must have been at least ten to fifteen thousand members, but one never hears about any divisions there’.¹⁶⁷ He believed the same situation existed in cities like Rome, Philippi, Corinth, and Antioch.¹⁶⁸ For Pethrus, the Acts 2:46 passage demonstrated that a local church, although big, could assemble as one in ‘the temple court’ and on other occasions meet together in smaller groups in the homes.¹⁶⁹ Thus the local church in each city had *one* primary meeting point where everyone could gather, yet allowed for services to be conducted by smaller groups of members in the homes. He refuted objections against this idea, based on the

¹⁶² Pethrus, ‘Splittring – tillbakagång,’ 1953, 3.

¹⁶³ Pethrus’ concession of the possibility of two churches in the same city is best understood in light of the conflict with Södermalm’s Free Church in the beginning of the 1930s. After hostilities were settled, Pethrus ruled out a merger between the two churches on the basis that ‘South and North in Stockholm are from a ministry perspective to be considered as two different cities. It would really be a minus for the ministry in Stockholm if the two churches merged’. See Pethrus, “‘Han stillar strider till jordens ändar,’” *EH*, 27 December, 1934, 903. Thus, in Pethrus’ mind, the size of the city determined the ultimate rationale for deviating from the ‘one city – one church’ model.

¹⁶⁴ Pethrus, ‘Splittring – tillbakagång,’ 1953, 3.

¹⁶⁵ Pethrus, ‘Splittring – tillbakagång,’ 1953, 3.

¹⁶⁶ Pethrus, ‘Den nytestamentliga enhetstanken,’ *EH*, 23 January, 1941, 69.

¹⁶⁷ Pethrus, ‘Urkristen enhet,’ *Dagen*, 9 April, 1953, 3.

¹⁶⁸ Pethrus, ‘Urkristen enhet,’ 1953, 3.

¹⁶⁹ Pethrus, ‘Urkristen enhet,’ 1953, 3.

understanding that the New Testament hinted at the existence of several local churches in places like Rome, Ephesus, and Corinth by referring to the larger literary context. For instance, Paul's admonition in 1 Corinthians 14:34 concerning women being silent in the *churches* (plural), he explained in light of 1 Corinthians 1:2 as an admonition to several local churches beyond the vicinity of Corinth.¹⁷⁰ The references concerning the churches that met in Priscilla and Aquila's houses in Ephesus and Rome respectively (1 Corinthians 16:19, Romans 16:5), he explained as the only meeting point mentioned in these letters.¹⁷¹

According to Pethrus, the principle of 'one city – one church' did not come about as an invention of humankind but originated with Jesus Christ himself, whose divine strategy was to establish the foundation of the church in Jerusalem by his death and resurrection.¹⁷² By establishing the first church in Jerusalem, Jesus knew that the influence of the church would spread to the cities and areas around it. Thus, Jesus' decision to establish the church in Jerusalem was not only of 'decisive importance for the success of [Jesus'] work,'¹⁷³ but it also provided the model for Paul's missionary strategy, which also focused on the provincial capitals of the Roman Empire.¹⁷⁴ Having one strong and centralised church in a key city was therefore, for Pethrus, the best way to guarantee success because it followed the divine wisdom exemplified by Jesus and the Apostles.¹⁷⁵

4.2.3.2 Analysis of the 'One City – One (Mega) Church' Model

Having examined Pethrus' 'one city one - (mega) church' model, it is clear Pethrus employed a wide range of arguments in its defence. The biblical arguments were based on a

¹⁷⁰ Pethrus, 'Den nytestamentliga enhetstanken,' 1941, 70.

¹⁷¹ Pethrus, 'Den nytestamentliga enhetstanken,' 1941, 70; Pethrus, 'Församlingen i storstaden,' *Dagen*, 26 September, 1953, 3.

¹⁷² Pethrus, 'Biblisk strategi,' *DK*, June 1957, 161.

¹⁷³ Pethrus, 'Biblisk strategi,' 1957, 161.

¹⁷⁴ Pethrus, 'Biblisk strategi,' 1957, 161; Pethrus, 'Församlingen i storstaden,' 1953, 3.

¹⁷⁵ Pethrus, 'Biblisk strategi,' 1957, 161.

strong restorationist conviction that the New Testament described the ideal configurations of local churches for all time. Faithfulness in the application of these ideal configurations became the standard by which local churches and denominations were measured. Although Pethrus considered a few objections against the model, they were never seriously considered but quickly dismissed in light of other proof-texts. This supports Carlsson's observation that Pethrus' use of the Bible was primarily polemical since 'the biblical texts are given 'a confirming and legitimising function'.¹⁷⁶ Consequently, his predetermined understanding of the biblical text did not allow for two churches in the same city, ruling out any possibility of households or small groups of believers being designated as true churches. Smaller gatherings he rather labelled as 'cell groups' or 'outposts' in order to justify the 'one city – one (mega) church' model. Apart from the obvious failure to note that early Christians met in house churches and not in one common building until the time of Constantine in the 4th century,¹⁷⁷ he also failed to acknowledge the extent to which it borrowed from Pietistic ecclesiology.

Moreover, Pethrus' hermeneutical practice of defending certain aspects of theory by reading his own exaggerated assumptions into the text, with little consideration of previously made assertions, sometimes went as far as to border on the outrageous. For instance, he could in one article write without any biblical proof that 'the church in Rome must have had at least ten to fifteen thousand members'.¹⁷⁸ In another article written the same year, he argued that there was only one church in Rome, which met in the house of Aquila and Priscilla.¹⁷⁹ Read independently the arguments sound convincing, but read together they become irreconcilable,

¹⁷⁶ Carlsson, 296.

¹⁷⁷ For an in-depth discussion of house churches in Early Christianity, see Roger W. Gehring, *House Church and Mission: The Importance of Household Structures in Early Christianity* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004). It is interesting to observe that in an article entitled *Indviden, gruppen och församlingen* [The individual, the Group and the Congregation] written in February 1972, Pethrus noted that 'Christians did not build their own churches or places of gathering until the end of the third century,' but Pethrus made no such comment at this point in time. Pethrus, 'Indviden, gruppen och församlingen,' *Dagen*, 9 February 1972, 2.

¹⁷⁸ Pethrus, 'Urkristen enhet,' 1953, 3.

¹⁷⁹ Pethrus, 'Församlingen i storstaden,' 1953, 3.

because ten to fifteen thousand people must therefore have met in Aquila and Priscilla's house. This illogical discrepancy shows that Pethrus presented his biblical arguments 'in neatly divided boxes' with little consideration of their larger ramifications. The discrepancy also confirms Josefsson's general observation that 'On the one hand it was important for the [Swedish] Pentecostal movement to be or to be viewed as biblical. [...] On the other hand the Bible was sometimes used fragmentarily and as a confirmation of one's own interpretation or experience'.¹⁸⁰ An example that clearly indicates the latter tendency was Pethrus' understanding of outposts. Nothing in the biblical texts that he quoted supports his particular understanding of outposts. Rather, Pethrus merely adopted the already accepted notion of outposts and merged it with his idea of 'one city – one (mega) church'. Since Pethrus was largely addressing the issue of outposts in the context of divisions, he found no compelling reason to defend them biblically. He merely showed pragmatically and experientially how outposts better preserved the unity than a number of independent local churches.

His habit of synthesising existing truths with 'new truths' also created the delicate problem of trying to fit 'new truth' into already set categories. For instance, the 'one city – one (mega) church' model could not contradict the already well-established independent local church model. The problem of consistently applying the two models is particularly seen in his article *Församlingen i storstaden* [The Church in the Metropolis]. Here he argued that '*without any form of organisation* [emphasis mine] the smaller circles surrounding the provincial capitals seemed to be able to preserve their first love and not disturb the larger ministry of the capital'.¹⁸¹ In this quote, Pethrus merged the independent local church ideal with the new concept of 'one city – one (mega) church,' and thus advocating a non-

¹⁸⁰ Josefsson, 178.

¹⁸¹ Pethrus, 'Församlingen i Storstaden,' 1953, 3.

organisational or (spiritual) unity between the ‘small circles’¹⁸² of Christians outside the city and the main fellowship of the city. However, as noted above, Pethrus advocated a strong *organisational* unity between the main ministry of the city and the outposts, and warned against the dangers of severing this *organisational* unity in favour of a greater number of independent local churches. Thus, he merely regurgitated a well-known mantra without even noticing the apparent contradiction to his previous statements. At closer scrutiny, the ‘one city – one (mega) church’ model actually displays a very close affinity to denominationalism. Pethrus’ preference for a big and centralised ministry with organisationally related outposts is nothing but a scaled-down version of denominationalism. In Pethrus’ mind, the local megachurch ought to function in the same way as a denominational headquarters, maintaining financial, ministerial, and administrative responsibility over the outposts. Apart from ‘faithfulness to the biblical model,’ structure and geographical considerations are the only essential differences between Pethrus’ ‘one city – one (mega) church’ model and full-fledged denominationalism. The range of a denomination’s influence may extend worldwide, whereas Pethrus’ local church model may only extend until it conflicts with the outposts of another local megachurch.¹⁸³ In function they are essentially the same. This goes to show that Pethrus’ objections against denominationalism were not based on an aversion to hierarchical structures. On the contrary, his model shows that he approved of a strong centralised organisation but objected to the concept of ‘human’ structures between or above local churches since such structures were not found in the Bible. The model also shows how much he emphasised the importance of a local church’s sphere of influence from the 1940s onward. Having a wide sphere of influence not only facilitated effective evangelism but also provided

¹⁸² Pethrus most likely refers to ‘smaller circles’ in this context to distinguish them from regular churches. Although a matter of uncertainty, Pethrus seems to use this ambiguous term in order for his readers to associate them with local outposts without having to call them by that name.

¹⁸³ As noted above, Pethrus could conceive of two churches in the same city as long as their ministries did not interfere with one another.

a church with more ‘striking power’¹⁸⁴ to influence society. Having power was therefore of essential importance to fulfil God’s mission in the world. It is true that Pethrus did not attribute a church’s power exclusively to its size. Drawing upon insights from C. H. Spurgeon, he explicitly stated that a church could be simultaneously ‘big and weak’.¹⁸⁵ Only if the church remained true to its task of ‘proclaiming the true gospel’ could it fulfil ‘its high and holy calling’.¹⁸⁶ Thus the key to great influence was a combination of faithfulness to God and having great size.¹⁸⁷

Finally, as has been briefly mentioned and will be further discussed, the model carried strong ecumenical implications. Yet, the model particularly pointed to the importance Pethrus gave to the structure of the church for effective church growth.

4.2.3.3 Evangelism

For Pethrus, the key to successfully growing healthy and numerically strong churches was dependent on inward causes such as prayer, purity, preserving revivalism in the church, and obedience to blueprint strategies outlined in the New Testament. However, these things would come to nothing unless they were followed by concrete efforts of soul-winning.¹⁸⁸ It is no wonder, therefore, that Pethrus considered soul-winning the most important task of the church.¹⁸⁹ Sometimes he even went as far as to claim that soul-winning was the reason for its

¹⁸⁴ Pethrus, ‘Församlingen i storstaden,’ 1953, 3.

¹⁸⁵ Pethrus, ‘Åter till kraftkällorna,’ *DK*, March 1945, 138.

¹⁸⁶ Pethrus, ‘Åter till kraftkällorna,’ 1945, 138.

¹⁸⁷ Pethrus, ‘Församlingen i storstaden,’ 1953, 3.

¹⁸⁸ ‘Soul-winning’ is an unfortunate term since it excludes a holistic understanding of salvation. However, since it is Pethrus’ preferred term, it will be used here.

¹⁸⁹ See for example, Pethrus, ‘Den största av alla uppgifter,’ *DK*, May 1956, 129-131; Pethrus, ‘Ringa kraft – En öppen dörr,’ 1943, 84; Pethrus, ‘Den största av alla uppgifter,’ *DK*, February 1951, 33; Pethrus, ‘Nöd för själar,’ *DK*, October 1946, 289. Simon Chan has convincingly argued that ‘soul-winning’ or rather preaching the gospel, is only a part of the church’s greatest task, which is to be a worshiping community. As opposed to Pethrus, Chan argues that ‘mission is ultimately theocentric rather than anthropocentric.’ See, Simon Chan, *Liturgical Theology*, 45.

very existence.¹⁹⁰ He admitted that the task of the church included meeting the needs of the congregation, but if that became the church's only task, 'something was wrong'.¹⁹¹ For Pethrus, Jesus came to save the world, and therefore the church must share the same goal.¹⁹²

The consequences for the church that did not keep soul-winning as its main priority, he depicted in the strongest of words: 'The church that only has its own edification as a goal and nothing else, will soon die and loses its edification and blessing, indeed everything'.¹⁹³ Such a church was in real danger of becoming nothing more than a 'social club' where one 'has a good time'.¹⁹⁴ On another occasion Pethrus wrote: 'If a church does not live in the centre of God's will, that is [...] if they are not occupied with winning souls for God, then they will become miserable and spiritually sick. [...] Instead of searching for the reason for their dissatisfaction in their own hearts [...] they start fighting each other. There are many churches that have consumed themselves in this way'.¹⁹⁵

Soul-winning was, for Pethrus, on the one hand a result of the power of God, but on the other hand also a result of human effort.¹⁹⁶ Since Pethrus viewed God as always willing to save the lost, numerical growth corresponded to peoples' willingness to pay the price for continuous soul-winning. Reflecting on the numerical growth of Filadelfia in 1941, he stated: 'The victory the congregation has had here, it has been due to the fact that there have been people who have been gripped by God and have been willing to make the sacrifice [...]. To the extent this has happened, there has been victory. *But the victory would have been several times greater if there would have been more [people] who had sacrificed themselves*

¹⁹⁰ Pethrus, 'Ringa kraft – En öppen dörr,' 1943, 84. See also, Pethrus, *Den europeiska pingstkongressen* (Stockholm: Förlaget Filadelfia, 1939), 191.

¹⁹¹ Pethrus, 'Ringa kraft – En öppen dörr,' 1943, 84.

¹⁹² Pethrus, 'Ringa kraft – En öppen dörr,' 1943, 84.

¹⁹³ Pethrus, 'Ringa kraft – En öppen dörr,' 1943, 84.

¹⁹⁴ Pethrus, 'Förförelsens makt,' *EH*, 13 October, 1949, 728.

¹⁹⁵ Pethrus, 'Församlingen som själavinnare,' *EH*, 24 April, 1941, 352.

¹⁹⁶ Pethrus, 'Församlingen som själavinnare,' 1941, 352.

[emphasis mine]'.¹⁹⁷ In another article he suggested four additional factors that contributed to successful soul-winning. First, he observed how important it was 'that one is not satisfied with what one has already won, but seizes every opportunity that God gives in order to serve him and win souls'.¹⁹⁸ Second, Pethrus warned that nothing was more dangerous for soul-winning than 'narrow-minded leaders being allowed to run the church'.¹⁹⁹ Leaders who did not have 'an eye for great opportunities' would 'devastate the ministry'.²⁰⁰ Third, in order to sustain successful church growth, he further emphasised that the church needed to be a good nurturer of the souls already won. Just like little children in a family needed care from the other family members, in the same way new believers needed loving care from their 'brother and sisters' in the church in order to 'remain on the path'.²⁰¹ Finally, and not surprisingly, the last condition for a church to remain a successful soul winner was that it had 'a right attitude to biblical truth and experience'.²⁰² With these two terms, Pethrus meant salvation (viz. the Lutheran understanding of justification by faith alone) and Spirit baptism. Regarding the latter, Pethrus clearly squared with the notion that Spirit baptism was given for the purpose of empowerment. The experience of, and not merely the belief in, Spirit baptism empowered the church for soul-winning and was of 'monumental importance [...] for keeping the work going'.²⁰³

Holger Sjögreen has argued that Pethrus made a theological u-turn away from his previous apolitical and soul-winning emphasis in the 1930s to an emphasis on political activities in order to influence society in the 1940s.²⁰⁴ To analyse the accuracy of that

¹⁹⁷ Pethrus, 'Församlingen som själavinnare,' 1941, 353. The importance of the individual's role in soul-winning again corresponds to Pethrus' 'co-worker' theology. See, 4.2.2.1 above.

¹⁹⁸ Pethrus, 'Huru en församling blir framgångsrik i själavinnarearbetet,' *EH*, 2 May, 1941, 368.

¹⁹⁹ Pethrus, 'Huru en församling blir framgångsrik i själavinnarearbetet,' 1941, 368.

²⁰⁰ Pethrus, 'Huru en församling blir framgångsrik i själavinnarearbetet,' 1941, 368.

²⁰¹ Pethrus, 'Huru en församling blir framgångsrik i själavinnarearbetet,' 1941, 369-370.

²⁰² Pethrus, 'Huru en församling blir framgångsrik i själavinnarearbetet,' 1941, 370.

²⁰³ Pethrus, 'Huru en församling blir framgångsrik i själavinnarearbetet,' 1941, 370.

²⁰⁴ Halldorf, 22.

statement, it is important to point out that 1940 to 1941 were in fact the years when Pethrus wrote the most on the topic of soul-winning. Out of fifty-four articles in *Evangelii Härold*, eight (15%) were specifically dedicated to the topic. The large number of articles on soul-winning can be explained in light of his interest in church growth principles during those years. As shown in the contextual narrative, it was not until the summer of 1941 that Pethrus became aware of the acute moral decay in society. Although a steep decline in articles relating to soul-winning is visible after 1942, they do not cease altogether.²⁰⁵ Based on these articles, it seems like Sjögreen's observation is only partially correct. It is true that Pethrus no longer adhered to an apolitical position in the 1940s, however to speak of a '180 degree theological u-turn' is too strong of a conclusion. Rather, it is better to regard soul-winning as falling into the background after 1942 because of Pethrus' newfound concern for social issues, but that does not mean that it ceased to remain a foundational core of Pethrus' theology. In fact, as shown above, Pethrus regarded the two as going 'hand in hand'.²⁰⁶

4.3 Ecumenism

4.3.1 Historical and Theological Overview

As discussed in the previous chapter, the early years of the Pentecostal movement saw Pentecostals cross denominational barriers with surprising ease.²⁰⁷ As time went on, however, the Pentecostal message of Spirit baptism became a dividing issue between Pentecostals and the Free Churches. The proliferation of the independent local church model and the later

²⁰⁵ See, for instance Pethrus, 'Ringa kraft – En öppen dörr,' 1943, 84-85; Pethrus, 'Föreläsens makt,' 1949, 728-730; Pethrus, 'En enhetens hemlighet,' *DK*, April 1946, 98-99; Pethrus, 'Nöd för själar,' 1946, 289-291; Pethrus, 'Den största av alla uppgifter,' 1956, 129-131; Pethrus, 'Vinn människor för Gud!,' *DK*, July 1951, 193-195; Pethrus, 'Det personliga själavinnandet,' *Dagen*, 15 September, 1950, 3; Pethrus, 'Det personliga själavinnandet,' *Dagen*, 19 June, 1953, 3, 10.

²⁰⁶ See, Pethrus, *Verklig väckelse*, 1951, 27.

²⁰⁷ For a discussion on the ecumenical convictions of early Pentecostals, see Allan Anderson, 'Pentecostals, Healing, and Ecumenism,' *International Review of Mission*, vol. 95 nos. 370/371, July/October (2004): 488-489.

rejection of infant baptism became further obstacles for maintaining unity. Above all, Pethrus' rejection of every form of organisational unity and the emphasis on the 'far superior' (inward) unity of the Spirit negated ecumenical efforts altogether. In sum, Swedish Pentecostals shared the same fears regarding ecumenism that Raymond Pfister claims French Pentecostals suffer from today, namely that ecumenism allows for a 'weakening of Pentecostal enthusiasm, compromise of doctrinal standards, incompatibility of purpose, [and] syncretistic tendencies [...]',²⁰⁸

Since Struble has already surveyed Pethrus'²⁰⁹ and the SPM's ecumenical stance from its earliest beginnings until 1947, with specific emphasis on Pethrus' attempt to integrate ÖM in 1937-38, the European Pentecostal conference in 1939, and the ecumenical conferences in 1944 and 1946, a summary of Struble's findings suffices to explain the main shifts and concepts in Pethrus' ecumenical thought during this particular period. However, since Struble's study is somewhat limited in its theological analysis, omits some important historical details, and does not extend much beyond 1947, a supplementary investigation is worth undertaking.²¹⁰

As noted in the contextual narrative, 1933-1934 marked the beginning of decreased isolationism and increased interest in ecumenism in Pethrus' life. The slight openness that began to be visible in 1933 slowly augmented during the rest of the 1930s and eventually led to two ecumenical conferences in 1944 and 1946. It is worth noting that Pethrus' attempt to incorporate ÖM in 1937-38 did not signal a new ecumenical stance from the one adopted during the 1920s. In fact, it was only *after* ÖM departed from the Baptist Union and more

²⁰⁸ Raymond Pfister, 'Pentecostalism and Ecumenism in France: A critical examination of seeming antipodes,' paper presented at the 10th EPCRA conference in Leuven, Belgium, 2001, 2.

²⁰⁹ Struble never claims to have surveyed Pethrus' ecumenical views, but only the SPM's ecumenical views. However, his insights are predominantly taken from Pethrus' writings, which underlines that Struble regards Pethrus' and the SPM's ecumenical stance as virtually synonymous.

²¹⁰ Carlsson and Sahlberg also discuss Pethrus' ecumenism although in a less detailed (Sahlberg) and less systematic way (Carlsson). See, Sahlberg, 62-69; Carlsson, 112-116.

closely resembled the Pentecostal Movement organisationally that he initiated contact. Articles from 1936 and 1937 provide ample proof that no ecumenical shift had yet taken place in Pethrus' mind during this time. For example, in 1936 he appealed for the 'Spirit-baptised' to stand 'shoulder to shoulder,' but claimed that the difficult attitudes of many Free Church leaders prevented any cooperation with them.²¹¹ ÖM, on the other hand, fulfilled the requirement of being 'one in Spirit'.²¹² In 1937, Pethrus explained that the reason for the SPM's lack of involvement in ecumenical conferences was due to the simple principle that 'in order to have peace with others: one must first make sure to have peace with oneself'.²¹³ Saying this, Pethrus did not mean to imply that there was any kind of disunity in the Pentecostal movement, but rather that the 'Spirit-baptised' (ÖM and the SPM) were still not unified. Pethrus was quick to point out, however, that other Christians missed this basic principle: '...spiritual leaders try to promote peace between denominations and churches all around the world although permanent dissensions existed in their own ranks'.²¹⁴ Furthermore, at the national conference in Malmköping the same year, he reiterated his preference for spiritual unity over against organisational unity, claiming: '...freedom is one of the strongest unifying bonds there is, especially in God's world. [...] The Free Churches [...] should stop with their dreadful organisational fury'.²¹⁵ However, a somewhat broader ecumenical perspective soon became visible, especially in connection to the 'discovery' of the 'one city – one (mega) church' model in 1938.

As shown above, Pethrus' attempts to incorporate ÖM failed, and that failure, according to Struble, halted the SPM's ecumenical efforts until 1944, when new contacts were sought

²¹¹ Pethrus, 'Missionärsparet Leanders övergång,' *EH*, 16 January 1936, 48.

²¹² Pethrus, 'Missionärsparet Leanders övergång, 1936, 48.

²¹³ Pethrus, 'I enhetens tecken,' *EH*, 23 december, 1937, 1041.

²¹⁴ Pethrus, 'I enhetens tecken,' 1937, 1041.

²¹⁵ Söderholm, 'Bibelstudieveckan i Malmköping,' *EH*, 15 July 1937, 591.

with the Swedish Baptist movements.²¹⁶ The fact that ecumenical attempts were halted during this time does not mean that Pethrus ceased to contemplate on ecumenical issues. In fact Struble, and to some extent Sahlberg, largely fail to observe the important ecumenical advances Pethrus made from 1938 until 1944.²¹⁷ Struble and Sahlberg argue that Pethrus' idea for an ecumenical conference between all Swedish denominations that practiced believer's baptism, either originated in 1943,²¹⁸ or came about as a result of a conversation he had with Baptist pastors at a 40-year reunion from Bethel Seminary in the summer of 1944.²¹⁹ These explanations do not tell the whole story, however, especially regarding the significant shift in attitude toward the Baptist Union. Pethrus' writings point to at least three causes for the shift in ecumenical perspective, which encouraged him to engage in a broader ecumenical discussion than merely with 'the Spirit-baptised'.

First, the 'discovery' of the 'one city – one (mega) church' model in 1938 and the events surrounding the incorporation of Östermalm with Filadelfia provided theological impetus for a greater appreciation of *visible* unity among local churches. In an article entitled *Den nytestamentliga enhetstanken* [the New Testament Concept of Unity] in 1941, he pointed out that Jesus' words in John 17:21-22 went beyond spiritual unity to include a visible unity as well.²²⁰ He insisted that Jesus' words meant that Christians 'should be one in every respect'.²²¹ Although this article was written with the merger of Filadelfia and Östermalm specifically in mind, the statement still highlights Pethrus' broadened perspective. In fact, his

²¹⁶ Struble, 165. Apart from the Pentecostal movement, the other Baptist movements present at the conference were ÖM, the Baptist Union, the Free Baptists, and the Holiness Covenant Church.

²¹⁷ Carlsson makes a note of the relationship between the 'one city – one (mega) church model' and Pethrus' understanding of Christian unity, but it does not extend beyond a footnote. See, Carlsson, 112.

²¹⁸ Sahlberg, 65. Sahlberg considers Pethrus' and the Lutheran Archbishop's co-signing of a document that appealed for a joint Christian effort toward inward unity in June 1940 as a strong indication of Pethrus' lessened sectarian attitude. However, this observation does not explain why Pethrus decided to approach the Swedish Baptist movements.

²¹⁹ Struble, 166.

²²⁰ Pethrus, 'Den nytestamentliga enhetstanken,' *EH*, 23 January, 1941, 69.

²²¹ Pethrus, 'Den nytestamentliga enhetstanken,' 1941, 69.

previous writings concerning outward unity in 1919 never went beyond the charismatic gifts and offices to include organisational aspects between local churches.²²² Apart from the positive theological vision of one church in each city, the ‘one city – one (mega) church,’ the model also emphasised for Pethrus ‘the scandal’ of the copious divisions in Protestant Christianity.²²³ When he described the background to the ecumenical conference in 1944 in his memoirs, he explicitly stated that he ‘had often told himself, that Christianity was so shredded and poisoned by the spirit of division, that it was almost impossible to restore it to the ideal pattern of the Early Church’.²²⁴ However, the ‘one city – one (mega) church’ model provided the necessary theological framework to encourage Pethrus to do something about the divisions in Protestant Christianity.

Second, articles from the end of the 1930s and the beginning of the 1940s also show a greater desire to overcome the differences between the Baptist Union and the Pentecostal movement. In 1939, Pethrus published an article entitled *Äro baptistsamfundet och pingstväckelsen två olika anderiktningar?* [Are the Baptist Union and the Pentecostal movement two different spiritual movements?] in which he rejected N. J. Nordenström’s idea that the two movements were of two different ‘spirits’.²²⁵ In the article, Pethrus particularly refuted the notion that the core of the Pentecostal movement was ‘speaking in tongues and other ecstatic phenomena’ as N. J. Nordenström had claimed. On the contrary, Pethrus showed that the essence and the ultimate goal of the Pentecostal movement was about ‘a deepening of the life of the Spirit in the Christian church, a richer prayer life, a richer life of faith, and the restoration of the ministry of the church to the ideal pattern written down in the

²²² See section, 3.5.3 above.

²²³ Pethrus, ‘Enhetstanken,’ *DK*, July 1944, 98. See also, section 4.2.3.1 above.

²²⁴ Pethrus, *Hos Herren är makten*, 1955, 155.

²²⁵ Pethrus, ‘Äro baptistsamfundet och pingstväckelsen två olika anderiktningar?’, *EH*, 26 January, 1939, 70-71.

New Testament'²²⁶ – a core and a goal Pethrus was convinced the Baptist Union shared with the Pentecostal movement.²²⁷ Having made that observation, Pethrus asked the rhetorical question: 'Can it be possible that the Baptists are of such different essence from this spirit that any fellowship between the Pentecostal movement and the Baptist Union is unthinkable?'²²⁸ The answer to the rhetorical question was obvious: Baptists and the Pentecostals shared the same spiritual core, making fellowship between the two movements possible. In an article published just a week before Pethrus pointed out that the spiritual life and the church services of early Baptists were actually closer to contemporary Pentecostals than contemporary Baptists.²²⁹ Although the comment entailed an implicit critique of the Baptists for straying from their spiritual heritage, the statement shows that Pethrus perceived the two movements as closely related and able to unite. Viewed together, the articles are clear evidence that even before 1940 Pethrus desired deeper fellowship with the Baptist Union and that he wanted to see an end to the conflict that had lasted between the two movements for nearly 30 years.²³⁰

In another article written in February 1939, Pethrus voiced what was probably his strongest ecumenical language up-to-date. Here he even surpassed his previous statements regarding the ecumenical vision for 'the Spirit-baptised' and the hope for closer relationships with the Baptist Union, to desire unity among all true Christians:

The unity of the believers was one of Jesus' last great prayer requests before he went to the cross. It is also every living and honest Christian's serious prayer request. Nothing can be more unnatural than for people, who have been redeemed with the same precious blood and are on the way to the same eternal goal, to walk in separate throngs as if they had nothing in common.²³¹

²²⁶ Pethrus, 'Äro baptistsamfundet och pingstväckelsen två olika anderiktningar,' 1939, 70.

²²⁷ Pethrus, 'Äro baptistsamfundet och pingstväckelsen två olika anderiktningar,' 1939, 70.

²²⁸ Pethrus, 'Äro baptistsamfundet och pingstväckelsen två olika anderiktningar,' 1939, 70.

²²⁹ Pethrus, 'Det gamla baptistsamfundet och pingstväckelsen,' *EH*, 19 January, 1939, 50.

²³⁰ See also, Pethrus, *Hos Herren är makten*, 1955, 156.

²³¹ Pethrus, 'Hoppet om mera enhet bland de kristna,' *EH*, 16 February, 1939, 137.

In the article Pethrus also reflected on Jesus' farewell discourse in John 16-17, especially emphasising Jesus' prayer in John 17:21-22 that his followers shall be one as He and the Father are one.²³² Pethrus hoped that the Holy Spirit would 'receive more and more power over God's people so that Christian unity could grow and bear more fruit'.²³³ Later in the article, Pethrus even went as far as to claim that *all* Christians needed the illumination of the Holy Spirit 'to be released from the temptations and the sins that lay behind the unnecessary divisions' that existed between them.²³⁴ Thus, the abovementioned articles clearly indicate that Pethrus had already taken the necessary conceptual/theological steps long before the idea of an ecumenical conference between the Swedish Baptist movements was presented to him.

Third, although Pethrus' articles before the Unity Conference are conspicuously absent regarding doctrinal unity, in light of his statement that two movements shared the same 'spirit,' it is not difficult to see how he concluded that those who believed in believer's baptism²³⁵ also shared the same 'spirit'. In fact, he specifically mentions in his memoirs, when he wrestled with the problem of the manifold divisions in Christianity, that the 'most natural' approach to visible unity was that 'those who are closest to one another doctrinally must have some possibility to unite'.²³⁶ The discussions before the Unity Conference in 1944 also reveal that he regarded believer's baptism as the doctrine 'with sufficient base for common ventures'.²³⁷ At what point in time Pethrus decided that believer's baptism was the specific doctrine with a wide enough base for an ecumenical conference is difficult to say. Nevertheless, it is essential to point out that for Pethrus these Baptist movements were indeed *one in spirit*, regardless of the fact that not all agreed to the Pentecostal understanding of

²³² Pethrus, 'Hoppet om mera enhet bland de kristna,' *EH*, 16 February, 1939, 137.

²³³ Pethrus, 'Hoppet om mera enhet bland de kristna,' *EH*, 16 February, 1939, 137.

²³⁴ Pethrus, 'Hoppet om mera enhet bland de kristna,' *EH*, 16 February, 1939, 138.

²³⁵ That is, ÖM, the Holiness Covenant Church, and the Free Baptists.

²³⁶ Pethrus, *Hos Herren är makten*, 1955, 155.

²³⁷ Struble, 169.

Spirit baptism nor to the SPM's understanding of the independent local church.²³⁸ Yet, it is conceivable that Pethrus envisioned these movements to coming to a 'fuller' understanding of the truth in the near future.

Struble has outlined the immediate events that led to the Unity Conference in December 1944. He notes for example the discussion Pethrus had with six of his former classmates from Bethel Seminary at a 40-year reunion regarding the possibility of uniting the different Baptist movements in Sweden. He further notes the sermon Pethrus preached the following Sunday entitled *Det kristna dopet och den svenska döparrörelsen just nu* [The Christian Baptism and the Swedish Baptist Movements Right Now], and the discussions that ensued at the National Conference in Nyhem where Pethrus proposed believer's baptism as the ground for unity with the other Baptist movements. Struble also includes the reactions of the Baptist movements to the thought of a joint ecumenical conference, etc.²³⁹ Importantly, he also shows that the different movements perceived the matter of unity rather differently. The Pentecostal Movement and ÖM stressed 'the unity of the Spirit' whereas the Baptist Union was more dogmatic in their approach.²⁴⁰

On 23 October, the Filadelfia church decided that the conference should be held 14-15 December. In the invitation to the denominations, Pethrus specifically labelled the conference as a *samförståndskonferens* [conference of mutual understanding] in order to avoid any notion that the conference was intended as a merger.²⁴¹ The invitation to the conference was by no means unanimously approved. Pethrus stated in his memoirs that the initiative received 'sharp

²³⁸ Pethrus, 'Enhetssträvandena,' *Dagen*, 29 December, 1953, 3. Struble also notes that around the time of the Unity Conference, 'the independent local church concept was momentarily set aside as a particular Pentecostal dogma.' Struble, 166.

²³⁹ Struble, 166-169.

²⁴⁰ Struble, 166-167.

²⁴¹ Pethrus, *Hos Herren är makten*, 1955, 159.

criticism' from some of the 'brothers' in the Pentecostal movement.²⁴² The Methodists and MCC who had been excluded from the conference also felt like the initiative hampered ecumenical efforts on a larger scale. Pethrus answered the criticism from the other Free Churches with the explanation that his intention was not to undermine the larger ecumenical efforts but that ecumenism in a 'smaller setting would encourage ecumenical efforts among all Christians'.²⁴³ Since Pethrus had dismissed organisational unity from the agenda, the discussions of the conference came to revolve around a number of joint ventures such as 'a common hymnal, the arrangement of more unity conferences, provisions for better local cooperation and common Bible schools, collaboration between the publishing houses, as well as newspaper issues'.²⁴⁴ In addition, Pethrus also considered that enhanced unity could benefit foreign missions.²⁴⁵

Even though the conference was largely preoccupied with possible joint ventures, in his address to the conference Pethrus presented a brief summary of his theological understanding of Christian unity. Based on John 11:51-52,²⁴⁶ Pethrus argued that unity was related to the atonement itself, making it of utmost importance.²⁴⁷ He further observed, in light of Ephesians 2:14, that the 'dividing wall was broken down through redemption in Christ – not only between God and human beings, but also between races and peoples and between private individuals'.²⁴⁸ Based on these texts, Pethrus stressed that unity could not be reached as a result of a conference decision. It had to be 'a spiritual experience'.²⁴⁹ Yet, Pethrus made clear that no concrete unity could be reached if a passive attitude were adopted. On the contrary, he

²⁴² Pethrus, *Hos Herren är makten*, 1955, 159. As noted in the contextual narrative, Sven Lidman was certainly part of that contingent since he valued originality as opposed to Pethrus' emphasis on change. See Sahlberg, 66.

²⁴³ Pethrus, *Hos Herren är makten*, 1955, 163.

²⁴⁴ W.A., 'Döparnas stora enhetskonferens,' *EH*, 28 December, 1944, 1235.

²⁴⁵ Pethrus, *Hos Herren är makten*, 1955, 160.

²⁴⁶ *Evangelii Häröld* incorrectly states that Pethrus' text was taken from John 12:51-52.

²⁴⁷ W.A., 'Döparnas stora enhetskonferens,' 1944, 1231.

²⁴⁸ W.A., 'Döparnas stora enhetskonferens,' 1944, 1231.

²⁴⁹ W.A., 'Döparnas stora enhetskonferens,' 1944, 1231.

noted that ‘unity comes from the outside,’ and in order for unity to happen, ‘it must have its preachers’.²⁵⁰ He ended his presentation by pointing out two preconditions for unity. First, all parties had to admit to their own ‘deficiencies and shortcomings,’ and then ‘adopt a willingness to move forward’.²⁵¹ The second condition was that each party was willing to make the New Testament its ideal.²⁵²

Although the conference had begun with great expectation, it unfortunately did not yield any concrete results, apart from a committee being established to discuss how the ecumenical efforts could continue in the future. Except for some comments concerning youth and missions organisations, the presentations during the conference were generally well received among most Pentecostals.²⁵³ For Pethrus personally, the greatest benefit of the conference was to be able to welcome representatives from the Baptist Union to the Filadelfia church, which they had excommunicated 31 years previously.²⁵⁴

In the aftermath of the conference, Pethrus was diligent to point out that no deviations had taken place in terms of organisation. He vowed that the independent local church concept was still as intact as before the conference, and that he did not intend to trade ‘the strong unity that existed within the Pentecostal movement for a weak and superficial unity with dissidents’.²⁵⁵ However, the conference allowed for ecumenical efforts to take place on a local level all over Sweden. In fact, at the national conference the following year, Pethrus insisted that, in light of the independent local church model, the question of unity was primarily a local church issue.²⁵⁶ Even though no change had taken place in organisation, a major change

²⁵⁰ W.A., ‘Döparnas stora enhetskonferens,’ 1944, 1231.

²⁵¹ W.A., ‘Döparnas stora enhetskonferens,’ 1944, 1231.

²⁵² W.A., ‘Döparnas stora enhetskonferens,’ 1944, 1231.

²⁵³ Pethrus, ‘Enhetskonferensen,’ *EH*, 28 December, 1944, 1238.

²⁵⁴ Pethrus, *Hos Herren är makten*, 1955, 161.

²⁵⁵ Pethrus, ‘Enhetskonferensen,’ 1944, 1238.

²⁵⁶ Struble, 172.

had taken place in attitude – denominationalism was no longer an obstacle for cooperation as in past decades.²⁵⁷

Pethrus admits in his memoirs that he had no way of knowing the results the conference would yield in terms of inward and outward unity.²⁵⁸ Time would soon tell that it would not yield much at all. Pethrus explained the absence of concrete results and the lack of personal involvement to the failure of the ‘continuation committee’ to provide him with an invitation to continue the cooperation.²⁵⁹ Sahlberg disagrees with Pethrus’ explanation²⁶⁰ and suggests that the lack of involvement on Pethrus’ part was rather a combination of the Pentecostal Movement’s disapproval of the Baptist Union’s more ‘culture-friendly attitude,’ and a result of the strong tensions that existed within the Pentecostal Movement itself.²⁶¹ A further obstacle, according to Sahlberg, was Pethrus’ plans for a daily newspaper.²⁶² It is also likely that his rejection of any form of centralised organisation alienated the Baptist Union from further cooperation. Whatever the cause(s), the conference yielded unsatisfactory results for most parties.²⁶³

Even though the Unity Conference had yielded unsatisfactory results, in October 1945 Pethrus initiated another ecumenical effort. This time he did not approach the five Baptist movements but solely ÖM. Struble notes that Pethrus felt that the problems from 1937-38 had not been completely resolved at the Unity Conference in 1944.²⁶⁴ In order to rectify the problems, Pethrus requested the Pentecostal Movement’s Pastors’ Conference to inquire if the

²⁵⁷ Struble, 173.

²⁵⁸ Pethrus, *Hos Herren är makten*, 1955, 156.

²⁵⁹ Pethrus, *Hos Herren är makten*, 1955, 163.

²⁶⁰ Pethrus’ explanation is indeed a bit bewildering considering the fact that his name was included even in *Evangelii Härold’s* list of the members of the committee. See, W.A., ‘Döparnas stora enhetskonferens,’ 1944, 1235.

²⁶¹ Sahlberg, 68. Pethrus would later admit that the tension within the Pentecostal movement contributed to the limited success of the conference. See, Pethrus, *Gå ut på gator och gränder*, 1949, 7-8.

²⁶² Sahlberg, 68.

²⁶³ Pethrus, ‘Väckelselängtan enar döparförsamlingarna,’ *Dagen*, 4 April, 1946, 79.

²⁶⁴ Struble, 174.

Örebro Elim Church²⁶⁵ was willing to host a conference between the movements.²⁶⁶ Sahlberg speculates that Pethrus might have had an ulterior motive, which was to create closer ties with ÖM in order to provide a broader financial base for his recently started newspaper, *Dagen*.²⁶⁷ Although it is true that *Dagen's* financial situation was dire at the time of the conference, Pethrus never mentioned anything regarding *Dagen* in his speeches at the conference, and the farthest the discussions went in terms of a joint literary venture was the issue of a shared hymnal. At any rate, the Elim Church accepted the suggestion and the conference took place 2-5 April 1946. Struble particularly notes that the leadership of ÖM was eager to convey that they did not intend to merge with the Pentecostal Movement. In spite of the leadership's clear intentions, the discussions at the conference still centred on the different perspectives of a merger.²⁶⁸ Struble also points out that Pethrus displayed a much more lenient attitude as opposed to 1937-38. In 1937-38, Pethrus dismissed every form of alliance between the two movements since alliances were an evasion for true unity.²⁶⁹ Now, rather than emphasising the differences, he emphasised the commonalities and accepted alliances as a first step toward a more profound unity on the basis that 'all or nothing is a dangerous principle'.²⁷⁰ However, regarding the critical issue of organised mission organisations, neither movement was willing to change its opinion. Thus, 'it was once again the organisational question on both sides that was the big hindrance for a complete merger between P [the Pentecostal Movement] and ÖM

²⁶⁵ The *Örebro Elim Church* had suggested to host a conference between the movements in 1937, but that conference never took place. Thus, the *Örebro Elim Church* was the most convenient venue for the conference.

²⁶⁶ Pethrus asked the national pastor's conference to make the formal request because his own independent efforts in 1937-38 were a big reason for the tension between the two movements.

²⁶⁷ Sahlberg, 125.

²⁶⁸ Struble, 174-175.

²⁶⁹ Struble, 175. Struble does not provide a sufficient reason why Pethrus rejected alliances in 1937/38. Even though he refers to some of Pethrus' previous statements regarding alliances, namely that alliances were a mere 'patch work' and 'of no value,' he fails to observe that Pethrus rejected alliances because they did not fulfil the biblical ideal of 'one city – one church'. Pethrus' understanding of alliances as 'worthless' significantly stem from this theological background.

²⁷⁰ Pethrus, 'Väckelselängtan enar döparförsamlingarna,' *Dagen*, 4 April, 1946, 1.

[ÖM]’.²⁷¹ Even though a merger between the two movements was ruled out, the conference provided both parties with the opportunity to apologise for any wrongdoings committed in 1937-38. Pethrus especially asked forgiveness for the way he had handled the situation.²⁷² It was this opportunity to reconcile with ÖM in 1946, and the somewhat improved relations with the Baptist Union in 1944 that Pethrus later regarded as the conferences’ greatest outcomes.²⁷³

The years following the ecumenical conferences of 1944 and 1946 saw Pethrus’ ecumenical concerns dwindle into the background for nearly a decade. As described in the contextual narrative, the loss of ecumenical interest can be explained in large part to the overwhelming hurdles he faced in the wake of the conflict with Sven Lidman, and the problems that arose between him and the Baptist Union regarding the new religious legislation of 1951. It is no wonder, therefore, that when Pethrus briefly referred to the topic of unity in the 1950s, it exuded practical realism. The only ecumenical work that Pethrus now put any stock in was joint ventures. In his book *Valen och moralen* [The Choices and the Morality] published in 1958, he dismissed as futile any notion of doctrinal unity on a larger scale, but regarded greater Christian influence in society as a broad enough base for unity to exist: ‘...on the basis of confession one can never build any far-reaching common Christian unity. There is however one policy where the Christians ought to be able to unite – a platform where they all can fit, and that is in the work for a greater Christian influence in society’.²⁷⁴ Consequently, the experiences from the 1940s had convinced Pethrus that only a shared value,

²⁷¹ Struble, 179.

²⁷² Struble, 177.

²⁷³ See, Pethrus, ‘Enhetssträvandena,’ *Dagen*, 29 December, 1953, 3.

²⁷⁴ Pethrus, *Valen och moralen*, 1958, 29-30.

such as evangelistic outreaches,²⁷⁵ or Christian influence in society (*kristet samhällsansvar*) was a broad enough base for meaningful ecumenical work.

4.3.2 Analysis of Lewi Pethrus' Ecumenical Perspective

When analysing Pethrus' ecumenical understanding from 1933-1958, the general question that needs to be answered is whether his ecumenical efforts should place him alongside other important Pentecostal ecumenical forerunners such as William Seymour, Thomas Ball Barratt, Donald Gee, and David du Plessis, as David Bundy suggests.²⁷⁶ In order to answer the question satisfactorily, the context and the scope of his ecumenical efforts must first be considered. Granted, for an accurate assessment the analysis ought to include the years up until Pethrus' death in 1974. However, 1933-1958 covers the pinnacle of Pethrus' ecumenical involvement, and the scope of his involvement during this period must be the key criterion for determining his ecumenical legacy.

Comparing Pethrus' understanding of unity in 1919 with the one portrayed in the 1940s, it is easy to draw the conclusion, as Sahlberg does, that Pethrus somehow modified or moved away from his early emphasis on spiritual unity to endorse a more visible or organisational unity.²⁷⁷ However, nothing in Pethrus' writings supports this notion. About a decade after the event, Pethrus explicitly stated that 'we did not contemplate then [in 1944] upon any organisational unity, but a unity that closest resembles Paul's famous words: "The unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace".'²⁷⁸ Not even Pethrus' comments concerning inward and outward unity in regard to the 'one city – one (mega) church' model in 1941 departed from the emphasis on spiritual unity. Pethrus merely insisted that Christians, who are one in Spirit,

²⁷⁵ Pethrus, 'Väckelse och enhet,' *Dagen*, 15 February, 1951, 3.

²⁷⁶ See, David Bundy, 'The Ecumenical Quest of Pentecostalism.' *Cyberjournal for Pentecostal-Charismatic Research* 5 (February 1999).

²⁷⁷ Sahlberg, 128.

²⁷⁸ Pethrus, 'Enhetssträvandena,' *Dagen*, 29 December, 1953, 3.

should not divide into many local churches but remain as one. Pethrus certainly did not argue that all Christians in one city, regardless of doctrinal belief or denominational affiliation, should assemble in one local church. Furthermore, Pethrus' outright rejection of any hint of organisational unity, apart from on a local church basis, also testifies to his insistence on spiritual unity. In fact, in an article from 1947 entitled *Organisationsraseri* [Organisational Fury], he not only stated that overconfidence in organisations would lead to the establishment of antichrist's kingdom, but he also completely dismissed the suggestion, raised at the World Pentecostal Conference in Zurich in 1947, of a world Pentecostal organisation.²⁷⁹ Thus, unity had to be spiritual, especially among Pentecostals.

Even though Pethrus theoretically acknowledged that Christian unity was rooted in the atonement, his actual ecumenical initiatives did not even extend to include Christians who agreed with the Protestant doctrine of justification by faith alone. The exclusion of denominations such as MCC and the Methodists can be explained in light of personal, methodological and theological reasons. First, Pethrus acknowledged in his memoirs that because of his own and his wife's 'first spiritual experiences' and 'precious memories' in the Baptist Union, they had always felt 'more closely connected with the Baptists than with, for example, MCC and the Methodists'.²⁸⁰ Second, as noted above, when contemplating the best way of achieving visible unity, he concluded that the most sensible approach was to begin with those who were closest theologically. In light of his personal affinity to the Baptist Union, it is of little surprise that he considered the closest theological link to be believer's baptism, a doctrine MCC and the Methodists did not share. Third, in his address to the Unity Conference in 1944, he explicitly stated that in order for unity to exist, 'each party had to

²⁷⁹ Pethrus, 'Organisationsraseri,' *Dagen*, 19 May, 1947, 3, 10.

²⁸⁰ Pethrus, 'Hos Herren är makten,' 1955, 156.

make the New Testament its ideal'.²⁸¹ Since MCC advocated modern youth organisations and showed openness to worldly entertainment, they had abandoned this ideal.²⁸² Another reason for the exclusion of MCC was most certainly due to the fact that MCC had not fully rejected higher criticism of the Bible.²⁸³ Consequently, MCC and the Methodists did not meet the criterion of being true revival (restorationist) movements, and were therefore not 'one in spirit' with the other Baptist movements.

The exclusion of MCC and the Methodists shows that in reality *visible* unity for Pethrus was not based on the atonement alone, nor in fact on believer's baptism, as the absence of concrete results of the conference showed, but on agreement with Pethrus' and the SPM's interpretation of the phrase 'the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace' (Ephesians 4:3). That is, Pethrus would not consider visible unity with a movement which was not biblicistic in its approach to Scripture and did not agree with the Pentecostal Movement's pronounced aversion against 'man-made' organisations. Pethrus and the SPM had predetermined boundaries as to what form visible unity with other Christians might take, and those boundaries were simply nonnegotiable. Pethrus therefore adapted his ecumenical approach depending on the 'spiritual state' of the Free Churches. He rejected ecumenical attempts when Free Churches promoted liberal theology, when they were antagonistic against the Pentecostal movement, or when they advanced new and modern (anti-Pentecostal) methods of ministry. However, when the Free Churches aligned with the Swedish Pentecostal perspective, he was the first to promote unity.

²⁸¹ W.A., 'Döparnas stora enhetskonferens,' 1944, 1231.

²⁸² Pethrus, 'De Frikyrkliga och pingstväckelsen,' *EH*, 26 August, 1943, 680-681. See also, Sahlberg, 65.

²⁸³ The beginning of the problems between the Pentecostal Movement and MCC regarding the higher criticism of the Bible can be traced to 1931 and Pethrus' disagreement with the general superintendent of MCC, Axel Andersson. See for example, Pethrus, 'Bibelkritiken finns inom frikyrkosamfundet,' *EH*, 19 February, 1931, 127; Pethrus, 'Bibelkritiken, ett svar till missionsföreståndare Axel Andersson,' *EH*, 19 March, 1931, 206. See also, Torsten Bergsten, *Frikyrkor i samverkan: Den svenska frikyrkoekumenikens historia 1905-1993* (Stockholm: Libris Media and Verbum Förlag AB, 1995), 185-186.

It is important to note here that Pethrus' ecumenical efforts were, from a broader ecumenical perspective, seriously limited. As just mentioned, mainline Protestant denominations were excluded, and engaging in discussions with the Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Churches were out of the question. An interfaith dialogue would have been inconceivable.²⁸⁴ In light of the beginning of the Charismatic Movement in the 1960s, Pethrus' perception of the Roman Catholic Church from 1934-1958 is particularly noteworthy. In 1934 Pethrus exclaimed: 'Praise be to God that the wretched Catholicism has so little power in our beloved country. May the Lord protect us from all Catholic influence'.²⁸⁵ In 1954, the language by which he described the Catholic Church had changed very little. Pethrus stated: 'When one considers all the blood that taints the hands of the church of the pope, especially the bloody persecutions that now go on in several countries, one shivers at the thought that our people would admit this distorted picture of Christianity'.²⁸⁶ Thus, comments like these ones must be considered when assessing Pethrus' role as an important Pentecostal ecumenical figure.

At any rate, since the obstacles for visible unity were too large to overcome even on a local level, Pethrus had to settle for alliances and joint ventures. It is difficult to see, however, how alliances and joint ventures realised his vision of unity among all redeemed, nor how they served as a remedy to the scandal of the copious divisions within Protestant Christianity. In fact, his emphasis in the 1950s on Christians uniting, not based on doctrine but on a shared concern for revival and the need for increased Christian influence in society, seems to fall far from the mark. Cecil M. Robeck poignantly observes, 'It is one thing to join a local, national, or international Evangelical or Full Gospel alliance in order to cooperate on shared concerns;

²⁸⁴ Pethrus' comments regarding the relation between social welfare and religion make it clear that he considered all other religions as inferior to Protestant Christianity, thus invalidating any interfaith dialogue. See, Pethrus, *Valen och moralen*, 1958, 8-10.

²⁸⁵ Pethrus, 'Antwerpen-London,' *EH*, 19 April, 1934, 286.

²⁸⁶ Pethrus, 'Katolicism och Protestantism,' *Dagen*, 8 May, 1954, 3.

it is quite another thing to join in a quest for full visible unity'.²⁸⁷ The hard lessons of the 1940s regrettably 'cured' Pethrus of his idealistic vision of visible unity among all regenerated Christians.

Having analysed Pethrus' ecumenical efforts from 1933-1958, the final assessment as to whether Pethrus ought to be included among other important Pentecostal ecumenical forerunners must remain inconclusive. On the one hand, Pethrus' ecumenical efforts were laudable considering the historical context in which he found himself. Not only did he need to overcome years of pronounced isolationism within his own movement, but he also needed to overcome deep-rooted conflicts with the Swedish Free Churches. On the other hand, Pethrus' ecumenical efforts only extended to Christians closest to himself. He even refused to consider unity with Protestant Christians if they did not meet the Pentecostals' preconceived understanding of 'spiritual unity,' not to mention Roman Catholics, Orthodox or other world religions. Thus, the perspective of the beholder will determine the final verdict.

4.4 Church and State

4.4.1 Church and State Relations in Sweden 1593-1951: Its Impact on Swedish Pentecostalism

Surprisingly for a former Baptist minister, Pethrus did not favour a separation of church and state. Instead, he favoured a formal connection between the SPM and the Lutheran State Church. This remarkable preference on the part of a Pentecostal cannot be accurately understood without a previous knowledge of the Swedish religious context of the time. In 1593, the Lutheran church became the national church of Sweden, and 'the king replaced the

²⁸⁷ Cecil, M. Robeck, 'Christian Unity and Pentecostal Mission: A Contradiction?' paper presented at the EPCRA conference in Oxford, England, 2009, 17.

pope as the highest authority in church matters,' ushering in an era of religious uniformity.²⁸⁸ In 1686, the issue of religious uniformity was further clarified, stating that all individuals residing in the kingdom of Sweden must adhere to Christian teaching and doctrine as defined in the Augsburg confession of 1530.²⁸⁹ Any deviation from this norm was 'punishable by law'.²⁹⁰ Thus, the Bible and the Lutheran faith became the foundation for the Swedish constitution. Strict Lutheran uniformity remained until the middle of the 18th century, when foreigners belonging to the Anglican and Reformed churches were allowed to practice their faiths. In 1782, religious freedom was also extended to Jews. At this point in history, religious freedom was granted to 'guests only'. Swedish citizens were not allowed to hold any kind of religious meeting without the presence of a Lutheran priest. The greatest deviation from the uniformity principle took place at the end of the 19th century with two edicts concerning religious dissenters in 1860 and 1873. The edicts extended religious toleration to denominations on the condition that they first asked the king for permission. The application had to include a statement of faith as well as a manual describing the applicant's church polity. The edicts concerning religious dissenters ended in effect Lutheran uniformity and introduced the new principle that 'registered religion is accepted religion'.²⁹¹ For our purposes, it is essential to note two important facts. First, Anglicans and Methodists registered but Baptists did not. Thus, in the eyes of the law, Baptists were still part of the Lutheran State Church.²⁹² Second, the new laws opened up the possibility to leave the State Church in order to join another registered denomination. However, the laws did not allow individuals to leave

²⁸⁸ Ingemund Hägg, 'Sweden – Secular Population and Non-Secular State' in *Separation of Church and State in Europe: with views on Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Spain, Italy, Slovenia, and Greece* (Brussels: European Liberal Forum, 2008), 32.

²⁸⁹ Anders Jarlet, 'Vem Definierar Religion? Från Kyrkolagen 1686 till Omskärelselagen 2001,' Lund: Teologiska Institutionen, Lunds Universitet, 2, [Accessed on 15 January 2009 from http://www.teol.lu.se/fileadmin/user_upload/ctr/pdf/rit/3/Jarlet.pdf].

²⁹⁰ Ingemund Hägg, 32.

²⁹¹ Anders Jarlet, 4.

²⁹² Anders Jarlet, 4.

the State Church and not join another denomination. Thus one could not remain religiously unaffiliated.

When the Pentecostal revival arrived in Sweden, it initially existed as a revival movement within a variety of denominations. However, it received its greatest acceptance among the Baptists. Consequently, the largest numbers of early Pentecostals were, on the one hand, willing members of the Baptist Union, and on the other hand, ‘unwilling’ members of the Lutheran State Church. In 1913, when the Pentecostal ‘message’ became a dividing issue among Baptists, leading to the Filadelfia church being excommunicated from the Baptist Union, the question remained as to what form the new movement would take. Having been influenced by William Durham’s ideas concerning organised denominations,²⁹³ Pethrus rejected all forms of denominationalism, choosing a ‘spiritual unity’ among the local churches rather than an organisational one. In light of the aforementioned religious laws, the decision to reject all forms of denominationalism created an ecclesiological impasse, forcing the SPM to become in Pethrus’ words ‘a revival movement within the [Lutheran State] church’.²⁹⁴

In 1951, new religious legislation was passed that finally granted freedom from religion, without the demand of joining another authorised denomination. The new legislation removed the ecclesiological impasse placed on Swedish Pentecostals and reignited the debate concerning Pentecostals’ relationship to the Lutheran State Church. Hence, the issue became a matter of individual choice and personal conviction, since it lost its bearing on church affiliation and the need for establishing a legal denomination. Turning now to Pethrus’ comments regarding the State Church, it is clear that Pethrus did not lament the religious situation but perceived the SPM’s connection to the State Church as a great advantage.

²⁹³ As noted previously, Pethrus might have exaggerated Durham’s influence but according to his own testimony, Durham’s articles were of ‘decisive importance’ even though other people may have contributed to it. Pethrus, *Medan du stjärnorna räknar*, 1953, 176.

²⁹⁴ Pethrus, ‘Religiösa kameleonter,’ *Dagen*, 8 January 1948, 3.

4.4.2 The Swedish Pentecostal Movement as Free Revival Movement within the Swedish Lutheran Church

Before addressing Pethrus' arguments concerning the benefits for the SPM to remain with the State Church, it is important to note that Pethrus did not perceive the State Church as a true church in the biblical sense. Pethrus wrote:

The word church means the summoned, but where are the summoned in the Swedish State Church? All who are born in the kingdom of Sweden belong to it. The borders of Sweden are that church's borders – and such a church is something that is totally foreign to the Word of God. Personally I believe that the State Church is not a [true] church but what we have instead in Sweden is a *Christian state* [emphasis Pethrus]. And there is a big difference between these concepts.²⁹⁵

In later writings, Pethrus rejected any notion that Swedish Pentecostals would accept Lutheran teachings regarding infant baptism, communion, or confirmation.²⁹⁶ Thus the issue for Pethrus was not the legitimacy of the Lutheran State Church or its theology, but rather, whether the constitutional link between the government and the Lutheran church established in 1684 better served Pentecostal and public interests than a separation of church and state. Pethrus explained: 'We [Pentecostals] believe that it is a greater advantage for a country to have the Bible as a foundation for its constitution [...] - even if it is only Christian by name - than a heathen'.²⁹⁷ It is worth mentioning here that Pethrus only justified his position of a Christian state from a biblical point of view on one occasion, referring to ancient Israel and Christ's reign during the Millennium as proofs for its biblical validity.²⁹⁸ On all other occasions, Pethrus argued on pragmatical and political grounds rather than on theological. The apparent lack of biblical support was largely because Pethrus perceived the issue as a political rather than a religious one. In an article entitled *Skall vi lämna statskyrkan?* [Should

²⁹⁵ Pethrus, *Vår ställning till andra kristna*, 1931, 13.

²⁹⁶ Pethrus, 'Pingstväckelsen och statskyrkan,' *Dagen*, 29 March 1952, 3.

²⁹⁷ Pethrus, *Vår ställning till andra kristna*, 1931, 13-14.

²⁹⁸ Pethrus, 'Religionsfrihet och religionslöshet,' *Dagen*, 19 december, 1951, 3. In the 1960s, Pethrus added another 'biblical argument,' referring to Paul's membership in the Jewish state of Israel as a parallel to Pentecostals' membership in the Lutheran State Church. See section, 5.3.4 below.

we leave the State Church?], he explained that the argument for leaving the State Church on the basis that Christians could not belong to two churches at the same time was unfounded, since not even a majority of Lutheran priests regarded the entire Swedish population as a true church. 'Thus, it seems that the union of state and church is rather a political than a religious issue'.²⁹⁹

Although Pethrus consistently maintained his preference for a Christian state, the reasons for advocating such a view varied from the 1920s to the 1950s. He first became aware of the benefit of a Christian state during a series of meetings with the famous healing evangelist Smith Wigglesworth in 1921. Because of Wigglesworth's 'unconventional' methods, he was summoned by the police to give an account for the services. After having shown that physical healing was indeed a biblical practice, and thus, in line with Sweden's biblical constitution, Pethrus was acquitted from all charges and no restrictions were placed upon his ministry.³⁰⁰ The incident cemented in his mind the benefit of having a constitution based on the Bible. In fact, many years later, he expressed his conviction that the Pentecostal movement would have been on several occasions 'in a very difficult situation unless Sweden had been a Christian state'.³⁰¹ Consequently, a Christian state granted Pentecostals 'the freedom to follow biblical mandates without being hindered in any way'.³⁰² Thus, the initial reason Pethrus favoured a Christian state was because it gave Pentecostals the right to practice their distinctive beliefs.

In 1931, Pethrus argued that the preference of Swedish Pentecostals to remain within the State Church set them apart from the Free Churches. As already mentioned, the preference of

²⁹⁹ Pethrus, 'Skall vi lämna statskyrkan?', *Dagen*, 25 september 1951, 3.

³⁰⁰ Pethrus, *Vår ställning till andra kristna*, 1931, 14. An almost identical situation took place in January 1950 during William Freeman's healing campaigns. Also on this occasion, Pethrus argued for Pentecostals' constitutional rights to pray for physical healing. See, Olof Djurfeldt, 'Missionintresset växte i förnyelseväckelsen,' in *pingströrelsen: Händelser och utveckling under 1900-talet*, vol 1, (Örebro: Libris Förlag, 2007), 178.

³⁰¹ Pethrus, 'Kristendom eller religionslöshet,' *Dagen*, 2 February, 1952, 3.

³⁰² Zander Åberg, 608.

remaining within the State Church was a matter of ecclesiological conviction and legal necessity,³⁰³ but the issue was also compounded by a history of conflicts with the Baptists and other Free Churches. From 1913 until 1934, the SPM utilised every possible argument in order to defend its *raison d'être* against the opposition from the Free Churches. At the peak of the tension in 1931, he published a book entitled *Vår ställning till andra kristna* [Our Position toward Other Christians] in which he outlined the reasons for the tension and listed a number of issues that divided them.³⁰⁴ Among the issues listed was that of the separation of church and state. Consequently, the belief in a Christian state became an issue that validated the SPM's existence.

In the beginning of the 1940s, when the SPM was firmly established, Pethrus attempted to breach the gap between the Pentecostal movement and the Free Churches by inviting denominations that practised believer's baptism to an ecumenical conference in 1944. As previously noted, the conference of 1944, and a later one with Örebro Missions Society in 1946, did not achieve any concrete results except for providing opportunities to apologise for previous hostilities.³⁰⁵ The lack of concrete results renewed the tension between the Baptists and the Pentecostals, and it was further challenged in May 1946 when Pethrus allowed the Lutheran bishop Manfred Björkqvist to participate in a service at the Filadelfia church on the basis that the Pentecostal Movement was 'a revival movement within the [Lutheran State] Church'.³⁰⁶ Pethrus' statement caused a significant stir since it went beyond his previous statements regarding Sweden as a Christian state. The issue became such a controversial topic that it was addressed again at the national conference in Nyhem a month later. At the

³⁰³ Pethrus addressed this predicament at the annual Nyhem conference in 1946, saying: 'If we should separate from the State Church, we must establish a denomination, and that we do not want on any condition'. Åberg, 608.

³⁰⁴ Apart from the issue of the separation of church and state, Pethrus also mentioned as dividing issues the Free Churches' involvement in politics, their openness toward liberal theology, their tolerance of sin and lack of church discipline, denominationalism, and their understanding of ecumenism.

³⁰⁵ Stävare, 'Ökat engagemang i samhällsfrågorna,' 172.

³⁰⁶ Sahlberg, 126-127.

conference a recent, but notable addition to the SPM with a Methodist background, C. G. Hjelm,³⁰⁷ commented that the ideal scenario for the Pentecostal Movement was a number of autonomous local churches within a free state.³⁰⁸ In response to Hjelm's statement, Pethrus reiterated his previous convictions that the State Church could not be considered a true church, and a connection to the State Church did not restrict the Pentecostal movement in any way. He also made the much-needed clarification that his contentious statement only meant to indicate the formal reality that existed between the Pentecostal movement and the State Church because of current religious laws. It is interesting to note here that even in 1966 Pethrus' controversial statement still generated enough discussion that he was forced to explain it once more. At this occasion the explanation had nothing to do with current religious laws since the legislation changed in 1951 but solely in terms of the purpose of the Pentecostal movement:

The Pentecostal movement is a revival movement not only within the Swedish church, but for all churches. The Church of Sweden is a mission field for the Pentecostal movement. Some tend to think that the Pentecostal movement is a movement for the Pentecostal movement. After churches have been planted and established, one closes oneself within one's own ministry and only works with the limited audience that comes to one's own meetings. Thus the Pentecostal movement becomes a revival for Pentecostals. One preaches salvation for the saved, believer's baptism for baptised believers, and Spirit baptism for the already Spirit baptised, etc. This strategy has meant the end for most revivals throughout the ages. Jesus' words, 'Go out into all the world' also apply to the Swedish church.³⁰⁹

³⁰⁷ Carl Gustaf Hjelm (1903-1965) was born in Norrköping, Sweden and he attended two Methodist church in the city in his early youth. Having attended the Methodist seminary in Uppsala, Hjelm acquired his preaching credentials in 1921. In 1925, Hjelm was baptised as an adult and therefore lost his preaching credentials with the Methodist church. Hjelm subsequently ministered in Baptist churches in Gothenburg and Helsinki until 1938, when he joined the Pentecostal church, Södermalm, in Stockholm. As pastor of the Södermalm church, Hjelm became an important voice in the SPM alongside individuals such as Lewi Pethrus and Sven Lidman. See, Fahlgren, 280-283.

³⁰⁸ Zander Åberg, 608. Sahlberg notes that a more 'sectarian branch' within the movement began to argue for a 'denominational principle,' encouraging Pentecostals to withdraw their membership from the State Church. Sahlberg certainly exaggerates the situation when he mentions a 'sectarian branch' arguing for a 'denominational principle'. More likely, C. G. Hjelm's comments only displayed an ideal vision, of perhaps a group of people, and did not necessarily advocate a denominational principle within the SPM. See, Sahlberg, 132.

³⁰⁹ Pethrus, 'Pingstväckelsen och Svenska kyrkan,' *Dagen*, 21 December, 1966, 2.

At any rate, having made that all-important clarification, Pethrus proceeded to argue that such a link indeed benefited the Pentecostal movement in four additional ways: First, remaining a formal member of the State Church prevented the Pentecostal movement from being forced to become an established denomination. Second, the link between church and state preserved the original purpose of the Pentecostal revival, which was to be a revival movement for Christianity as a whole. Third, the connection between the church and the state also guaranteed that Christianity [Luther's Small Catechism] was taught in public schools, which was a benefit for the entire nation.³¹⁰ Finally, remaining with the State Church obstructed antichristian forces in Sweden from achieving their goal of ridding Sweden of Christianity.³¹¹ Thus, in the 1940s the argument for a Christian State served a two-fold purpose for Pethrus. On the one hand, the issue kept the Pentecostal movement rooted to its original vision of being a revival movement for Christianity as a whole, and on the other hand, it functioned as an important argument in the struggle with the Free Churches and the rising threat of secularisation and moral corruption of society.

In the beginning of the 1950s, the issue took centre-stage again. In light of the new religious legislation, the argument that a connection between church and state prevented the SPM from having to organise itself into an established denomination lost its force. The new religious legislation required Pethrus to find another primary reason for maintaining the concept of a Christian state, which he found in the evils of nationwide secularisation.

³¹⁰ Pethrus would return to the argument that a separation of church and state meant the end for mandatory Christian education in public schools on numerous occasions in the 1950s. He then argued that mandatory Christian education was the most important factor in educating youth to become responsible citizens. Using the example of American youth, whom he regarded as ignorant of religious issues in comparison to Swedish youth, due to their lack of mandatory Christian education, he further insisted that local churches were unable to compensate for the loss of Christian education. Hence, there was no proof that 'a Free Church in a free land' provided the same biblical knowledge as compulsory Christian education in a country with a Christian state. See, Pethrus, 'Amerikas ungdom analfabeter i kristendom,' *Dagen*, 26 October, 1957, 2; Pethrus, 'Kristendomsundervisningen i skolorna,' *Dagen*, 29 January, 1952, 3; Pethrus, 'Kristendomsundervisningen,' *Dagen*, 28 May, 1957, 2.

³¹¹ Zander Åberg, 608.

Although he had already used the impending threat of secularisation as an argument for maintaining a Christian state in the 1940s, it had been just one of several arguments. In the 1950s, the threat of secularisation became the overriding concern that put all other arguments to rest. For instance, in 1951 he argued that Free Church proponents confused the concept of the individual's freedom *for* religion with the concept of the State's freedom *from* religion. The demand for religious freedom was a justified democratic right, but the removal of Christianity from the state did not advance the welfare of Christians and the population in general. In fact, it merely served anti-Christian interests and reduced Christian influence in society.³¹² In Pethrus' view, a Christian state stood as a buttress against the moral filth that wanted to pollute the nation, and no benefits could be gained through a removal of that buttress. In light of the nation's dire social and moral condition, he asserted that Free Church advocates 'must set aside their religious jealousy, prestige, and church politics [and focus on] the one big question: What benefits God's purpose as a whole?'³¹³

In another article entitled *Skall vi lämna statskyrkan?* [Shall we leave the State Church?], written in September 1951, he continued his 'big picture' line of reasoning by claiming that the separation of church and state was an outdated argument and inapplicable for Swedish Pentecostals. He observed that the separation of church and state had been an urgent matter for the Free Churches in the past, when they were persecuted by the State Church, but it lacked relevance for modern-day Pentecostals. Although sympathetic to the Free Churches' misfortune, Swedish Pentecostals did not share their history and thus could not share their complaint. On the contrary, Pethrus argued that the relationship between the SPM and the State Church was largely cordial and often even friendlier than with the Free

³¹² Pethrus, 'Religionsfrihet och religionslöshet,' 1951, 3. Pethrus, 'Kyrkans skiljande från staten,' *Dagen*, 17 July, 1951, 3. For a more detailed discussion of Pethrus' political ecclesiology, see 5.3 below.

³¹³ Pethrus, 'Religionsfrihet och religionslöshet,' 1951, 3.

Churches.³¹⁴ Having shown the irrelevance of the Free Churches' history as an argument for Swedish Pentecostals to withdraw their membership from the State Church, Pethrus spent the rest of the article focusing his reader's attention on the benefits of having a Christian state in order to deal with the *current* social and moral problems. Consequently, running through this article, and other articles from the same time, was the recurring argument that a separation of church and state merely played into the hands of atheistic, communistic, and anti-Christian forces, since only they could benefit from the Bible being removed as the foundation for the nation's constitution.³¹⁵ Thus, in the 1950s the argument for maintaining a Christian state was set on a predominantly national scale, transcending the immediate advantages for Pentecostal and Free Churches to the overall moral and social welfare of the Swedish nation and God's purposes in general.

4.4.3 Analysis of Lewi Pethrus' Understanding of Church and State

Although Pethrus regarded the issue of Church and State as a predominantly political issue, his views need to be evaluated in its larger ecclesiological context. Historically, Pethrus' belief in independent local churches within a State Church is not without precedent. It finds proponents as far back as the English reformation, particularly in the writings of semi-separatist Puritan Henry Jacob (1563-1624).³¹⁶ As oppose to radical separatists, who wanted a complete separation of church and state, semi-separatist such as Jacob wanted independent local churches to be able to exist alongside the Church of England. In this broad sense,

³¹⁴ Pethrus, 'Skall vi lämna statskyrkan?,' *Dagen*, 25 september, 1951, 3.

³¹⁵ See for instance, Pethrus, 'Kyrkans skiljande från staten,' *Dagen*, 17 July, 1951, 3; Pethrus, 'Skall vi lämna statskyrkan?,' *Dagen*, 25 september 1951, 3; Pethrus, 'Religionsfrihet och religionslöshet,' *Dagen*, 19 december, 1951, 3; Pethrus, 'Varför jag inte utträder ur kyrkan,' *Dagen*, 2 Janury, 1952, 3; Pethrus, 'Kristendomsundervisningen i skolorna,' *Dagen*, 29 January, 1952, 3; Pethrus, 'Kristendom eller religionslöshet,' *Dagen*, 2 February, 1952, 3; Pethrus, 'Pingstväckelsen och statskyrkan,' *Dagen*, 29 March 1952, 3.

³¹⁶ Henry Jacob, *Reasons Taken Out of God's Word and the Best Human Testimonies Proving a Necessity of Reforming Our Churches in England* (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, n.d.).

Pethrus could be considered a semi-separatist. However, contrary to Jacob, who acknowledged the authority of the Church of England, Pethrus completely disregarded the Church of Sweden as a spiritual and ecclesiological entity. As already noted, for Pethrus, the issue of church and state was not one issue but two. Thus, Pethrus rejected as unscriptural any notion of a State Church but found compelling reasons for believing in a *Christian state*.

Closer to a Swedish context, Pethrus' views corresponded more closely with original Pietist rather than radical Pietist beliefs. Rather than separating from the Lutheran church, Pethrus believed that Pentecostalism could revitalize the Lutheran church in the same way as Spener and Francke believed that Pietism could revitalize it. Pethrus' vision for the SPM therefore resembled the vision of *Evangeliska Fosterlandsstiftelsen* [Swedish Evangelical Mission], which views itself as an association of congregations with a specific purpose within the Church of Sweden but not as an independent church. Yet interestingly, Pethrus never expanded on the similarities of his views with early Pietism nor with the Swedish Evangelical Mission.

When analysing Pethrus' arguments for a Christian state, it is important to note that none of his writings includes a more profound analysis of the subject. He never explained in what sense the state could be considered 'Christian'. His two biblical examples of ancient Israel and Christ's reign during the Millennium only served the purpose of assuring his readers that the concept of a Christian state was not against biblical teachings. The fact that Pethrus completely ignored that his examples were not suited for the church-age is a strong indication of their reassuring purpose. Although biblical evidence for a Christian state is severely lacking, Pethrus accepted the notion of a Christian state on a conceptual level. He affirmed that the Swedish state could be regarded as Christian in a nominal sense since it was constitutionally based on the Scriptures. For Pethrus, the constitutional wedding of church and

state was not a license for the state to dominate the people's religious beliefs but to ensure that Christian liberties were upheld. Church and state were therefore not 'incommensurate [...] in that one is dependent upon spiritual persuasion and influence, the other upon its power to force and coerce,'³¹⁷ as Nigel Wright asserts, but equally responsible to abide by the moral code to which they were attached. In fact, Pethrus believed the state was not only responsible to abide by its biblical constitution but also to promote Christianity in its legal decision-making. Indeed, if politicians neglected the religious needs of the people, it would cause them irreparable damage and eventually lead to the nation's ruin. Thus, for Pethrus, nothing was more important for the social well being of the people than the state's attitude toward religion.³¹⁸ It is interesting to note that it largely concurs with the four key principles David McIlroy considers as recurrent throughout 1,500 years of Christian political thought, namely '(1) government is accountable to God; (2) government's role is limited; (3) government exists for the public good; (4) the task of government is the wise execution of just judgment'.³¹⁹ Although in line with the fundamental Christian understanding of government for more than a millennium, Pethrus' arguments concerning the state's moral responsibilities confuse the essential difference between the *function* and the *nature* of the state, as James Bannerman observes: 'In the case of the State, it may indirectly, and by use of its proper power as a State, promote to no inconsiderable extent those moral and religious ends which it is the Church's distinctive duty to work out; but still political government is a civil institute, and not a spiritual'.³²⁰ Thus, the state's function should include a concern for the moral well

³¹⁷ Nigel G. Wright, *Free Church, Free State: The Positive Baptist Vision* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster Press, 2005), xxii.

³¹⁸ See, Pethrus, 'Politisk blindhet,' *Dagen*, 19 April, 1956, 3.

³¹⁹ David McIlroy, 'The Role of Government in Classic Christian Political Thought,' in Nick Spencer and Jonathan Chaplin, eds. *God and Government* (London: SPCK, 2009), 81-82.

³²⁰ James Bannerman, *The Church of Christ*, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1974), 364.

being of the people; yet calling the state ‘Christian’ contributes a role to the state which it is not meant to nor cannot have.

Carl-Erik Sahlberg remarks that Pethrus intentionally set-aside restorationism during the 1950s as an inappropriate model of explaining church history. It is true that in his earlier writings he lamented the spiritual decline that took place following the Council of Nicea in 325 CE and he later endorsed ‘Constantinianism,’ the idea of declaring a previous heathen empire as ‘Christian’ in the 1950s. However, it is important to note that Pethrus only ‘ignores’ one aspect of restorationism, namely its theory of widespread apostasy during the first centuries of the church, and not its Early Church ideal. For instance, Pethrus can in the same article argue for the practice of believer’s baptism, Spirit baptism, and spiritual gifts as the model of the Early Church and a few sentences later speak about the advantages of having a state anchored in the Bible and the Lutheran confessions. This incongruity is a clue that Pethrus’ views are not guided by a need for rational and ecclesiological consistency but for immediate pragmatic purposes. In fact, in his book *Gå ut på Gator och Gränder*, published in 1951, Pethrus promoted the apostasy theory of restorationism. Thus, Sahlberg not only overstates his case but also inaccurately interprets Pethrus’ views of a Christian state as an *intentional* setting aside of restorationism.³²¹

In conclusion, rather than presenting a solid exegetical and rational argument for the Christian state concept, Pethrus’ arguments concerning a Christian state show to what extent other formative contexts and values formed his ecclesiology. Perceived pragmatic benefits for the Swedish state in general and the Pentecostal Movement in particular were primary concerns; biblical notions were only presented to validate the previously adopted position. Thus the Bible was not always the greatest force in shaping Pethrus’ ecclesiology but

³²¹ See, Sahlberg, 131; Pethrus, *De kristnas enhet*, 1919, 9; Pethrus, *Verklig väckelse*, 1951, 30-31; Pethrus, ‘Pingstväckelsen och statskyrkan,’ 1952, 3.

occasionally just one among many. For Pethrus, a ‘Christian state’ was simply a winning formula that needed no change.

4.5 Summary

Shifting foci in Lewi Pethrus’ ecclesiology marks the period 1934-1958. The strong emphasis on the church as the spiritual community during the 1910s and 1920s is largely preserved in the beginning of the 1930s, but drops into the background from around 1938 until 1946 when a more inclusive attitude becomes visible. Apart from a renewed interest in political issues beginning in the early 1940s, the more inclusive attitude was also a result of a lessening of the idealistic (dualistic) self-understanding that was prevalent in Pethrus’ thought especially during the 1920s. A large part can also be attributed to the discovery of the ‘one city – one (mega) church’ model. The model not only provided the necessary theological framework for an increased appreciation of unity on a local level, but it also emphasised for Pethrus the scandal of the many divisions within Protestant Christianity. However, the increased openness in the 1940s did not mean that Pethrus abandoned his pneumatological core. The belief in the independent local church with its ‘unity of the Spirit’ ideal remained the same, and the importance of preserving the Pentecostal movement as a revival movement (through a dedication to purity, prayer, and spiritual gifts and offices) remained intact.

Pethrus’ ecclesiology is also marked during this period by a strong expansionistic emphasis. First, the numerical success of the Pentecostal Movement in the 1930s generated a lot of interest in church growth principles. Building vibrant churches was perceived as virtually guaranteed if obedience and dedication were shown to the blueprint strategies outlined by the ‘Chief Architect’ in the New Testament, such as the independent local church and the ‘one city – one (mega) church’ models. Second, especially in the 1940s and the 1950s,

his expansionistic emphasis focused on the need for Christians *to do something* about the rapid decline of morality in society. Being a leader who led from the front, he initiated ecumenical efforts (1944 and 1955), started his own daily newspaper (1945) and radio broadcasts (1955), fought for the preservation of church and state, etc., with the intent of doing something about the moral situation in society. Third, Pethrus' expansionistic emphasis sometimes contradicted or even violated cherished ecclesiological positions. His dealings with ÖM in 1937-38 clearly deviated from the independent local church model, for the sole purpose of increasing the Pentecostal Movement's influence. The aim of preserving the Pentecostal movement as well as generating interest for social concerns even overruled a fundamental principle of Baptist ecclesiology, namely the separation of church and state. These goals were important enough for Pethrus to warrant not even sufficient biblical justification. This shows that Pethrus was willing to go beyond his own self-proclaimed limits in order to achieve his purposes. Furthermore, Pethrus' expansionistic emphasis tended to limit idealistic descriptions of the church. In the 1920s, Pethrus frequently referred to idealistic analogies of the church such 'the body of Christ' or 'the pillar and the foundation of the truth'. Even though reflective ecclesiology was not completely absent,³²² society's urgent moral needs put it in the back seat. In light of Pethrus' emphases at the time, his view of the church from 1934-1958 is best described as an agent of expansion and social transformation.

³²² See for example, Pethrus, 'De andliga ämbetena,' *EH*, 1 July, 1948, 431; Gösta Borgström, 'En vecka i brödrakärlekens tecken,' *EH*, 26 June, 1958, 12.

CHAPTER 5

LEWI PETHRUS' ECCLESIOLOGICAL THOUGHT 1959-1974: THE CHURCH AS A GLOBAL FELLOWSHIP OF SAINTS

5.1 Contextual Narrative

In 1958, at the age of 74, and after 47 years of nearly uninterrupted ministry, Pethrus stepped down as pastor of the Filadelfia church. Pethrus' resignation meant a significant shift for the SPM. For at least some, bright rays of freedom finally began to shine as the all-embracing shadow from the figure behind the elevated pulpit of the Filadelfia church started to lose its grip. Young academics began questioning his reservations against advanced theological training,¹ and *Förlaget Filadelfia*, the publishing house he himself started, did not even publish his writings, forcing Pethrus to form a new publishing company under his own name.² Ivar Lundgren also notes how individuals from within his own circle of acquaintances, such as 'Bobby Andström, Eric Carlén, Adrian Holmberg and Roland Möllerfors' all published books that contained 'stinging criticism' against Pethrus in 1966.³ Lundgren further notes how an incorrect money transfer in the 'Pentecostal bank,' *Allmänna Spar-och Kreditkassan*, during the summer of 1965 forced Pethrus to appear in court to give an account for the irregularity.⁴ Pethrus' appearance in court generated nationwide interest and caused

¹ In an article entitled, *Intellektualismens faror* [the dangers of intellectualism] Pethrus responded to the criticism of the young academics by noting that 'The Free Churches are [...] generally victims of newly baked academicians intoxicated by their degrees and incapable of seeing the superiority of spiritual experiences and divine realities in comparison to book knowledge'. Pethrus, 'Intellektualismens faror,' *Dagen*, 21 February, 1962, 2. In a later article Pethrus observed that intellectualism was as much of a danger for the Pentecostal movement as spiritual fanaticism. Although intellectualism was a good thing when accompanied with humility, pure intellectualism carried with it a desire to achieve 'cultural maturity' in the eyes of the world, which would, if adopted within the movement, lead the Pentecostal movement away from its revivalist roots. See, Pethrus, 'Dagen och intellektualismen,' *Dagen*, 5 August, 1963, 2.

² Pethrus also started his own magazine *Något för alla* [Something for All] and the record company *Hoppets röst* [The Voice of Hope]. Ivar Lundgren, 'Pingstvännerna in i partipolitiken,' *Pingströrelsen: Händelser och utveckling under 1900-talet* (Örebro: Libris förlag, 2007), 1:234.

³ Lundgren, 'Pingstvännerna in i partipolitiken,' 234.

⁴ Lundgren, 'Pingstvännerna in i partipolitiken,' 232-233.

much disturbance within the Pentecostal movement. Although Pethrus was innocent of any personal wrongdoing, Bobby Andström retells how ‘many of his [Pethrus’] most furious critics viewed the case as a case against Lewi Pethrus – he was the one morally responsible for the recent years’ mistakes and incorrect speculations’.⁵

In spite of the many setbacks and oppositions he faced during the last decade and a half of his life, Pethrus’ influence over the SPM was far from over. It continued as a result of Pethrus being the chief editor of the newspaper *Dagen* and a frequent speaker on IBRA radio broadcasts. In a notice in relation to his upcoming 75th birthday, Pethrus straightforwardly abolished any notion that he was removing himself from the public spotlight: ‘After many years I have left the pulpit of the Filadelfia church in Stockholm as my permanent platform. *Dagen* and IBRA are now the rostrums from which I can almost daily continue my preaching and reach far greater numbers than one can reach from even the biggest church. I love this task and want to continue with it as long as health and strength remain’.⁶ Consequently, the relinquishing of the most prestigious pulpit in Swedish Pentecostalism did not end Pethrus’ influence but opened new doors of opportunity that had previously, by the nature of his pastoral office, been closed to him. Pethrus’ new freedom enabled him to forcefully pursue his ever-growing concern for the moral condition of the Swedish nation.

Since the beginning of the 1940s, Pethrus had employed a variety of tactics to bolster Christian influence in society, which was becoming, according to Pethrus, increasingly marginalized.⁷ Having begun by merely admonishing Christians to vote, Pethrus upped his

⁵ Bobby Andström, *Profilen Lewi Pethrus* (Malmö: Forsberg Förlag), 1966, 13.

⁶ Pethrus, ‘Gåva till pastor Lewi Pethrus’ 75-årsdag,’ *Dagen*, 12 February, 1959, 3.

⁷ Joel Halldorf argues that Pethrus purposefully established institutions, such the *Dagen* newspaper, IBRA radio, a bank (*Allmänna Spar-och-Kredit Kassan*), a folk high school (*Kaggeholm*), and a political party (*Kristen Demokratisk Samling*) as ‘pillars’ to achieve a Christian counterculture. However, Halldorf fails to observe that Pethrus only began regarding Sweden as a completely secular nation in the 1970s, only a few years before he died. Thus, Pethrus’ aim in erecting his institutions was not to establish, strictly speaking, a ‘Christian counterculture,’ but rather to preserve and strengthen Sweden’s battered, yet still existing ‘Christian culture’. The newspaper *Dagen*, IBRA radio, and *Kristen Demokratisk Samling* certainly aimed to promote and preserve

measures to include methods such as the strategic elections of Christian party members to the parliament and the formation of the lobbying group *Kristet samhällsansvar* [Christian Responsibility in Society]. After years of disappointing results, Pethrus understood that the overwhelming secular majority within the political parties drowned out the voices of the few Christians in their midst, and suggested that only one drastic measure remained – the formation of a Christian party, which would have Christian concerns and values at the forefront of its political agenda.⁸ The ultimate catalyst for the formation of the Christian party was the changes that the government proposed to mandatory Christian education in upper secondary schools. The government’s suggestion of submerging Christian education under the general heading of religious studies and reducing the mandatory hours of Christian education from five to roughly two hours a week generated vast criticism from virtually all Christian camps. Lundgren observes that the churches’ outrage and the massive petition with over two million signatures that followed the government’s proposal encouraged Pethrus and others to believe that the time was ripe for a Christian party.⁹ Consequently, on 20 March 1964, Pethrus took one of his boldest steps and formed *Kristen Demokratisk Samling* [Christian Democratic Coalition] (KDS), with himself as vice chairperson and the Lutheran priest, Birger Ekstedt, as chairperson.¹⁰ In Pethrus’ mind, KDS was more than a political party. KDS was ‘a symbol of the positive forces that existed in our country’.¹¹ The party’s strength originated in the nation’s faith in the power of living Christianity to have an impact in societal life,¹² and its

Christian values in society, but *Kaggeholm* and *Allmänna Spar-och Kreditkassan* were not established to promote a Christian culture/counterculture, but primarily to provide theological education and financial assistance for local Pentecostal churches. See sections, 5.3.1 and 4.1. Joel Halldorf, ‘Lewi Pethrus and the Creation of a Christian Counterculture,’ *Pneuma* 32 (2010): 363-364.

⁸ Pethrus, ‘Behöver vi ett nytt politiskt parti?’, *Dagen*, 24 October, 1962, 2.

⁹ Lundgren, ‘Pingstvännerna in i partipolitiken,’ 228-229.

¹⁰ Halldorf, ‘Lewi Pethrus and the Creation of a Christian Counterculture,’ 366.

¹¹ Pethrus, ‘Politisk väckelse,’ *Dagen*, 24 March, 1964, 2.

¹² Pethrus, ‘Politisk väckelse,’ 1964, 2.

ultimate goal was to facilitate soul-winning.¹³ Although the initial success of the party was minimal, receiving only a meagre 1,8 percent of the votes in the 1964 elections,¹⁴ its formation affected the SPM in a significant way, turning the movement into ‘a significant political force’¹⁵ in society. However, far from all were happy about the politicisation of the movement.

As a reaction to the politicisation of the movement that Pethrus spearheaded, a new movement by the name of *Maranata* emerged. Since the moment Pethrus’ societal pathos began to be visible in the 1940s, it had had its opponents. Sven Lidman had been its most vocal antagonist, but even after his excommunication in 1948, discontent continued to brew under the surface. Torbjörn Aronson notes that when *Maranata* emerged in the beginning of the 1960s, it did not only emerge as a reaction to the politicisation of the Pentecostal movement but also as a response to its increasing legalism and the longing for a revival such as the Renewal revival in the 1950s.¹⁶ Even though Pethrus tended to be a man that defended new revivals, *Maranata* received almost nothing but criticism from him. Pethrus found no grounds for *Maranata*’s claim that it was a renewal of the Pentecostal movement or a manifestation of what the Pentecostal Movement was in the beginning.¹⁷ Far from being a sound movement, Pethrus likened people who attended their meetings to alcoholics and drug addicts who needed their religious fix.¹⁸ For Pethrus, *Maranata* was simply an expression of religious fanaticism, something which he had attempted to asphyxiate as long as he had been a Pentecostal minister. In addition, Pethrus portrayed *Maranata* leaders, such as Arne Imsen,

¹³ Pethrus, ‘Andlig ansvars känsla,’ *Dagen*, 31 July, 1964, 2.

¹⁴ Lundgren, ‘Pingstvännerna in i partipolitiken,’ 231.

¹⁵ Lundgren, ‘Pingstvännerna in i partipolitiken,’ 231.

¹⁶ Aronson, 99.

¹⁷ Pethrus, ‘Maranata och fanatism,’ *Dagen*, 28 June, 1963, 2.

¹⁸ Pethrus, ‘Maranata och fanatism,’ 1963, 2.

as individuals who only caused church divisions, and who pried young people away from healthy fellowship in their local churches in exchange for empty freedom in *Maranata*.¹⁹

Maranata was not the only group that was sceptical about Pethrus' political activity. Worrying voices were heard from both inside and outside of the SPM. Opposing political parties ranted against KDS in public forums,²⁰ and a major concern within the SPM was that KDS blurred the distinction between a Christian congregation and a political party. In response to the internal criticism, Pethrus explained, 'KDS was a secular notion like other political parties, only with the exception that it had a different attitude toward Christianity than other Swedish political parties'.²¹ For this reason, KDS purposefully avoided conducting their meetings in churches in order not to confuse KDS' work with the ministry of the church.²² The rationale for including 'Christian' in the party's name was not to link it with doctrines and liturgy but to emphasise that 'it was an issue of Christianity as an everyday religion'.²³ The goal of KDS was therefore not 'to turn the Swedish population into a Christian church,' as Pethrus' friend Einar Rimmerfors had inaccurately asserted but 'to create in Sweden a Christian democracy and to oppose the development toward a godless majority dictatorship'.²⁴ Even though Pethrus defended KDS with every ounce of his strength, Lundgren interestingly observes that even Pethrus' successor as pastor of the Filadelfia church, Willis Säwe, was reluctant to endorse Pethrus' political initiative and never showed Pethrus any support in *Evangelii Härold*, although he was the magazine's chief editor.²⁵

In spite of the criticism levelled against Pethrus' political involvement, it would be wrong to assert that Pethrus had somehow re-evaluated his previous emphases. Only a brief

¹⁹ Pethrus, 'Maranata har dömt sig själv,' *Dagen*, 4 June, 1963, 2. For a fuller discussion on the history and development of *Maranata*, see Aronson, 99-138.

²⁰ Lundgren, 'Pingstvännerna in i partipolitiken,' 230.

²¹ Pethrus, 'Vardagens kristendom,' *Dagen*, 16 May, 1964, 2.

²² Pethrus, 'Ett kristet parti och församlingslivet,' *Dagen*, 15 February, 1964, 2.

²³ Pethrus, 'Ett kristet parti och församlingslivet,' 1964, 2.

²⁴ Pethrus, 'Innesnöade kritiker,' *Dagen*, 16 September, 1966, 2.

²⁵ Lundgren, 'Pingstvännerna in i partipolitiken,' 231.

glance at the editorials Pethrus' published in *Dagen* from 1959 to 1974 show that Pethrus dedicated equal attention to spiritual topics as well as to socio-political ones. Pethrus frequently returned to topics such as Christology, Soteriology, the Second coming of Christ, Spirit baptism, and revivalism, just as he had done in previous years. In fact, the establishment of *Lewi Pethrus stiftelse för filantropisk verksamhet* [Lewi Pethrus' Institution for Philanthropic Ministry] in 1959²⁶ and Pethrus' publication of his four-volume series on the life of Jesus in 1970 to 1973 entitled, *Timmermannen från Nasaret* [the Carpenter from Nazareth], may not only serve as an *inclusio* for the period 1959 to 1974 but also as a summary of the key emphases of his entire life's ministry. Thus for Pethrus, there was simply no dualism between church ministry and political work: 'Political work does not replace the ministry or prayer, or even trespass on it. It is an expression of a sense of spiritual responsibility'.²⁷

Even though the period was not marked by a great change in Pethrus' key emphases, it did show broadened horizons. His articles in *Dagen* often took on a more international perspective than in previous decades.²⁸ Developments in Western European and North American politics were, for instance, frequently discussed. Interestingly, he remarked that he had never received more reactions to any of his numerous publications than after having defended the United State's massive bombing raids of Hanoi during the closing stages of the

²⁶ The purpose of *LP-stiftelsen* (in short) was to rehabilitate drug addicts. Under the leadership of Erik Edin, the institution grew rapidly and soon existed in cities all over Sweden. During the 1960s and the 1970s, several rehabilitation centres were purchased so that more permanent care could be provided. *LP-stiftelsen* went bankrupt in 1997, but a number of local churches soon revamped its ministry in the form of a new institution called *LP-verksamhetens ideella riksförening* [The LP-Ministry's Non-profit National Organisation]. *LP-stiftelsen* was in essence the culmination of Pethrus' concern for social issues.

²⁷ Pethrus, 'Andlig ansvarskänsla,' *Dagen*, 31 July, 1964, 2.

²⁸ The heightened international perspective was, of course, a result of a greater accessibility to international media but it was also due to his frequent travels, in particular to his son's, Ingemar's, home in California. Engaging in international politics was also naturally restricted by his previous position as a local pastor, albeit the biggest and most influential Pentecostal church in all of Europe. However, this is not to say that Pethrus did not have an interest in international events before 1959. Pethrus maintained close correspondence with internationals throughout his life and his many travelling accounts speak of his international interest.

Vietnam War, which was a purely political issue.²⁹ In fact, Pethrus' personal White House invitation to attend Richard Nixon's presidential inauguration on 20 January 1973, not only serve as a striking example of his loyal affection toward the United States but also as a poignant illustration of the far-reaching effects of his political views and his international stature. Having begun his life as a humble Swedish Baptist pastor, Pethrus ended his life as a man of international renown.

Politics was not the only area in which his heightened international perspective became visible. The same international perspective also manifested itself in the religious realm. What Pethrus considered as two interrelated revivals,³⁰ the Charismatic and the Jesus Movements, particularly gained his interest. Although space and purpose prohibit a comprehensive account of the origins and developments of the movements at this point, the manner in which these movements not only confirmed but also challenged his preconceived ecclesiology needs addressing. Peter Hocken observes that 'the roots of the CM [Charismatic Movement] go back more than a decade before the 1960 event commonly seen as the birth of the movement, namely Dennis Bennett's public announcement [...] that he spoke in other tongues'.³¹ Although Pethrus was well aware of these 'roots',³² Pethrus did not comment on the

²⁹ Pethrus, 'Jag skall arbeta för bättre relationer Sverige – Amerika,' *Dagen*, 24 February, 1973, 8.

³⁰ For Pethrus, the Charismatic Movement and the Jesus Movement were identical to the Pentecostal Movements. Pethrus perceived the movements as two branches from the original Pentecostal movement. Pethrus linked the two movements because of the evidence he saw of the Spirit's presence in the two movements, and because they were two religious movements that existed independently of any church or denominational structure. Pethrus, 'Pingstväckelsen eller pingströrelsen,' 1973, 2; Pethrus, 'Jesusrörelsen – Varken församling eller samfund,' 3 February, 1972, 2. Aronson, on the other hand, regards the two movements as distinct. He acknowledges that the 'boundaries were sometimes fluid,' but whereas the Charismatic Movement was largely a church related revival centred on Spirit baptism, and which influenced primarily mainline churches, the Jesus Movement was, on the other hand, 'primarily an American revival among hippies and youth with drug problems, which became saved through bold evangelism'. Aronson, 159-160.

³¹ Peter Hocken, 'Charismatic Movement,' *TNIDPCM*, Stanley M. Burgess and Eduard M. Van Der Maas, eds. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 477.

³² Hocken traces these 'roots' to ministries of some of the more famous 'healing evangelists' during the 1950s such as William Branham, Oral Roberts, Gordon Lindsey, and T. L. Osborn, who were all Pentecostals but ministered outside of Pentecostal contexts. The fact that Pethrus had personal contacts with William Branham, and commented on Oral Roberts' decision to leave the Pentecostal Movement in order to join the

Charismatic Movement until 6 April 1963. In an article entitled *Urkristendomens renässans* [the Renaissance of the Early Church], Pethrus for the first time described how ‘roughly 20 students at the University of Yale had received Spirit baptism and had spoken in tongues,’ and how ‘a revival had spread among Lutherans, Presbyterians, Baptists, and Methodist for a number of years’.³³ The relatively long period of silence may be explained, as Lundgren suggests, in light of the reserved scepticism many Swedish Pentecostals harboured against Christians who had experienced Spirit baptism but decided to remain within their original denominations.³⁴ Regardless of the reason(s) Pethrus may have had for not immediately speaking out concerning the Charismatic Movement, it is clear that when he did, he endorsed it wholesale. The primary reason why Pethrus so unreservedly defended the Charismatic Movement was that it mirrored the Pentecostal movement in at least three fundamental ways. First, the two movements shared a similar history. Both movements had come about as a result of individuals seeking a deeper experience of the Holy Spirit and, in spite of their humble beginnings, had later spread to a wider circle of Christians.³⁵ The opposition the Charismatic Movement encountered from, for instance, the bishop of the Episcopal Church of California, James A. Pike, was an eerie reminder of the opposition the early Pentecostal movement also experienced.³⁶ Pethrus hoped, however, that the history would not repeat itself so that the Charismatic Movement would be forced to leave the established denominations. The world simply did not need a ‘second Pentecostal movement’³⁷ but ‘a free spiritual

United Methodist Church in 1968, show that he was well aware of their ministries. Hocken, ‘Charismatic Movement,’ 477. Pethrus, ‘Oral Roberts och pingstväckelsen,’ 12 July, 1968, 2. See also, 4.1 above.

³³ Pethrus, ‘Urkristendomens renässans,’ *Dagen*, 6 April, 1963, 2.

³⁴ Lundgren, 254.

³⁵ Pethrus, ‘Urkristendomens renässans,’ 1963, 2.

³⁶ Pethrus, ‘Urkristendomen på frammarsch,’ *Dagen*, 18 May, 1963, 2.

³⁷ Pethrus, ‘Pingst och förnyelse,’ *Dagen*, 29 May, 1971, 2.

movement, which goes outside and beyond the boundaries to all churches and denominations'.³⁸

Second, the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements also shared a common experience. As opposed to 'other' revivals, 'who tried to achieve revival without Spirit baptism and spiritual gifts',³⁹ the Charismatic Movement exemplified the Pentecostal movement in its openness toward 'the power of heavenly realities'.⁴⁰ The Charismatic Movement's emphasis on speaking in tongues and physical deliverance was therefore telltale signs of its Pentecostal identity.⁴¹ Yet the Charismatic Movement was a healthy reminder for the Pentecostal Movement that 'they did not have monopoly on Spirit baptism with accompanying signs'.⁴²

Third, the Charismatic Movement also continued the Pentecostal Movement's purpose of ushering in the great end-time revival which would not save but influence the entire world before Christ's second coming.⁴³ Joel's prophesy of God's Spirit being poured out on 'all flesh' was now in the process of being fulfilled through the Charismatic Movement.⁴⁴ Since these three aspects all aligned with the Pentecostal Movement, Pethrus asserted that the Charismatic Movement was indeed a 'new Pentecost'.⁴⁵

Spending a number of extended holidays in California during the 1960s offered Pethrus the possibility not only to read about but also to examine the Charismatic Movement and meet some of its leaders first hand.⁴⁶ Aronson notes that Pethrus personally invited Dennis Bennett

³⁸ Pethrus, 'Livet och friheten förenar,' *Dagen*, 30 July, 1966, 2.

³⁹ Pethrus, 'Urkristendomen på frammarsch,' 1963, 2.

⁴⁰ Pethrus, 'Urkristendomen på frammarsch,' 1963, 2.

⁴¹ Pethrus, 'Urkristendomen på frammarsch,' 1963, 2.

⁴² Pethrus, 'Oral Roberts och pingstväckelsen,' 1968, 2.

⁴³ Pethrus, *Bryningstider – segertider*, 1969, 198-199.

⁴⁴ Pethrus, 'Mig har Gud lärt,' 1969, 2.

⁴⁵ Pethrus, *Bryningstider – segertider*, 1969, 12, 181. It is no surprise, therefore, that when Pethrus sent Ivar Lundgren to the United States in 1969 to investigate the Charismatic Movement that the final book form of his report was entitled *Ny Pingst* [New Pentecost].

⁴⁶ Pethrus, 'Digert program väntar Lewi Pethrus i USA,' *Dagen*, 28 December, 1971, 5. In 1970, Pethrus personally interviewed the Hollywood star, Pat Boone, in his home in California regarding his experience of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. Pethrus, 'Sångaren Pat Boone till Lewi Pethrus: Så fann jag Gud,' *Dagen*, 20 May, 1970, 3.

to Sweden in 1965, which became an important event for the introduction of the Charismatic Movement in Sweden.⁴⁷ In 1966, Pethrus continued his support of the Charismatic Movement in Sweden by giving the Swedish branch of the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International his 'full support'.⁴⁸ The arrival of Kathryn Kuhlman in 1969 and, in particular, the Charismatic Movement conferences *G-72* in Gothenburg and *Karisma-72* in Stockholm, made sure that the Charismatic Movement 'received its real breakthrough in Sweden'.⁴⁹ Even though many Pentecostals viewed the conferences with considerable scepticism, Pethrus did not hesitate to be one of the main speakers at the *G-72* conference in Gothenburg.⁵⁰

Pethrus' openness toward new spiritual movements was further displayed in his acceptance of the Jesus Movement. During its peak from 1968-1972,⁵¹ Pethrus not only defended the legitimacy of the movement against those who had reservations against it,⁵² but even invited Duane Pederson, who coined the term 'Jesus Movement' with a group of Jesus people to the Swedish Pentecostals' Annual Conference at Nyhem in 1972. Concerning the Jesus Movement's tendency to work independently of local churches, Pethrus crassly remarked (based on Revelation 2:5): 'There are perhaps churches even today from which he [Jesus] needs to remove the lampstand. If he desires to move it to the amusement parks among sinners and publicans, which he did in the past, who dares to blame him for doing so'.⁵³ Somewhat surprisingly, Pethrus not only defended the Jesus Movement's ministry methods, but also the Jesus people's controversial clothing: 'We have those who judge the youth of the Jesus Movement for their clothing. But their clothes have for themselves no matter in their relationship with God. It is alcohol, drugs and sexual promiscuity, which has

⁴⁷ Aronson, 152.

⁴⁸ Aronson, 153.

⁴⁹ Aronson, 158-160.

⁵⁰ Aronson, 161.

⁵¹ Aronson, 197.

⁵² Pethrus, 'Jesusfolket kommer,' *Dagen*, 9 June, 1972, 2.

⁵³ Pethrus, 'Jesusfolket – självständig verksamhet,' *Dagen*, 10 February, 1972, 2.

been their sin. [...] For our part we consider it to be exemplary that one becomes so preoccupied with the miracle of salvation, and Him who performed the same, that one does not have any time or any interest left over to think about one's clothes'.⁵⁴ The following statement neatly sums up Pethrus' general attitude toward the Jesus Movement: 'To have Jesus more vibrant and real in one's life and ministry surely cannot be regarded as a heresy'.⁵⁵

The last years of Pethrus' life, on the one hand, were marked by a joy of witnessing fresh outpourings of the Spirit of God through the Charismatic and Jesus Movements. On the other hand, joy was not ruling supreme since conflicts were, just as in previous years, an all-too-familiar companion. Toward the end of Pethrus' life, the Norwegian evangelist, Arild Edvardsen caused him serious problems. Edvardsen not only tried to divide and feed off the Norwegian Pentecostal Movement as 'a parasite' by his independent efforts,⁵⁶ but he also jeopardised the unity of the SPM. When Stanley Sjöberg, the new pastor of the City Church in Stockholm, formerly known as the Östermalm Free Church,⁵⁷ refused to heed Pethrus' and the leadership of *Dagen's* advice to boycott Edvardsen,⁵⁸ the issue became so infected that it was not resolved until the beginning of the 1990s.⁵⁹ In spite of the problems, Pethrus entered glory on the 4 September 1974 with the word 'Hallelujah',⁶⁰ and his funeral procession was no immodest prelude to his heavenly reception as scores of people and mounted police escorted him to his final earthly resting place at the Solna Church. The eulogies that followed upon Pethrus' death were largely a combination of praise and adoration in memory of an

⁵⁴ Pethrus, 'Andliga uppvaknandet viktigare än beteenden,' *Dagen*, 8 July, 1971, 2.

⁵⁵ Pethrus, 'Amerika och Jesus-väckelsen,' *Dagen*, 25 March, 1971, 2.

⁵⁶ Arild Edvardsen had begun a small campaign of trying to raise funds for homeland missionaries in Norway. As time went on, Pethrus argued that all of Edvardsen's later initiatives already existed in the Norwegian Pentecostal Movement and were therefore biblically illegitimate and only a source for divisions. Pethrus, 'Splittring inom Norska pingströrelsen,' *Dagen*, 30 April, 1974, 2.

⁵⁷ For a history of *Östermalm's* problematic relationship to the Filadelfia church and the SPM, see 4.1 above.

⁵⁸ Pethrus, "'Drogen eder ifrån sådana,'" *Dagen*, 30 May, 1974, 2.

⁵⁹ Björne Erixon, 'Andlig förnyelse i många församlingar,' *Pingströrelsen: Händelser och utveckling under 1900-talet* (Örebro: Libris förlag, 2007), 279-280; Aronson, 173.

⁶⁰ Ivar Lundgren, 'Lewi Pethrus sista ord: Halleluja!,' *Dagen*, 5 September, 1974, 19.

exceptional man. However, the Salvation Army officer Harry Tyndal and Willis Säwe balanced the hagiographic descriptions by testifying to his dominant and unyielding character.⁶¹ Erixon notes that Pethrus' 'testament' to the SPM during the final years of life was threefold, namely 'his strong support of the Jesus Movement and the Charismatic Renewal, his book *Brytningstider – segertider* and his last sermon at the Nyhem conference'.⁶² Although Erixon's observation fairly accurately sums up Pethrus' contribution to the SPM from 1959-1974.⁶³ For our purposes, however, the manner in which the events of 1959-1974 affected Pethrus' ecclesiology needs additional explanation.

The most notable effect the events of 1959-1974 had on Pethrus' ecclesiology was a shift in focus from the local to the universal church. The 1960s was a decade when Pethrus felt that a too heavy emphasis had been placed on the individual local church concept, even to the point of receiving 'cult status' within the movement.⁶⁴ To counterbalance this trend, Pethrus began emphasising the importance of the 'individual initiative' alongside the local church. Additionally, local churches were frequently perceived as being 'in crisis'.⁶⁵ Churches had either 'gone astray' in one way or another, most often because of forgetfulness of divine realities or reliance on human strength,⁶⁶ or in the worst case even 'grieved the Holy Spirit'.⁶⁷ However, Pethrus did not blame 'true believers' for such negligence but non-Christians, 'who did not measure up to the standards of real members in the Christian church'.⁶⁸ In the

⁶¹ Erixon, 'Andlig förnyelse i många församlingar,' 281-282.

⁶² Erixon, 'Andlig förnyelse i många församlingar,' 2. Pethrus' last sermon was entitled 'To win one by one' and it was a summary of the recipe to the SPM's numerical success over the years.

⁶³ It is clear that Pethrus' attitude toward the Jesus and Charismatic Movements, and his book *Brytningstider-segertider*, had a significant impact on the SPM. However, it is much more difficult to discern how Pethrus' last sermon had such an effect, apart from being the 'final words' of an important leader.

⁶⁴ See section 5.4 below.

⁶⁵ Pethrus, *Brytningstider-segertider*, 1969, 15-59.

⁶⁶ Pethrus, 'Segrande svaghet,' *Dagen*, 13 March, 1971, 2;

⁶⁷ Pethrus, 'Anden måste trivas,' *Dagen*, 24 October, 1970, 15.

⁶⁸ Pethrus, *Brytningstider-segertider*, 1969, 205.

universal church, however, ‘no one got in who did not have the life in God’.⁶⁹ Only the one who lived ‘the life of faith’ belonged to the Bride of Christ, ‘which is dressed in Christ’s glory, without spot or wrinkle’ [Ephesians 5:25-27].⁷⁰ Such perfection, Pethrus surmised, only applied to the universal and not to the local church.⁷¹

Second, although Pethrus, in his attempt to rectify the Swedish Pentecostals’ idealised picture of the local church, created an unfortunate dichotomy between the local and the universal church,⁷² the Charismatic Movement provided Pethrus with a poignant example for maintaining this dichotomy.⁷³ The Charismatic Movement had convincingly shown that there were indeed ‘true believers’ in the mainline denominations, including the Roman Catholic Church, yet this did not mean that their structures were now legitimate. In an article entitled *Mig har Gud lärt* [God has Taught Me], Pethrus not only tackled the biggest objection Swedish Pentecostals held against the Charismatic Movement, namely that ‘Jesus does not baptise people in the Holy Spirit who hold to such delusions as the doctrines of the Catholic church,’⁷⁴ but he also envisioned changes to the ‘ungodly’ structure of the Roman Catholic Church.⁷⁵ Regarding the former problem, Pethrus noted that anyone who held this view had not grasped the essence of the Pentecostal movement: ‘The Pentecostal Movement is not, and can never become, a structure which has Spirit baptism as its distinguishing sign [...]. The

⁶⁹ Pethrus, *Brytningstider-segertider*, 1969, 205-206.

⁷⁰ Pethrus, *Brytningstider-segertider*, 1969, 205.

⁷¹ Pethrus, *Brytningstider-segertider*, 1969, 205.

⁷² Pethrus’ argumentation follows a logic in which local churches are constituted of redeemed saints and unregenerated sinners. The universal church is therefore the sum total of all ‘true’ believers throughout history. Pethrus’ statements, when taken at face value, are not strictly a rejection of the church as a *corpus permixtum* but of the idea that Christians are *simul justus et peccator* (simultaneous righteous and a sinner). Peter C. Bouteneff explains the Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox understanding of the issue in terms of the Church’s subjective and objective holiness: ‘The members of the Church sin, both individually and corporately, but the Church, as such, as Christ’s body, as Christ’s spotless bride (Eph 5:25-27), is not simply the sum of its members: It is a body that is by nature holy and sinless’. Peter C. Bouteneff, ‘Ecumenical Ecclesiology and the Language of Unity,’ *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 44, Vol. 3 (Summer 2009): 354.

⁷³ Pethrus’ description of the ‘corrupt’ local church and the pure ‘universal’ church is, in fact, more of a distinction between the ‘invisible’ and the ‘visible’ church than the local and the universal church.

⁷⁴ Pethrus, ‘Mig har Gud lärt,’ 1969, 2.

⁷⁵ Pethrus, ‘Mig har Gud lärt,’ 1969, 2.

Pentecostal movement concerns the experience of the innermost core of Christianity. It is Christ vivified for the individual through Spirit baptism'.⁷⁶ In fact, Pethrus testified to having found the answer to the 'Catholic problem' when reading Peter's words in Acts 10:28 that 'one should not consider any person as impure or unclean'.⁷⁷ Regarding the latter problem, Pethrus surmised that the Catholics' reception of Spirit baptism served as a strong indicator that the Roman Catholic Church was heading for great structural changes.⁷⁸ Thus even within the 'corrupt' structure of the Roman Catholic Church existed genuine believers who belonged to the universal church.

Even though Pethrus did not elaborate as extensively on the Jesus Movement in comparison to the Charismatic Movement, the Jesus Movement further confirmed his view that local churches were in crisis. As shown above, the fact that the Jesus Movement transformed and existed beyond established church structures was a sign that many local churches were useless, and that Jesus might as well remove their 'lampstand'.⁷⁹ The Jesus Movement's strong social commitment⁸⁰ and Christocentric focus⁸¹ were also important factors that contributed to his support of the movement and which proved its genuine character.

Finally, emphasising the universal church over against the local church was also in line with his increased global vision. In previous decades, holiness mostly ran along 'Pentecostal lines' with some spilling over into other denominations. Due to the Charismatic Movement, holiness now began to run across vertical and international lines, with an obvious focus on the

⁷⁶ Pethrus, 'Mig har Gud lärt,' 1969, 2.

⁷⁷ Pethrus, 'Mig har Gud lärt,' 1969, 2. Although Pethrus never admitted to have considered *Spirit baptised* Catholics as 'unclean.' In light of his previous comments regarding the Roman Catholic Church, it is almost certain that such a notion would have been inconceivable for Pethrus before the beginning of the Charismatic Movement. See section, 4.3.2 above.

⁷⁸ Pethrus, *Brytningstider – segertider*, 1969, 26.

⁷⁹ Pethrus, 'Jesusfolket – självständig verksamhet,' 1972, 2.

⁸⁰ Pethrus, 'Urkristendomen återkommer,' *Dagen*, 5 February, 1972, 2.

⁸¹ Pethrus, 'Amerika och Jesus-väckelsen,' 1971, 2.

universal church. This is not to say that Pethrus rejected his understanding of the independent local church concept. In fact, it got even more pronounced since denominationalism became even more redundant in light of the Charismatic Movement.

The Charismatic and Jesus Movements not only shifted Pethrus' focus from the local to the universal church but also challenged his ecclesiology in other areas. As have been shown before, and will be further discussed below, the Charismatic Movement broke down a big barrier in Pethrus' mind, especially toward the Roman Catholic Church, and significantly broadened his ecumenical horizon. The way the Jesus Movement challenged his ecclesiology was not as dramatic as the Charismatic Renewal, but it encouraged Pethrus to speak out against Swedish Pentecostals' misplaced emphasis on dress and outward appearance.⁸² Even though he claimed to have never changed his opinion in the matter,⁸³ his strong emphasis on not being 'conformed to the world' in the 1940s had clearly contributed to the misplaced emphasis.⁸⁴ Due to the Jesus Movement's influence, he found sufficient reason to oppose the legalistic tendencies and argue that 'clothes and hair were peripheral issues,' and which were not to divide local churches.⁸⁵

A briefly discussed but very interesting change of perspectives is found in an article entitled *De små församlingarnas problem* [the Small Churches' Problem].⁸⁶ In it, Pethrus completely rejected some of his 'megachurch principles,' which he had so painstakingly defended, especially during the 1930s. He noted, for example, that in a large church there was a risk that members feel disconnected, and that it was the spiritual quality and not the size of

⁸² Pethrus, 'Andliga uppvaknandet viktigare än beteenden,' 2; Pethrus, 'Hårfrågan splittrar församlingar,' *Dagen*, 17 February, 1970, 2; Pethrus, 'Brytningstider – segertider,' 1969, 211-218.

⁸³ Pethrus, 'Hårfrågan splittrar församlingar,' 1970, 2.

⁸⁴ See, 4.1 above.

⁸⁵ Pethrus, 'Hårfrågan splittrar församlingar,' 1970, 2.

⁸⁶ Pethrus, 'De små församlingarnas problem,' *Dagen*, 4 September, 1969, 2.

the church that decided numerical growth.⁸⁷ These arguments were in fact the very arguments Hjalmar Danielson had levelled against ‘megachurches’ in 1934, and which Pethrus had then refuted in length.⁸⁸ The complete turnaround is a clear indication that his ‘megachurch’ principles were not strong convictions, but merely arguments to defend the Filadelfia church from outside criticism. Thus, when Pethrus no longer pastored a megachurch, he could easily relate to the challenges of a small church, which shows that many of his ecclesiological arguments were simply *ad hoc* and easily replaced if faced with a different dilemma. In fact, since he had no need to personally defend the Filadelfia church any longer, Pethrus’ megachurch principles fell completely into the background and were largely replaced by an even stronger emphasis on political ecclesiology.

Having begun to advocate different degrees of political involvement during the 1940s and the 1950s, the 1960s witnessed the development of a full-fledged political ecclesiology. Pethrus not only defined Christianity’s role in society, but also delineated the possibilities and the limitations of the individual and the local church in political activities. Moreover, Pethrus thoroughly discussed not only the Church of Sweden’s relation to the state, but also the state’s relation to the Church of Sweden. Since the issues of ecumenism, political ecclesiology, and the independent local church concept dominated Pethrus’ ecclesiological discussions during 1959-1974, these three issues will be the focus of the rest of this chapter.

5.2 Ecumenism

5.2.1 Historical and Theological Overview

As evidenced in the previous chapter, Pethrus’ ecumenical understanding was clarified and refined from 1934 to 1958 through a combination of new biblical insights and practical

⁸⁷ Pethrus, ‘De Små Församlingarnas Problem,’ 1969, 2.

⁸⁸ See section, 4.2.3.1 above.

lessons gained in concrete ecumenical work. Pethrus' ecumenical writings from 1959 until his death in 1974 logically display this enhanced understanding. Paul's admonition to the Ephesians to 'keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace' (Ephesians 4:3) remains, as it did from 1919 onward, the foundational cornerstone of Pethrus' ecumenical thinking. Unity based on doctrine is continually rejected, and joint ventures are hailed as the most effective approach to receive concrete results. Visible unity is limited to the local church level, and any attempt to achieve visible unity by creating organisations above or between local churches is strongly rejected.

Although Pethrus' ecumenical understanding remains virtually the same during the last years of his life, a further fine-tuning of his ecumenical thought is, nevertheless, visible. The developments taking place within the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Free Church Council of Sweden, on the one hand, and the changes brought about by the Charismatic Movement and the Jesus Movement upon the mainline churches, on the other, encouraged Pethrus to reflect even further on ecumenical issues. These reflections shaped Pethrus into a solid 'bottom-up' rather than a 'top-down' ecumenist.

5.2.1.1 National Ecumenism

In the beginning of 1959, Lewi Pethrus' ecumenical writings were particularly concerned about the ecumenical developments that took place among the Free Churches during the 1950s and the Pentecostal Movement's response, or lack thereof, to these developments. In order to give clarity to Pethrus' ecumenical writings in 1959, a brief explanation of these developments needs to be given here.

During an inaugural address to the Free Church Council of Sweden in November 1948, Ansgar Eeg-Olofsson noted that the council's many years of discussions regarding the

creation of a federation of Free Churches had yielded little clarity.⁸⁹ Eeg-Olofsson suggested that something, which he called the *Free Church of Sweden*, should be established, implying a full merger of Free Churches in Sweden.⁹⁰ At the Free Christian National Convention in March 1950, it was decided that a committee should be formed in order to investigate the possibilities for the establishment of a Swedish Free Church Federation. The committee embarked on the task with vigilance, and at the Eighth General Free Church Meeting in March 1953, the committee presented a possible constitution for the future Free Church Federation.⁹¹ Bergsten remarks that the committee emphasised that ‘the denominations which joined the federation would maintain their full independence in all doctrinal matters, such as baptism, communion and church polity,’⁹² and that the Federation should have two central bodies: a general assembly and an executive body called ‘the Swedish Free Church Council’.⁹³ The conference enthusiastically and unanimously accepted the committee’s proposal, and advocated that the suggestion of a Swedish Free Church Federation should now be implemented. In spite of the conference’s unanimous decision, the efforts of creating a Swedish Free Church Federation soon died because of a lack of participation, varied attitudes toward the recently established WCC in 1948, and theological differences regarding open communion.⁹⁴ The issue of open communion became the greatest hurdle, since the Free Church Council insisted that denominations which practiced closed communion had to change their practice and allow all ‘associated members’ of the Federation to participate in communion, even if they were not baptised as adults.⁹⁵

⁸⁹ Bergsten, 138.

⁹⁰ Bergsten, 138.

⁹¹ Bergsten, 138-139.

⁹² Bergsten, 140-141.

⁹³ Bergsten, 140-141.

⁹⁴ Bergsten, 142.

⁹⁵ Bergsten, 142-143.

In January 1959, the Pentecostal Movement came under criticism from the daily newspaper *Svenska Dagbladet* for their lack of participation in the Free Church Council's efforts in establishing a joint federation. In a series of articles in *Dagen*, Pethrus explained why the Pentecostal movement had opted to remain outside the discussions of a Federation of Swedish Free Churches. He explained that the reason was not that the Pentecostal movement did not believe in ecumenism, but that their independent structure did not allow them to participate.⁹⁶ The articles not only permitted Pethrus to give an explanation for the Pentecostal Movement's inactiveness but also to present their/his ecumenical perspective and their/his reservations against some of the Free Church Council's methods. In the first article, he particularly addressed what he considered the Council's wrongful insistence on doctrinal uniformity. Highlighting the reluctance of many Baptists to accept the Free Church Council's insistence on open communion, Pethrus rather ironically stated: 'Perhaps the truth regarding baptism was as precious for them as for the Baptist pioneers in this country, who rather suffered imprisonment [...] and exile rather than compromising with their conviction'.⁹⁷ Pethrus' comment contained an implicit but rather obvious critique of the Free Church Council's approach to ecumenism. Later in the same article, he made his criticism more explicit by arguing that not all divisions within Christianity were illegitimate. As long as divisions had their origin in a passionate defence of 'rediscovered' biblical truths, they were legitimate. However, ecumenism that emphasised uniformity in doctrine was as dangerous and futile as seeking absolute uniformity in the political arena.⁹⁸ Spiritual unity while not

⁹⁶ Pethrus, 'Sv. Dagbladets ekumenism (III),' *Dagen*, 17 January, 1959, 2.

⁹⁷ Pethrus, 'Sv. Dagbladets ekumenism,' *Dagen*, 8 January, 1959, 2.

⁹⁸ Pethrus, 'Sv. Dagbladets ekumenism,' 1959, 2. In another article entitled *Ekumenik som splittrar* [Ecumenism that Divides] published on 17 March 1959, Pethrus criticised the Free Church Council's insistence on open communion even further. He argued that it would mean a 'death blow' to the Swedish Baptists, and he was glad that Baptist leaders as Erik Rudén and Gunnar Westin worked for Christian unity but opposed doctrinal uniformity. For Pethrus, anyone with a little bit of common sense would realise that 'something must be wrong with the ecumenical efforts if they caused divisions within one's own ranks.' See, Pethrus, 'Ekumenik som splittrar,' *Dagen*, 17 March, 1959, 2. See also, 'Splittringens konsekvenser,' *Dagen*, 12 April, 1962.

requiring doctrinal uniformity opened up for the possibility of ‘working for an increased Christian influence in society,’ a joint venture in which ‘all Christians could come together as one’.⁹⁹

In the second article, Pethrus continued the same line of reasoning but clarified his position by noting that ecumenism had both an ‘inward’ and an ‘outward’ side. ‘Inward ecumenism’ Pethrus argued, was not reached by a common creed or organisation, but found in the fellowship of divine adoption’.¹⁰⁰ ‘Outward ecumenism,’ on the other hand, was that responsibility shared by all Christians to influence the place in which they were living. For Pethrus, Christian norms and principles were universal and should thus yield a united Christian front.¹⁰¹ This kind of ecumenical work could only be called ‘outward ecumenism’ since it limited itself to the establishment of a ‘Christian culture’ in society, as opposed to ‘inward ecumenism’ that focused on individual transformation.

In the third article, Pethrus had to restate his explanation of ‘inward’ and ‘outward’ unity because it was interpreted as a means of justifying divisions.¹⁰² Having straightened out the misconceptions, Pethrus proceeded to argue that *Svenska Dagbladet*’s criticism of the Pentecostal Movement for their indifference to ecumenism was completely unfounded in light of the active participation of many Swedish Pentecostals in the lobbying group *Kristet Samhällsansvar* [Christian Responsibility in Society].¹⁰³ Pethrus further commented that *Svenska Dagbladet*’s criticism was merely ‘air’ without any true concern for unity.¹⁰⁴ In fact, its approach to ecumenism was symptomatic for the main problem within contemporary ecumenism in general:

⁹⁹ Pethrus, ‘Sv. Dagbladets ekumenism,’ 1959, 2.

¹⁰⁰ Pethrus, ‘Sv. Dagbladets ekumenism (2),’ *Dagen*, 10 January, 1959, 2.

¹⁰¹ Pethrus, ‘Sv. Dagbladets ekumenism (2),’ 1959, 2.

¹⁰² Pethrus, ‘Sv. Dagbladets ekumenism (III),’ 1959, 2.

¹⁰³ Pethrus, ‘Sv. Dagbladets ekumenism (III),’ 1959, 2.

¹⁰⁴ Pethrus, ‘Sv. Dagbladets ekumenism (III),’ 1959, 2.

The most of this talk about Christian unity comes from religious theorists. It is usually denominational leaders, scholars, and journalists, etc. who are not in contact with the everyday life in the churches, that are preoccupied with ecumenism. Let the pastors for the churches take care of the question regarding Christian unity. Let in this way the men of the practical life, within the Christian ministry, deal with the problem. They can say what is possible in this area. This issue has in actuality a different bearing in different places. A general decision from the headquarters can in many cases be impossible to carry out in the country due to local circumstances. What is done in individual locations in order to unify Christian factions is of extraordinary value and can later spread from place to place. A unity based on the pastors' and the churches' opinion and insight can then become a solid and durable foundation for Christian unity and cooperation.¹⁰⁵

Pethrus further elaborated on the abovementioned preference for effective 'bottom-up' (rather than detached 'top-down' ecumenism) in an article entitled *I enhetens tecken* [In the Name of Unity] published 22 January the same year. To illustrate his point, he did not shy away from using the all-too familiar conflict between the Östermalm Free Church and the Filadelfia church.¹⁰⁶ After years of resentment and bitter fights, the two churches had now managed to resolve their differences and 'all the obstacles for fellowship had been removed'.¹⁰⁷ The renewed fellowship between the churches was for Pethrus not only a victory for the churches themselves but also for the entire Pentecostal movement and God's Kingdom as a whole.¹⁰⁸ This kind of local and concrete ecumenism stood as a radical contrast to contemporary ecumenism, which 'talked a lot about unity but in reality did very little to resolve conflicts and opposition'.¹⁰⁹

As noted in the previous chapter, Pethrus' understanding of 'inward ecumenism' was not limited to a shared experience of the atoning work of Christ¹¹⁰ but was also strongly linked to a biblicistic approach to the Scriptures. It is therefore not surprising that he also

¹⁰⁵ Pethrus, 'Sv. Dagbladets ekumenism (III),' 2.

¹⁰⁶ For an explanation to the conflict between the Östermalm Free Church and the Filadelfia church, see 4.1 above.

¹⁰⁷ Pethrus, 'I enhetens tecken,' *Dagen*, 22 January, 1959, 2.

¹⁰⁸ Pethrus, 'I enhetens tecken,' 1959, 2.

¹⁰⁹ Pethrus, 'I enhetens tecken,' 1959, 2.

¹¹⁰ See, 4.3.2 above.

argued in 1965 that the core divide between Swedish Christians was not found in doctrinal or organisational differences or in the difference between the State Church and the Free Churches but ‘between those who believe in the divine revelation and those who do not believe’.¹¹¹ This divide, Pethrus explained, was drawn up in the ‘spiritual world’ but was ‘clearly visible in Christian ministry and contemporary society’.¹¹² In order that nobody would misunderstand what the ‘unbelieving’ side was, Pethrus further explained: ‘The positive side builds its faith on the divine revelation whereas the negative side builds its faith on science’.¹¹³ This did not mean, however, that the ‘positive side’ rejected science but only that the divine revelation superseded ‘all human wisdom’.¹¹⁴ For Pethrus therefore, the acceptance of higher criticism of the Bible divided churches along vertical, rather than horizontal lines, and provided a greater obstacle for unity than any other issue, since it testified to an inward division of the Spirit.

In 1968, encouraged by the WCC’ meeting in Uppsala, Eeg-Olofsson and Gösta Nicklasson of MCC renewed the suggestion of a common Swedish Free Church denomination. Pethrus’ first reaction to the suggestion was a combination of admiration and reservation. Pethrus praised the suggestion as a ‘bold initiative’ but lamented that the suggestion lacked specification. For Pethrus, such a bold initiative required much more detailed proposals than merely being willing to give up one’s denominational name.¹¹⁵ When the proposal was discussed once again at the Eleventh Free Church Symposium in Örebro in March 1969, Pethrus noted how Eeg-Olofsson and Nicklasson had still not provided any practical guidelines for its implementation.¹¹⁶ Moreover, the fact that youth with an anti-

¹¹¹ Pethrus, ‘Den kristna splittringens kärna,’ *Dagen*, 5 November, 1965, 2.

¹¹² Pethrus, ‘Den kristna splittringens kärna,’ 1965, 2.

¹¹³ Pethrus, ‘Den kristna splittringens kärna,’ 1965, 2.

¹¹⁴ Pethrus, ‘Den kristna splittringens kärna,’ 1965, 2.

¹¹⁵ Pethrus, ‘De Kristnas enhet i ett nytt läge?,’ *Dagen*, 19 October, 1968, 2.

¹¹⁶ Pethrus, ‘Frikyrkomöte med frågetecken,’ *Dagen*, 26 March, 1969, 2.

Western bias had prepared the agenda of the symposium, he regarded as a ‘negative factor’ for achieving unity.¹¹⁷ Although the suggestion of a common Swedish Free Church denomination disintegrated from within due to the Methodists’ unwillingness to participate,¹¹⁸ Pethrus also gave the suggestion his *coup de grâce* after realising that the proposal did not have spiritual unity as its central focus. Pethrus concluded: ‘Unity which is not built upon the unity of the Spirit is a lot more dangerous than the division we now experience’.¹¹⁹ However, a movement that had the unity of the Spirit as its central tenet was the burgeoning Charismatic Movement. As will be shown below, the Charismatic Movement came to considerably spark Pethrus’ interest in international ecumenism.

5.2.1.2 International Ecumenism

During the 1940s and the 1950s, Pethrus’ ecumenism seldom extended beyond the national level, with the exception of a deep commitment to and involvement in the international Pentecostal movement. Consequently, Pethrus’ writings were almost completely devoid of any references to the developments taking place within the WCC at this time. As previously noted, Pethrus was highly critical of Nathan Söderblom’s ecumenical *Life and Work* conference in Stockholm in 1925,¹²⁰ yet his interest in international ecumenism waned until the beginning of 1959. For instance, Pethrus did not discuss the merger of the *Life and Work* and the *Faith and Order* movements in 1937, which eventually led to the creation of the WCC in Amsterdam in 1948. He neither commented on the *Faith and Order*¹²¹ conference in Lund, Sweden in 1952, nor on the second assembly of the WCC in Evanston, Illinois in 1954. The absence of any reference to the Lund conference is especially surprising, since the

¹¹⁷ Pethrus, ‘Frikyrkomöte med frågetecken,’ 1969, 2.

¹¹⁸ Bergsten, 157-160.

¹¹⁹ Pethrus, ‘En farlig enhet,’ *Dagen*, 28 March, 1969, 2.

¹²⁰ See section, 3.6.4 above.

¹²¹ *Faith and Order* became one of the consultative bodies of the WCC after 1948.

adopted ‘Lund principle’¹²² resonated with his aversion against doctrinal unity. Pethrus’ silence concerning these developments can be explained in light of the Lidman conflict, which coincided with the establishment of the WCC. In addition, the beginning of the 1950s was also a period in which he was deeply preoccupied with the new religious legislation of 1951, the establishment of the financial institute *Spar-och-Kreditkassan*, and the constant fight against the secularisation of society.

Sahlberg notes, however, that the newspaper *Dagen* had not been as silent as Pethrus, but had been ‘highly sceptical of the model of ecumenism the WCC represented’ since its beginning in 1948.¹²³ Sahlberg explains *Dagen*’s scepticism in light of five major objections: First, the WCC was perceived as ‘sowing the seeds of a coming, apocalyptic, “world church”.’ Second, the WCC’ approach to ecumenism was viewed as complicating local and national ecumenism. Third, the WCC represented organised unity without any ‘natural’ (spiritual) unity. Fourth, the WCC advocated liberal theology. And fifth, the presence of the Russian and the Greek Orthodox Churches encumbered fellowship, because of the Soviet Union’s involvement in the cold war and the Greek Orthodox Church’s alleged persecution of Protestants.¹²⁴

It is important to note here that Pethrus might have shared all of these objections, but he only singled out two of these particular criticisms in his later writings dedicated to the broader ecumenical movement. In fact, Pethrus’ first interaction with the international ecumenical movement in 1959 took rather modest proportions. In an article entitled *Aktuella enhetstankar* [Current Thoughts on Unity] Pethrus did not reflect on the WCC per se but primarily on Pope

¹²² The ‘Lund principle’ stated, ‘Should not our churches ask themselves whether... they should not act together in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compel them to act separately?’ Quote taken from, Ann K. Riggs and R. Keelan Downton, eds. *National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA: Faith and Order Commission Handbook* (Graymoor Ecumenical and Interreligious Institute, 2005), 7.

¹²³ Sahlberg correctly observes (in his footnotes) that Pethrus did not personally engage in this initial critique of the WCC. See Sahlberg, 193.

¹²⁴ Sahlberg, 190-193.

John XXIII's New Year's statement regarding a possible future ecumenical council (Vatican II). Pethrus merely noted that John XXIII seemed more opened to ecumenical dialogues than his predecessors, yet doubted that other churches would even be allowed to participate as observers.¹²⁵ Pethrus further noted that the American magazine *Look* had contacted prominent clergymen from Orthodox and Protestant circles about John XXIII's broader ecumenical perspective. Not surprisingly, Pethrus singled out Karl Barth's statement that 'if we wish to break the deadlock in this issue then we must look backward to the origin of the churches. We must all become disciples'.¹²⁶ For Pethrus, this 'restorationist' perspective was something that 'everyone should approve of,' but which was unfortunately not 'the foundation upon which the modern ecumenical movement based itself'.¹²⁷ Pethrus also pointed out that many of *Look's* interviewees preferred an 'unorganised solution to the unity question,' yet he quickly concluded that most people would realise that the modern ecumenical movement was 'far from the finishing line' in achieving this goal.¹²⁸ However, he boldly asserted that 'if the modern ecumenical movement would decide to follow these guidelines, they would reach much further than so many failed, so-called, ecumenical movements in our time'.¹²⁹ The rest of the article Pethrus dedicated to contrasting the futility of pursuing doctrinal unity as opposed to the ecumenical prospects intrinsic to the shared goals of world evangelisation and societal reform.

¹²⁵ Pethrus, 'Aktuella enhetstankar,' *Dagen*, 24 August, 1959, 2. The Roman Catholic Church never joined the WCC, but sent representatives to the meetings of the WCC, beginning with the Lund conference in 1952. However, Cecil M. Robeck observes that John XXIII's openness 'made possible and ultimately contributed to the rise and success of the Charismatic Movement within the Catholic Church, a movement of the Holy Spirit through which many lives were touched'. Cecil M. Robeck, 'Lessons from the International Roman Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue,' in Wolfgang Vondey, ed. *Pentecostalism and Christian Unity* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2010), 83.

¹²⁶ Pethrus, 'Aktuella enhetstankar,' 1959, 2.

¹²⁷ Pethrus, 'Aktuella enhetstankar,' 1959, 2.

¹²⁸ Pethrus, 'Aktuella enhetstankar,' 1959, 2.

¹²⁹ Pethrus, 'Aktuella enhetstankar,' 1959, 2.

In this first article relating to international ecumenism, Pethrus' reflections share the same basic perspective as adopted up until the middle of the 1950s.¹³⁰ Interestingly, Pethrus' critique of international ecumenism in general and the WCC in particular only dealt with one of Sahlberg's five categories, namely organised versus 'natural' (spiritual) unity. In a second article written 14 December 1961 entitled, Pethrus continued his 'narrow' criticism of the WCC. This time Pethrus levelled his critique against the WCC based on a statement made by its general secretary, Willem Visser't Hooft, who claimed that the WCC 'was trying to remove the obstacles that prevented Christians to meet a common Eucharist table'.¹³¹ For Pethrus, this approach was not only doomed to failure but was also completely redundant, since it only focused on the outward details of the Eucharist and missed the essential message of the Eucharist: 'If the Christians of the world celebrate this meal with the experience of the reconciliation that the Eucharist proclaims, and with sincere hearts in full confidence of faith accept its blessings, then they may well be one even though they do not share the same view regarding the details of the Eucharist'.¹³² The WCC, therefore, only sought after unity in 'outward things, whereas true unity was built on inward spiritual factors'.¹³³

In the article, Pethrus also addressed the prevalent fear of the WCC turning into a universal 'super church'. As opposed to other Pentecostals, who viewed the WCC as a possible apocalyptic, 'beastly,' forerunner, he only viewed the WCC as a potential threat to the independent local church concept. He acknowledged that the WCC had denied any intention of becoming a universal 'super church' but the fact that the organisation had the power to include, and logically exclude, churches and denominations was enough of a

¹³⁰ See section, 4.3 above.

¹³¹ Pethrus, 'Kyrkornas Världsråd,' *Dagen*, 14 December, 1961, 2.

¹³² Pethrus, 'Kyrkornas Världsråd,' 1961, 2.

¹³³ Pethrus, 'Kyrkornas Världsråd,' 1961, 2.

Scriptural deviation to warrant serious concern.¹³⁴ Thus, his criticism of the WCC was initially limited to organisational unity versus spiritual unity without any apocalyptic overtones, which is rather remarkable considering that he had just finished a series of ten articles on the Book of Revelation during the first four months of 1961.¹³⁵

In June 1962, however, Pethrus expanded his criticism of the WCC to include a second of Sahlberg's categories. This time it regarded the WCC's tendency to damage local ecumenism, or more broadly, Pethrus' reservations against 'top-down' ecumenism. Just as in 1959, when he illustrated his point by using the example of the reconciliation of the Östermalm Free Church with the Filadelfia church, he now reiterated the same point but used the more specific illustration of the reconciliation of the Östermalm Free Church's long estranged pastor, Ragnar Ljungquist with the rest of the Pentecostal Movement. For Pethrus, this kind of ecumenism that overcame local divisions 'was a lot more important than the seriously overhyped interest in alliances on the global level'.¹³⁶ Overcoming local divisions was therefore the logical starting point for achieving Christian unity.¹³⁷ However, the WCC did not abide by this principle and had, for instance, contributed to the disintegration of the Swedish Missionary Council.¹³⁸

In 1963, Pethrus' objections against the WCC took a more personal twist yet remained closely linked to the organisational issue. On 27 February, Gustaf Wingren, a systematic theologian from the University of Lund, published an article in *Svenska Dagbladet* in which

¹³⁴ Pethrus, 'Kyrkornas Världsråd,' 1961, 2.

¹³⁵ Pethrus mentioned in 1947 that overconfidence in organisation would eventually lead to the establishment of antichrist's kingdom, but his writings are conspicuously absent of any such notion at this time. Bergsten notes, however, the strong apocalyptic and anti-ecumenical sentiments that were prevalent among Swedish Free Churches in the beginning of the 1960s. Bergsten points to Erland Sundström's book *Babylonisk sköka eller Kristi brud – Svar på angreppen mot Kyrkornas Världsråd och mötet i New Delhi* [Babylonian whore or the Bride of Christ - Answers to the attacks against the WCC and the meeting in New Delhi] as symptomatic of the debates that surrounded the WCC at this time. See, Bergsten, 204-205.

¹³⁶ Pethrus, 'Verkliga enhetssträvanden,' *Dagen*, 30 June, 1962, 2.

¹³⁷ Pethrus, 'Verkliga enhetssträvanden,' 1962, 2.

¹³⁸ Pethrus, 'Verkliga enhetssträvanden,' 1962, 2.

he argued that the WCC ‘surprisingly enough generated a lot of interest from Rome and the international Pentecostal movement’.¹³⁹ Pethrus responded that, at least in regard to the international Pentecostal Movement, his claim ‘lacked any solid foundation’.¹⁴⁰ The only Pentecostals who had attended the conference in New Delhi were ‘one or two groups of Pentecostals from the west coast of South America’ [...] and the pastor David du Plessis.¹⁴¹ Regarding the South American (Chilean) churches, Pethrus noted that none of them had ever ‘made themselves known’ in any of the World Pentecostal Conferences, and could therefore not be viewed as representing the international Pentecostal movement. Pethrus later explained that their membership in the WCC was not a matter of conviction but rather a matter of coercion. He explained, based on an apparent statement from the Chilean churches themselves, that their inclusion in the WCC was linked to a sense of ‘moral obligation’ after having received financial aid from a representative of the WCC in order to overcome the effects of an earthquake. After the earthquake, the representative had allegedly pressurised the churches to join the WCC, and since they had received financial aid, they were in no position to refuse him.¹⁴² It is interesting to note here that Carmelo E. Álvarez affirms Pethrus’ version that the earthquake of 1960 ‘triggered an immediate commitment to ecumenical solidarity in Chile,’ but he does not view the churches’ decision to join the WCC as a matter of coercion, but rather as an historical process of ecumenical solidarity that can be traced back to 1941, ‘when the Evangelical Council of Chile was established, and important Pentecostal churches began to participate actively in ecumenical matters’.¹⁴³ In light of the strong opposition

¹³⁹ Pethrus, ‘Pingströrelsen och Kyrkornas Världsråd,’ *Dagen*, 2 March, 1963, 2.

¹⁴⁰ Pethrus, ‘Pingströrelsen och Kyrkornas Världsråd,’ 1963, 2.

¹⁴¹ Pethrus, ‘Pingströrelsen och Kyrkornas Världsråd,’ 1963, 2.

¹⁴² See Pethrus, ‘Pingstväckelsen och Kyrkornas Världsråd,’ *Dagen*, 10 September, 1969, 2.

¹⁴³ See, Carmelo E. Álvarez, ‘Joining the WCC: The Ecumenical Story of Pentecostalism in Chile,’ in Wolfgang Vondey, ed. *Pentecostalism and Christian Unity* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2010), 41.

against the WCC at the time, it is quite understandable Pethrus preferred to believe his version of the story.

Concerning du Plessis' presence in the meeting, Pethrus also argued that neither could his example be viewed as representative for the international Pentecostal movement. Pethrus clarified that du Plessis was indeed a 'good man'¹⁴⁴ but that he had overstepped his boundaries when he claimed to be the 'secretary of the international Pentecostal movement,' when in all reality, he had only been the secretary for the Preparation Committee for the World Pentecostal Conference, and only up to the middle of the 1950s and no later.¹⁴⁵ According to Pethrus, the Committee had early on explained to du Plessis the difference of being the secretary for the Preparation Committee and the secretary for the World Pentecostal Conference in a way that 'neither him nor anyone else could misunderstand'.¹⁴⁶ The examples of the Chilean churches and du Plessis could therefore not be regarded as representative for the international Pentecostal movement's attitude toward the WCC.¹⁴⁷ In fact, Pethrus noted that the first World Pentecostal conference in Zurich in 1947 had already discussed, but rejected, the idea of an international Pentecostal organisation. When Thomas Zimmerman, the general superintendent of the American Assemblies of God, addressed the World Pentecostal Conference in Jerusalem in 1961 in regard to the WCC, the entire assembly 'loudly affirmed' his arguments against joining the organisation.¹⁴⁸

In 1965, Pethrus' criticism of the WCC reached a new level. He then accused the WCC of attempting to unite all the Christians of the world in one large organisation, likening its

¹⁴⁴ David du Plessis and Lewi Pethrus had been close friends for many years, although their relationship was not always tension free. See for example, Joel Halldorf, *Lewis Brev*, 260-263.

¹⁴⁵ Pethrus, 'Pingströrelsen och Kyrkornas Världsråd,' 1963, 2.

¹⁴⁶ Pethrus, 'Pingströrelsen och Kyrkornas Världsråd,' 1963, 2.

¹⁴⁷ Pethrus, 'Pingströrelsen och Kyrkornas Världsråd,' 1963, 2.

¹⁴⁸ Pethrus, 'Pingströrelsen och Kyrkornas Världsråd,' 1963, 2.

ecumenical efforts to the totalitarian characteristics of Communism and Nazism.¹⁴⁹ In contrast to 1961, when he acknowledged that the WCC did not have any such intent, Pethrus now fully embraced the idea that the WCC indeed had that goal. In 1966, he noted for example that the ecumenism of the WCC was erasing the boundaries ‘between the world and the people of faith, [...] a boundary that Christian unity is not allowed to or cannot cross’.¹⁵⁰ Furthermore, the rising tide of the Charismatic Movement provided yet another potent argument against worldwide organisations such as the WCC. In an article entitled *Livet och friheten förenar* [Life and Freedom Unites] Pethrus described how the Charismatic Movement rapidly advanced in America among mainline churches in spite of heavy resistance. For Pethrus, the most prominent characteristic of this recent ‘Pentecostal movement’¹⁵¹ was its growth and its freedom from being ‘encapsulated within a worldwide organisation’.¹⁵² The Pentecostal movement was, therefore, ‘still after 50 years a free spiritual movement, which went outside and above the boundaries of all churches and denominations’.¹⁵³ The Charismatic Movement was thus a recent and poignant testimony to his lifelong thesis that ‘there are many ways to have cooperation and fellowship without therefore needing to join together in a common organisation. Life and freedom are the best adhesives between people’.¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁹ Pethrus, ‘Enhetssträvanden med frågetecken,’ *Dagen*, 26 October, 1965, 2.

¹⁵⁰ Pethrus, ‘En samlingslinje,’ *Dagen*, 6 May, 1966, 2.

¹⁵¹ Pethrus perceived the Charismatic Movement as identical to the Pentecostal movement, and thus used the same terminology to describe the two movements, since the Charismatic Movement encapsulated in Pethrus’ mind the essentials of the Pentecostal movement. Pethrus’ equation of the two movements affirms Philip Owen’s observation that, ‘All experiences of the Holy Spirit are mediated through the lens of a particular ecclesiastical culture and tend to be interpreted by theological guidelines of that culture’. Philip C. Owen, ‘A Study of the Ecumenical Nature of Charismatic Movement: with particular reference to Roman Catholic and Anglican Charismatic Movement in England,’ (Ph.D. dissertation, School of Historical Studies, University of Birmingham, 2007), 236.

¹⁵² Pethrus, ‘Livet och friheten förenar,’ 1966, 2.

¹⁵³ Pethrus, ‘Livet och friheten förenar,’ 1966, 2.

¹⁵⁴ Pethrus, ‘Livet och friheten förenar,’ 1966, 2. For an in-depth study of the ecumenical nature of the Charismatic Movement, see Philip C. Owen, ‘A Study of the Ecumenical Nature of Charismatic Movement: with particular reference to Roman Catholic and Anglican Charismatic Movement in England,’ (Ph.D. dissertation, School of Historical Studies, University of Birmingham, 2007).

In 1968, the WCC generated discussions once more. This time Pethrus got personally involved since the fourth general assembly was being held in Uppsala, Sweden. Ivar Lundgren notes how the circumstances surrounding the event affected Pethrus more than the conference itself.¹⁵⁵ Having been in contact with du Plessis, who was attending the conference, Pethrus was encouraged to arrange an informal ecumenical meeting to discuss the burgeoning Charismatic Movement. Somewhat remarkably, the pastor of the Pentecostal church in Uppsala, Sven Jonasson, denied his request to use the church's premises, which forced Pethrus to turn to MCC in order to convene the meeting in their facility in Uppsala.¹⁵⁶ Jonasson's denial of Pethrus' request was even more surprising in light of the fact that just the week before, Jonasson had invited the Chilean Pentecostal representatives of the conference, together with the Catholic financial expert Barbara Ward, to a meeting in the fellowship hall of the church.¹⁵⁷ Lundgren speculates that, 'Jonasson perhaps regarded it as less offensive to invite a Catholic speaker to the fellowship hall than to allow a public ecumenical meeting in the church, even if Lewi Pethrus served as a guarantee to ensure that everything remained within the acceptable framework of the Pentecostal movement'.¹⁵⁸ As Lundgren points out, however, the incident illustrates that the SPM was still highly sceptical of the Charismatic Movement since it was linked to churches that were perceived as 'spiritually dead'.¹⁵⁹ Yet, Lundgren does not refrain from lauding Pethrus' openness to the Charismatic Movement as 'yet another of his many pioneering moves,' even to the point of calling it a 'prophetic act'.¹⁶⁰

In the wake of the conference, du Plessis came under criticism from the Swedish Pentecostal pastor, Stanley Sjöberg, who criticised du Plessis for not believing 'in the church

¹⁵⁵ Lundgren, 'Pingstvännerna in i partipolitiken,' 1:235.

¹⁵⁶ Lundgren, 'Pingstvännerna in i partipolitiken,' 1:235.

¹⁵⁷ Lundgren, 'Pingstvännerna in i partipolitiken,' 1:235.

¹⁵⁸ Lundgren, 'Pingstvännerna in i partipolitiken,' 1:235.

¹⁵⁹ Lundgren, 'Pingstvännerna in i partipolitiken,' 1:235.

¹⁶⁰ Lundgren, 'Pingstvännerna in i partipolitiken,' 1:235.

as a divine instrument in the last days' on the basis of a statement he had made in regard to Joel's prophecy in Joel 2:28.¹⁶¹ In defence of his long-time friend, Pethrus observed that Sjöberg had misinterpreted du Plessis' statement. He also vouched for du Plessis' genuineness by pointing to his twenty years of personal friendship, his belief in 'a free biblical church,' and his God-given call of bringing the Pentecostal message of Spirit baptism to everyone who was willing to listen, including many 'unbroken fields' and multitudes of churches and denominations.¹⁶² In fact, Pethrus viewed du Plessis' success in reaching churches and denominations that had previously closed their doors to the Pentecostal message as a 'marvellous ministry'.¹⁶³

The topics of the conference itself did not generate much discussion from Pethrus. The only aspect of the conference on which Pethrus focused was its emphasis on making churches aware of their responsibilities toward the physical needs of society.¹⁶⁴ The events surrounding the conference suggest, however, that he had now come to a point where he embraced a more open-minded attitude toward a broader spectrum of Christianity, and in particular the Roman Catholic Church. The damning judgements of the Roman Catholic Church that were so prevalent during the first few decades of his life now went extinct.¹⁶⁵ It is of little surprise, therefore, that when Ivar Lundgren first began to survey the possibilities of arranging the first Charismatic Movement conference in Sweden, with Roman Catholic participation (later called *Karisma 72*), Pethrus was more than willing to participate.¹⁶⁶ When he heard that others had hesitated about Roman Catholic participation in the conference, he allegedly

¹⁶¹ According to Pethrus, du Plessis had only made the observation that the church is not mentioned in Joel's prophecy regarding the outpouring of the Spirit in the last days, but only individuals, which was *de facto* correct. See, Pethrus, 'Försätlig personföljelse,' *Dagen*, 8 August, 1968, 2.

¹⁶² Pethrus, 'Försätlig personföljelse,' 1968, 2. Pethrus specifically mentions du Plessis' terrible car accident that nearly ended his life.

¹⁶³ Pethrus, 'Försätlig personföljelse,' 1968, 2.

¹⁶⁴ See for example, Pethrus, 'Uppsalamötet,' *Dagen*, 3 July, 1968, 2.

¹⁶⁵ See, 4.3.2 above.

¹⁶⁶ Erixon, 'Andlig förnyelse i många församlingar,' *Pingströrelsen: Händelser och utveckling under 1900-talet* (Örebro: Libris förlag, 2007), 1:263.

answered: 'If the Catholics are not there, there will not be a charismatic conference'.¹⁶⁷ In a related conference called G72, which was held in Gothenburg the same year as the *Karisma* 72 conference, Pethrus' openness toward the Roman Catholic Church became even more visible. Pethrus then honestly testified: 'I was born a Baptist and have a Baptist doctrinal understanding. If I had been born of Catholic parents, it is likely that I would have been a Catholic today'.¹⁶⁸ He also noted that 'where the Holy Spirit is active, Christians are united in spite of different doctrines. [...] When it comes to our different doctrines, we can only leave each other in the hands of God [...] and pray that God would lead us. The Spirit gives love for the Bible. When it comes to doctrines, each one has to settle [his/her views] with God and the Bible'.¹⁶⁹

The year 1972 saw the Charismatic Movement gain a foothold in the SPM but it was also the year when the first international Pentecostal-Catholic dialogue began.¹⁷⁰ Not everyone accepted the Pentecostals' friendlier attitude toward the Catholics, however. The magazine *Hemmets Vän*, for instance, levelled serious criticism against the advances and argued that it was heretical to have Catholics and Protestants come together and pray for unity. Moreover, *Hemmets Vän* further accused the Pentecostal movement of 'swallowing the delusions of the Roman church' just because of the success of the Charismatic Movement. According to *Hemmets Vän*, the acceptance of the Charismatic Movement meant a rejection

¹⁶⁷ Erixon, 'Andlig förnyelse i många församlingar,' 1:263.

¹⁶⁸ Ivar Lundgren, 'Lewi Pethrus enhetsrecept på G72: Lämna lärostriderna, bekämpa sociala nöden,' *Dagen*, 12 August, 1972, 8.

¹⁶⁹ Lundgren, 'Lewi Pethrus enhetsrecept på G72: Lämna lärostriderna, bekämpa sociala nöden,' 8.

¹⁷⁰ Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen is just one of several scholars who have researched the international Pentecostal-Catholic dialogue in length. Kärkkäinen outlines the dialogue from 1972-1997 in four stages: The first stage he labels as 'the stage of mutual introduction' (1972-1976), the second stage as 'the phase of Contrapositions' (1977-1982), the third stage as 'the search for common identity' (1985-1989), and the fourth stage as 'the potential of mutual cooperation in the Christ-given mission' (1990-1997). See, Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, 'Ecumenism in Wonderland: Roman Catholic – Pentecostal Dialogue on Mission and Proselytism,' *International Review of Mission*, 89, No. 355 (October 2000): 557.

of the Lutheran doctrines of *Sola Scriptura*, *Sola Gracia*, and *Sola Fide*.¹⁷¹ In response to *Hemmets Vän*, Pethrus defended, first of all, the ecumenical talks between the Catholics and the Pentecostals by noting that it was the Catholics who had initiated the conversation and not the Pentecostals. Pethrus simply did not understand how dialogues and prayers between Christians could constitute heresy or be labelled as ‘delusional’.¹⁷² Pethrus further rejected every notion that the Pentecostals had changed their biblical perspective but emphasised that it was the Spirit that had fallen among churches that were previously opposed to the Pentecostal movement and its message. The Pentecostals’ fellowship with the Catholics was therefore not a deviation from biblical principles but the experience of what the Bible called ‘the unity of the Spirit through the bonds of peace’.¹⁷³ The perspective of *Hemmets Vän*, on the other hand, was nothing more than ‘narrow-minded bigotry, which created difficulties and sufferings for preachers and church members, who had experienced the unity of the Spirit with all the true children of God’.¹⁷⁴ Pethrus maintained this openness toward charismatic Catholics until his death in 1974.

5.2.2 ‘Bottom-Up’ Ecumenism

Having surveyed Pethrus’ ecumenical perspective from 1959 to 1974, it is evident that the period 1934-1958 not only cemented his understanding of the centrality of spiritual unity but also provided experiences that significantly shaped his ecumenical thinking. The lessons he learned from engaging in practical ecumenical work became the kernels that later germinated into a ‘well-developed’ model of Christian unity – a model which I would label as a ‘bottom-up’ rather than a ‘top-down’ approach to ecumenism.

¹⁷¹ Pethrus, ‘Beklaglig kursförändring,’ *Dagen*, 4 April, 1972, 2.

¹⁷² Pethrus, ‘Beklaglig kursförändring,’ 1972, 2.

¹⁷³ Pethrus, ‘Beklaglig kursförändring,’ 1972, 2.

¹⁷⁴ Pethrus, ‘Beklaglig kursförändring,’ 1972, 2.

As opposed to the prevalent trend in Pethrus' day of limiting ecumenical discussions to the national and international levels, Pethrus argued that the starting point for meaningful ecumenism must follow a 'bottom-up' approach, beginning on the local level. In fact, he goes so far as to claim that true ecumenism begins in the heart of each believer. In an article entitled *Kristen enhet* [Christian Unity] published in July 1959, Pethrus stated that 'stagnation and recession in the ministry [...] are often the causes for discontentment, criticism, unloving attitudes, and factions. Where God's Spirit, which is the Spirit of revival, is at work, the malicious criticism of others disappears'.¹⁷⁵ For Pethrus, revival in the hearts of Christians was therefore the 'first phase in a great spiritual revival',¹⁷⁶ and it was 'during such times that many Christians found each other, who have never previously had any contact'.¹⁷⁷ As mentioned above, Pethrus labelled this kind of ecumenism as 'inward ecumenism' or the shared experience of divine adoption. Being ushered into the family of God by the Spirit's work in divine adoption created in Pethrus' view 'an inward force [in the heart of the believer] to seek fellowship with those who have had the same wonderful experience'.¹⁷⁸

If the individual transformation of the heart was the first phase in Christian ecumenism, the second phase was clearly the local church. For Pethrus, the local church set the boundaries for fruitful, *visible* unity. In light of Pethrus' 'one city – one church model',¹⁷⁹ meaningful visible unity could not be achieved through organisational, doctrinal or conciliar means, but only in the merging of local churches. Organisational unity only created a unity in name and fell short of the biblical principle of the unity of the Spirit. Doctrinal unity was not only redundant, since unity did not require uniformity in beliefs, but also unjustified since doctrinal differences, or 'passion for biblical truths,' legitimised divisions. Moreover, conciliar

¹⁷⁵ Pethrus, 'Kristen enhet,' *DK*, July 1959, 193.

¹⁷⁶ Pethrus, 'Kristen enhet,' 1959, 193.

¹⁷⁷ Pethrus, 'Kristen enhet,' 1959, 193.

¹⁷⁸ Pethrus, 'Sv. Dagbladets ekumenism (2),' 1959, 2.

¹⁷⁹ See, 4.3 above.

ecumenism was too aloof and pursued by too many individuals with little or no knowledge of local church contexts to make any real difference. Conciliar ecumenism also generated a fear among local assemblies that a large collective would engulf their fellowship.¹⁸⁰ The issue of visible unity was therefore better left in the hands of local pastors and congregations who knew the intricate problems of achieving visible unity on a local level. Local churches were also significantly more suited at resolving age-old and deeply rooted conflicts - something that national or international ecumenism either ignored or was too ill equipped to handle. If church unity could be resolved on the local level, Pethrus was convinced that its influence would 'stretch far beyond the local borders'.¹⁸¹ In fact, the attitude of individual members and local churches toward Christian unity determined the attitude of the nation as a whole.¹⁸² Based on this 'bottom-up' notion of visible unity, Pethrus advanced the thesis that 'one cannot come further, when it comes to Christian unity, than what one has come on the individual and local level'.¹⁸³

Even though Pethrus perceived that it was possible to achieve visible unity on a local level, Pethrus lamented, however that 'there is a lot of outward Christian unity that is not supported by an inward one'. He particularly warned Christians for believing the notion that 'merging Christian ministries in general will result in what the Scriptures call 'the unity of the Spirit'.¹⁸⁴ In his book *Brytningstider - segertider* [Friction times – Victory times], he emphasised this point even more bluntly: 'To maintain unity with a denomination or a congregation that has betrayed its original spirituality and freedom is wrong. The justification

¹⁸⁰ Pethrus, *Brytningstider - segertider*, 1969, 49.

¹⁸¹ Pethrus, *Brytningstider - segertider*, 1969, 49.

¹⁸² Pethrus, *Brytningstider - segertider*, 1969, 49.

¹⁸³ Pethrus, *Brytningstider - segertider*, 1969, 49.

¹⁸⁴ Pethrus, 'Kristen enhet,' 1959, 193.

and value of unity is completely dependent on with whom one is united. Unity has therefore no value in itself'.¹⁸⁵

The third and final phase in Pethrus' 'bottom-up' ecumenical model concerned national and international ecumenism. Although he vehemently opposed any organisational or doctrinal solution to the question of Christian unity, and took a generally reserved attitude toward ecumenism beyond the local church, Pethrus still found room for national and international ecumenism. As Pethrus perceived it, spiritual unity transcended every social, ethnic, gender, and geographical barrier to include every true believer on earth. This spiritual unity ran vertically through churches and denominations, including the Catholic Church. Yet, somewhat paradoxically, 'the unity of the Spirit' was a boundless unity with clear boundaries. In order to meet the criteria for inclusion in the unity of the Spirit, Christians had to believe in the Spirit *and the Word* and not in the Spirit alone: 'An open and honest return to the New Testament experience of salvation and an unreserved acknowledgement of the divine revelation in the Bible we perceive as indispensable for a successful cooperation'.¹⁸⁶ Christian unity was therefore not an end in itself, nor an unqualified concept, but primarily a sense of *koinonia* that resulted from an experience of conversion and a right attitude toward the Bible. Since the criterion was a right *attitude*, and not a correct interpretation of the Bible, Pethrus even viewed confessing Catholics as meeting this criterion at the end of his life.¹⁸⁷ As long as national and international ecumenism did not venture into organisational or doctrinal domains, Pethrus believed they could serve an important practical role in promoting joint ventures such as global mission and the establishment of Christian values in society. In

¹⁸⁵ Pethrus, *Brytningstider - segertider*, 1969, 48-49.

¹⁸⁶ Pethrus, 'En samlingslinje,' 1966, 2.

¹⁸⁷ Peter Hocken makes the interesting observation that Catholic bishops of the Second Vatican Council borrowed the 'spiritual ecumenism' of the French priest Abbé Paul Couturier. Couturier's 'spiritual ecumenism' entailed the requirements of 'interior conversion' and a 'change of heart and holiness of life' among others. It is therefore very probable that Couturier's 'spiritual ecumenism' was an important contributing factor to Pethrus' augmented appreciation of the Roman Catholic Church in the 1960s. See, Peter Hocken, *Church Forward: Reflections on the Renewal of the Church* (London: Alive Publishing, 2007), 68-71.

addition, Pethrus perceived pastors and denominational leaders ‘as holding to a great degree the issue of Christian unity in their hands’.¹⁸⁸ Thus, without their efforts, little Christian unity would be achieved on the local level. Although sceptical of the practical benefits of ecumenical dialogues for most of his life, Pethrus gained a broader appreciation of ecumenical dialogue via the Pentecostal-Catholic ecumenical dialogue in 1972, particularly concerning Christians of diverse backgrounds coming together for prayer.

5.3 Political Ecclesiology

5.3.1 Introduction

Political ecclesiology is a field of study that belongs under the broader heading of political theology. Amos Yong, in his recent study of Pentecostalism and political theology, defines politics, in light of its Greek root *polis*, as referring to ‘human life in the public square, where the various dimensions of religion, culture, society, economics, and government converge and interface’.¹⁸⁹ Later in the same work, Yong defines political ecclesiology as ‘an understanding of the interrelationship of theology and politics in which the practices of the church as a community of believers play a central role’.¹⁹⁰ Yong’s broad definition of politics is helpful since it emphasises that politics extends beyond the activities of government to include the full range of human interaction in everyday life. However, his definition of political ecclesiology could have been more explicit by noting that the practices of the government, as a ruling body, often share an equally important role in the study of political ecclesiology as the practices of the church. This is particularly true in Pethrus’ political ecclesiology, as will be shown below.

¹⁸⁸ Pethrus, *Brytningstider - segertider*, 1969, 49.

¹⁸⁹ Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar: Pentecostalism and Political Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), xix.

¹⁹⁰ Yong, *In the Days of Caesar*, 81.

Before assessing Pethrus' political ecclesiology, a few preliminary observations are in order. First, Pethrus' political theology was based on the idea that Christianity and the church were related yet separate concepts:

Some have made the mistake of saying that Christian churches equal Christianity. [...] Christianity is found within all Christian denominations, and in many instances much of the real kind. Still it would be wrong to say that these denominations represent Christianity. [...] Christianity is a spiritual religion where neither temples, ceremonies, clergy, nor organizations are necessary for man's fellowship with God.¹⁹¹

The differentiation between Christianity and the church is crucial to understanding Pethrus' political ecclesiology. In Pethrus mind, Christianity was a religion without flaws that ultimately reflected the perfections of Christ. The church (or more specifically, mainline churches) on the other hand, was the embodiment of Christianity in the life of sinful people and was therefore only a partial representative of Christianity. A major reason why Christianity was largely invisible to the world was because the church had couched Christianity in a garb of outward religiosity. Due to the church's failure of accurately reflecting the perfections of Christianity, Pethrus' political theology was primarily concerned about the spreading and preservation of 'living Christianity'. Since Christianity was a 'spiritual religion,' it should permeate every aspect of human existence, including life in the public square. As will be discussed below, the ubiquitousness of Christianity did not apply to the church, however. The church, as a localized body of Christianity, had boundaries which it should not transgress.

Second, Pethrus' political theology did not stem from a casual interest in politics but from a deep-seated fear that Sweden was being intentionally and systematically 'de-christianised' by secular authorities. Carl-Gustav Carlsson, who has studied Pethrus' political theology at length, observes how Pethrus viewed Sweden as a Christian state in the 1930s and

¹⁹¹ Pethrus, *A Spiritual Memoir*, 1973, 71-72.

systematically revised this opinion during the 1940s and the 1950s, to conclude in the 1970s, that ‘Sweden was in most respects a de-christianised country’.¹⁹² Pethrus’ political activity was therefore an attempt to come to the defence of Christendom, which was being assaulted in the public square; or as Michael Kirwan somewhat ironically puts it, ‘[the reluctance of] coming to terms with the death of Christendom’.¹⁹³ It is important to note here, as Carlsson does, that Pethrus viewed Christianity as having a two-fold purpose. On the one hand, Christianity related to ‘the internal,’ which Pethrus regarded as everything relating to individual salvation. On the other hand, Christianity also related to ‘the external,’ which Pethrus viewed as ‘national morality, societal norms, and traditions’.¹⁹⁴ Pethrus’ fight against the de-christianisation of Swedish society was therefore understood in the latter sense, which was strictly speaking a defence of *Christendom*, that is, a society based on Christian norms rather than Christianity per se. The following quote vividly explains his concern: ‘The pillars of the Christian norms are being broken down one after the other. Not only state religion but also confessional Christianity is ready to collapse over the one thousand year history of Christian ministry in our country’.¹⁹⁵

Third, Pethrus’ political theology was not only a fight against de-christianisation but also a promotion of Christian values (ethics) in society. Although Pethrus’ writings lack the linguistic sophistication of most political theologians, they nevertheless expressed similar ideas and shared the same basic concern of all political theologians and social ethicists, namely, as John Howard Yoder puts it, the desire to look for ‘the right “handle” by which one can “get a hold on” the course of history and move it in the right direction’.¹⁹⁶ The desire to

¹⁹² Carlsson, 163-164.

¹⁹³ Michael Kirwan, *Political Theology: A New Introduction* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2008), 178.

¹⁹⁴ Carlsson, 161.

¹⁹⁵ Pethrus, ‘Var är Sveriges kristna,’ *Dagen*, 28 February, 1962, 2

¹⁹⁶ John H. Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 228.

set things ‘right’ in society drove Pethrus to rebuff every form of fatalism and religious escapism, which he perceived as commonplace in Swedish Free Church movements.¹⁹⁷ Ultimately, Pethrus’ insistence on an active Christian influence in society stemmed from the idea of the ‘prophylactic’ aspects of Christianity. Christianity was not only beneficial for Christians but also for all of humankind. The church’s role was to represent Christianity as the ‘salt of the earth’¹⁹⁸ which kept the world from moral and spiritual decay: ‘The cure against de-christianisation is living Christianity. From their springs flow the Christian norms which shall serve the rebuilding of society. Being the salt of the world cannot be fulfilled by another organisation. Only the institution which is the ‘pillar and foundation of the truth’ can fulfil this task’.¹⁹⁹

Fourth, as previously noted, Pethrus’ political theology was surprisingly constant throughout his life even while the methods of promoting Christian influence in society changed.²⁰⁰ The somewhat limited presence of a political theology in Pethrus’ writings up until the 1940s he explained as a matter of immaturity in behalf of the SPM, as opposed to any personal disinterest in the subject. For Pethrus, the early Pentecostal movement needed ‘milk’ but was in the 1960s ready for ‘solid food’.²⁰¹

It could be argued that, the study of Pethrus’ political ecclesiology ought to encompass the 1940s and the 1950s. However, the period 1959 to 1974 displayed the ‘solid food’ stage of his political ecclesiology. Therefore, the following discussion will be limited 1959-1974, albeit including insights from previous decades when necessary. Given that Carl-Gustav Carlsson has researched Pethrus’ political theology in length and that his analysis requires

¹⁹⁷ Pethrus, ‘Sanningens pelare och grundfäste,’ *Dagen*, 31 March, 1962, 2.

¹⁹⁸ Pethrus, “‘I ären jordens salt’,” *Dagen*, 16 March, 1962, 6.

¹⁹⁹ Pethrus, ‘Sanningens pelare och grundfäste,’ 31 March, 1962, 2. See also, Pethrus, “‘I ären jordens salt’,” 6.

²⁰⁰ Pethrus, *Ny mark*, 1966, 5. See also, 4.1 above.

²⁰¹ Pethrus, ‘Mjölkmatt och stadig mat,’ *Dagen*, 27 September, 1966, 2.

little improvement, Pethrus' political theology will not be the focus here, but rather his political ecclesiology.²⁰² Since Carlsson does not distinguish between Pethrus' political theology and political ecclesiology and leaves out certain elements of Pethrus' political ecclesiology, a more detailed investigation of it is therefore necessary.

The following discussion will proceed according to the two main aspects of Pethrus' political ecclesiology, namely Christianity's, the Christian's and the local church's relationship to the *polis*; and the *polis*' relationship to Christianity and the local church. As will be shown below, these two perspectives were closely intertwined in Pethrus' political ecclesiology, and it is under the latter perspective that Pethrus' understanding of Sweden as a Christian state falls.

5.3.2 Christianity's, the Christian's and the Local Church's Relationship to the *Polis*

Pethrus' political ecclesiology was founded on the basic assumption that there was no contradiction between church ministry and the promotion and preservation of Christianity in the public sphere. In fact, Pethrus believed that they were not contradictory but intrinsically inter-reliant. Both perspectives had the common goal of reaching as far into society as possible.²⁰³ For Pethrus, the aim of the ministry of the church was to bring 'living Christianity' to the individual, yet the reception of Christianity had obvious advantages beyond the mere justification of the person before God. The transformation of the individual did not only entail an inward change but it was also accompanied by a reformed life with obvious positive effects for the society as a whole.²⁰⁴ Apart from the social aspects of justification, the church's understanding of Christianity as a religion of compassion also

²⁰² See, Carlsson, 144-232.

²⁰³ Pethrus, *Ny mark*, 1966, 7.

²⁰⁴ Pethrus, 'Politisk väckelse,' *Dagen*, 12 January, 1960, 2. Pethrus mentions salvation as bringing stability to family life, diminishing the problems of alcohol, and turning young people away from riots and public disorder.

meant that in whatever context Christianity settled, it was followed by an improvement in social conditions. The establishment of schools, hospitals, and social welfare systems was just one of the results that naturally followed in the wake of Christianity.²⁰⁵ Since Christianity was by its very nature a religion that ‘built up,’ fighting de-christianisation in the public sphere using political means was, therefore, not only a legitimate but an essential way to ensure that what Christianity had built up was not ‘torn down’.²⁰⁶ Thus, ‘Christians had not only a right but also an obligation to point out evil’ in society.²⁰⁷

Although Pethrus advised local churches from directly engaging in political activities, he insisted that the ministry of *individual Christians* must share this two-fold purpose of promoting and preserving Christianity in the public sphere, since the two were of equal importance.²⁰⁸ Pethrus recognised, however, that his belief in the two-fold purpose of Christian ministry did not correspond to the beliefs of many of his fellow contemporaries. Finding himself within a movement with strong links to the radical reformation, merging the role of the Kingdom of God with the kingdom of this world was more than many of his Pentecostal friends could bear.²⁰⁹ Despite the resentment of his views from within his own ranks, Pethrus did not shy away from tackling the main objections.

One of the most recurring objections against engaging in the political sphere was due to its apparent sinfulness. Politics was considered as so poisoned by non-Christian behaviour that Christians ought to stay clear of it. For Pethrus, this was no reason for Christians to withdraw from politics since it meant that ‘the formation of the nation’s politics was left in

²⁰⁵ Pethrus, *Ny mark*, 1966, 106.

²⁰⁶ Pethrus, *Ny mark*, 1966, 105-110.

²⁰⁷ Pethrus, ‘Den segrande kristendomen,’ *Dagen*, 29 December, 1962, 2.

²⁰⁸ ‘We are not satisfied with only individuals receiving the blessings of Christianity. The Christian influence of society is of the same importance’. Pethrus, ‘Kristendom och politik,’ *Dagen*, 1 December, 1962, 2.

²⁰⁹ Pethrus, *Ny mark*, 1966, 6.

the hands of the hard and the ruthless'.²¹⁰ Pethrus further surmised that the notion of the apparent sinfulness of politics stemmed from the idea that the material world was somehow inherently impure.²¹¹ However, this could not be the case since God was the creator of both the material and the supernatural world, making both worlds equally divine.²¹² Blaming apparent sinfulness as the reason for staying away from politics was also, in Pethrus' mind, a failure to realise the bigger spiritual picture. Pethrus found it sad that so many Christians did not understand the battle strategies of the devil:

[Christians are often] satisfied to work with those who have come to the churches, but it is not there where the battle in actuality is fought. Here is a battle about the common opinion and the legislation. Many Christians try to face these attacks with a ministry that does not reach beyond the church walls. When it comes to going out and meeting the enemy in the field he operates, they came up with excuses and plead that sin should be permitted because there is so much of it.²¹³

A more fundamental objection against active political involvement related to the long-standing Anabaptist tradition of making a clear separation between the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of this world. Pethrus argued that 'the one who proclaims the false doctrine that Christianity should be separated from societal life creates a dangerous divide between practical Christianity and a sincere devotional life. They tempt Christians to choose between two types of piety, causing irreparable damage to the cause of Christianity'.²¹⁴ Putting an ironic twist to Paul's words in Colossians 3:3, Pethrus mockingly described their attitude: 'There is a way of emphasising the individual experience so that one's Christianity means nothing in the society in which one lives. The hidden life with Christ in God becomes so hidden that the surrounding [world] becomes completely unaffected by it'.²¹⁵ Pethrus further

²¹⁰ Pethrus, 'Kristendom i politiken,' *Dagen*, 15 September, 1964, 2.

²¹¹ Pethrus, *Ny mark*, 1966, 12.

²¹² Pethrus, *Ny mark*, 1966, 12.

²¹³ Pethrus, 'Sedeslösheten anfaller,' *Dagen*, 28 April, 1964, 2.

²¹⁴ Pethrus, 'Sedeslösheten anfaller,' 1964, 2.

²¹⁵ Pethrus, 'Var är Sveriges kristna,' 1962, 2.

added that separating Christianity from the public arena only played in the hands of atheists who wanted Christians to stay out of the political decision-making process,²¹⁶ displayed religious egotism,²¹⁷ and promoted the erroneous view that Christianity only belonged within the confines of the church.²¹⁸ The latter understanding Pethrus viewed as a combination of laziness and unhealthy fatalism: ‘Christians lie still within their enclosures and rest on the false notion that God himself will do it [protect the nation from forces that remove Christian ideals.]’²¹⁹ In the ‘final’ assessment of this view, Pethrus concluded that Christians who voiced this idea were simply ‘afraid of getting dirty’: ‘The car mechanic, the farmer, and the chimney-sweep all have occupations that make them dirty, but these are necessary occupations. The same is true for the politician’.²²⁰

As opposed to the Anabaptist position, Pethrus advocated the ‘reformed principle’ of Christians’ dual membership: ‘We do not cease to be Swedish citizens when we become decided Christians. We should become better citizens the better Christians we become. We should also make a better effort in society according to the measure of how we improve as Christians’.²²¹ In fact, Pethrus believed that the Scriptures gave abundant evidence for the dual membership principle,²²² particularly in the life of Jesus. Having defined politics as ‘a free citizen’s relationship to the state’ and showed how Jesus was concerned about children, marriages, families, the relationship of the rich to the poor, and religiopolitical issues, Pethrus concluded: ‘Jesus is [...] the greatest political figure that will ever exist in the history of mankind. [...] Jesus was a politician in the right meaning of the word. [...] His teachings

²¹⁶ Pethrus, ‘Kristna och ateister hand i hand,’ *Dagen*, 7 May, 1965, 2.

²¹⁷ Pethrus, *Ny mark*, 1966, 11.

²¹⁸ Pethrus, *Ny mark*, 1966, 12.

²¹⁹ Pethrus, ‘Samhällsmoral,’ *Dagen*, 26 November, 1966, 2.

²²⁰ Pethrus, *Ny mark*, 1966, 13.

²²¹ Pethrus, ‘Jesus som politiker,’ *Dagen*, 24 May, 1972, 2.

²²² ‘In light of the ministries of Jeremiah, Daniel, John the Baptist and Paul, it is inexplicable how people who read the Bible can say that Christians should not concern themselves with politics’. Pethrus, ‘Kristendom och politik,’ *Dagen*, 1 December, 1962, 2.

touched virtually every aspect of society, and especially those issues that concerned the fundamentals of society'.²²³

As outlined above, Pethrus adhered to a strong conviction that Christians in general and Christianity in particular should be part of political life. However, he did not believe that the same was true for local churches.²²⁴ For instance, he argued that political issues were not to be discussed inside but belonged outside the local church. Bringing political issues into the local church would not only stir up conflicts, since church members shared a variety of political views, but would also bring confusion between church and political life.²²⁵ As leaders for their churches, pastors were especially responsible for keeping politics out of the church. Pastors who uttered political statements and made judgements concerning party politics only created difficulties for themselves.²²⁶ In addition, pastors were not supposed to get involved in politics so that the ministry would not suffer,²²⁷ and they had no right to interfere in their members' political life.²²⁸ As far as the church itself was concerned, party politics did not belong on its agenda. Yet for the individual church member, the freedom was a lot greater. Pethrus acknowledged that the individual church member's responsibility was primarily toward the life of the church, yet he argued that there were enough 'idle' people in the church who could 'find important roles in political work'.²²⁹ Thus, meaningful political work such as the Christian Democratic Party (KDS) could 'manage with the scraps that fell from its master's table'.²³⁰

In sum, even though Pethrus perceived the local church as ill-assorted to participating in party politics, Pethrus strongly argued that a Christian's individual piety should not be

²²³ Pethrus, 'Jesus som politiker,' 1972, 2.

²²⁴ Pethrus, 'Kristet och ateistiskt samröre,' *Dagen*, 2 October, 1970, 2.

²²⁵ Pethrus, 'Ett kristet parti och församlingslivet,' *Dagen*, 15 February, 1964, 2.

²²⁶ Pethrus, 'Ett kristet parti och församlingslivet,' 1964, 2.

²²⁷ Pethrus, 'Ett kristet parti och församlingslivet,' 1964, 2.

²²⁸ Pethrus, 'KDS har existensberättigande,' *Dagen*, 18 June, 1964, 2.

²²⁹ Pethrus, 'Ett kristet parti och församlingslivet,' 1964, 2.

²³⁰ Pethrus, 'Ett kristet parti och församlingslivet,' 1964, 2.

divorced from everyday life. If the two went hand in hand, ‘then we have healthy Christianity as well as a Christian influence in society that we so desperately need’.²³¹ In light of this dual principle, it is understandable that he regarded the ultimate purpose behind the establishment of KDS as motivated by the Great Commandment of ‘loving neighbour’ since the commandment imply a connection between spirituality and outward action.²³²

5.3.3 The *Polis*’ Relationship to Christianity and the Local Church

Promoting and preserving Christianity in the public sphere did not only apply to Christians but also to the civil authorities. Pethrus noted that, ‘no phenomenon has had greater ability to affect the development of society than living and goal-oriented Christianity. Neither has anything had more beneficial influence on Christian revival efforts than when the leadership of society has taken a sympathetic and supporting position behind the work of the Christian church’.²³³ Beyond showing a sympathetic and supporting position toward the ministry of the church, Pethrus believed that the authorities could also support the church by upholding high standards of public morality. However, public morality was one of the concepts most misunderstood not only by the Swedish government but also by many Pentecostals. In an article entitled *Samhällsmoral* [Public Morality], Pethrus addressed the misunderstandings and outlined his general understanding of public morality. The heart of the issue hinged upon a correct understanding of the difference between individual and public morality. In order to clarify the difference, Pethrus employed an illustration from the area of public health. Pethrus explained that individual purity was a precondition for church membership, but that was not what the issue of public morality was all about. One could not demand, based on the individual’s right to religious freedom, that the whole population

²³¹ Pethrus, ‘Kristendom i politiken,’ *Dagen*, 15 September, 1964, 2.

²³² Pethrus, ‘Insnöade kritiker,’ *Dagen*, 16 September, 1966, 2.

²³³ Pethrus, ‘Politisk väckelse,’ *Dagen*, 12 January, 1960, 2.

should act like a Christian church.²³⁴ Thus, the issue was not about ‘how tidy people kept their homes,’ but how the ‘sewer systems of society’ were working, and the Christians’ right to speak up when they were blocked.²³⁵ Consequently, as impossible as it was for a society to exist without a certain measure of sanitation, in the same way it was impossible for modern states to exist without a measure of public moral standards. People should therefore ‘not be allowed to empty their garbage on the streets’.²³⁶

The quality of the ‘sewer system’ was not only a crucial matter for the well being of society but also instrumental to the church’s very existence. For Pethrus, without a Christian morality ‘the Christian church could not exist’.²³⁷ She was, according to the New Testament, ‘the pillar and the foundation of the truth,’ and without Christian ethics, there was simply no real Christianity.²³⁸ A secularised state was therefore ‘no fertile ground for any kind of Christianity’.²³⁹ However, as Carlsson accurately points out, Pethrus had no illusions as to the extent and purpose of public morality. The purpose of insisting on public morality ‘was not to turn the society into a church in the New Testament sense,’²⁴⁰ but to ensure that Christian values, which were perceived as beneficial for everyone, were preserved.

In an article labelled *Lagstiftning och moral* [Legislation and Morality] Pethrus expanded on the notion that the actions of civil authorities affected Christian values in society to a much greater degree than most Christians realised. He particularly rejected the concept that the church is the sole responsible agent for upholding Christian values in society: ‘People claim that the individual and the church have the responsibility for secularisation and immorality that affect the people, but that is not the whole truth. Even if the Christian church

²³⁴ Pethrus, ‘Samhällsmoral,’ *Dagen*, 26 November, 1966, 2.

²³⁵ Pethrus, ‘Samhällsmoral,’ 1966, 2.

²³⁶ Pethrus, ‘Samhällsmoral,’ 1966, 2.

²³⁷ Pethrus, ‘Samhällsmoral,’ 1966, 2.

²³⁸ Pethrus, ‘Samhällsmoral,’ 1966, 2.

²³⁹ Pethrus, ‘Religionsfrihet eller religionslöshet,’ *Dagen*, 7 September, 1967, 2.

²⁴⁰ See, Carlsson, 164; Pethrus, *Ny mark*, 1966, 87.

does its duty even so well, it is neutralised by an antichristian legislation. An antichristian legislation can tear down Christianity in a nation much easier and in much less time than the Christian church can through its ministry rebuild the same'.²⁴¹ Indeed, for Pethrus, 'laws and the obedience thereof is what foremost shape public morality'.²⁴² A hostile or indifferent society was therefore a negative force of great measure against the ministry of the church. For Pethrus, it was against this negative force in Swedish politics that 'Christians must rise up unless the spiritual life [... of Sweden] would become completely snuffed out'.²⁴³

As mentioned above, Christians were responsible for stemming the tide of secularisation, but Christians shared this responsibility with elected politicians. Based on Romans 13:4, Pethrus considered politicians to be 'God's servants' who were responsible for the moral and spiritual welfare of the people.²⁴⁴ Passing laws that contributed to an increased secularisation of society was therefore a failure of politicians to live up to their God-given mandate.²⁴⁵ In the bigger scheme of things, passing secularised laws ultimately opposed God's common grace toward all humankind, an insight Pethrus claimed to have discovered while reflecting upon biblical teachings: 'I have found in Scripture that God has concern for and considers the peoples as well as the church. He has his hand in their destinies and he wants their leaders to be God's servants and care for the people in a devout and worthy manner'.²⁴⁶

It is important to note here than Pethrus never engaged in a more profound discussion as to the extent of the authority of 'God's servants'. Despite rubbing shoulders with Lutherans

²⁴¹ Pethrus, 'Lagstiftning och moral,' *Dagen*, 18 April, 1964, 2.

²⁴² Pethrus, *Ny mark*, 1966, 46.

²⁴³ Pethrus, 'Kristendom och politik,' *Dagen*, 1 December, 1962, 2.

²⁴⁴ Pethrus, 'Mina ändrade åsikter,' *Dagen*, 29 April, 1964, 2.

²⁴⁵ Pethrus, 'Mina ändrade åsikter,' 1964, 2.

²⁴⁶ Pethrus, 'Mina ändrade åsikter,' 1964, 2.

his entire life, he never alludes to Luther's 'two kingdoms' theology.²⁴⁷ Nevertheless, sporadic comments throughout his writings yield a relatively good picture of his understanding of the roles of the two kingdoms.

Pethrus did not share the view that civil authorities had the power to reform the church when necessary. In fact, Pethrus argued that the state should not even appoint offices in the Lutheran State Church.²⁴⁸ When the discussion arose as to whether the church should ordain female priests, Pethrus perceived the issue as an internal matter of the church and not an issue which should involve the state.²⁴⁹ Moreover, Pethrus lamented the fact that most social care, which initially belonged to the ministry of the church, now almost completely remained in the hands of the state: 'Present-day Christianity is characterized by [...] one-sidedness. One cleaves man into two. The spiritual part is turned over to the church. The other part, namely man's body and his material life, the church turns over to the world'.²⁵⁰ Consequently, Pethrus did not regard the state as inherently unable to perform Christian prerogatives, but rather that the state was not meant to do so. The fact that the state performed Christian prerogatives was ultimately a failure of the church as opposed to the state transgressing its intended boundaries. As far as the state's *explicit* obligation toward Christianity was concerned, apart from the obvious responsibility of upholding justice, Pethrus only viewed it as relating to advocating and preserving Christian values and practices in the public sphere.

²⁴⁷ Luther's 'two kingdoms' theology was based on the idea that the temporal and the spiritual authorities were two separate entities, yet equally submitted to God's sovereign rule and providence. Both kingdoms shared a divine origin and the task of fighting evil. See, Yong, *In the Days of Caesar*, 64.

²⁴⁸ Pethrus, 'Skilsmässa stat och kyrka?', *Dagen*, 5 December, 1972, 2.

²⁴⁹ Pethrus, 'Kyrkan och staten,' *Dagen*, 24 September, 1959, 2.

²⁵⁰ Pethrus, *A Spiritual Memoir*, 1973, 140.

5.3.4 Sweden as a ‘Christian State’ and Pethrus’ Political Ecclesiology

Although Pethrus’ understanding of Sweden as a Christian state was thoroughly discussed in the previous chapter, it is important to briefly note the further fine-tuning that took place during the 1960s. As noted before, he viewed, quite inaccurately, the Swedish state as ‘Christian’ because of its constitutional link to the Scriptures and the Augsburg confession.²⁵¹ It was also observed that he understood the state’s *intended* purpose as solely relating to the preservation and promotion of Christian values in society, with no authority to meddle in the affairs of local churches, including the Lutheran church.

As mentioned previously, Pethrus did not consider the Church of Sweden as a true church in the New Testament sense, yet it had some doctrinal truth²⁵² and ‘real’ Christians in it.²⁵³ The Church of Sweden was, for Pethrus, rather ‘a more or less successful imitation of theocratic state of Israel’.²⁵⁴ Despite ‘the more or less successful’ parallel between the Church of Sweden and theocratic state of Israel, Pethrus expanded on it to provide another ‘biblical’ reason for Pentecostals to maintain their membership in the State Church.²⁵⁵ All Israelites were members of theocratic state, but only the people of faith were the true Israel.²⁵⁶ The New Testament showed that Paul (a member of the true Israel), although critical of the Pharisees’ works righteousness, agreed with the Pharisees concerning bodily resurrection and physical healing.²⁵⁷ For Pethrus, Paul’s observance of Jewish customs, such as circumcision and

²⁵¹ See 4.4.3 above.

²⁵² On occasion, because the Lutheran church had ‘rediscovered’ justification by faith, Pethrus went so far in his defence of the Lutheran church that he considered himself as a Lutheran. He even confessed that justification by faith was ‘of more foundational importance than Spirit baptism,’ and therefore Pentecostals ‘should be aware of despising the church that has brought us the doctrine of justification by faith’. See, Pethrus, ‘Paulus och “statskyrkan”’, *Dagen*, 4 February, 1967, 2.

²⁵³ Pethrus regarded the Swedish church as having two types of members: Those who merely belonged to the church because they were automatically added to it at birth, and those who had their spiritual home there, whom in essence constituted the church. See, Pethrus, ‘Svenska Kyrkan och vi,’ *Dagen*, 14 March, 1962, 2.

²⁵⁴ Pethrus, ‘Kyrkboken – ingen livets bok,’ *Dagen*, 6 April, 1968, 2.

²⁵⁵ In the 1950s, Pethrus had only referred to Old Testament Israel and the Millennium as proof for its biblical validity.

²⁵⁶ Pethrus, ‘Kyrkboken – ingen livets bok,’ 1968, 2.

²⁵⁷ Pethrus, ‘Paulus och “statskyrkan”’, 1967, 2.

ceremonial shaving (Acts 18:18), showed that ‘Paul did not break with the Jewish theocracy’.²⁵⁸ Similarly Pentecostals, who obviously belonged to ‘the true Israel’ and agreed with some Lutheran doctrines, did not need to separate from the Church of Sweden.²⁵⁹ Nevertheless, it was the ‘real’ Christians who regularly attended the Church of Sweden that ultimately had the responsibility to represent ‘living Christianity’ to the state,²⁶⁰ a task which they had unfortunately failed to fulfil.²⁶¹

In terms of the wedding of the Lutheran church and the state, Pethrus further added that it was far from a happy marriage of two equally yoked parties but a relationship in which the state henpecked the Lutheran church.²⁶² He recognised that different opinions existed within the Pentecostal movement as to the validity of the marriage,²⁶³ yet he somewhat fatalistically argued that ‘if the Lutheran church is divorced from the state, another will soon take its place since people want to have a church that does not demand repentance, separation from the world, and a New Testament church’.²⁶⁴ Apart from wanting to accommodate the ‘shallow’ religious needs of the Swedish people, Pethrus also argued that that there was one more profound reason for maintaining the union of church and state, a reason which he traced all the way back to the Early Church. In Pethrus’ mind, ‘the Early Church understood that Christianity carried a strong ethical element which was a necessary salt in the decadent

²⁵⁸ Pethrus, ‘Paulus och ”statskyrkan”,’ 1967, 2. Pethrus’ parallel between the ‘theocratic Jewish state’ in Paul’s time and the Church of Sweden is seriously inaccurate. In light of the Roman occupation of Palestine in the first century C.E., there was no such thing as a ‘Jewish theocratic state in Paul’s time’. No Jewish theocratic state had existed since the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.E, with the possible exception of a few years during the Maccabean period in the second century, B.C.E. By treating the Law of Moses, Judaism, theocracy, and modern State Churches as synonymous concepts, Pethrus fails to realise the essential theological, cultural, and historical differences between these concepts. Looking for biblical support for his view, Pethrus simply forces a pre-critical reading on the biblical text.

²⁵⁹ Pethrus, ‘Pingstväckelsen och Svenska kyrkan,’ *Dagen*, 21 December, 1966, 2.

²⁶⁰ Pethrus, ‘Svenska kyrkan och vi,’ 1962, 2.

²⁶¹ Pethrus, ‘Sanningens pelare och grundfäste,’ 31 March, 1962, 2.

²⁶² Pethrus, ‘Behåll frivilligt korum,’ *Dagen*, 16 November, 1965, 2.

²⁶³ Pethrus, ‘Svenska kyrkan och vi,’ 1962, 2.

²⁶⁴ Pethrus, ‘Staten och kristendomen,’ 1 July, 1960, 2.

Roman society,²⁶⁵ and their efforts did not limit themselves to merely establishing a ‘Free Church’ but continued, ‘until they changed the Roman state’.²⁶⁶ He even contended that Constantine understood the ethical ‘salt’ of Christianity, which explained his reason for ‘tying the state and the church together so hard that they became one’.²⁶⁷ Consequently, Pethrus regarded the Church of Sweden as ‘a continuation of the institutionalisation which Christianity ended up in during the first centuries of the church,’²⁶⁸ yet founded on the elementary principle ‘that the more influence Christianity has over society the better it is’.²⁶⁹ Without providing much explanation, he believed that ‘in a moderate form, there lay a significant truth to it’.²⁷⁰ A brief glance at the records of Swedish history simply sufficed as proof for this ‘significant truth’: ‘During the time when the State Church exercised its influence, the people had respect for divine, spiritual, and ethical values, and the moral corruption was not as great as it is now, [...] a result the Free Churches have never been able to achieve’.²⁷¹

Apart from the biblical, historical and contemporary reflections Pethrus added to his understanding of the state-church relationship, it is also important to note that when he summarised his arguments in 1968 as to why he favoured a Christian state, out of the seven reasons he listed, all but one directly related to political theology; not one reason related to the essence of the Pentecostal movement or denominationalism, which had been such crucial arguments in previous years.²⁷²

²⁶⁵ Pethrus, ‘Staten och kristendomen,’ 1960, 2.

²⁶⁶ Sven Forsberg, ‘Mångsidig livsgärning: Fortsatt framtidssyn,’ *Dagen*, 10 March, 1964, 5.

²⁶⁷ Pethrus, ‘Staten och kristendomen,’ 1960, 2.

²⁶⁸ Pethrus, ‘Staten och kristendomen,’ 1960, 2.

²⁶⁹ Pethrus, ‘Staten och kristendomen,’ 1960, 2.

²⁷⁰ Pethrus, ‘Staten och kristendomen,’ 1960, 2.

²⁷¹ Pethrus, ‘Staten och kristendomen,’ 1960, 2.

²⁷² Pethrus, ‘Kyrkboken – ingen livets bok,’ *Dagen*, 6 April, 1968, 2.

5.4 The Independent Local Church Model Revisited

The independent local church model had been an essential and largely unquestionable element of Swedish Pentecostal ecclesiology since the excommunication of Franklin in 1929. However, in an article published in May 1963, Pethrus indicated that a shift toward denominational thinking had begun to appear in the movement. The argument of certain Pentecostal preachers²⁷³ that a removal of their membership from the State Church was justified since they already belonged to another denomination, combined with the appeal for a Pentecostal seminary,²⁷⁴ indicated that denominational thinking had crept into the movement.²⁷⁵ These two examples showed that the Pentecostal preachers regarded themselves as ‘a church among the churches’.²⁷⁶ Although Pethrus acknowledged that ‘no direct appeal for the creation of a denomination existed,’ he felt that there were ‘subtle hints in that direction’.²⁷⁷ Pethrus’ fear that a denominational mindset was beginning to take shape in the movement was further fuelled by the suggestion of ‘the 15-men committee’²⁷⁸ at the annual Preacher’s Conference in 1966 that an independent missions committee should be established to serve as an independent advisory board for local Pentecostal churches in their missionary efforts.²⁷⁹ Pethrus was initially positive to the ‘15-men committee’ and he endorsed their suggestion at the Preacher’s Conference in 1964, which led to the formation of *Svenska Pingstmissionens U-landshjälp* [The Swedish Pentecostal Mission’s Third World Aid] in

²⁷³ Even though Pethrus leaves the Pentecostal preachers unnamed, Nils-Olov Nilsson notes that he most likely had in mind Edvin Näslund, Malmö, and Carlo Johansson, Lund, both of whom advocated longer bible school training. See, Nilsson, 209.

²⁷⁴ In the debate as to whether the SPM ought to have its own seminary, Pethrus clarified that the issue centred upon the fundamental question whether the Pentecostal movement ought to remain a revival movement or become a church institution. If the Pentecostal movement became a church institution, it was, for Pethrus, entitled to a seminary, but since the movement was not a church institution, no seminary was needed. See, Pethrus, ‘Predikantskola eller inte?’, *Dagen*, 4 May, 1963, 2.

²⁷⁵ Pethrus, ‘Pingströrelse eller pingstsamfund,’ *Dagen*, 2 May, 1963, 2.

²⁷⁶ Pethrus, ‘Pingströrelse eller pingstsamfund,’ 1963, 2.

²⁷⁷ Pethrus, ‘Pingströrelse eller pingstsamfund,’ 1963, 2.

²⁷⁸ The ‘15-men committee’ had been established as an independent committee in the beginning of the 1960s to deal with mission related questions. See, Wahlström, ‘Fri församlingar och starka organisationer,’ 312.

²⁷⁹ Wahlström, ‘Fri församlingar och starka organisationer,’ 312.

1965.²⁸⁰ In fact, as independent bodies, Pethrus did not regard the ‘15-men committee’ and ‘The Swedish Pentecostal Mission’s Third World Aid’ as a violation of the independent local church concept but as an essential part of it. Pethrus stated, ‘The fact that ministerial bodies are created in connection to the independent local churches, such as the Swedish Pentecostal Mission’s Third World Aid and the temporary 15-men committee, is in no way opposed to the independent local church concept. It is rather a precondition for the independent local church. Without similar independent bodies, one should need and perhaps soon demand a denominational organisation’.²⁸¹

It is important to note here that when Pethrus first outlined his view of the independent local church concept in 1919, he pointed out that the Early Church had ‘outward unifying bonds’ (joint ventures) that tied the churches together into a spiritual fellowship.²⁸² By 1966, these joint ventures (institutions) had grown so numerous within the SPM that direct parallels to the Early Church were no longer possible. To defend their legitimacy, Pethrus needed to find a broader conceptual framework which gave these institutions biblical validity yet clear consistency with the fundamental aspects of the independent local church concept. In an article entitled *Församlingen och det personliga initiativet* [the local church and the personal initiative], Pethrus presented his ‘new’ framework by making a distinction between the collective (the local church) and the individual. He noted how both Peter and Paul in the book of Acts often worked independently of the local church without its direct permission or supervision, which proved that ‘a person called and equipped for a task in God’s kingdom is just as much a biblical institution as the local church’.²⁸³ Pethrus further observed that it was because ‘these two factors – the personal initiative and the active local church – had been

²⁸⁰ Wahlström, ‘Fria församlingar och starka organisationer,’ 312.

²⁸¹ Pethrus, ‘Frihet, enighet, och styrka,’ *Dagen*, 13 May, 1966, 2.

²⁸² See section, 3.6 above.

²⁸³ Pethrus, ‘Församlingen och det personliga initiativet,’ *Dagen*, 2 July, 1966, 2.

combined that the SPM had been able to achieve such good results'.²⁸⁴ Thus, based on this broad conceptual framework, Pethrus was able to conclude:

The ministry which has over the years been built up in Sweden has largely been personal initiatives that the local church has rallied around. The publishing house *Filadelfia*, *Evangelii Härold*, the hymnal *Segertoner*, the *Filadelfia church* at *Rörstrand* street and *Kaggeholm's* folk high school, etc., are personal initiatives, which have been able to be brought forward with such success only through a cooperation between the local initiative and an active and determined congregation.²⁸⁵

As just noted, however, Pethrus' favourable attitude toward the work of the '15-men committee,' soon changed as the committee suggested the formation of a mission board. Magnus Wahlström notes that Pethrus regarded a mission board to have much greater potential of becoming a denominational board than any of the current institutions within the movement.²⁸⁶ Although Pethrus acknowledged that the '15-men committee' had no intention of establishing a permanent denomination,²⁸⁷ in light of the painful experiences surrounding the Swedish Free Mission 40 years previously,²⁸⁸ the suggestion of a new missions committee generated enough fear in Pethrus to conclude that 'the attempts that are now made [...] are most certainly a step back into denominationalism'.²⁸⁹

After much debate and drawn-out discussions, the suggestion of the '15-men committee' was finally dropped, a result Nils-Olov Nilsson contributes to Pethrus' 'charismatic leadership and strong position within the SPM'.²⁹⁰ Even though the debates had not led to any practical changes, they did, however, force Pethrus to further reflect on the independent local church concept. Pethrus' 'new' conceptual framework provided a more

²⁸⁴ Pethrus, 'Församlingen och det personliga initiativet,' 1966, 2.

²⁸⁵ Pethrus, 'Församlingen och det personliga initiativet,' 1966, 2.

²⁸⁶ Wahlström, 'Fri församlingar och starka organisationer,' 312.

²⁸⁷ Pethrus, 'Verksamhetsformens betydelse,' *Dagen*, 10 December, 1966, 2.

²⁸⁸ Pethrus, 'Spåren förskräcker,' *Dagen*, 16 December, 1966, 2.

²⁸⁹ Pethrus, 'Överflödig organisation,' *Dagen*, 19 November, 1966, 2.

²⁹⁰ Nilsson, 208.

nuanced approach to the topic in comparison to previous years. He insisted that a too heavy emphasis on the independent local church concept could lead to ‘the old Catholic idea of the “one salvific church,”’ namely, that ‘everything should be done through the local church’.²⁹¹ For Pethrus the belief in the independent local church was not ‘a dogma like the creed the Church of Sweden repeats every Sunday: “We believe in one holy and catholic church”’.²⁹² Thus, the SPM had never established or condemned anyone for not adhering to the dogma ‘We believe in a free congregation,’ but openly and willingly worked with other Pentecostals who had a different ministerial approach.²⁹³ The independent local church model was therefore not an essential aspect of the Christian faith such as ‘our belief in God, in Christ, in the Holy Spirit, and the biblical Word, etc., [...] but ‘a ministerial approach Swedish Pentecostals had found support for in the New Testament’.²⁹⁴

This more ‘nuanced’ understanding of the independent local church concept as ‘a New Testament ministerial approach,’ Pethrus elaborated further on in his book *Brytningstider - segertider* in 1969. On the one hand, Pethrus defended the concept not only from a biblical and historical perspective but also from a purely practical standpoint, arguing that the model was more efficient in saving time, finances, and as a mission strategy.²⁹⁵ On the other hand, Pethrus also added additional rationale for his ‘new’ conceptual framework. He argued that Lutheran and Roman Catholic churches, including some local Pentecostal churches, had a too strong church structure (collectivism) that tended to quell individual freedom and personal

²⁹¹ Pethrus, ‘Överflödigt organisation,’ 1966, 2.

²⁹² Pethrus, ‘Överflödigt organisation,’ 1966, 2.

²⁹³ Pethrus, ‘Överflödigt organisation,’ 1966, 2.

²⁹⁴ Pethrus, ‘Överflödigt organisation,’ 1966, 2. It is interesting to note here that Pethrus specifically emphasised that the independent local church concept did not rule out fellowship with other Pentecostals. However, he said nothing about the insurmountable obstacle the concept created between the Swedish Pentecostals and the Free Churches from 1919 to 1933. During this period, the independent local church concept was clearly treated as an unwritten dogma than merely ‘a New Testament ministerial approach.’ See, Struble, 32.

²⁹⁵ Pethrus, *Brytningstider – segertider*, 1969, 32-46.

initiatives, which were essential for church renewal and numerical growth.²⁹⁶ Although the local church was, for Pethrus, the largest collective the New Testament recognised,²⁹⁷ even local churches could quell personal initiatives if they did not follow New Testament guidelines.²⁹⁸ At the end of his book, Pethrus stated that the SPM had committed this error with unprecedented severity. A movement which could almost always count on his support was now accused 'of turning up the authority of the local church' to such a degree that the SPM had a 'local church cult' similar to the Roman Catholic Church's 'Mary cult'.²⁹⁹ Pethrus based his devastating critique on the movement's incorrect understanding of the local versus the universal church. The Pentecostal movement had, according to Pethrus, wrongly interpreted biblical texts that referred to the universal and applied them to the local church. The outcome of such a faulty exegesis was that the movement contributed too much authority to the local church and regarding it as an 'executive unit'.³⁰⁰

Björne Erixon argues that Pethrus' strong language was partially due to the criticism Willis Säwe had levelled against *LP-stiftelsen* for conducting its own public Sunday services.³⁰¹ Although Erixon's assertion is certainly correct, Pethrus' strong language was primarily a reaction against an overemphasis on the independent local church concept, which corresponded to his pronounced repugnance of excesses of any kind.³⁰² The fact that the main content of the book was a compilation of reworked editorials published in *Dagen* from 1966-

²⁹⁶ Pethrus, *Brytningstider – segertider*, 1969, 25-31, 205-207.

²⁹⁷ Pethrus argued that the local church could perform all the duties of a denomination as, or if not even more, effectively than any denomination. Pethrus, *Brytningstider – segertider*, 1969, 46.

²⁹⁸ Pethrus, *Brytningstider – segertider*, 1969, 36-37.

²⁹⁹ Pethrus, *Brytningstider – segertider*, 1969, 205.

³⁰⁰ Pethrus, *Brytningstider – segertider*, 1969, 204-206.

³⁰¹ Erixon, 280. See also, Aronson, 210-211.

³⁰² See section, 2.5 above.

1969 demonstrates that Pethrus regarded the problem as a general trend and not as an isolated event.³⁰³

For some, however, despite his justification for the existence of independent institutions alongside the local church, Pethrus largely failed to acknowledge the obvious discrepancies that existed between theory and the actual practice of the institutions in relation to the local churches.³⁰⁴ The many institutions that existed in the movement, and which had predominantly come about through Pethrus' own efforts, inadvertently challenged the accurateness of the claim that the movement did not have any centralised institutions above or between the local churches.³⁰⁵ In his book *Organisationer och beslutsprocesser inom pingströrelsen* [Organisations and Decision-making processes within the Pentecostal Movement] published in 1973, Bertil Carlsson showed that the institutions were not merely joint ventures or independent institutions but 'functions' that were essentially carbon copies of denominational organisations.³⁰⁶ These organisations exercised significant influence on the local churches and had such a complex structure and decision-making processes that they were almost impossible to assess.³⁰⁷ Carlsson also pointed out that of the twelve institutions he had researched, Pethrus was a board member in seven, chairperson in three, and vice

³⁰³ See, Pethrus, 'Frihet, enighet och styrka,' 1966, 2; Pethrus, 'Församlingen och det personliga initiativet,' *Dagen*, 2 July, 1966, 2; Pethrus, 'Kristendomens väg till framgång,' *Dagen*, 6 July, 1966, 2; Pethrus, 'Överflödigt organisation,' *Dagen*, 19 November, 1966, 2; Pethrus, 'Frihet och sammanhållning,' *Dagen*, 30 November, 1966, 2; Pethrus, 'Verksamhetsformens betydelse,' *Dagen*, 10 December, 1966, 2; Pethrus, 'Spåren förskräcker,' *Dagen*, 16 December, 1966, 2; Pethrus, 'Blir pingstväckelsen en kyrka,' *Dagen*, 8 March, 1967, 2; Pethrus, 'Inget frälsningsmonopol,' *Dagen*, 7 December, 1968, 2; Pethrus, 'Pingstförsamlingarna och verksamhetsmonopolet,' *Dagen*, 14 January, 1969.

³⁰⁴ For an in-depth explanation of the progressive development of institutions in the SPM, see Wahlström, 'Fri församlingar och starka organisationer,' 310-313.

³⁰⁵ In a response to Pethrus' article *Pingströrelse eller pingstsamfund* [Pentecostal movement or Pentecostal denomination] from 1963, the Baptist church historian, Gunnar Westin, noted that the board for issuing wedding licences was a deviation from the independent local church concept. Pethrus disagreed with Westin that the board meant a deviation since the specific treatment the Pentecostal movement received from the king himself when the board was established in 1951 was enough proof that even in the eyes of the state, the Pentecostal movement was a fellowship of independent churches rather than an established denomination. See, Pethrus, 'Pingströrelse eller pingstsamfund. Lewi Pethrus svarar,' *Dagen*, 10 May, 1963, 2.

³⁰⁶ Bertil Carlsson, 72.

³⁰⁷ Bertil Carlsson, 12.

chairperson in one. Pethrus had been the initial ‘driving force’ in all but one.³⁰⁸ Employing Weber’s charismatic leadership model, Carlsson further noted that Pethrus’ ‘unspoken’ leadership role in the movement was a reaction to the movement’s recognition of Pethrus as a divinely appointed and supernaturally equipped individual.³⁰⁹ Wahlström observes that Bertil Carlsson’s research sent shockwaves through the Pentecostal movement since it revealed, contrary to the commonly and highly valued presupposition, that the movement was a ‘hidden denomination’.³¹⁰ Although strong reactions were heard in *Dagen*, it is interesting to note that the only criticism Pethrus personally levelled against Carlsson’s research was the distinction he had made between the terms *pingstväckelsen* [Pentecostal revival] and *pingströrelsen* [Pentecostal movement], a distinction Pethrus found to be ‘utter nonsense’.³¹¹ However, the fact that Pethrus had accused Carlsson’s study of being ‘the opposite of [good] research’³¹² certainly intended to undermine all of Carlsson’s assertions in the eyes of the SPM.

In spite of the criticism, Pethrus never acknowledged to having personally transgressed the independent local church concept, and the SPM maintained the independent local church ideal even after Pethrus died in 1974. Changes within the last two decades have shown, however, that the independent local church concept is now something which almost completely remains in the movement’s past.³¹³

³⁰⁸ Bertil Carlsson, 71.

³⁰⁹ Bertil Carlsson, 20-25.

³¹⁰ Wahlström, ‘Fri församlingar och starka organisationer,’ 312.

³¹¹ Pethrus, ‘Pingstväckelsen eller pingströrelsen,’ 1963, 2. See also, 2.3.1 above.

³¹² Pethrus, ‘Pingstväckelsen eller pingströrelsen,’ 1963, 2.

³¹³ See, Nils-Olov Nilsson, 247-279. A striking example of the recent developments concerns the board of issuing wedding licenses. On 1 May 2012, the board will cease to exist and the Swedish Pentecostal denomination *Pingst* will take over its responsibilities. Initially, all pastors who are entitled to perform legal weddings will lose their licenses, and only pastors who apply for a renewed license, and belong to a denominationally affiliated congregation, will be able to keep their certification. Local Pentecostal churches who have not joined the denomination by 1 May 2012, will not receive the authority to conduct legal weddings. See, Ulrika Ramstrand, *Pingst.se*, June 2011, 4.

5.5 Summary

Having surveyed Pethrus' ecclesiology from 1959-1974, it is evident that the period was not marked by any major ecclesiological 'discoveries,' apart from a greater insight into the 'internal' and 'external' purposes of Christianity. The only notable difference is the broader and more refined articulation of his previous ecclesiological views, and the renewed emphasis on the universal church. The renewed emphasis on the universal church was a result of what Pethrus perceived to be the beginning of a 'local church cult' among Swedish Pentecostals, and the international aspects of the Charismatic and Jesus movements, which transformed and transcended local churches. The period also witnessed a 'coming together' of the ecumenical lessons Pethrus learned in previous decades. From 1911 to 1933, Pethrus emphasised spiritual unity; from 1934 to 1958, Pethrus tried to merge inward (spiritual) unity with a distinct emphasis on outward unity (joint ventures); and from 1959 to 1974, he tried to emphasise both, but with a specific emphasis on bottom-up ecumenism. Since Pethrus was no longer in charge of a megachurch such as Filadelfia, he did not need to defend it against outside criticism, which resulted in his 'megachurch principles' faded into the background. Having been released from the restraints of the pastorate, Pethrus was able to give full attention to, and develop a full-fledged, political ecclesiology. Although Pethrus immersed himself, both in international and national politics, he never lost his spiritual focus, as Carlsson accurately notes: 'When everything is said and done, it is the politics of heaven that remains closest to the Pentecostal leader's heart'.³¹⁴ Thus during 1959 to 1974, Pethrus combined a global vision with a continued strong emphasis on spiritual matters, which naturally extended to his ecclesiology. Pethrus' understanding of the church from 1959 to 1974 may therefore be labelled as a global fellowship of saints.

³¹⁴ Carlsson, 164.

CHAPTER 6

SPIRITUALITY AND FORMATIVE CONTEXTS: THE INNER LOGIC OF LEWI PETHRUS' ECCLESIOLOGY

6.1 Introduction

Lewi Pethrus' ecclesiology is a vivid example of how historical themes converge in an eclectic synthesis. Belonging to a tradition that has incorporated Lutheran, Pietist, Baptist, Holiness, pre-millennial, and restorationist teachings profoundly shapes his overall theology and the diversity of his ecclesiological thinking.¹ As shown in the diachronic analysis of his ecclesiology, the diversity is further enhanced by a strong pragmatic emphasis and individual reflections on, and adaptations to, an ever-changing context. From an outsider's perspective, the resulting synthesis is often rationally inconsistent, but since he treats each historical strand separately and pragmatically, the inconsistencies escape his attention.²

At this point, it would be easy to level a profound theological and historical critique of Pethrus' ecclesiology, but doing so without considering, as Roger Haight has suggested,³ the essential core from which Pethrus' ecclesiology flows would be to neglect its inner logic and broader significance. The aim of this chapter is therefore first to assess the core beliefs behind Pethrus' ecclesiology and second to show how this core serves as the unifying centre of his ecclesiology. The chapter will also demonstrate that this unifying centre consists of a

¹ Pethrus readily acknowledged his theological indebtedness, stating: 'Regarding redemption and justification by faith am I a Lutheran, regarding the New Birth and sanctification I believe like the Methodists, regarding Christian Baptism is my opinion like the Baptists, and in regard to soul-winning I am a Salvationist. Regarding Spirit baptism, spiritual gifts and the spiritual offices I share the Pentecostals' perspective.' Pethrus, *Hos Herren är makten*, 1955, 259.

² William Kay's observation regarding the ecclesiology of early Pentecostals also applies to Pethrus: 'The truth is that the early Pentecostals read their understanding of the church from the churches they had known from childhood. They did not approach ecclesiology with any theological sophistication, but rather with a practical determination to create congregations that functioned as nearly as possible like the congregations of the New Testament'. William Kay, *Pentecostalism* (London: SCM Press, 2009), 245.

³ Haight, vol.3, 17-18.

particular form of spirituality that has ‘loving Christ’ and ‘loving neighbour’ as its primary focus. Importantly, this particular form of spirituality corresponds, in Pethrus’ mind, to the essence of Pentecostalism, affirming Steven Land’s assertion that religious affections ‘characterize Pentecostals’.⁴ It will be further noted that these affections are interpreted through a number of hermeneutical lenses which give the affections a distinct ‘Pentecostal’ flavour. The discussion on affections will be followed by a brief discussion on Pentecostal ecclesiality and identity, which is, as David Morgan correctly observes, ‘an obvious requirement for a Pentecostal ecclesiology’.⁵ To illustrate how there is a logical progression in Pethrus’ ecclesiology from this particular form of spirituality to ecclesiological beliefs, concrete examples from the diachronic analysis of his ecclesiology will be utilised.

An essential part of the discussion will be to describe how Pethrus’ formative contexts serve as a ‘counterbalance’ to the unity in his ecclesiology. The combination of Pethrus’ Pentecostal spirituality and formative contexts leads to a ‘Pentecostal’ ecclesiology of unity in diversity. Formative contexts, thus, function as the ‘many’ in the unity/diversity equation, whereas spirituality functions as the ‘one’. The chapter will conclude by showing that the combination of Pethrus’ ‘Pentecostal’ spirituality and formative contexts provide a window into the inner logic of his ‘Pentecostal’ ecclesiology. The broader (global) significance of the inner logic of Pethrus’ ‘Pentecostal’ ecclesiology will be addressed in the final chapter.

6.2 Spirituality - the Unifying Centre of Lewi Pethrus’ Ecclesiology

As described above, for Pethrus, Christianity was in essence a ‘spiritual religion’ without the ‘attire’ that people usually associated with it, such as ‘temples, ceremonies, clergy

⁴ Steven J. Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 123.

⁵ Morgan, 36.

or organizations'.⁶ Christianity had to do with the person's relationship to God.⁷ Furthermore, Pethrus defined the essence of Pentecostalism as 'the experience of the innermost core of Christianity,'⁸ a conclusion he arrived at after many years of reflection on the Pentecostal movement.⁹ Viewed together, the quotes describe Christianity as a broad framework of spirituality with an inner core, and the Pentecostal movement as the *living experience* of this inner core. Although C. E. Green laments that 'pentecostal spirituality is too often divorced from an adequate theology of the church,'¹⁰ Pethrus' understanding of Christianity in general, and Pentecostalism in particular, sheds important light on three related issues regarding the centrality of religious affections, the ecclesiality of Pentecostalism, and the essence of Pentecostal identity. Since these elements have an important bearing on the inherent logic of his ecclesiology, each issue needs to be addressed in turn before a critical evaluation of his ecclesiology may be undertaken.

6.2.1 'Loving Christ' and 'Loving neighbour' – The Primary Valued Affections

Even though Pethrus never stated it outright, inferences from his statements and the logic of his arguments show that the Great Commandments of 'loving God' and 'loving neighbour' (Matthew 22:36-39) are the 'innermost core of Christianity' that Pethrus speaks about, except with the notable difference of emphasising 'Christ' rather than 'God'.¹¹ 'Loving

⁶ Pethrus, *A Spiritual Memoir*, 1973, 71-72.

⁷ Pethrus, *A Spiritual Memoir*, 1973, 71-72.

⁸ Pethrus, 'Mig har Gud lärt,' 1969, 2.

⁹ See section, 2.4.3.

¹⁰ Chris E. Green, "'The Body of Christ, the Spirit of Communion': Re-Visioning Pentecostal Ecclesiology in Conversation with Robert Jenson,' *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 20 (2011): 16.

¹¹ This is not to say that a theocentric perspective is entirely absent in Pethrus' writings, but merely that Pethrus' affections display a strong Christocentric perspective. Pethrus can for example state, 'We need to experience that 'God's love is shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5). Then it becomes natural for us to love *God* above all things and our neighbour as ourselves' [emphasis mine]. Pethrus, *Urkristna kraftkällor*, 1925, 108. Occasionally, Pethrus even combines the two perspectives: 'Fellowship with God's Son – this is really [...] a definition of what Christianity is, because Christianity, true living Christianity, that is fellowship with God through Jesus Christ our Lord.' Pethrus, *Varken syndare eller svärmare*, 1943, 5.

Christ' and 'loving neighbour' were therefore the two religious affections that he most highly valued, and which formed the core of his spirituality.¹² In 1925, Pethrus noted for instance: '[...] love is the first fruit of the Spirit – love is the new life's inner essence. Our salvation has its roots in divine love, and nothing is therefore more natural, than it produces fruit of love in our lives.'¹³ In 1933, Pethrus further noted, 'This love [brotherly love] also turns itself toward the unsaved world, which exists around us. [...] We have in relation to the unsaved the same love that made Christ leave the glory of heaven and die on the cross for a dying world. This love manifests itself in compassion toward the miserable that live around us, and we seek to bring them the wonderful message of salvation. It is this power that motivates the church to sacrifice itself for people's salvation.'¹⁴ In fact, the same emphasis on 'loving Christ and neighbour' is consistently emphasised both before 1925 and after 1933.¹⁵ Before proceeding, two observations must first be made. First, the emphasis on 'loving Christ' as opposed to 'loving God' was something he owed to his religious background.¹⁶ Based on insights from David Reed, Simon Chan explains the tendency of early Pentecostals to shift from God to Christ (and the Spirit) as a vestige from the Holiness Movement, which was anxious 'to defend the deity of Jesus and the Spirit against liberals and Unitarians [...]'.¹⁷ Although Pethrus might have been more indebted to Moravianism than the Holiness Movement for his Christocentrism,¹⁸ the fact that Pethrus valued 'loving Christ' as supreme is an indication of

¹² Land understands spirituality as the 'integration of beliefs, practices and affections'. Land, 123.

¹³ Pethrus, *Urkristna kraftkällor*, 1925, 107.

¹⁴ Pethrus, *Den goda vägen*, 1933, 117.

¹⁵ See for instance, Pethrus, 'Kärlekslivet i Gud,' *EH*, 7 October, 1920, 157; Pethrus, 'Kärlekslivet i Gud,' *EH*, 14 October, 1920, 161; Pethrus, 'Kristi kärlek tvingar oss,' *EH*, 8 June, 1922, 89; Pethrus, *Framgångens hemlighet*, 1938, 142, 156-157; Pethrus, *Vägen hem*, 1939, 25-27; Pethrus, 'Kärlek till själarna,' *EH*, 17 June, 1943, 473; Pethrus, 'Tro, verksam i kärlek,' *Dagen*, 16 June, 1956, 3; Pethrus, 'Den fullkomliga andliga kärleken,' *Dagen*, 7 September, 1962, 6; Pethrus, 'En kärlek som offerar,' *Dagen*, 7 May, 1965.

¹⁶ See section 3.1 above.

¹⁷ Simon Chan, 'Jesus as Spirit-Baptiser: Its Significance for Pentecostal Ecclesiology'. In *Toward a Pentecostal Ecclesiology: The Church and the Fivefold Gospel*, ed. John Christopher Thomas (Cleveland, CPT Press, 2010), 153. For an in-depth discussion of the 'forgotten Father' syndrome, see Thomas A. Smail, *The Forgotten Father* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1980).

¹⁸ See section, 2.2.2.

borrowed values. Context therefore plays a decisive role in determining not only the diversity of Pethrus' ecclesiology but also his core values. Second, emphasising 'loving Christ' and 'loving neighbour' is not to say that these were the only affections Pethrus valued. Josefsson has observed, for example, that early Swedish Pentecostals highly valued 'freedom, unity and purity,'¹⁹ which Pethrus certainly endorsed as well. The reason for emphasising 'love of Christ' and 'love of neighbour' is because they constitute the *core* of the affections he valued and particularly affected his ecclesiology. In fact, emphasising core values proves rather than disproves the existence of a 'scale of values'.²⁰

Steven Land has shown that affections are 'neither episodic, feeling states nor individualistic sentiments [... but] belief shaped, praxis oriented and characteristic of a person'.²¹ Land argues that Pentecostals share three general affections in common, namely 'gratitude, compassion, and courage'.²² Even if these affections are difficult to pinpoint in Pethrus' life, 'loving Christ' and 'loving neighbour' were clearly visible throughout his life and they manifested themselves in concrete actions. For instance, his writings testify to a deep devotedness to the life and work of Christ, and his heartfelt concern for the spiritual and the physical needs of the poor is one of his most enduring legacies.²³ Importantly, these two foci never waned and re-emerged as many of his other concerns, such as an emphasis on physical healing, political action, the independent local church, megachurches, and international

¹⁹ Josefsson, 104.

²⁰ Bernard Lonergan notes that values can be scaled according to five general categories, namely 'vital, social, cultural, personal, and religious values'. Quoted in Clifton, 71. Here I am simply arguing that there was also a 'scale of values' among Pethrus' *religious* values, and of which 'loving Christ' and 'loving neighbour' were the key values.

²¹ Land, 44.

²² Land, 138.

²³ See for instance, David Bundy, 'Social Ethics in the Church of the Poor: The Cases of T. B. Barratt and Lewi Pethrus,' paper presented at the 10th EPCRA conference in Leuven, Belgium, 2001, 1-10. See also, 5.1 above.

ecumenism, but meet Land's requirement of being 'constant, shaping beliefs, praxis oriented and characteristic of a person'.²⁴

However, Pethrus interpreted and qualified these affections in a number of important ways. First, he viewed a person's love for Christ and 'the [Pentecostal] experience of the innermost core of Christianity' as having a profound impact on an individual's approach and appreciation of the Bible. The 'Pentecostal experience' provided Pentecostals with 'a new Bible,'²⁵ and any hint of a critical hermeneutic was viewed as a plague that threatened the very foundations of the Christian faith, and something which was 'completely foreign to real [Pentecostal] believers'.²⁶ A person's approach to the Bible was therefore a direct reflection of his or her love for Christ and experience of 'true' Christianity, which also further explains Pethrus' biblicistic and restorationist use of the Bible. The value he placed on 'loving Christ' and 'loving neighbour' also elucidates why he, and so many other Pentecostals, gravitated toward the book of Acts for their theology. The book of Acts ultimately described, in narrative form,²⁷ what it meant to love Christ and neighbour in concrete ways. Thus the book of Acts became the perfect blueprint from which to build one's theology and practical ministry.²⁸

Second, the realisation of 'loving Christ' and 'loving neighbour' was, in Pethrus' mind, unattainable without the work of the Spirit.²⁹ The blueprint of the book of Acts clearly testified to the Spirit's importance. Although an exhaustive analysis cannot be made here

²⁴ Land, 44.

²⁵ Pethrus, "'Andligt rus",' *EH*, 9 January, 1919, 6.

²⁶ Pethrus, *Kristi vittnesbörd om Moseböckerna*, 1933, 20-21.

²⁷ Narrative has historically been the preferred means of communication for Pentecostals. See for instance, Japie LaPoorta, 'Unity or Division: A Case Study of the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa,' in *The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made to Travel*, eds. Murray M. Dempster, Byron D. Klaus and Douglas Petersen (Oxford: Regnum, 1999), 152-160; Archer, 'Pentecostal Story: The Hermeneutical Filter for the Making of Meaning,' 36-59.

²⁸ Amos Yong notes that, 'Luke-Acts has served somewhat as a template allowing reads to enter into the world of the Early Church'. Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, 27.

²⁹ Pethrus, *Ur kristna kraftkällor*, 1925, 108.

concerning the manner in which Pethrus' pneumatology correlates to his core values, it is crucial to note that Spirit baptism functioned in his thinking as the doorway for a deeper and more abiding commitment to 'loving Christ' and 'loving neighbour'.³⁰ Since Spirit baptism was intrinsically linked to 'the core of Christianity,' the language of sanctification and power became obvious focal points.³¹ Spirit baptism enhanced the love of Christ and filled the believer with power to proclaim the gospel to the lost, which was viewed as the ultimate expression of loving one's neighbour. In fact, Allan Anderson has shown that Pethrus was not the only Pentecostal who linked Spirit baptism and mission (loving one's neighbour), but it was 'the central plank of the whole structure of Pentecostalism in its first decade'.³² Manifesting openness toward a fuller work of the Spirit such as belief in spiritual gifts and physical healing was also a further way of showing love and devotedness to Christ. Rejecting man-made structures in favour of spiritual offices was a means of lovingly and submissively recognising Christ's headship of the church.³³ Adhering to cessationist beliefs, rejecting the doctrine of subsequence, or belonging to dead, 'institutionalised' churches, was interpreted as spiritual insensitivity and a lack of love for Christ.

Third, 'loving Christ' was a 'living experience' that needed to be constantly evidenced in concrete actions toward one's neighbour. Pethrus' understanding of what it meant to love Christ was in many respects identical to Jonathan Edwards' definition of true religion: 'That religion which God requires, and will accept, does not consist in weak, dull, and lifeless wishes, raising us but a little above a state of indifference. God, in his word, greatly insists upon it, that we be in good earnest, *fervent in spirit* [emphasis Edwards], and our hearts

³⁰ Pethrus, *Hos Herren är makten*, 1955, 262.

³¹ Since Pethrus emphasised 'loving Christ' and 'loving neighbour,' his discussions regarding Spirit baptism contain elements of both sanctification and power. For a further discussion on sanctification and power, see section, 2.2.3 above.

³² Allan Anderson, *Spreading Fires: The Missionary Nature of Early Pentecostalism* (London: SCM, 2007), 66.

³³ See section 4.2.2.1 above.

vigorously engaged in religion'.³⁴ Consequently, 'loving Christ' was a matter of having one's heart 'vigorously engaged in religion' or being 'on fire' for the Lord. Keeping the fire ablaze naturally obliged spiritual exercises such as prayer, Bible reading, and meditation, etc., since these activities were indispensable for a constant 'abiding in Christ' (John 15:4).³⁵ The point of this 'living experience' was, as Chan points out, to maintain a *personal* relationship with Jesus.³⁶ Importantly, Chan notes that the value Pentecostals placed on the personal relationship with Jesus was carried over into their understanding of worship and mission, both of which functioned as means of 'bringing people into "a personal relationship with Jesus"'.³⁷ Chan's observation highlights the intrinsic link Pentecostals made between 'loving Christ' and 'loving neighbour'. In his empirical study of Hockley Pentecostal Church, Cartledge notes that the same is true for Pentecostals today: 'love is at the centre of the church's mission and [...] this is expressed primarily through worship and subsequently in acts of service through pastoral care of one another in the congregation and discipleship-making in the world'.³⁸ Chan argues that Pentecostals are 'seeking to catch up on the social implications of the Pentecostal message'.³⁹ For Pethrus, although mission was supreme, it was not restricted to evangelism but included philanthropic deeds and even the establishment of institutions. Thus in Pethrus' mind, one's personal relationship with Christ served as the catalyst for all mission endeavours, no matter if they were evangelical, social or political in nature. They all served the purpose of bringing people into a personal relationship with Christ, which was a concrete way of showing the love of Christ toward one's neighbour.⁴⁰

³⁴ Jonathan Edwards, 'A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections,' in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 1, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2000), 237.

³⁵ See further section 4.2.2.2 above.

³⁶ Simon Chan, 'Jesus as Spirit-Baptiser,' 152-153.

³⁷ Simon Chan, 'Jesus as Spirit-Baptiser,' 153.

³⁸ Mark J. Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit: Rescripting Ordinary Pentecostal Theology* (London: Ashgate, 2010), 9.

³⁹ Simon Chan, 'Jesus as Spirit-Baptiser,' 153.

⁴⁰ Pethrus, *Gud med oss*, vol. 1, 1931, 45, 47; Pethrus, 'Insnöade kritiker,' 1966, 2.

From the above discussion, it is clear that Pethrus' interpretation of the core values of 'loving Christ' and 'loving neighbour' gave them a distinct 'Pentecostal flavour' that carried important ecclesiological implications. His interpretation of 'loving Christ' and 'loving neighbour' became a Christ-centred, Spirit-empowered, praxis oriented, and experience driven spirituality, closely in line with Land's description of Pentecostal spirituality.⁴¹ Yet it did not restrict Pethrus to viewing the Church merely as a 'missionary fellowship' that was on its 'way to the kingdom,'⁴² but also affected his understanding of apostolicity, ecumenism, political ecclesiology, and church polity, etc. In light of the aforementioned discussion, it is fair to conclude that the value Pethrus placed on 'loving Christ' and 'loving neighbour' and their particular interpretation is what distinguish Pethrus' spirituality as 'Pentecostal'. Before considering how his core values shaped his ecclesiology, the discussion on underlying values has an important bearing on the thorny discussion regarding Pentecostal ecclesiality and Pentecostal identity; two issues which are often conflated in contemporary discussions regarding Pentecostal ecclesiology but which Pethrus kept clearly distinct.⁴³

6.2.2 Pentecostal Ecclesiality

Pethrus' statement that Christianity and Pentecostalism were 'spiritual religions without the attire that people usually associated with it, such as temples, ceremonies, clergy or organizations'⁴⁴ underscores the fact that he did not perceive Pentecostalism as having its own ecclesiality. On the contrary, Pentecostalism was inherently antithetical to lifeless, institutionalised religion, but all about the *experience* and the *relationship* with God. This is

⁴¹ Land, 123-124.

⁴² Land, 179-180.

⁴³ For instance, none of the articles in John Christopher Thomas' (ed.) *Toward a Pentecostal Ecclesiology: The Church and the Fivefold Gospel* devote any significant time to distinguishing the difference.

⁴⁴ Pethrus, *A Spiritual Memoir*, 1973, 71-72.

not to say that Pethrus was anti-ecclesial, but that he perceived Pentecostalism as a spiritual renewal movement. The issue for Pethrus was not the establishment of the Church per se, but the institutionalisation of *Pentecostalism*. The purpose of Pentecostalism was not the establishment of denominations, creeds, seminaries, and mission societies alongside other churches and denominations but rather to lead the universal church into a deeper understanding of spiritual realities, such as Spirit baptism, spiritual gifts, and a vibrant worship of Jesus. In fact, he boldly claimed that the formation of local Pentecostal churches in Sweden was an unfortunate event which was brought about because of rejection and persecution from other Christians.⁴⁵ Even though not entirely correct,⁴⁶ the institutionalisation of Pentecostalism caused Pethrus to lament late in life that, ‘the Pentecostal movement had only become a Pentecostal movement for Pentecostals’.⁴⁷

It might be argued that Pethrus failed to realise that Pentecostalism was, in Hollenweger’s terms, ‘a syncretism par excellence,’⁴⁸ because of its inevitable bond to history and culture, and could not be reduced to a pure form of spirituality. Nevertheless, his understanding of the essence of Pentecostalism played a crucial role in the construction of his ecclesiology. Perceiving Pentecostalism as a spiritual renewal movement for the universal church had broad ecclesiological ramifications, particularly regarding apostolicity. Clark Pinnock makes the important observation that for Pentecostals the apostolicity of the church is not based on the historical succession of bishops as in Roman Catholic Church, or on the re-establishment of doctrine as in Protestant churches, but on the recovery of apostolic

⁴⁵ Pethrus, ‘Blir pingstväckelsen en kyrka?’, 1967, 2.

⁴⁶ See section, 3.1 above.

⁴⁷ Pethrus, ‘Pingstväckelsen och Svenska kyrkan’, 1967, 2.

⁴⁸ Walter J. Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals: Origins and Developments Worldwide* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997), 132.

spirituality.⁴⁹ Pethrus similarly argued that only a church that truly believed and practiced apostolic spirituality could claim apostolic succession. Even though Pethrus did not deny that there were true Christians in non-charismatic churches,⁵⁰ he made it clear that only churches that practice this kind of spirituality were fighting for the faith.⁵¹ The vibrant faith of the NT church, as described in the book of Acts, was therefore far from being ‘primitive,’⁵² but rather set the precedent for those churches that may claim to have kept ‘the faith handed down to the saints’ (Jude 3) in its purest form.⁵³ In summarising the early Pentecostal understanding of apostolicity, Kärkkäinen accurately describes Pethrus’ sentiment: ‘...the ultimate criterion was not formulations of faith but the living out of the apostolic gospel’.⁵⁴

It is worth noting here that since Pentecostalism did not have its own ecclesiality but functioned as a spiritual renewal movement for the universal church, Pethrus never spoke of a distinct ‘Pentecostal ecclesiology’. Combining ‘Pentecostal’ with ‘ecclesiology’ would wrongfully assume a shared ecclesiological identity among Pentecostals and misunderstand Pentecostalism’s spiritual essence. Even if the absence of a distinct Pentecostal ecclesiality ruled out the possibility of a Pentecostal ecclesiology, it did not impede Pethrus from promoting a veritable smorgasbord of ecclesiological views. In other words, separating the essence of Pentecostalism from the Pentecostal person invalidated a ‘Pentecostal ecclesiology’ but left ample room for ‘Pentecostals having an ecclesiology’.

⁴⁹ See Clark H. Pinnock, ‘Church in the Power of the Holy Spirit: The Promise of Pentecostal Ecclesiology,’ *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 14 (2006): 156.

⁵⁰ Pethrus, *Vår ställning till andra kristna*, 1931, 33.

⁵¹ Pethrus, *Kampen för den överlämnade tron*, 1929, 16-17.

⁵² The designation of the apostolic church as ‘primitive’ implies an evolution of the church into a more mature form. Restorationists, such as Pethrus, vehemently opposed such an understanding of the church. Using spirituality as the criterion for determining maturity, the only conclusion was that the Church had regressed and not progressed.

⁵³ Pethrus, *Kampen för den överlämnade tron*, 1929, 16-17.

⁵⁴ Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, ‘Pentecostals and the Claim for Apostolicity,’ in *Pentecostal Issues, Ecclesiology & Ecumenism: Papers Presented in Theological Positions Colloquium 2010 & 2011*, Donovan Barron and Riku Tuppurainen, eds. (Sint-Pieters-Leeuw, Belgium: Continental Theological Seminary, 2011), 70.

6.2.3 Pentecostal Identity

The previous discussion affirms Kärkkäinen's observation, 'Pentecostals understand themselves first and foremost on the basis of their particular brand of spirituality'.⁵⁵ For Pethrus, Pentecostal identity ran vertically along spiritual lines, and not horizontally along denominational lines. Pentecostals were, therefore, individuals who valued love of Christ and neighbour in a practical way, distinguished themselves by being completely open and obedient to the Word of God, and regularly experienced the leading and the power of the Spirit. Thus a person did not become a Pentecostal by joining a Pentecostal church or by being born to Pentecostal parents, but by manifesting 'the innermost core of Christianity' in accordance with a number of theological and hermeneutical prerequisites. Spirit-filled Roman Catholics or Jesus infatuated hippies could better meet the prerequisites of a 'true' Pentecostal than the average churchgoer, who was only a Pentecostal in name.⁵⁶ Pentecostal identity was therefore never guaranteed but conditional upon faithfulness to the essence of Pentecostalism, and in fact possible to lose.⁵⁷ To be precise, a Pentecostal was someone who *valued* a Pentecostal form of spirituality and manifested it in concrete actions. *Prolonged* absence of visible fruits of such a value brought into question a person's or a church's identity as Pentecostal. Thus it is rather certain that Pethrus would have objected to the trend in modern scholarship to abandon the term 'Pentecostalism' for the plural 'Pentecostalism'.⁵⁸ Failing to distinguish between the spiritual essence of Pentecostalism and the countless mass of 'classical Pentecostals, neo-Pentecostals, and independent Pentecostal churches that it takes

⁵⁵ Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Toward a Pneumatological Theology: Pentecostal and Ecumenical Perspectives on Ecclesiology, Soteriology, and Theology of Mission* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2002), 58.

⁵⁶ See section, 5.1 above.

⁵⁷ Pethrus, 'Jesusfolket – självständig verksamhet,' 1972, 2.

⁵⁸ See for instance, Anderson, *Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 10.

two dictionaries, [...] and a regular supply of books and articles to try to do justice to them,⁵⁹ would be to commit the same error as losing sight of the forest for the trees.

When analysing Pethrus' understanding of Pentecostal identity, it is evident that his definition is simultaneously inclusive and exclusive. In fact, it contradicts a number of contemporary suggestions toward a Pentecostal identity. For instance, as opposed to Andrew Lord, who suggests that Pentecostal identity is constituted by at least five different elements, namely 'experience, doctrine, the Scriptures, spirituality and mission,'⁶⁰ and that 'pentecostal identity must be shaped by all five and not simply reduced to any one or two influences,'⁶¹ Pethrus' definition clearly shows that he perceived spirituality and experience as the core elements of Pentecostal identity, and not merely as a mix of equally important elements. Spirituality and experience form Pentecostal identity, and this identity in turn shapes a Pentecostal's approach to the Scriptures, doctrinal beliefs, and missionary emphasis. He would also have ruled out Michael Bergunder's suggestion that membership of Pentecostal synchronic and diachronic networks constitute Pentecostal identity.⁶² Although Pethrus recognised the historical roots of the movement,⁶³ defining Pentecostal identity *exclusively* in terms of membership of synchronic and diachronic networks would have rendered religious affections redundant. For Pethrus, it was not the membership of networks, but the shared value placed on a 'Pentecostal' form of spirituality which was the synchronic link that united Pentecostals in the present and the diachronic link that connected them to their historical roots. Furthermore, viewing Pentecostal identity merely from a theological perspective would

⁵⁹ Keith Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology: A Theology of Encounter* (London: T & T Clark, 2008), 6.

⁶⁰ Lord, 7.

⁶¹ Lord, 9.

⁶² Michael Bergunder, *The South Indian Pentecostal Movement in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 12-22.

⁶³ Thus, Pethrus would have not objected to Walter Hollenweger's suggestion that Pentecostalism has five historical roots, namely 'catholic, evangelical, critical, ecumenical, and the black oral root'. Walter J. Hollenweger, 'The Black Root of Pentecostalism,' in Allan H. Anderson and Walter J. Hollenweger, eds., *Pentecostalism after a Century: Global Perspectives on a Movement in Transition* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 36.

also be inaccurate. Pethrus rejected any notion that Pentecostalism was merely concerned about ‘Pentecostal distinctives’.⁶⁴ In fact, it is even likely that he would have rejected the claim that the fivefold (or fourfold) gospel was *the* theological distinctive of Pentecostalism. The restoration of the fourfold gospel was undoubtedly a vital component of his early theology, yet the categories of ‘Jesus as Healer’ and ‘Soon Coming King’ rarely received the same attention as ‘Jesus as Saviour’ and ‘Baptiser’ in later years. The former categories subsided for long intervals, only to reappear during times of revival and events of great political and eschatological significance.⁶⁵ Even though Pethrus cognitively adhered to the fourfold gospel his whole life, it did not remain a *constant* framework upon which he built his understanding of Pentecostal identity. Scholars such as Kärkkäinen, Morgan, and Archer, who draw upon Dayton’s observation regarding the fourfold gospel and link it to Pentecostal identity, tend to lose sight of this inconsistent application of the fourfold (fivefold) gospel in later Pentecostal history and practice.⁶⁶

Finally, viewing Pentecostal identity in terms of social categories would have also have been unsatisfactory to Pethrus. Even if much of Pethrus’ ministry and many of his church members came from the working poor;⁶⁷ and though he affirmed Ephraim Briem’s analysis that the movement’s initial success was related to the disillusionment Swedish people experienced as a consequence of the increasing urbanisation and secularisation of society in

⁶⁴ See section, 2.4.3 above.

⁶⁵ Pethrus specifically stressed physical healing during the 1920s and the 1950s, when Smith Wigglesworth’s and William Freeman’s healing campaigns were criticised in the public press, and he emphasised Christ’s second coming at the establishment of the nation of Israel in 1948 and at the height of the Cold War during the 1960s. During the intervening periods, physical healing and eschatology did not disappear but fell into the background. Clifton notes that the premillennial urgency that distinguished early Australian Pentecostals has now been ‘rejected as ludicrous’ by modern Pentecostals, which shows that changes to the five/fourfold gospel are also evident in other contexts. See, Clifton, 289.

⁶⁶ Kärkkäinen, *Toward*, 58-59; Kenneth J. Archer, ‘The Fivefold Gospel and the Mission of the Church: Ecclesiastical Implications and Opportunities,’ in *Toward a Pentecostal Ecclesiology: The Church and the Fivefold Gospel*, ed. John Christopher Thomas, 7-43 (Cleveland, CPT Press, 2010), 30-32; Morgan, 40-43.

⁶⁷ Pethrus mentions how his meetings with the poor became a major problem for the church because of all the lice the poor dragged into the church premises. See, Pethrus, *Medan du stjärnorna räknar*, 1953, 221, 217-224. Per Olov Enquist even calls him the ‘lice king’. Enquist, 171.

the second half of the 19th century;⁶⁸ he would not have agreed with Robert Mapes Anderson's view of 'social discontent as the root source of Pentecostalism'.⁶⁹ Such a definition would have been too narrow and have excluded the importance of theology and doctrine as Grant Wacker has correctly noted.⁷⁰

In sum, viewing Pentecostal identity in terms of spirituality restricts the use of the epithet 'Pentecostal' but opens it wide for anyone who loves Christ and neighbour in a 'Pentecostal way'. Such an inclusive definition of Pentecostal identity leaves room for Allan Anderson's 'blurred edges' yet gives Pentecostals their 'family resemblance,'⁷¹ not in terms of sociology doctrine or history but on the value placed on Pentecostal spirituality. In fact, Pethrus' notion of Pentecostal identity can be explained in light of a well-known Pauline analogy (Romans 11:17-24). Countless 'wild olive shoots' (non-Pentecostal churches) can be grafted into the Pentecostal 'olive tree' (adopting a Pentecostal spirituality), yet even the natural branches (classical Pentecostals) 'may be broken off' if they cease to practice the prerequisites of a Pentecostal spirituality. Thus the spiritual trunk of the Pentecostal olive tree remains the same, but identity with that trunk is only guaranteed as long as 'faithful abiding' remains.

Turning now to Pethrus' explicit ecclesiology, I will show that there is a logical progression from the value he placed on the religious affections of 'loving Christ' and 'loving neighbour' (Pentecostal spirituality) to ecclesiological beliefs.

⁶⁸ Pethrus, 'Efter 50 år,' *Dagen*, 9 February, 1957, 2.

⁶⁹ Robert Mapes Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited: The Making of American Pentecostalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 240.

⁷⁰ Grant Wacker, 'Taking Another Look at the Vision of the Disinherited,' *Religious Studies Review* 8, No. 1 (January, 1982): 18-20. For a fuller assessment of the 'social scientific approach' to Pentecostal identity, see Allan Anderson, 'Varieties, Taxonomies, and Definitions,' in *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*, eds. Allan Anderson, Michael Bergunder, et. al. (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2010), 20-22.

⁷¹ Allan Anderson, 'Varieties, Taxonomies, and Definitions,' 15.

6.3 From Pentecostal Spirituality to Ecclesiological Beliefs

The progression from values to ecclesiological beliefs is visible in a number of areas in Pethrus' ecclesiology. It has already been noticed that mission functioned as an integral component of 'loving Christ' and 'loving neighbour'. It is no wonder, therefore, that Pethrus understood 'soul-winning' as the most important task of the church, since the aim of every ministry was to lead people into a personal relationship with Jesus.

It is perhaps in Pethrus' ecumenism where the progression from core values to ecclesiological beliefs is the most visible. The bedrock of his ecumenical thinking was the principle of spiritual unity. From the beginning of his ecumenical writings in 1919 to the end in the 1970s, the emphasis on spiritual unity never faded. The consistency of theme shows that it was integrally linked to his core values. However, Pethrus understood spiritual unity in a restricted sense, applying it only to those who had a personal relationship with Christ and viewed the working of the Spirit in a Pentecostal way: 'Nothing can create true brotherly love in the church than the experience of Pentecost. No human being on earth can imagine how wonderful this love is, unless she has experienced Spirit baptism's bath of love and later become a member of a church comprised of Christians who are pure in heart and Spirit-filled.'⁷² This restricted view is also evident from the fact that he even rejected fellowship with Protestants, who acknowledged justification by faith alone, if they also promoted higher criticism.⁷³ On the other hand, when Roman Catholics, who had been previously viewed as virtual pseudo-Christians, received Spirit baptism he quickly changed his opinion of them and was even willing to overlook major theological differences and accept them as true 'Pentecostals'.⁷⁴ Consequently, even if Pethrus was willing to engage in joint ventures with a

⁷² Pethrus, *Urkristna kraftkällor*, 1925, 109.

⁷³ See section, 4.3.2 above.

⁷⁴ It is interesting to note that Pethrus refused any attempt toward unity with MCC because of their acceptance of higher criticism of the Bible, whereas in later years major theological differences did not rule out

broad spectrum of Christians, he never pursued unity with other Christians unless they were ‘Pentecostal’ in the spiritual sense. Furthermore, since he viewed the Pentecostal movement as a renewal movement, with the specific purpose of leading Christians into a personal relationship with Jesus and a deeper understanding of the working of the Spirit, his view contributed to a strong aversion to any form of organisational unity among Pentecostals. In fact, he perceived the ‘Pentecostal’ model of spiritual unity as the key (biblical) model of unity, not only for the Pentecostal movement but also for Christianity as a whole. Thus, apart from joint ventures, every attempt at a doctrinal or organisational solution to the problem of Christian disunity was viewed as falling short of the ideal mark.

Another example which shows how Pethrus’ core values affected his ecclesiology is evident in his political theology. When Pethrus established the political party KDS in 1964, he explicitly stated that ‘loving neighbour’ was the ultimate purpose behind KDS.⁷⁵ KDS’ political agenda of promoting Christian values and stopping the secularisation of society was interpreted as synonymous to loving one’s neighbour. Although Pethrus regarded a local church’s ability to engage in politics as rather limited, he vehemently opposed the idea of separating the church from the world. Leaving the world in the hands of the ungodly without any access to the positive influence of Christianity was the direct opposite of loving one’s neighbour.

A further important observation can be made from Pethrus’ controversial belief in Sweden as a Christian state. As noticed above, Pethrus’ argumentation in favour of a Christian state was almost exclusively based on pragmatic principles that varied according to the changes in the historical context.⁷⁶ Yet he affirmed the notion of a Christian state

fellowship with Spirit baptised Roman Catholics. The discrepancy points to the supreme value Pethrus placed on spirituality even above one’s interpretation or approach to the Bible.

⁷⁵ Pethrus, ‘Insnöade kritiker,’ 1966, 2. See also, Carlsson, 169.

⁷⁶ See section, 4.4 above.

primarily because he believed it generated the most conducive context for Christians to thrive and for non-Christians to accept Jesus as their personal saviour - issues that clearly related to his core values. Interestingly, the Pentecostal pastor C. G. Hjelm undoubtedly shared these values, yet because of his Methodist and Baptist background, he nonetheless argued that the most conducive context for the church was 'a Free Church in a free state'.⁷⁷ This example shows that two leaders from the same movement, and who adhered to almost identical values, could promote radically different ecclesiologies simply because they differed in their perceptions of how to best promote the core values.⁷⁸ Ecclesiological diversity therefore did *not* presuppose a difference in essential unity but merely in opposing methodologies, as Roger Haight has correctly noted.⁷⁹

Yet another example which points to the centrality of Pentecostal spirituality in Pethrus' ecclesiology may be seen in his inconsistent use of biblical metaphors of the church. When drawing upon the metaphor of the church as 'a pillar and foundation of the truth,' his primary intent was not to exegete the text but to find a biblical support for the practice of church discipline. However, stressing the importance of church discipline was not an end in itself but functioned as a means of preserving the spiritual life of the church, which again shows that vibrant spirituality was his main concern and not ecclesiological orthodoxy.⁸⁰

When assessing the bewildering diversity of Pethrus' ecclesiology, it is clear that not all issues were given equal amount of attention and critical reflection. Certain issues like believer's baptism and the church as a community of the redeemed, for example, were never questioned but adopted wholesale from Baptist ecclesiology. For instance, he regarded T. B.

⁷⁷ Zander Åberg, 608.

⁷⁸ The conflict between Pethrus and Lidman is another notable example of the same phenomenon. Lidman wanted to separate from the world to preserve the Pentecostal revival, Pethrus wanted to engage it. They shared the same values but opposite methodologies. See section 2.4.4 above.

⁷⁹ Haight, vol. 3, 13.

⁸⁰ See section, 3.2.3 above.

Barratt's initial years as a paedobaptist as a period of 'innocent ignorance,' whereas Barratt's decision to accept believer's baptism as a 'coming to a correct understanding of biblical truth'.⁸¹ Other issues, such as his megachurch principles and his understanding of the Lord's Supper, received a lot of attention for a while but quickly faded into the background after having been addressed. On the other hand, issues like ecumenism, the independent local church concept, and political ecclesiology received great amount of attention and remained highly controversial topics for decades, which begs the question of the cause of this unequal attention. The answer, I propose, is found in the manner in which these issues related to his core values. For instance, the negative experience of being excommunicated from the Baptist Union in 1913 certainly contributed to his negative attitude to denominationalism, but his preference for independent local churches, governed by individuals endowed with the charismatic gifts and offices, owed more to his core values than to any negative experience.⁸² Thus, Pethrus advocated the independent local church model primarily because he viewed it as the most biblical (and practical) model in order to preserve the spiritual vitality of the church and not primarily because of any personal resentment he may have had against the Baptist Union. The following examples testify that formative contexts such as theological heritage and personal experiences influenced Pethrus' ecclesiological thinking in profound ways, but not as profoundly as his Pentecostal spirituality.

The measure in which the core values related to ecclesiological issues also explains the *ad hoc* and non-systematic nature of his ecclesiology. Drawing on insights from Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, Keith Warrington explains that the reason why early Pentecostals did not develop 'a distinctive Pentecostal theology of the church' was because they expected the imminent

⁸¹ Pethrus, 'Väckelsen som pågår,' *Dagen*, 6 April, 1972, 2.

⁸² Pethrus, *De kristnas enhet*, 1919, 19.

return of Christ and were ‘more doers’ than ‘thinkers’.⁸³ However, in Pethrus’ case the primary reason for the *ad hoc* and largely insufficient attention to ecclesiology was rather due to its mixed relevance to his core values. Ecclesiology was mostly a secondary concern, yet when it touched on core values, it clearly became a major one. Amos Yong has concluded that ‘if they [Pentecostals] have talked about ecclesiology at all, it is usually as an afterthought,’⁸⁴ but this statement requires modification. Pentecostals treated ecclesiology as ‘an afterthought’ only when it did not affect their core values; when it did, it became much more of a ‘forethought’ than an ‘afterthought’.

It is also important to note that ecclesiological issues that did not directly relate to the core values had the tendency of undergoing the greatest historical changes. Comparing the independent local church model with Pethrus’ understanding of local church offices, for instance, shows that the former was established early on in Pethrus’ thinking, whereas the latter underwent revisions for several decades.⁸⁵ In fact, as late as 1963, he argued that there was no biblical precedent for having a senior pastor/elder leading the local church, but that a group of elders shared the responsibility of overseeing the local church in the New Testament - an idea that was contrary to what he had stated in his memoirs a decade earlier.⁸⁶ This kind of ecclesiological oscillating points to the fact that ‘surface level’ ecclesiology was often easily modified, whereas issues that related to core values remained largely unaltered.

Even though it can be proven that important aspects of Pethrus’ ecclesiology directly flowed from the value he placed on Pentecostal spirituality, finding undeniable links between his core values and his *entire* ecclesiology cannot be maintained, however. This leads to the

⁸³ Keith Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology: A Theology of Encounter* (London: T & T Clark, 2008), 131.

⁸⁴ Amos Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh, Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 121.

⁸⁵ See section, 3.6.5.

⁸⁶ Pethrus, ‘Församlingar utan föreståndare,’ 1963, 2.

conclusion that formative contexts played an intrinsic role in the overall make-up of his ecclesiology.

6.4 Formative Contexts and the Diversity of Pethrus' Ecclesiology

As described above, Pethrus was indebted to multiple church traditions and incorporated many of their beliefs into his own theology. However, I have endeavoured to show that these beliefs were mostly questioned and re-evaluated when they touched upon or were perceived as contradictory to his Pentecostal spirituality. An important factor in this re-evaluating process was undoubtedly his restorationist outlook, which promoted a biblicist and sceptical methodology toward doctrine and church practices. His 'discovery' of the 'one city – one church' model and the frequent revisions of his understanding of church offices are poignant examples of this methodology. Restorationism, therefore, significantly aided in diversifying his already diversified ecclesiology.

Another important factor that significantly contributed to the diversity of his ecclesiology was the changes that took place in his social and personal context. For example, the experience of witnessing a rapid secularisation of society and the stepping down as pastor of a megachurch transformed his ecclesiology in distinct ways.⁸⁷ In fact, changes in his social and personal context largely determined what issues were brought to the foreground or moved to the background.

Two related issues that complicated and diversified Pethrus' ecclesiology even further were his pragmatism and his tendency to compartmentalise ecclesiological issues. Being a leader who had to deal with problems on very short notice frequently forced him to employ a type of 'spiritual utilitarianism'⁸⁸ that utilised different ecclesiological arguments to achieve

⁸⁷ See sections, 5.1 and 4.1.

⁸⁸ See section, 2.5.

the most profitable end. Within this pragmatic framework, promoting diametrically opposing ecclesiologies was all right as long as it served the greatest spiritual good. The outcome of this spiritual utilitarianism was a compartmentalised ecclesiology that ignored inherent inconsistencies and the larger ramifications of its conclusions.

In sum, looking at Pethrus' ecclesiology from a broad perspective, it is clear that it found itself within the tension of the Wesleyan quadrilateral.⁸⁹ The frameworks of Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience all contributed to its wide diversity. Yet as opposed to Protestant theology, which argues that Scripture is the predominant framework to which all the other frameworks must submit, the predominant framework of Pethrus' ecclesiology was not Scripture but the framework that best suited his immediate needs and ultimately his Pentecostal spirituality.

6.5 Summary

Having analysed the unity and the diversity in Pethrus' ecclesiology, its inner logic now emerges and it is found in the constant tension of the one and the many. If one strictly looks at the bewildering diversity and conflicting presentation of Pethrus' ecclesiology, it would be easy to conclude that it has no logic. However, when one analyses his ecclesiology in light of the underlying spiritual values that permeate much of the discussion, a much more 'logical' ecclesiology emerges. In fact, it manifests a 'unity in diversity' or an emphasis on the 'one and the many' that brings a surprising consistency to much of his ecclesiological thinking. Granted, the ecclesiological synthesis that arises will not be satisfactory to most systematic theologians, but the combination of his Pentecostal spirituality and formative contexts is exactly what makes Pethrus' 'Pentecostal ecclesiology' Pentecostal. Turning now to the

⁸⁹ For an in-depth discussion on each element of the Wesleyan Quadrilateral, see Stephen W Gunter, and others, *Wesley and the Quadrilateral: Renewing the Conversation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997).

broader significance of Pethrus' Pentecostal ecclesiology, I will support the thesis, based on Roger Haight's transdenominational ecclesiology, that research into a global Pentecostal ecclesiology should follow the same inner logic as manifested in Pethrus' ecclesiology, namely that the value Pentecostals place on a particular form of spirituality gives the movement its essential unity, whereas formative contexts provide its concrete diversity. Ultimately, the chapter will affirm William Kay's hypothesis that 'core beliefs + context = actual belief'.⁹⁰

⁹⁰ William K. Kay, 'Concluding Reflections,' in *Toward a Pentecostal Ecclesiology: The Church and the Fivefold Gospel*, ed. John Christopher Thomas (Cleveland, CPT Press, 2010), 287.

CHAPTER 7
THE DEVELOPMENT OF A TRANSDENOMINATIONAL PENTECOSTAL
ECCLESIOLOGY

7.1 Lewi Pethrus' Contribution Toward a Transdenominational Pentecostal Ecclesiology

Roger Haight bases his transdenominational ecclesiology on the successful achievements of the ecumenical movement to engage in meaningful and profitable discussion despite overwhelming differences. He argues that its achievements are only possible since the diverse members of the ecumenical movement share 'a common ecclesial existence'.¹ It is my contention that global Pentecostalism, which is perhaps even more diverse than the ecumenical movement, also shares a similar underlying identity, which is expressed in a mutual concern for a Pentecostal form of spirituality. In fact, I propose that the inner logic of Pethrus' 'Pentecostal' ecclesiology may serve as a helpful microcosmic model for discussing a macrocosmic, transdenominational Pentecostal ecclesiology.

As seen in the introduction, a transdenominational ecclesiology is essentially a method of correlation that presupposes the existence of multiple concrete ecclesiological investigations that analyse 'the unity in diversity' of each study. My investigation into Pethrus' Pentecostal ecclesiology is one such study. Once such investigations are in place, the subsequent work is to 'weigh a considerable amount of diverse evidence arising from the various churches'.² The next two steps in the methodology are to employ a normative analysis of the findings and give 'an apology (self-explanation) for the position taken'.³ Regrettably, since the number of concrete ecclesiological studies of the Pentecostal movement is currently

¹ Haight, vol. 3, 11.

² Haight, vol.3, 17.

³ Haight, vol. 3, 18.

too small for constructing a transdenominational Pentecostal ecclesiology, and the task too vast for a single individual to undertake, the first transdenominational Pentecostal ecclesiology must wait a future time. Even if it can only be conceptualised now, however, because of the movement's nature as a global phenomenon, any discussion regarding Pentecostal ecclesiology must be, in essence, transdenominational.

As seen above, the value Pethrus placed on Pentecostal spirituality is that which gives his ecclesiology its essential unity. Understanding Pentecostal identity in terms of its particular form of spirituality is a contested concept among Pentecostal scholars. However, the notion is receiving increasing acceptance. In a recent presidential address to the Society for Pentecostal Studies, Kimberly Alexander has advocated, similarly to Pethrus, that Pentecostalism is primarily a form of spirituality that has travelled across the globe and adapted itself to various cultural contexts.⁴ She further notes, 'To remain authentic, Pentecostalism must also reflect its original spiritual witness. That witness, that *familiarity* or *communitas* cannot be reduced to "text and texture," "style and substance," or even "doctrinal distinctives." It is, rather, a living faith, one that is experienced in community'.⁵ Here I am in essential agreement with Alexander, yet I would emphasise that it is not the practice or experience of 'a living faith' that constitutes Pentecostal identity, but the *value* Pentecostals place on it. The simple reason for this is that Pentecostals do not always practice or experience their spirituality but consistently value it. Nevertheless, practice and experience

⁴ Kimberly Alexander, 'Standing at the Crossroads: The Battle for the Heart and Soul of Pentecostalism,' *Pneuma* 33 (2011): 336.

⁵ Although Alexander does not address Pentecostal ecclesiology per se, her insights, I believe, support the notion that any discussion regarding Pentecostal ecclesiology must recognise Pentecostalism as a spiritual renewal movement that is shaped by formative contexts. Following Hollenweger, she also notes that Pentecostalism is a *particular* form of spirituality that emphasises 'orality, narrative, embodied manifestations, *communitas*, dreams and visions,' thus making it inclusive yet exclusive enough not to lose Pentecostalism's historical distinctiveness. Alexander, 'Standing at the Crossroads,' 336-337.

cannot be absent altogether since that would bring into question the existence of values in the first place.⁶

The emphasis on shared religious values has two important implications for a transdenominational Pentecostal ecclesiology. First, the emphasis on shared values delineates the investigation. Only churches and denominations that manifest a value on a Pentecostal form of spirituality would be considered in the research. Second, understanding the manner in which underlying values shape ecclesiological expressions becomes the foundation for the entire transdenominational project. As noted above, this presupposes a thorough knowledge of the formative contexts that create the ‘diversity’ in local Pentecostal ecclesiologies, yet the basis of the methodology is to look *beyond* such diversity to the religious values that form the unity behind the diversity. Thus, only *after* such an investigation has been done may a transdenominational comparison of underlying values be undertaken.

When outlining the potential of a transdenominational Pentecostal ecclesiology, it is imperative to note that while Pentecostals share an appreciation of a Pentecostal form of spirituality, they do not necessarily agree on what that spirituality entails. For example, it is doubtful that all Pentecostals would place the same stress on Christology as Pethrus does in his spirituality. An interesting study would be, for instance, to see if Christology is as highly emphasised in contexts where the deity of Jesus was not as seriously questioned and where the influence of Pietism was not as clearly pronounced as in the Western world. Consequently, Pentecostals do not need to share *all* the basic elements of their spirituality as long as there are enough similarities to create a ‘family resemblance’.⁷

⁶ Mark J. Cartledge notes that spirituality must be viewed holistically: ‘From a Christian perspective spirituality concerns not just the process of worship but the life of faith which contains devotional practices and concrete behaviour’. Mark J. Cartledge, *Encountering the Spirit: The Charismatic Tradition* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2006), 26.

⁷ Anderson, ‘Varieties, Taxonomies, and Definitions,’ 15.

When considering the comparative aspect of the methodology, the main task of a transdenominational Pentecostal ecclesiology would be to examine the similarities in religious values among the numerous Pentecostal ecclesiologies around the globe. The study would assess, for instance, if other Pentecostal ecclesiologies manifest a similar emphasis on ‘loving Christ’ and ‘loving neighbour’ as Pethrus’ does. If similarities were indeed found, a crucial part of the study would be to explain *why* and *how* ecclesiological differences arise. As seen in the example of Pethrus and C. G. Hjelm, individuals and churches may adopt radically different ecclesiologies while sharing the same religious values.⁸ Core religious values may, of course, be expressed in different ways and contain slight nuances, yet such dissimilarities do not necessarily invalidate their unity. Land argues, for example, that Pentecostals value ‘gratitude, compassion and courage’⁹ whereas Pethrus values ‘loving Christ’ and ‘loving neighbour’. Although these values are expressed in different ways, they may share identical concerns. Comparisons of such nuances would therefore be an essential aspect of the transdenominational research.

Another important aspect of the comparative aspect of the methodology would be to question the stereotypes surrounding Pentecostal ecclesiology, such as its individualistic tendencies¹⁰ and its uncritical borrowing from the Free Church tradition.¹¹ A brief look into Pethrus’ ecclesiology showed that not all Pentecostals agreed with a Free Church ecclesiology,¹² and taking a global perspective might show that Pentecostalism’s

⁸ See, 4.4.2 above.

⁹ Land, 138.

¹⁰ Quoting Barth, Michael S. Horton implies that Pentecostals almost ‘sin against the Holy Ghost’ by their individualistic tendencies, ‘for the Holy Ghost leads him [the individual] directly into the community and not into a private relationship with Christ.’ Michael S. Horton, *People and Place: A Covenant Ecclesiology* (London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 181.

¹¹ Nigel Wright, principal of Spurgeon College, notes for example that Pentecostals stem from the radical wing of the reformation and ‘broadly shares some or all of those values associated with believers’ baptism, the autonomy of the local congregation and freedom of conscience’. Wright, *Free Church, Free State: The Positive Baptist Vision*, xxiii. See also, Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, 127.

¹² See section, 4.4 above.

individualistic tendencies may be more of a Western problem than a global one. Even if such stereotypes were confirmed, a transdenominational Pentecostal ecclesiology would avoid assuming their existence transcontinentally.

Comparison of underlying values is only one aspect of a transdenominational methodology, but it also employs a normative aspect. Empirical and historical research may reveal ‘undesired’ values that are contrary to biblical teaching. For example, Roger E. Olson has noted, ‘Deeply embedded within the Pentecostal movement's ethos is a cult of personality; charismatic leaders are put on pedestals above accountability and are often virtually worshiped by many of their followers’.¹³ If a transdenominational comparison of Pentecostal ecclesiologies discovered that Olson’s accusation actually was true on a global scale, the normativeness of the methodology could bring much-needed correction to the deviations from the Scriptural norm. In fact, it could level a much more profound critique, since it focuses not only on random events but on the underlying values of the movement as a whole. Additionally, since the methodology presupposes knowledge of historical developments, it could also pinpoint the time and the factors that contributed to the deviation.

The importance of the normativeness of the methodology is seen in its recognition of ecclesiastical sin on the one hand, and in its openness toward church metaphors and idealised descriptions of the church on the other. Yet, similarly to Paul,¹⁴ the use of such metaphors and

¹³ See for example, Roger E. Olson, ‘Pentecostalism’s Dark Side,’ *Christian Century*, 7 March 2006, 27-30.

¹⁴ When analysing the literary contexts where biblical metaphors of the church are used, it is evident that Paul intended the ‘idealised’ metaphor to have an impact on the concrete expression of the church. For example, in 1 Corinthians 3:16 Paul uses the metaphor of the temple of the Holy Spirit to stress the danger of building on human wisdom rather than on Christ. Thus, Paul’s method of dealing with problems in the church begins with an appeal to a better understanding of spiritual realities, then emphasises the practical consequences of such an understanding. However, Paul’s ‘indicative-imperative’ model does not imply that an ecclesiological method ‘from above’ logically precedes a method ‘from below.’ At closer examination, we find that Paul’s metaphors are deliberately chosen in light of the historical context. For instance, the analogy of the church as ‘the body of Christ’ and the ‘temple of the Holy Spirit’ in 1 Corinthians are both used in light of the historical context. The analogy of the ‘body of Christ’ was frequently used among Greek authors, and the illustration of the Corinthians as ‘the temple of the Holy Spirit’ would have resonated with the Corinthians’ recurrent habit of attending pagan temples. Furthermore, Paul’s designation of the church as the ‘household of God’ in 1 Timothy 3:15 perfectly

idealised descriptions of the church would only be employed *after* a concrete knowledge of the church and its ecclesiastical sin has been identified. Thus a transdenominational ecclesiology bridges the unhealthy divide between idealised and concrete ecclesiological models and finds strength in both approaches.

Having compared and analysed the religious values buried in their ecclesiologies, a transdenominational Pentecostal ecclesiology could now set forth a decisive apology concerning the veracity of the movement's 'faith claims' in comparison to the actual reality evidenced in their concrete ecclesiologies. It could also accurately evaluate contemporary suggestions toward a Pentecostal ecclesiology that would resonate not only with the movement's theologians but also with its general population. In the final evaluation of a transdenominational ecclesiology, Haight observes, 'The success of this ecclesiology has to be measured in degrees by the various parties to which it appeals: the highest degree will be found in its ability to express with relative adequacy a real common understanding of the church that can also acknowledge real differences without allowing them to undermine the unity constituted by shared reality and meaning'.¹⁵ For a transdenominational Pentecostal ecclesiology, however, the highest degree of success would be to define the movement's shared values and identity. To employ a frequent concern of Lewi Pethrus, the methodology would elucidate the religious values that create 'the unity of the Spirit' among the vast spectrum of Pentecostals across the globe. Yet, it would reserve the right to point out and try to bring back 'stray sheep' that have wandered from the fold.

In sum, the study of Pethrus' ecclesiology has shown that trying to find a consistent, rationally and theologically acceptable ecclesiology on an individual level is difficult indeed. Since Pentecostalism is not a church-based movement, finding a consistent ecclesiology on a

fits the literary context, since nearly the entire epistle is devoted to family and interpersonal relationships. See Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1987), 264, 602.

¹⁵ Haight, vol. 3, 13.

global level is a task in futility. On the other hand, if Pentecostalism is understood as a particular form of spirituality that is based on common religious values, a comparative analysis of the ecclesiology of those who adhere to such a form of spirituality becomes possible. Such a transdenominational definition of Pentecostalism will be purposefully broad and inclusive in order to avoid excluding ‘fringe Pentecostals’ on historical, theological, and perhaps even sociological grounds. Yet it will not be so broad that the term ‘Pentecostal’ loses its meaning altogether.

7.2 Evaluation of Contemporary Suggestions Toward a Pentecostal Ecclesiology

Since Pentecostalism is a transdenominational phenomenon, I believe Haight’s transdenominational ecclesiology carries important implications for evaluating suggestions toward a Pentecostal ecclesiology. Haight’s methodology asks at least four basic questions of any suggestion toward a Pentecostal ecclesiology: (1) Does it provide a definition of Pentecostalism and/or Pentecostal identity? (2) Does it consider formative contexts? (3) Is it transdenominational in the sense that it recognises Pentecostalism’s diversity? (4) Does it employ a concrete method *before* an idealised ecclesiological method, or just one without the other? The purpose here is not to provide an in-depth analysis of each suggestion but only to observe how well scholars are able to comply with the above criteria. The suggestions will be grouped thematically according to four broad categories along the ‘ecclesiology from above’ versus the ‘ecclesiology from below’ axis. The first category is a radical ecclesiology from above which almost completely ignores contextual issues and discusses Pentecostal ecclesiology in purely theological terms. This approach tends to view Pentecostal ecclesiology as static, homogeneous, and inherently deficient. It often wants to replace Pentecostals’ ‘weak’ ecclesiology with a more ‘robust’ one. The second category is a

moderate ecclesiology from above. This approach often begins by highlighting undesirable characteristics with a Pentecostal understanding or approach to ecclesiology. After having given brief attention to some concrete realities, this approach quickly turns its attention to an ecclesiology from above, which is meant to remedy the undesirable characteristics. The third category is a moderate ecclesiology from below, which pays attention to formative contexts and tries to understand the concrete reality of Pentecostal ecclesiology before employing a normative analysis. The final category is a radical ecclesiology from below that is concerned about addressing Pentecostal ecclesiology for what it is with little or no normative analysis. Before proceeding, it is essential to note that the categories are purposefully broad in order to leave room for a certain degree of variety, yet the general characteristics of each category remain the same.

7.2.1 Radical Ecclesiology from Above

In his article, ‘Toward a Pentecostal Ecclesiology: Participation in the Missional Life of the Triune God,’ Peter Althouse attempts ‘to construct a Pentecostal ecclesiology that is Trinitarian, Missional and eschatological in scope’.¹⁶ However, he quickly dismisses any ‘descriptive accounts of Pentecostal ecclesiologies as they have developed to date’.¹⁷ He proposes instead that ‘Pentecostal ecclesiology must start in the reflection of the Triune God, who constitutes the Church as a sent and sending community’.¹⁸ Without taking anything away from the orthodoxy of Althouse’s ecclesiology, his rejection of any consideration to the movement’s identity, values, historical developments, and ecclesiological diversity evidences a radical form of an ecclesiology from above. His treatment of the topic assumes that

¹⁶ Peter Althouse, ‘Towards a Pentecostal Ecclesiology: Participation in the Missional Life of the Triune God’, *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 18 (2009): 231.

¹⁷ Peter Althouse, ‘Towards a Pentecostal Ecclesiology,’ 231.

¹⁸ Peter Althouse, ‘Towards a Pentecostal Ecclesiology,’ 231.

Pentecostal ecclesiology is the same worldwide and manifests similar deficiencies.¹⁹ Even though he might be correct, his ‘Trinitarian-missional ecclesiology’²⁰ presupposes the absence of a Trinitarian ecclesiology within Pentecostalism without referring to any concrete studies. Thus the decision not to cite any concrete studies unfortunately creates a divide between the concrete reality and his Trinitarian-missional ecclesiology. This divide is visible, for instance, when he states that the lack of a Trinitarian ecclesiology has been ‘ameliorated somewhat by a number of recent publications,’²¹ drawing attention to the work of Volf, Macchia, Chan and Amos Yong.²² His statement assumes that these scholars’ ecclesiologies correspond to the ecclesiology of ordinary Pentecostals and have had an impact at a grass-root level. The divide is perhaps the greatest when he asserts that the developments on the international ecumenical level have remedied the Trinitarian void within Pentecostalism. In fact, I would suggest that very few Pentecostals have been ‘spurred [...] to think of the Trinitarian essence of the church’ as a result of ‘the Pentecostal dialogue with the World Alliance of Reformed churches’.²³ Consequently, Althouse’s suggestion is an example of a radical ecclesiology from above. This is not to say that his proposal has nothing to offer the Pentecostal movement but that a Pentecostal ecclesiology must resonate with its values, diversity, and historical developments in order to have meaning outside the academic realm.²⁴

¹⁹ Peter Althouse, ‘Towards a Pentecostal Ecclesiology,’ 230.

²⁰ Peter Althouse, ‘Towards a Pentecostal Ecclesiology,’ 237.

²¹ Peter Althouse, ‘Towards a Pentecostal Ecclesiology,’ 237.

²² Peter Althouse, ‘Towards a Pentecostal Ecclesiology,’ 237-239.

²³ Peter Althouse, ‘Towards a Pentecostal Ecclesiology,’ 240.

²⁴ In a later article entitled ‘Ascension-Pentecost-Eschaton: A Theological Framework for Pentecostal Ecclesiology,’ Althouse proposes yet another framework for constructing a Pentecostal ecclesiology. In this article Althouse suggests that a good starting point for such an endeavour, which ‘incorporates that which Pentecostals hold dear to their understanding of the Church without displacing its theological contributions in adopting other theologies of the Church, [...] is the Pentecost narrative of Luke-Acts, in the fulfilment of the descending Spirit promised by the ascending Christ’. Here Althouse does not completely dismiss ‘ordinary’ Pentecostal ecclesiology, yet tends to assume that ‘Pentecostal churches eclectically borrow from other theological traditions and apply their practices in pragmatic and technical ways, but with little understanding of their philosophical and theological implications’. Even if this article manifests similar strengths and weaknesses as the previous one, because Althouse considers some concrete realities, it displays a more moderate ecclesiology from above. See, Peter Althouse, ‘Ascension-Pentecost-Eschaton: A Theological Framework for

Wolfgang Vondey wants to develop a ‘systematic and ecumenical ecclesiology among Pentecostals,’ and suggests that, ‘eucharistic hospitality is a suitable starting point for this endeavor’.²⁵ The reason why he wants to develop such an ecclesiology is because ‘the Lord’s Supper occupies no central place in Pentecostal ecclesiology to this date’.²⁶ Similarly to Althouse, Vondey does not define Pentecostalism, consider its diversity, or point to any concrete studies for his claim. As opposed to Vondey, Jonathan Black has convincingly argued that the British Apostolic Church has a well-developed ecclesiology that could best be described as a ‘Eucharistic fellowship’.²⁷ Black notes, for example, that the Sunday morning service is referred to as ‘The Breaking of Bread,’ emphasising that ‘the sacrament was not only the central aspect of the service, it was the service, [...]’.²⁸ Black’s observations from the British Apostolic Church show that eucharistic theology is perhaps not as underdeveloped as Vondey asserts.²⁹ This does not take away anything from his eucharistic theology of discernment. Yet, the lack of attention to the eucharistic ecclesiologies that are actually visible in global Pentecostalism begs the question of how Pentecostals may actually construct such a ‘systematic and ecumenical ecclesiology’ without drastically reworking or discarding present beliefs and practices.

Pentecostal Ecclesiology,’ in *Toward a Pentecostal Ecclesiology: The Church and the Fivefold Gospel*, ed. John Christopher Thomas (Cleveland, CPT Press, 2010), 225-247.

²⁵ Wolfgang Vondey, ‘Pentecostal Ecclesiology and Eucharistic Hospitality: Toward a Systematic and Ecumenical Account of the Church’ *Pneuma* 32 (2010): 41.

²⁶ Vondey, ‘Pentecostal Ecclesiology and Eucharistic Hospitality,’ 42.

²⁷ Jonathan Black, ‘Toward the Possibility of a Pentecostal Ecclesiology: Some Lessons from the British Apostolics,’ paper presented at the Pentecostal Theological Colloquium, Continental Theological Seminary, March 2009, 4-13.

²⁸ Black, 4-13.

²⁹ In Vondey’s defence, Apostolic beliefs and practices have rarely been view as ‘kosher’ within mainstream Pentecostalism, yet Pethrus’ more ‘acceptable’ eucharistic theology shows that Pentecostals, at least historically, did not neglect the sacrament. See sections, 3.3 and 3.5.3 above. In light of Harold D. Hunter’s observation that different eucharistic practices exist ‘in countries dominated by Greek Orthodox churches,’ and Allan Anderson’s comment that Russian and Ukrainian Pentecostals have shown a ‘resistance to any influences from the West,’ are strong indications that a more profound eucharistic theology exists among Pentecostals in East European contexts. Harold D. Hunter, ‘Ordinances, Pentecostal,’ in *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, rev. and exp. ed., eds. Stanley. M. Burgess and Eduard M. Van Der Maas. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002: 948; Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 99.

A third and final example of a radical ecclesiology from above is Clark Pinnock's 'Church in the Power of the Holy Spirit: The Promise of Pentecostal Ecclesiology'.³⁰ Without properly substantiating his claim, Pinnock asserts, 'Pentecostals have not offered much in the way of theological [ecclesiological] understanding'.³¹ Based on his own experience and biblical and theological considerations, he proposes six themes which may mend the situation: (1) An Anointed Herald of God's Kingdom, (2) A Trinitarian Society, (3) A Church Oriented to Mission, (4) Fellowship in the Spirit (5) A Continuing Charismatic Structure, and (6) An Institutional Dimension.³² Pinnock's proposal presents a 'robust' ecclesiology, but it does not consider the concrete ecclesiologies of Pentecostals.³³ Andrew Lord correctly notes that Pinnock 'seems more evangelical with pentecostal additions rather than attempting [...] to develop a distinctively pentecostal approach'.³⁴ In addition, he does not define Pentecostalism or considers its diversity and formative contexts but views Pentecostals as a homogeneous group.

7.2.2 Moderate Ecclesiology from Above

Simon Chan in his article 'Mother Church: Toward a Pentecostal Ecclesiology' states, 'Pentecostals share with their Protestant counterparts a very weak, sociological concept of the church'.³⁵ This leads to a view of the church 'as a service provider for the needs of individual Christians'³⁶ and a defective view of the church's *koinonia* (communion).³⁷ To rectify the problem, Chan suggests that Pentecostals need to incorporate a better understanding of what it

³⁰ Clark H. Pinnock, 'Church in the Power of the Holy Spirit: The Promise of Pentecostal Ecclesiology,' *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 14 (2006): 147-165.

³¹ Pinnock, 'Church in the Power of the Holy Spirit,' 149.

³² Pinnock, 'Church in the Power of the Holy Spirit,' 150-163.

³³ R. Hollis Gause, 'A Pentecostal Response to Pinnock's Proposal,' 184.

³⁴ Lord, 67.

³⁵ Chan, 'Mother Church,' 178.

³⁶ Chan, 'Mother Church,' 178.

³⁷ Chan, 'Mother Church,' 179.

means to have ‘the church for a mother’ or the church as a ‘spiritual, transcendent, and organic reality’.³⁸ As noted above, Pentecostals may certainly learn a lot from Chan’s suggestions,³⁹ but the dichotomy he creates between the church’s transcendent and human reality is unfortunate. He tends to elevate the transcendence of the church to the point that the human (sinful) aspect of the church almost ceases altogether. Moreover, Chan’s objection against Pentecostals’ weak sociological ecclesiology is stated in a way that applies to all Pentecostals. It may be true for Pentecostals in the West but not necessarily on a global scale. Yet, since Chan highlights some concrete realities and an awareness of Pentecostal history, his suggestion is not a radical form of an ecclesiology from above.

Chan is not the only Pentecostal scholar who has advocated a *communio* ecclesiology for Pentecostals, but he has been preceded and followed by scholars such as Miroslav Volf, Frank Macchia, Amos Yong and Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen. Since Clifton has already pointed out the methodological problems with Miroslav Volf’s *communio* ecclesiology,⁴⁰ which also apply to Macchia, Yong, and Kärkkäinen, and since Andrew Lord has already summarised their suggestions,⁴¹ it is only necessary here to make a few general observations in view of our four criteria. Amos Yong thinks ‘one way forward for Pentecostal ecclesiological reflection, [...] is to engage in a self-critical dialogue with the traditional marks or notes of the church’.⁴² Before engaging in a more detailed assessment of Yong’s proposal,’ it is important to note

³⁸ Chan, ‘Mother Church,’ 179.

³⁹ His arguments regarding the problems with Free Church ecclesiology, the ecclesial nature of Spirit baptism, the importance of local catholicity before universal catholicity, and the church as a healing, truth-traditioning, and eschatological community are all noteworthy considerations and could have balanced Pethrus’ rampant individualism. However, it is doubtful that all Pentecostals suffer from the same rampant individualism as Pethrus did. See section, 2.6 above.

⁴⁰ Shane Clifton notes that *communio* ecclesiologies have difficulties differentiating between divine and human persons. They idealistically believe that the church can be modelled on the trinitarian relationship, and they do not account for the variety of ecclesiologies that can arise from the same model. Thus *communio* ecclesiologies manifest a disjointedness between the authentic expression of the church and its idealised description. See Clifton, ‘An Analysis of the Developing Ecclesiology of the Assembly of God in Australia,’ 38-40.

⁴¹ Lord, 68-74.

⁴² Amos Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 133.

that he only uses Pentecostal systematic theologies,⁴³ Pentecostal scholars (Chan, Kärkkäinen, Volf), and Melvin Hodges' missiological ecclesiology as a guide for defining Pentecostal ecclesiology. His proposal remains in the biblical and theological sphere and omits any reference to Pentecostalism's diversity. Since it alludes to a concrete reality, however, it qualifies as a moderate ecclesiology from above. It should also be noted that an appeal to the marks of the church is fraught with problems. Howard A. Snyder observes that the 'ambiguity of the marks' and their 'inadequate biblical grounding' are two of the biggest problems with such an approach. Regarding the ambiguity of the marks, Snyder shows that varying church traditions have come to radically different conclusions after reflection on the traditional marks of the church.⁴⁴ There is also no consensus as to the exact number of the marks, with suggestions ranging from 'three to as many as a hundred'.⁴⁵ Second, Christian theology often appeals to the unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity of the church but forgets that the New Testament speaks as frequently about the church as '*diverse, charismatic, local, and prophetic*'.⁴⁶ Apart from these two major flaws, Snyder also notes that the marks of the church were originally used 'as a test to exclude Christians who understood the church differently'.⁴⁷ Thus, the marks of the church may not be the best way of spurring on 'the ecumenical tradition of Pentecostalism'.⁴⁸ Since Yong tends to overlook these problems, his suggestion loses some of its appeal for constructing a Pentecostal ecclesiology, despite his emphasis on the Spirit which creates unity in diversity.⁴⁹

⁴³ Yong cites Michael Dusing's, Guy Duffield's and Nathaniel Van Cleave's, and J. Rodman Williams' systematic presentations to show that Pentecostals have uncritically borrowed from the Free Church tradition. Yong, 123.

⁴⁴ Howard A. Snyder, 'The Marks of Evangelical Ecclesiology,' in John G. Stackhouse Jr. ed., *Evangelical Ecclesiology: Reality or Illusion?* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2003), 83.

⁴⁵ Snyder, 'The Marks of Evangelical Ecclesiology,' 84.

⁴⁶ Snyder, 'The Marks of Evangelical Ecclesiology,' 88.

⁴⁷ Snyder, 'The Marks of Evangelical Ecclesiology,' 82.

⁴⁸ Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, 187.

⁴⁹ Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, 135-151.

Although Kärkkäinen displays a greater awareness of the ‘bewildering variety and mix of views’ within global Pentecostalism than Yong,⁵⁰ his discussion regarding Pentecostal beliefs, practices, and challenges regarding *koinonia* is almost exclusively drawn from a Western context. Even if Kärkkäinen’s ‘Pentecostal ecclesiology of *koinonia*’ may speak to many Pentecostal concerns and emphases, it does not arise ‘from below’ but is imposed ‘from above’. Morgan correctly notes that his ‘work is written without reference to church practices that need to be examined and challenged and thus is itself closer to a blueprint ecclesiology than a practically oriented ecclesiology’.⁵¹ Kärkkäinen’s assertion that ‘some significant theological developments have taken place in the Pentecostal family of churches in terms of a Pentecostal ecclesiology of *koinonia*’⁵² also, similarly to Althouse, ascribes too much significance to the international ecumenical dialogue and its impact on local Pentecostal ecclesiologies. However, Kärkkäinen does explain Pentecostal identity in terms of its spirituality.⁵³

Frank Macchia’s *communio* ecclesiology differs slightly from Kärkkäinen’s in the sense that it appeals to Spirit baptism as its basic framework. Rather than following the classic Pentecostal interpretation of Spirit baptism, Cartledge explains that Macchia ‘constructs a Pentecostal theology around this central metaphor by expanding its boundaries: he places it within an eschatological framework and a trinitarian perspective before applying it to ecclesiology and Christian vocation in the world’.⁵⁴ Cartledge also observes that Macchia objects to Steven Land’s, Harvey Cox’s, and in particular Walter Hollenweger’s tendency to view ‘Pentecostalism and its spirituality without recourse to this distinctive theological

⁵⁰ Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, ‘The Church as the Fellowship of Persons: An Emerging Pentecostal Ecclesiology of *Koinonia*,’ *PentecoStudies* 6 No. 1 (2007): 3.

⁵¹ Morgan, 70.

⁵² Kärkkäinen, ‘The Church as the Fellowship of Persons,’ 3.

⁵³ See section, 6.2.3.

⁵⁴ Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit*, 97.

marker'.⁵⁵ Even if Macchia acknowledges the diversity of the Pentecostal movement and stresses that 'whether experiential or doctrinal, Spirit baptism can function in a multiple of ways,'⁵⁶ he does not give concrete historical evidence for that belief. In fact, as shown above, even an early Pentecostal pioneer like Pethrus rejected the idea that Spirit baptism was the movement's distinctive marker after extended reflection on the Pentecostal movement.⁵⁷ James Dunn has also shown that within recent Pentecostal history, 'Issues of "second blessing" and speaking in tongues have been largely side-lined, to be replaced by questions about signs and wonders, and about the character [...] of charismatic leadership and authority'.⁵⁸ Unfortunately, Macchia does not consider such historic developments in his construal. Moreover, the fact that he extends the boundaries of Spirit baptism beyond their recognisable form for most Pentecostals casts doubts on its usefulness for shaping concrete Pentecostal ecclesiologies.⁵⁹

As opposed to Macchia, Kenneth Archer, in his article 'The Fivefold Gospel and the Mission of the Church: Ecclesiastical Implications and Opportunities,' argues that Spirit baptism is not the distinctive marker of Pentecostalism but rather the fivefold gospel.⁶⁰ Archer affirms Donald Dayton's analysis that the fourfold gospel is the centrepiece of Pentecostal theology and Steven Land's argument that it undergirds Pentecostal spirituality. However, he notes that Land's work only '*implicitly* contributes to the community as a missionary fellowship, [... and that] it would be beneficial to develop further and integrate *explicitly* the

⁵⁵ Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit*, 97.

⁵⁶ Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, 56.

⁵⁷ See section, 2.4.3 above.

⁵⁸ James D.G. Dunn, 'Born Again: Baptism and the Spirit: A Protestant Response,' in *Pentecostal Movements as an Ecumenical Challenge*, Jürgen Moltmann and Karl-Josef Kuschel eds. (London: SCM Press, 1996), 110.

⁵⁹ Lord notes that Macchia's interpretation of Spirit baptism is 'stretched most' when it is applied to 'cosmic transformation'. See Lord, 78.

⁶⁰ Kenneth J. Archer, 'The Fivefold Gospel and the Mission of the Church: Ecclesiastical Implications and Opportunities,' in *Toward a Pentecostal Ecclesiology: The Church and the Fivefold Gospel*, ed. John Christopher Thomas (Cleveland, CPT Press, 2010), 19.

Fivefold gospel into ecclesiology in order to strengthen theologically a Pentecostal understanding of the mission of God'.⁶¹ In order to achieve this goal, Archer develops a 'soteriological ecclesiology centered in the Fivefold gospel'⁶² by expanding on John Christopher Thomas' suggestion of constructing a Pentecostal ecclesiology around the fivefold gospel. Thomas' suggestion links each element of the fivefold gospel to a particular aspect of the nature of the church and an accompanying sacramental sign.⁶³ By adding the fivefold ministry gifts mentioned in Ephesians 4:11-13, Archer tries to make Thomas' suggestion even more explicit and even more tailored to Pentecostal concerns.⁶⁴ Contrary to many other suggestions toward a Pentecostal ecclesiology, Archer acknowledges that his suggestion is not meant 'to offer *the* definitive Pentecostal theology, nor attempt to be a *global* Pentecostal theology.'⁶⁵ Rather, he proposes that his suggestion function as 'a *local* Pentecostal theology' that could interact with other Pentecostal theologies around the world.⁶⁶ Kärkkäinen correctly notes, however, that Thomas' and Archer's construals are 'somewhat artificial and haphazard,' and the link between 'Jesus' various roles with specific sacramental signs' and ministerial gifts 'calls for clarification'.⁶⁷ Moreover, Archer's reference to Mark Cartledge's study of the presence of the fivefold gospel in early British Pentecostalism only

⁶¹ Archer, 'The Fivefold Gospel and the Mission of the Church,' 18-19.

⁶² Archer, 'The Fivefold Gospel and the Mission of the Church,' 35-43.

⁶³ Archer summarises Thomas' suggestion as follows: 'Jesus is Savior. The Church as the Redeemed Community and its ecclesiastical sign is water baptism. Jesus is Sanctifier. The Church as a Holy Community and Foot-washing is the ecclesiastical sign. Jesus is Baptizer. The Church as an Empowered Missionary Community and the ecclesiastical sign is glossolalia. Jesus is Healer. The Church as a Healing Community with the ecclesiastical sign of praying for the sick with the laying on of hands and anointing with oil. Jesus is Coming King. The Church as an Eschatological Community with the Lord's Supper serving as the ecclesiastical sign. Archer, 'The Fivefold Gospel and the Mission of the Church,' 34.

⁶⁴ Archer adds 'apostles and the *apostolic* function' to the church as a 'Redeemed Community'; 'teachers and the *teaching* function' to the church as a 'Holy Community,' 'prophets and the *charismatic* function to the church as Charismatic Community, 'pastors and the *pastoral* function to the church as a 'Healing Community,' and 'evangelists and the *evangelistic* function to the church as a 'Missionary Community.' Archer, 'The Fivefold Gospel and the Mission of the Church,' 40.

⁶⁵ Archer, 'The Fivefold Gospel and the Mission of the Church,' 32.

⁶⁶ Archer, 'The Fivefold Gospel and the Mission of the Church,' 32.

⁶⁷ Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, "'The Leaning Tower of Pentecostal Theology": Reflections on the Doctrine of the Church on the Way,' in *Toward a Pentecostal Ecclesiology: The Church and the Fivefold Gospel*, ed. John Christopher Thomas (Cleveland, CPT Press, 2010), 267.

proves that the framework was present in *early* Pentecostalism but not in later Pentecostal history.⁶⁸ Cartledge has since shown that the fivefold gospel was in fact changed into a fourfold framework, and that Jesus' second coming 'was detached from a premillennial scheme'.⁶⁹ Thus Archer's assumption that the fivefold gospel remains unaltered until present lacks historical verification. The lack of historical verification questions his claim that the fivefold gospel is an appropriate framework for constructing a Pentecostal ecclesiology, even within a Western context.

In a recent article entitled "'The Body of Christ, the Spirit of Communion": Re-Visioning Pentecostal Ecclesiology in Conversation with Robert Jenson,' Chris E. Green highlights Pentecostals' weak Free Church ecclesiology similarly to Simon Chan. For Green, 'Pentecostals must begin to address this weakness, not only for the sake of the movement's integrity, but also in order to remain faithful to the call of the gospel'.⁷⁰ Drawing upon Robert Jenson's work, he argues that Pentecostals must 're-imagine' five misconceptions: (1) The role of the Spirit in the church's history, (2) the church's divinity and humanity, (3) charism and institution, (4) liturgy and mission, (5) Christ's immediacy and the sacrament of communion.⁷¹ Even if Green is correct that Western Pentecostals have had problems in each of these areas, he tends to assume that all Pentecostals suffer from the same problems in equal measure. His proposition that Pentecostals need to 're-imagine' their ecclesiology also presupposes that Pentecostals are, in James K. A. Smith's words, 'thinking things' and that their praxis will be changed by a mere change in cognitive beliefs.⁷² Clifton rightly notes that 'Evangelicals tend to assume that contextualisation is simply the task of communicating

⁶⁸ Archer, 'The Fivefold Gospel and the Mission of the Church,' 31-32.

⁶⁹ Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit*, 4-5. See also section, 6.2.3 above.

⁷⁰ Chris E. Green, "'The Body of Christ, the Spirit of Communion": Re-Visioning Pentecostal Ecclesiology in Conversation with Robert Jenson,' *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 20 (2011): 17-25.

⁷¹ Green, "'The Body of Christ, the Spirit of Communion,'" 17.

⁷² James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 39-42.

biblical propositions to contemporary culture, but this fails to recognise the role that tradition, culture, praxis, and experience play in theological formulations'.⁷³ Thus Green's proposal would have benefited from a deeper recognition of the importance of formative contexts and an attention to Pentecostalism's diversity.

Andrew Lord's approach to Pentecostal ecclesiology differs significantly from many other suggestions toward a Pentecostal ecclesiology. Lord's study goes beyond the confines of the local church and considers the 'networks' or 'mid-level structures' that exist, not only between local churches, but also between local churches and the world. He defines a network church as 'a set of *centres*, [or] church communities, that are connected by *links*'.⁷⁴ The links he understands as consisting of 'leaders, journals and conferences – each rooted in personal relationships'.⁷⁵ Having displayed the presence of mid-level structures in the Book of Acts and in early Pentecostalism, he grounds his network ecclesiology on a Trinitarian model that balances the Latin Trinitarian model of the West with the Social Trinitarian model of the East. He then proceeds to connect this balanced understanding of the Trinity to the catholicity and the missionary nature of the church. It is important to note here that the joint ventures created by the SPM from 1912 to 1919, and Pethrus' publication of *De Kristnas Enhet* in 1919, established the SPM into a 'network church'.⁷⁶ This shows that Pethrus (and much of Scandinavian Pentecostalism) had a developed understanding of 'network church,' which disproves Lord's claims that the understanding of network church is 'relatively recent' and that 'early pentecostals did not see church as network'.⁷⁷ In fact, Pethrus consistently

⁷³ Clifton, 'An Analysis of the Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia,' 21.

⁷⁴ Andrew Lord, 'Network Church: A Pentecostal Ecclesiology Shaped by Mission,' 97.

⁷⁵ Andrew Lord, 'Network Church: A Pentecostal Ecclesiology Shaped by Mission,' 97.

⁷⁶ Pethrus did not use 'network' terminology but the language of 'inward and outward unifying bonds'. Nevertheless, the basic concepts are virtually identical. See sections 3.1 and 3.6 above.

⁷⁷ Andrew Lord, 'Network Church: A Pentecostal Ecclesiology Shaped by Mission,' 92-93.

maintained that the Pentecostal movement ought to remain as a ‘network church’.⁷⁸ This crucial topic was discussed both at the first European Pentecostal Conference in Stockholm in 1939 and at the first World Pentecostal Conference in Zurich in 1947.⁷⁹ In addition, Pethrus based his arguments for joint ventures on the Book of Acts, which also proves that Pentecostals did not ‘neglect “mid-level” narratives in Acts’ as Lord asserts.⁸⁰ Even if Lord’s study would have benefited from a more in-depth study of Pentecostal history, his research is helpful since he defines Pentecostal identity,⁸¹ and his emphasis on mid-level structures incorporates parachurch organisations, which tend to be neglected in most discussions on Pentecostal ecclesiology.⁸² Thus Lord’s insightful study provides a broadened ecclesiological perspective that even concrete ecclesiologies need to consider.

7.2.3 Moderate Ecclesiology from Below

David Morgan’s doctoral dissertation *Priesthood, Prophethood and Spirit-led Community: A Practical-Prophetic Pentecostal Ecclesiology* investigates two Australian Pentecostal churches (Hillsong and Christian City Church) based on Nicholas Healy’s concrete ‘practical-prophetic’ ecclesiology. In order to construct a *Pentecostal* ‘practical-prophetic’ ecclesiology, Morgan analyses a variety of suggestions toward a Pentecostal identity in light of Ninian Smart’s six categories of determining Christian identity.⁸³ Morgan concludes that Kärkkäinen’s ‘six-fold gospel,’ which adds the priesthood and prophethood of all believers to the traditional ‘fivefold gospel,’ is the most satisfactory suggestion despite not

⁷⁸ Pethrus’ strong reaction against the SPM’s tendency in the 1960s to subsume all ministries under the confines of the local church was in essence a defence of the network church model. See section 5.1 above.

⁷⁹ See for instance, *Den europeiska pingstkongressen* (Stockholm: Förlaget Filadelfia, 1939); Pethrus, ‘Organisationsraseri,’ *Dagen*, 19 May, 1947, 3, 10.

⁸⁰ Lord, 97.

⁸¹ See section, 6.2.3 above.

⁸² William K. Kay, ‘Concluding Reflections,’ 286-287.

⁸³ These categories are ritual, mythological, doctrinal, ethical, social, and experiential. Morgan, 38-39.

fully adhering to all of Healy's criteria.⁸⁴ Having established theological basis of priesthood and prophethood, he proceeds to give an account of the historical development of the two churches. The historical account is then followed by an examination of the churches' statements of faith, Hillsong's 'sold worship,' and Christian City Church's prophetic practices. The examination of the churches leads Morgan to conclude that they do not live up to Healy's criteria of being good disciple-makers and witnesses to Christ.⁸⁵ Even if Andrew Lord asserts that Morgan's emphasis on priesthood and prophethood are 'more in line with blueprint ecclesiology' than concrete methodologies,⁸⁶ Morgan's study meets the broad criteria of a moderate ecclesiology from below. He considers the issue of Pentecostal identity and he acknowledges formative contexts and the diversity of Pentecostalism. Although questions could be raised regarding the appropriateness of Morgan's normative analysis, a normative analysis follows his inductive study of the source materials.

As briefly noted in the previous chapter, Steven Land's book *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom* describes Pentecostal churches in terms of 'missionary fellowships'.⁸⁷ The foundation for this assertion is drawn from a variety of first-hand sources such as Pentecostal journals, hymns, and personal testimonies.⁸⁸ From this first-hand evidence, Land demonstrates 'the fundamental relationship between theology and spirituality'.⁸⁹ Affirming Donald Dayton's fourfold framework, he explains that 'spirituality is defined as the integration of beliefs and practices in the affections which are themselves evoked and expressed by those beliefs and practices'.⁹⁰ He further notes that the Holy Spirit is

⁸⁴ Morgan, 40, 70.

⁸⁵ Morgan, 167-242.

⁸⁶ Lord, 20.

⁸⁷ Land, 34.

⁸⁸ Land, 59-121.

⁸⁹ Land, 13.

⁹⁰ Land, 13.

‘a starting point for a distinctive Pentecostal approach to theology as spirituality’.⁹¹ The eschatological Spirit creates a passion for the inaugurated, yet not fully realised, Kingdom of God in the Pentecostal community. The tension between the ‘already’ and the ‘not yet’ of the Kingdom expresses itself in a vibrant passion for God in prayer and Spirit-empowered mission,⁹² but also manifests a pessimistic ‘not yet’ realism that creates an apocalyptic longing for the full realisation of the Kingdom.⁹³ As shown above, Land’s study provides a convincing case that Pentecostalism and Pentecostal identity should be understood in light of its spirituality. He does not impose a predetermined grid on the movement, but his conclusions arise out of an interaction with historical sources. In addition, in the last chapter of his work, Land provides an in-depth normative analysis of the material, employing a ‘trinitarian re-visioning of Pentecostal spirituality’.⁹⁴ However, since he follows Hollenweger’s lead in viewing the first decade as the ‘heart and not the infancy’⁹⁵ of the Pentecostal movement’s spirituality, his study tends to overlook changes in subsequent decades.

Mark Cartledge, in his book *Testimony in the Spirit: Rescripting Ordinary Pentecostal Theology*, articulates a Pentecostal ecclesiology around five key themes: temple of praise, household of healing, members of ministry, community of hospitality and pilgrims of hope.⁹⁶ Unlike most other approaches, his proposal does not arise from a broad theological or biblical perspective, nor from a national or even denominational perspective, but from a limited research sample, namely Hockley Pentecostal Church, an Assembly of God congregation in Birmingham, UK. Following David Martin’s empirical method of re-scripting, Cartledge

⁹¹ Land, 39.

⁹² Land, 167.

⁹³ Land, 98.

⁹⁴ Land, 13.

⁹⁵ Land, 13.

⁹⁶ Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit*, 183-188.

analyses the ‘ordinary’ theology of church members (script) that emerges out of ‘the verbatim testimonies located within the broader congregational narrative’.⁹⁷ The reason for emphasising testimonies is that they most clearly express people’s ‘ordinary’ theology.⁹⁸ Cartledge further explains that testimony not only functions on a personal level but is also found on a congregational and denominational level. However, the methodology is not only concerned about ‘praxis,’ but also with ‘espoused theology via sermons, leaflets and regular everyday conversation’.⁹⁹ Cartledge stresses that the methodology does not try ‘to surplant [sic] *Pentecostal* presuppositions with alien ones’ or propose a ‘re-envisioning of classical Pentecostal confessionism’.¹⁰⁰ Rather, ‘it seeks to move ordinary theology forward through a deeper analysis of its testimony mode and a broader dialogue with the Christian theological tradition, illuminated by the insights of the social sciences’.¹⁰¹ In light of our four criteria, it is possible to see that his fivefold articulation of Pentecostal ecclesiology arises out of an interaction with Pentecostal spirituality, which he rightly understands as a key feature of its identity. The history of the British Assemblies of God and Hockley Pentecostal Church is outlined, which also demonstrates an awareness of formative contexts. Furthermore, his study does not impose ‘alien presuppositions’ as ecclesiologies from above tend to do, but employs a normative analysis *after* having identified actual beliefs. Thus, he interacts with ecclesiologies from above but does not let them define his understanding of Pentecostal ecclesiology. Although Cartledge analyses a small sample, his study provides a good ‘window’ into the values and beliefs of the British Assemblies of God. Consequently, it is one

⁹⁷ ‘Re-scripting’ is defined as the scholarly interaction with the ‘script’. Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit*, 17.

⁹⁸ Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit*, 17.

⁹⁹ Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit*, 18.

¹⁰⁰ Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit*, 18.

¹⁰¹ Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit*, 18.

of the most useful investigations up-to-date for constructing a transdenominational Pentecostal ecclesiology.

7.2.4 Radical Ecclesiology from Below

Until today, no radical Pentecostal ecclesiology from below exists. However, Shane Clifton's work may be viewed as a mild expression of it. Althouse correctly notes that Clifton's work is 'more of a sociological assessment from below than an ecclesiological theology proper'.¹⁰² Yet his study does not completely exclude a normative analysis and commit the error of becoming 'just another branch of social science,' which Mark Cartledge explains is 'very much real' in this category.¹⁰³ Nevertheless, Clifton's study only makes 'intimations of the future'¹⁰⁴ by noting positive and negative trends. Although he suggests, for instance, that the problems of an outdated view of Spirit baptism and the presence of a prosperity gospel in the Australian Assemblies of God may be resolved by an engagement with recent national and international literary contributions,¹⁰⁵ he does not suggest a *scriptural* way of dealing with these problems. Apart from this oversight, Clifton's study stands out in its attentiveness to issues of Pentecostal identity and formative contexts. In fact, any future contribution toward a transdenominational Pentecostal ecclesiology would benefit from having his study as one of its key dialogue partners.

In a paper presented at the EPCRA conference in Uppsala in 2007, Simon Chan argues, somewhat surprisingly, for a concrete Pentecostal ecclesiology, rejecting Barth's Christological ecclesiology 'from above,' which displays 'a lack of emphasis on the concrete

¹⁰² Peter Althouse, 'Ascension-Pentecost-Eschaton,' 229.

¹⁰³ Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit*, 15.

¹⁰⁴ Clifton, 'An Analysis of the Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia,' 218.

¹⁰⁵ Clifton, 'An Analysis of the Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia,' 288.

works of the Spirit at the human level'.¹⁰⁶ As an alternative, Chan proposes a concrete Pentecostal ecclesiology that makes *explicit* Pentecostals' *implicit* sacramental and episcopal affinities. Drawing on the example of the Orthodox Church, he believes Pentecostals ought to imitate Orthodox liturgy, which is normative in its shape 'yet 'pneumatologically conditioned' and hence, vibrant and dynamic'.¹⁰⁷ At first glance, Chan's suggestion may seem original and inventive or for some Pentecostals quite distressing.¹⁰⁸ For our purposes, however, it is only important to note that because a majority of Pentecostals display sacramental and episcopal affinities does not mean that they automatically affirm them theologically. Christopher A. Stephenson correctly notes that 'aspects of Pentecostal practice must be allowed to have a formative role in doctrinal formulation, but they must not be accepted uncritically. This will involve Pentecostals engaging in a serious discerning process about precisely which practices should be embraced and transmitted and which might need to be revised or jettisoned.'¹⁰⁹ Consequently, Chan's proposal removes the normative aspect any concrete ecclesiological model needs to have and exemplifies the general characteristic of a radical ecclesiology from below, even if it is not a full-blown version of it.

7.3 Summary

Having briefly analysed the most substantial contributions toward a Pentecostal ecclesiology, we note that predominantly ecclesiologies from below define Pentecostal identity, with the exception of Lord and Kärkkäinen. Since ecclesiologies from above seldom define Pentecostalism in light of its global diversity, their reflections on Pentecostal

¹⁰⁶ Simon Chan, 'Spirit, Church, and Liturgy: The Making of a Pentecostal Ecclesiology,' paper presented at the EPCRA conference, September, 2007, 4.

¹⁰⁷ Simon Chan, 'Spirit, Church, and Liturgy: The Making of a Pentecostal Ecclesiology,' 5.

¹⁰⁸ Althouse notes, 'Chan's project is overburdened by hierarchical assumptions and a High Church episcopacy that many Pentecostals would find disconcerting'. Althouse, 'Towards a Pentecostal Ecclesiology,' 238.

¹⁰⁹ Christopher A. Stephenson, 'The Rule of Spirituality and the Rule of Doctrine: A Necessary Relationship in Theological Method,' *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 15, (2006): 88.

ecclesiology often display a Western bias. Their habit of mostly consulting secondary sources and basing their arguments on unsubstantiated generalisations creates an unfortunate divide between their idealised descriptions and the ‘ordinary’ ecclesiology found in primary source materials and contemporary practice. Thus an ecclesiology from above too quickly judges Pentecostal ecclesiology as deficient without recognising the vast diversity that exists even within Western Pentecostalism. Furthermore, questions need to be raised concerning the practical wisdom of situating Pentecostal ecclesiology so squarely in the academic and theological realms, as is common with most ecclesiologies from above. For instance, why do many of their arguments deal more with German reformed Protestants and Early Church Fathers than Pentecostal pioneers? Why include highly technical and drawn-out discussions on various Trinitarian models when such discussions are more likely to alienate than to challenge ordinary Pentecostals? In fact, in Pethrus’ vast literary corpus neither the term nor the concept of the Trinity is ever mentioned. This is not to say that Trinitarian theology is unimportant for Pentecostals. Rather, scholars must learn to couch their language in understandable words that relate to Pentecostals’ core values. As shown throughout this research, knowledge of core values presupposes an understanding of Pentecostal history and the formative contexts that shape that history. However, scholars must appropriate such knowledge in order to implement their suggestions in a more constructive fashion. Unfortunately, most current proposals toward a Pentecostal ecclesiology are severely disjointed from Pentecostal history, a disjointedness which undermines one of the most fundamental purposes of their suggestions, which is to rectify deficient Pentecostal ecclesiology. If more Pentecostal ecclesiologies could be written that follow a moderate ecclesiology from below and focus on both the West, and other cultural and religious contexts, the vast ecclesiological diversity could be better understood and provide valuable

insights into the movement's unity worldwide. The outcome could be a transdenominational Pentecostal ecclesiology that emphasised Pethrus' motto of 'unity in the Spirit through the bond of peace'.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

The thesis has achieved a number of important tasks. First, by an in-depth investigation of primary sources, the research has elucidated previously overlooked or underemphasised concepts in Pethrus' ecclesiology such as his sacramental ecclesiology, his 'one city – one (mega) church' model, his view of 'Sweden as a Christian state,' his political ecclesiology, and his 'bottom-up ecumenism'. The research has also demonstrated how concepts either developed or remained constant over time. It has, therefore, overcome a major lacuna in many discussions on Pentecostal ecclesiology, namely, as Everett A. Wilson has noted, the lack of considering more than just the movement's early beginnings.¹ The diachronic research has further evidenced that the value Pethrus placed on Pentecostal spirituality significantly shaped his ecclesiological thinking. However, such ecclesiological thinking was not divorced from reality but was diversified through a constant interaction with formative contexts. Religious values and formative contexts thus formed Pethrus' ecclesiology into a Pentecostal ecclesiology of 'unity in diversity'. Based on Roger Haight's transdenominational ecclesiology, the study has also provided a fresh approach to conducting meaningful comparative research into a vastly diverse movement. By adopting the formula of core religious beliefs + formative contexts, as evident in Pethrus' ecclesiology, the thesis has argued the possibility of a transdenominational Pentecostal ecclesiology that looks beyond the movement's wide diversity to analyse its essential (spiritual) unity worldwide. Although such transdenominational research may only yield general conclusions, the research may nevertheless provide valuable insights into the 'historical and qualitative substance'² that the

¹ Wilson, 106.

² Haight, vol. 3, 13.

numerous Pentecostal ecclesiologies around the world have in common. Even if a transdenominational Pentecostal ecclesiology requires a lot of preparatory research, the prospect holds more promise than addressing Pentecostal ecclesiology in generic, a-historical terms or abandoning the pursuit altogether. In fact, a transdenominational Pentecostal ecclesiology finds ‘an honourable place for empirical theology alongside systematic and dogmatic theology’ that William Kay has long desired.³ The most significant contribution of the thesis, however, is to the general field of Pentecostal ecclesiology itself. Although Clifton, Cartledge and Morgan have all employed a concrete methodological analysis of Pentecostal ecclesiology, the thesis is the first study that has employed a similar methodology to the ecclesiology of a notable Pentecostal pioneer. By narrowing down the research to a single individual, the study has opened a broader window for understanding the factors that contributed to the formation of ecclesiological beliefs among early Pentecostals. It is likely that such information would have been difficult to attain if the research had been solely conducted on a national or international level. Finally, the study of Pethrus’ ecclesiology has also shown that Pentecostal ecclesiology is a lot more complex than normally assumed. Generic portrayals of ‘Pentecostal ecclesiology’ are therefore rarely satisfactory even when described in the most inclusive way. The door is therefore wide open for further studies of Pentecostal ecclesiology, especially for movements and leaders outside the English-speaking world.

³ Kay, ‘Concluding Reflections,’ 287-288.

APPENDIX:

LEWI PETHRUS TIMELINE¹

- 1884 Lewi Pethrus is born 11 March in Västra Tunhem, Västergötland. Son of Johan and Kristina Johnson.
- 1895 Receives his first job as a shepherd boy in the summer.
- 1899 Moves to Vänersborg and is baptised in the Baptist chapel. Begins working in A. F. Carlsson' shoe factory. Changes his name from Petrus Lewi Johansson to Lewi Pethrus.
- 1901 Moves to Oslo. Active in a Baptist congregation in the city.
- 1902 Becomes an associate to pastor Adolf Milde in the Baptist congregation in Arendal, Norway. Preaches his first sermon. Has what he later perceives as his experience of Spirit baptism when he views a sunrise at sea.
- 1903 Is called as a preacher to the Baptist congregation in Bengtsfors, Dalsland.
- 1905 Reads Viktor Rydberg's *Bibelns lära om Kristus* [The Bible's teaching of Christ] and loses his faith in Jesus' divinity. A time of doubt and despair follows. Regains his faith and peace of mind after what he perceives as a personal encounter with Jesus.
- 1906 Becomes pastor in the Baptist congregation in Lidköping.
- 1907 Reads about T. B. Barratt's meetings in Oslo and travels there. Is confronted with Barratt's three questions: 'Do you want to become anything for Jesus? Do you want to do anything for Jesus? Do you want to go anywhere for Jesus?' and answers 'yes' to these. Receives knowledge of the teaching of Spirit baptism. This Pethrus came to regard as his entrance into the Pentecostal movement.
- 1910 Is called to become pastor of the newly formed Stockholm's seventh Baptist church, Filadelfia.
- 1911 Preaches his inaugural sermon in the Filadelfia church. The Filadelfia church's rescue mission is started.
- 1912 Publishes his first book, the sermon compilation *Jesus is Coming*, on his newly established publishing house Filadelfia.
- 1913 Is married to the Norwegian Lydia Danielsen in April. The same month the Filadelfia church is excommunicated from the Baptist's Stockholm district because of a different view of the Lord's Supper. Pethrus is ready to accept baptised believers from other

¹ The following biographical data is taken from Halldorf, *Lewis Brev*, 333-336 with minor additions.

denominations to the communion table, while the district claims that only Baptists are allowed to be welcomed.

- 1914 Publishes the first edition of the Pentecostal movement's hymnal *Segertoner*.
- 1915 The oldest son Oliver is born. After follows Miriam 1916, Dora 1918, Karl-Jacob 1920, Ingemar 1922, Knut 1924, Paul 1924, Rakel 1924 and Liljen 1925.
- 1916 The first issue of *Evangelii Härold* is published.
- 1919 At the weekly conference in Kölingared, the present pastors oppose denominationalism. In autumn Pethrus releases the book *De kristnas enhet* [The Unity of the Christians].
- 1921 The Filadelfia church change location from Uppsalagatan to Sveavägen. The police take action against the English preacher Smith Wigglesworth's meetings. Sven Lidman joins the Pentecostal movement.
- 1924 Pethrus travels for the first time to America.
- 1928 The Filadelfia church passes 3,000 members. The police raid the Filadelfia church's shelter *Arken* in the Old City.
- 1929 Franklin conflict and the split with Alfred Gustafsson.
- 1930 The new church at Rörstrandsgatan is inaugurated. It is at this time Sweden's largest church, viewed in terms of seating.
- 1931 Pethrus publishes the sermon compilation *Gud med oss* [God with Us], the book which he considers as his most important.
- 1934 The Filadelfia church passes 5,000 members.
- 1937 On his own initiative, Pethrus approaches John Magnusson of the Örebro Mission Society for a possible merger with the Pentecostal Movement. Magnusson rejects Pethrus' suggestion, which creates tension between the two movements.
- 1941 Östermalm's Free Church is joined to the Filadelfia church. Pethrus leaves Sweden in order to move to America but he returns in autumn.
- 1942 The Filadelfia church buys Kageholm castle and begins a folk high school.
- 1944 Östermalm's Free Church is re-established, and a group of members led by Elis Lindskog leaves Filadelfia. Pethrus invites denominations that practice believer's baptism to a first ecumenical conference, which yields little results.
- 1945 The newspaper *Dagen* is started.

- 1946 Pethrus invites the Örebro Mission Society to an ecumenical conference in order to clear the problems that linger from 1937.
- 1948 The Lidman conflict. The Latter-Rain revival springs up in Canada.
- 1949 Lewi Pethrus visits America and establishes contacts with the Latter-Rain revival through Joseph Mattsson-Boze. Becomes honorary doctor of theology at Wheaton College, Illinois.
- 1950 William Freeman visits Sweden in January. The Renewal Revival springs up gets its definite break-through at the preacher's conference in December.
- 1951 Ragnar Ljunquist accepts the invitation to pastor Östermalm's Free Church and is isolated from the Pentecostal movement.
- 1952 Allmänna Spar-och Kreditkassan is started.
- 1953 The first two volumes of Lewi Pethrus' memoirs are published. The first half in the first volume, *Den anständiga sanningen* [The Decent Truth], is a response to Lidman's polemical book *Resan till domen*, [The Journey to the Judgement] from year 1949.
- 1955 IBRA Radio begins broadcasts from Tangier. Pethrus is host for the World Pentecostal Conference in Stockholm. Pethrus forms the lobbying group *Kristet Samhällsansvar* [Christian Responsibility in Society] together with Lutheran bishop Sven Danell.
- 1958 Pethrus resigns as senior pastor of Filadelfia and is replaced by Willis Säwe.
- 1959 Lewi Pethrus Stiftelse för Filantropisk verksamhet (LP-stiftelsen) [Lewi Pethrus Association for Philanthropic Ministry] is created.
- 1964 Pethrus takes initiatives to the creation of Kristen Demokratisk Samling [Christian Democratic Union] (nowadays called the Christian Democrats).
- 1966 The Book *Ny mark* [New Ground] is released at his own and newly formed publishing house. His wife Lydia Pethrus dies.
- 1973 Pethrus becomes commander of the Royal Order of Vasa.
- 1974 Lewi Pethrus dies 4 September.

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¹ Rather than following an alphabetical order, the outline of Pethrus' publications follows Carlsson's arrangement since it gives a good thematic overview of the content of the books. See, Carlsson, 309-310.

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