

Methods and Models of Spiritual Revitalization of the Roman Catholic Church during the Protestant Reformation: Lessons for the 21st Century Church-Strategy for Revival

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Abstract— The study examines the approaches that sparked an institutional transformation of Roman Catholic spirituality during the Protestant Reformation. The Reformation was a clarion call upon the spiritual decay of the church, and the agitation for the overhaul led many to disengage from the Roman Catholic church. However, such a decision led the Catholic church to set up machinery for a restructuring within the institution. This study carefully explores the attempted ecclesiastical approaches that were adopted to improve and return the catholic church to active spirituality. The measures that were employed brought some transformation that strengthened the spirituality and unity of the church, which has helped the ecclesiastical structure in preserving her spiritual heritage. Questions have been asked as to why the Roman Catholic church has developed a sustainable system of promoting its spirituality. The contemporary church is craving for a revival, and it is debatable whether the church of the 21st century can learn from the successful approaches of Catholicism. This study does not aim to justify Catholicism or promote Catholic spirituality but offers a challenge to the church today on the need to develop a sustainable approach of preserving and promoting a contextual spirituality that makes meaning to the everyday life of people.

Index Terms— Methods, Models, Protestant Reformation, Revitalization, Roman Catholic, Spiritual

I. INTRODUCTION

The word “Roman Catholic” or “Catholicism” rings negatively in the heart of an average Protestant. This is due to the records of activities of the Catholic church that sparked the Reformation in the 15th century. In the modern study of church history, theologians, both Protestant and Catholic, are amazed as to the sustainable measures that have preserved the Catholic church for many centuries. There is no doubt that the history of the church cannot be complete without a reflection of the contribution of the Roman Catholic church. Also, an understanding of the Protestant Reformation must be examined in the light of Catholicism. This consideration ignites an appreciation for the revival that took place throughout the Reformation period. It is important to note that most theologians that helped shape Christian theology

since antiquity mainly belongs to the Catholic church, and an understanding of the contemporary Christian church requires a careful reflection of history. Cameron remarks that “Christian history is essential to anyone who wishes to understand the present-day churches, or to assume any position of leadership within it, [and] one cannot understand faith working in society unless one sees it with the help of a historical perspective.”¹ Thus, gaining this ecclesiastical knowledge cannot be one-sided but holistic as it played a critical role in the rise of modern theology.

Meanwhile, there is no justification for every activity of the Catholic church as it contributed largely to the fading of Christianity in many regions such as North Africa. Nevertheless, it is such an attitude that challenged the church to advocate for a revival that led to the Reformation, which brought spiritual reawakening. Importantly, it contributed in shaping the theology of the church for many centuries. In practices of contemporary Christianity, the effect of the Reformation is felt in the Protestant denominations and the Catholic church.

Over the years, the understanding of spirituality has changed, and its meaning varies depending on denominational affiliation and doctrinal beliefs. For instance, spirituality was seen as the beliefs and activities by which individuals follow in an attempt to relate to God and the transcendent reality. However, in modern Christianity, spirituality is separated from religion because of the confront of secularity that drives people to seek different ways to rediscover the sacred and to deepen their spiritual lives.² Noteworthy, spirituality is not the elevating and the isolation of designated activities, but its impulse animates all of human life. Thus, spirituality is developmental, and it inscribes how the corporeal relate to the incorporeal. It is a thirst after the things of the Spirit, which is more of an engaged spirituality that begins with God in developing the landscape of God’s people. Spirituality is a relationship of the human spirit, which is imperceptible to God, who is embodied in humanity evident in an active and lively relationship between contemplation and just action in the life

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¹ Euan Cameron, *Interpreting Christian History: The Challenge of the Churches’ Past* (Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons, 2008), 1.

² Robert A. Burns, *Catholic Spirituality and Prayer in the Secular City* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 2008), 4.

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of God's people.³

In the meantime, historians have focused more on the reasons that sparked the Reformation. This viewpoint indorses partisan historicity that either promote bias in the presentation of facts or the omission of some objective reality of the whole Reformation story. Also, both historians and theologians have centered on the achievements and failures that the Reformation effected throughout Protestantism. Historical narratives of the 15th and 16th centuries' Reformation have been one-sided, and the Catholic church presented in the background with the preferment of a traditional ideological position. However, the modern study of the Reformation has challenged the conventional and single usage of the word "Reformation;" historians proffer the term "Reformations," noting that the era experienced multiple reform movements.⁴ Hudon submits an outstanding evaluation of the spiritual state of the church.⁵ He contends that the challenge that Luther and the other Reformers issued and struggled about the fundamental elements of the Christian faith, all had its founding in the vibrant change in the economy, political consolidation, religious rethinking, and the social upheaval, which laid the foundation of the modern world.⁶ Foremost, the historical background that clamored for reformation can be characterized by the call of both the regular and secular clerics to a higher moral standard, adhering to the canon laws and monastic rules. Consequently, the Reformation is significant throughout modern history; thus, it is right to ask about its effect on the Catholic church whose conditions and practices led to the Reformation. The question, whether the Reformation had any impact on the Catholic church is worthy of consideration. What was the Roman Catholic response to the Reformation, and what was happening within the Catholic church? Also, what were the steps that the Catholic church adopted in response to the Reformation? These are substantive questions that require the acute reaction of modern theologians, in which this study provides a synopsis.

II. THE HISTORICAL FOUNDATION OF ROMAN CATHOLIC SPIRITUALITY REVIEW STAGE

Orthodox spirituality is founded on apophatic theology, which promotes a theo-ontology that opens the door to revelation through the experience of others.⁷ Two fundamental characteristics of Roman Catholic spirituality are sacred theology, which relies on the written word of God and tradition.⁸ These two tenets of Catholic religiosity are emphasized throughout history. A return to Scripture is for communion with God and not to gain experience of him through signs. This does not mean that there are no variety of ways to comprehend God, but that as Scripture remains the

unifying factor of all standards, spirituality becomes more authentic and biblically grounded.

The development of Catholic spirituality can be foregrounded in the Benedictine, Franciscan, Dominican, and Ignatian spiritualities, which helped shape the theology of the Roman Catholic church throughout the medieval era and to the time of the Reformation.⁹ For instance, the action taken by the Franconian kings and pope Gregory VII in 1073-1083 that led to the investiture conflict was a motivation to reform the church and re-spiritualize its administration. The Dominican and Franciscan movements in the eleventh and twelfth centuries were an attempt to define what real Christian devotion ought to be. Also, the fourteenth and fifteenth-century conciliarist movement questioned the veracity of the Christian commitment of certain popes and the legitimacy of maintaining a governmental structure that gives the pope alone the power to call councils into being.¹⁰ Burns argues that Roman Catholic spirituality grew from devotionism that was hierarchically regulated with printed devotional prayer guidebooks associated with congregational worship.¹¹ Christianity flourished in the Greco-Roman world and developed a strong relationship between church and state from the time of Constantine. Spielvogel submits:

Christianity in the Greco-Roman society grew because of the sporadic persecution of Christians in the first century. The oppression helped strengthened the growth of Christianity and moved the church towards a centralized organization. It also led to the emergence of a hierarchical structure of Bishopric that separates the laity from the clergy. Noteworthy the spread of Christianity can be connected to the quality of the message that Christianity had to offer to the Roman world, the promise of salvation. Also, Christianity seems to imbue life with meaning and purpose, and it provided the then world the advantage that other mystery religions lacked. Above all, Christianity was not restricted to men but appealing to all, which drew the attention of

⁹ The Benedictines spirituality is described as perhaps, the least spectacular that is down to earth and not dramatic. It emphasizes on communal mutuality, a life of liturgical prayer, and separation from a sinful world. Benedictine promoted and strengthened monasticism. Benedict is described as the Father of Western Monasticism. Furthermore, in the Benedictine spirituality there is a model of Christian life in the Spirit, which include reading of the Scripture, meditation, prayer and contemplation, and the promotion of practical and personal daily life of praise through singing to God. In Franciscan spirituality, poverty, love of nature, and charitable deeds are basic characteristics of its spiritual practices. The Dominican spirituality centers on poverty, preaching the word of God and the defense of Roman Catholic doctrine from heresies. The principle of preaching the Word led to the promotion of orthodox preaching, known as the "Order of Preachers." Finally, the Ignatian spirituality centers on discerning the will of God with the effort to find God in everything, living a life of the resurrection, and for the glory of God. Michael Casey, *An Unexciting Life: Reflections on Benedictine Spirituality* (Petersham, Massachusetts: St Bede's Publications, 2005); cf., Wil Derkse, *The Rule of Benedict for Beginners: Spirituality for Daily Life* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2003); Valentin-M. Breton, *Franciscan Spirituality: Synthesis, Antithesis* (Whitefish, MT: Literary Licensing, LLC, 2011). Steven E. Turley, *Franciscan Spirituality and Mission in New Spain, 1524-1599: Conflict Beneath the Sycamore Tree (Luke 19:1-10)* (New York & London: Routledge, 2016), 24ff; William A. Hinnebusch, *Dominican Spirituality: Principles and Practice* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2014), 39; Phyllis Zagano and Thomas McGonigle, *The Dominican Tradition: Dominican Tradition* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2016); David L. Fleming, *What Is Ignatian Spirituality?* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2010), 2; Charles J. Healey, *The Ignatian Way: Key Aspects of Jesuit Spirituality* (New York/Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2009), 19.

¹⁰ Hudon, *Theatine Spirituality*, 5-6.

¹¹ Burns, *Catholic Spirituality and Prayer in the Secular City*, 5-6.

³ Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Christian Spirituality*, 1st ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983).

⁴ Christopher Metress, ed., *Teaching the Reformations* (Basel, Switzerland: MDPI, 2018), 18.

⁵ William V. Hudon, ed., *Theatine Spirituality: Selected Writings* (New York & Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1996), 1.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Stanley J. Grenz, *The Named God And The Question Of Being* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, n.d.), 11.

⁸ Jordan Aumann, *Christian Spirituality in the Catholic Tradition* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1985), 1.

many women.¹²

Accordingly, throughout the medieval ages, the church remained united with one central government under Roman Catholic church governance. Note, asceticism, Christian mysticism, and saintly religiosity illuminated medieval religious culture, which characterized the spirituality of the Roman Catholic church. Bornstein remarks that the devotional life of the clergy and laity unfolded in a variety of settings, of which the most important were the church, and the home was an integral practice that prepares Catholic laypeople for Mass and worship.¹³

The historicity of Catholic spirituality is foregrounded in the uniformity of faith, known as the “age of faith.” It was a period of the pursuit of personal freedom and equality with the hope of a better future. However, the thirteenth-century records the decline of Roman power and the influence of the pope upon the state. The conflict began to erupt as power began to wane, which broke the peace and brought an end of the uniform faith. Linder aver, the Reformation resulted in a lasting division in a Church that had retained its essential unity for more than a thousand years, which makes the era of immense importance.¹⁴

III. CHARACTERISTICS OF ROMAN CATHOLIC SPIRITUALITY

Monasticism, asceticism, sacrament, indulgence, papacy, clerical power, the use of Latin in church worship, seven sacraments, and transubstantiation, all characterized the spirituality of Catholicism throughout the Middle Ages.¹⁵ Middle Ages Roman Catholic spirituality, as it still is, can be described by the sacramental mysteries of the church. It maintains the sacred rites and language, which remains the channel that faithful Catholics receive spiritual nourishment from the sacred liturgy. The classics of Christian spirituality have lasted a long time within the Catholic tradition. Practices such as the teachings of the church, the lives of saints, the historical and theological reflection, the many embodiments of Christian devotions and piety, the liturgical, and Sacred Traditions are all the deep wells that Catholicism drew its spirituality.

Meanwhile, mystical philosophy and theology are essential elements in the Catholic traditions, which are fundamental in expressing the right understanding and a need for faith. Gerhart and Udoh opine that mysticism played a significant role throughout Catholic traditions, which centered spiritual life on communality and liturgy. Its concern was on spiritual growth that was culminated in the Beatific Vision of the Christian life, which is contemplative and private.¹⁶ What promoted the passion for mysticism in the spirituality of the Middle Ages were two independent factors – doctrinal and mystical concerns. These aspects necessitated personal reflection and contemplation on the mystery of

¹² Jackson J. Spielvogel, *Western Civilization: A Brief History, Volume I: To 1715*, ninth edition. (Australia: Cengage Learning, 2016), 142.

¹³ Daniel E. Bornstein, ed., *Medieval Christianity*, vol. Vol. 4 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 16.

¹⁴ Robert Dean Linder, *The Reformation Era* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2008), 3.

¹⁵ Ali Pirzadeh, *Iran Revisited: Exploring the Historical Roots of Culture, Economics, and Society* (Washington, DC: Springer, 2016), 57.

¹⁶ Mary Gerhart and Fabian Udoh, eds., *The Christianity Reader* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 581.

Christ’s death and its implication to human life.

Furthermore, emphasis on spirituality was put on monastic lifestyle, liturgy, and the celebration of the Eucharist, through which the Catholic faithful gained a deeper appreciation for the Eucharist and made it the center of the Christian life. As Okoledah observed, the realization of Christian perfection was something that must apply to the ordinary Christian.¹⁷ Also, the practices and promotion of Christian traditions were the means of preserving political and territorial boundaries. Foremost, the structural unity of Catholic spirituality is significant in protecting the Latin language. It promoted spiritual unity that bore tremendous fruits in the realms of architecture, art, literature, politics, war, agriculture, and even romance and family life, which were characterized as the socio-political-religious unity of the Christendom.¹⁸

Admittedly, in the heart of the Catholic spirituality of the Middle Ages was the practice of clemency, which had an important place in Roman Catholic spirituality and became a critical concern that sparked the Reformation. Indulgence took a new form in 1300CE during the reign of Boniface VIII, who instituted the Roman jubilee. Boniface offered plenary indulgence, or remission of the punishment that is attached to sin to people who visited Rome and performed specific required actions, accompanied by appropriate contrition. Yelle contends that the Catholic economy of indulgences brought countless thousands of pilgrims to Rome and was linked to the rise of the idea of purgatory, which connected material payment with spiritual salvation; thus, offered Rome with significant financial windfalls.¹⁹ Abreast, the indulgence economy was singled out by most Protestant reformers with special condemnation, especially by Luther because the whole corruption of the church was centered on the indulgence practice and the misuse of resources, which corrupted the clergy. Affirmatively, the Catholic church was wallowing in venality and needed immediate reforms.

IV. PROTESTANT REFORMATION

What brought about the Protestant Reformation was the renaissance of humanism and its effect on cultural and political changes in Germany, which brought an end to the ecclesiastical unity of western Christendom.²⁰ Basel was a major center of Christian humanism, and many of the reformers that came from there were concern about ameliorating the education and catechism of Europe, which led to the establishment of schools for the young and promoted a national system of education. Hudon avers that medieval reformers and the reform movement challenged

¹⁷ Norbert Okoledah, *Problems and Prospects of the Search for a Catholic Spiritual Tradition in the Ghanaian Catholic Pastoral Ministry* (Munster: LIT Verlag Münster, 2005), 215.

¹⁸ Phillip Campbell, *The Catholic Middle Ages: A Primary Document Catholic Study Guide* (Grass Lake, MI: Lulu.com, 2016), 10.

¹⁹ Robert A. Yelle, *Sovereignty and the Sacred: Secularism and the Political Economy of Religion* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2018), 156.

²⁰ Humanism was an intellectual movement that was committed to the study of the classics of the Ancient World. It was concern about the source of beliefs and practices with concern of the many patent abuses and venerable traditions of the institutional Church. Elizabeth M. Dowling and W. George Scarlett, eds., *Encyclopedia of Religious and Spiritual Development* (Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi: SAGE, 2006), 135.

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three things: clerical decay, the distasteful self-assurance of official Christendom, and the longstanding mixture of political and religious authority wielded by bishops and abbots.²¹

Meanwhile, Basel played a pivotal role in Reformation history and could be called the center of sixteenth-century Europe.²² Basel was known for its excellent pastoral leadership. Most of the reformers and some of the sixteenth-century theologians and learned preachers prospered from Basel.²³ The two great councils of the church were held in the fifteenth century at Basel. There, the famous university in Europe was located, and one of the most significant printers of the sixteenth-century shops was established too. All these were instruments that helped shaped and promoted the Reformation. Foremost, Basel is known as the trade center and of industry and is known as the center of cultural and commercial life. It had the largest population and accumulations of wealth – building, ships, agriculture, and goods of all kinds, as well as scholarship. Hence, Basel can be described as the hallmark of Reformation orthodoxy because “It experienced something of all the major movements of the century: the development of capitalism, Humanism, and Protestant reforms.”²⁴ However, Guggisberg is of the view that up to now, Basel has not been treated very extensively in the international debate of the Reformation as an urban movement.²⁵

In the meantime, Protestant orthodoxy was apprehensive of mysticism and spirituality that intimated a works-righteousness approach to the life of faith.²⁶ The Protestant Reformation challenged the claim of Papal sovereignty, the selling of indulgence, the hierarchical structure of feudal domination, and the centrality of power. It also confronted the corruption of the clergy, interference of secular authority with ecclesiastical appointments that promoted the gravest abuses in almost every department, and the heavy taxes on the peasants. Nolan avers, the Protestant Movement revived and reveled in ancient traditions that painted the Roman Catholic church with its many attachments to secular power as the “whore of Babylon” and every reigning pope as the “Antichrist.”²⁷ The conceptual framework of the Reformation also challenged the theological and moral wrongs of the most influential religious and political establishment of the time – the Catholic church. Reformation advocated for personal and individual religious

rights of people. While it may be argued that the Reformation began with Luther, it is worthy to note that before the 15th century, there have been several calls on the church to reform. Somervill contends that throughout the centuries of Catholic existence, people had continuously asked the church to make changes, and the reform had been the topic of discussion at every theological conference of the Catholic church between 1378 and 1514.²⁸ Ives asserts that Christianity had recorded several revivals throughout history with consequent upheavals.²⁹

Furthermore, the concern of the church was centered on monastic reforms. However, from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, heresies that centered on theology had engulfed the church. These heresies focused on the Person of Christ with doubt of his conception reality.³⁰ Thus, the Reformation that began with Luther was not something new to the Roman Catholic church; nevertheless, it was a realization of a long-term innovative idea and yearning that was implemented through a step-by-step strategy. It was also a revolt against the failure of the medieval church to accept the need for reforms or to provide a theology and spirituality that could satisfy the discipline of sacred hearts and minds.³¹ The beginning of the Reformation in 1515 changed the historicity of the Christian church to this day. While the Reformation offered a new dawn in Christian history with a tremendous transformation that led to the resurgence of other reformers, it no doubts, challenged the Catholic church to respond to the imminent reality that threatened the extinction of the Papal authority. Consequently, the Roman Catholic church took some measures to retort to the Reformation movement.

V. CATHOLIC RESPONSE TO PROTESTANT REFORMATION

The contest against power abuse of the church had political and religious consequences. The Reformation triggered a bloody battle between Catholics and Protestants.³² The fight was introduced by St. Ignatius and promoted by the Jesuits. They were influential in their military organization as supported by Pope Paul III because the Jesuits gave him unconditional obedience and served as his secret service, police, and army.³³ While the 15th to early 17th centuries could be described as a time of revival that reawakened purer religious life and nearer to the pattern of the New Testament, some Roman Catholic historians see it as a revolt against the

²¹ Hudon, *Theatine Spirituality*, 5.

²² Robert Benedetto and James O. Duke, eds., *The New Westminster Dictionary of Church History: The Early, Medieval, and Reformation Eras* (Louisville & London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 627.

²³ Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Shaping of the Reformed Baptismal Rite in the Sixteenth Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1992), 66; Amy Nelson Burnett, *Teaching the Reformation: Ministers and Their Message in Basel, 1529-1629* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2006), 5.

²⁴ E. Harris Harbison, *The Age of Reformation* (London: Cornell University Press, 2013), 3.

²⁵ Hans Rudolph Guggisberg, *Basel in the Sixteenth Century: Aspects of the City Republic Before, During, and After the Reformation* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2010), 20.

²⁶ Arthur Holder, *The Blackwell Companion to Christian Spirituality* (West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons, 2011), 22.

²⁷ Cathal J. Nolan, *The Age of Wars of Religion, 1000-1650: An Encyclopedia of Global Warfare and Civilization* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2006), 705.

²⁸ Barbara A. Somervill, *Martin Luther: Father of the Reformation* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Capstone, 2006), 11; Benedetto and Duke, *The New Westminster Dictionary of Church History*, 335.

²⁹ Eric William Ives, *The Reformation Experience: Living Through the Turbulent 16th Century* (Oxford, EN: Lion Hudson Plc., 2012).

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 59.

³¹ John C. Olin, *Catholic Reform: From Cardinal Ximenes to the Council of Trent, 1495-1563: An Essay with Illustrative Documents and a Brief Study of St. Ignatius Loyola* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1990), 2.

³² Kevin M. Schultz, *HIST, Volume 1* (Boston, MA: Cengage Learning, Inc., 2018), 19.

³³ Odile Schwarz-Herion and Abdelnaser Omran, eds., *Strategies Towards the New Sustainability Paradigm: Managing the Great Transition to Sustainable Global Democracy* (Switzerland: Springer International Publisher, 2015), 76.

universal church.³⁴ Consequentially, the Reformation has a spiritual effect because it challenged the Roman Catholic institution to initiate an enthusiastic approach through the Council of Trent in 1545-1563 to proffer internal reform strategies.³⁵ Noteworthy, without the aggressive challenge of Protestantism, the Roman Catholic church might hardly have revived itself out of its own depleted moral and spiritual condition, and it might have needed a miracle to redeem itself from the Protestant aggression.

Undeniably, the Catholic church went through reforms, and the enormous change that took place at that time continued and received its founding at the Council of Trent.³⁶ Through the Council, the church was provided with a militant ideology for the Catholic faithful to separate themselves from what was considered as the corruption of Enlightenment.³⁷ Also, the Tridentine resolution led to the foundation of the Jesuits movement with their missionary zeal, the blossoming of the mystical orders like the exploration of Teresa of Avila and St. John the Cross, which extraordinarily promoted the Roman Catholic church in responding to the Protestant Reformation.³⁸ However, others described the Catholic response as advocating for supremacy and checking the advance of Protestantism rather than actual reforms.³⁹

Admittedly, many within the Catholic institution sympathized with the reformers and were willing to lay their lives for the cause of the Reformation. Others clamored for the unity of the church and sought for amicable measures to reform the church without any break.⁴⁰ Some issues raised include the morality of the clergy, the limitation of Papal authority, the relationship between church and state, the transubstantiation, heavy taxes on the poor, the place of

tradition, simoniacal, absenteeism, and many more. The Catholic reformers did not neglect these areas as they were central in the attempt to reform the Catholic church. Thus, by the end of the Reformation, the Catholic church had come to define its place in the new church order.

The response of the Catholic Church is described differently. Some see it as a response, others see it as a revival within the Catholic church, and still, others describe it as merely a reformation.⁴¹ But the 19th-century historians call it the counter-reformation; nevertheless, it is factual that the Protestant Reformation triggered an internal transformation that led to clarifying the beliefs of the Catholic religion, which activated a new religious impulse from within. The Reformation and the counter-reformation led to a socio-cultural-religious change. It also pushed the Roman Catholic church to preach new piety and persuaded the church institution to curb its worldly practices, which became a model for Catholic spirituality.⁴² It is remarked that though the Catholic church rejected most of the proposals of the Protestants, nevertheless, the reformers encouraged the Roman Catholic church to restructure and reorganize itself. Through the Council of Trent, many of the Catholic doctrines were officially defined for the first time, which codified the current ecclesiastical structure of Catholicism.⁴³ This study explores some selected methods and the models that the Catholic church adopted in an attempt to reform and redefine itself.

VI. ROMAN CATHOLIC MODELS OF SPIRITUAL REVITALIZATION WITH RELEVANCE TO THE CONTEMPORARY CHURCH

The Catholic church was shocked by the Protestant Reformation, which forced the institution to adopt models to respond to the movement, and as a result, the Catholic church underwent some spiritual and administrative renovation; thus, putting her own house into a better shape. Poska remarked, "The violent physical and intellectual upheaval of the Protestant Reformation, finally forced the [Catholic] church to elaborate an extensive program of religious regulation and reform."⁴⁴ This study does not consider or argue for a revival within the Catholic church but offers an overview of the instruments that the instituted church adopted in the attempt to respond to Protestant Reformation. A few of the models that were taken in reforming Catholic spirituality were revised assessment of religious education. This liturgy propagated new devotions, traditions, and moral reforms of the clergy. Poska is also of the view that the proposal confirmation of the Council of Trent articulated a conceptual reformation approach that was aimed at all Christians, men, women, children, cardinals, curates, kings, and vagrants alike.⁴⁵ Arguably, the Catholic church recorded some internal

³⁴ Earle E. Cairns, *Christianity Through the Centuries: A History of the Christian Church* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Academic, 2009), 270.

³⁵ Robbie F. Castleman, *Story-Shaped Worship: Following Patterns from the Bible and History* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 190.

³⁶ The Council of Trent met within three distinct periods that lasted for about eighteen years: 1545-1547, 1551-1552, and 1562-1563. Many historians see the Council as a place where all bad things were wrought, while others see it as a place where all good things were created; nevertheless, it is affirmative that the council was a call to respond to Luther and the Protestant Movement, thus, Luther set the agenda for the council though he was present at the council. Luther's challenged were practical, the idea of salvation and a practical cry for reform of various ecclesiastical offices and religious practices. The Council of Trent ended in 1563, closing an era and opening a new and important one in the history of the Catholic Church because the seventy years of the Council significantly defined the survival and revival of the Catholic faith. Noteworthy, the Council of Trent did not succumb to the pressure of Protestantism but reaffirmed church authority, reassert traditional doctrine, however, it also emerged with clear system of doctrine and discipline with some significant moral and administrative reforms. John W. O'Malley, *Trent: What Happened at the Council* (Massachusetts & London: Harvard University Press, 2013), 1-2; Mary Jo Weaver and David Brakke, *Introduction to Christianity*, Fourth Edition. (Belmont, CA: Cengage Learning, 2008), 98.

³⁷ Eric O. Hanson, *The Catholic Church in World Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014), 55; Carl Mosk, *Nationalism and Economic Development in Modern Eurasia* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), 114.

³⁸ R. Ward Holder, *Crisis and Renewal: The Era of the Reformations* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 5.

³⁹ William A. Dymess and Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, eds., *Global Dictionary of Theology: A Resource for the Worldwide Church* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 205.

⁴⁰ Jamie S. Scott, ed., *The Religions of Canadians* (Toronto, CA: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 78.

⁴¹ Doug Jones, *Sound of Worship: A Handbook of Acoustics and Sound System Design for the Church* (Amsterdam: Taylor & Francis, 2013), 58.

⁴² Jeffrey Brautigam, *5 Steps to a 5 AP European History, 2014-2015 Edition* (New York: McGraw Hill Professional, 2013), 303.

⁴³ Frank S. Mead, Samuel S Hill, and Craig D. Atwood, eds., *Handbook of Denominations in the United States*, 13th Edition. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2010).

⁴⁴ Allyson M. Poska, *Regulating the People: The Catholic Reformation in Seventeenth-Century Spain* (Leiden, Boston & Köln: BRILL, 1998), 2.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

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reforms.

A. Liturgical Paradigm

At the dawn of the Middle Ages, the monastic and ascetic life of Benedictine monks began to change as it offered a moderate asceticism and gave less importance to the place of manual labor with a concentration on liturgy. Liturgical advancement characterized the spirituality of the late medieval ages and during the Protestant Reformation. As Jones et al. submitted, “medieval spirituality was essentially public, communal and ‘ecclesial’ in nature and focused on the liturgy of the church, the Bible, and the cult of the saints.”⁴⁶ Most of the reformers challenged this aspect of church practices. Noteworthy, Catholic spirituality took different formats with different regions taking specific emphasis. For instance, there was the Spanish spirituality, Italian spirituality, and French spirituality. Nevertheless, these were fundamentally the same since they were Catholic; however, they differ in conception and presentation.⁴⁷ At the heart of the Catholic Reformation was the revitalization and the restoration of past high standards, which led to the emergence of lay confraternities with emphasis on prayer, fasting, and service to God and neighbors. Mullett argue that the Catholic Reformation was only an endorsement and affirmation of medieval Catholic religious concerns.⁴⁸ The Catholic Reformation led to the formation of religious orders to offer spiritual reforms at different levels.⁴⁹

Meanwhile, the liturgical revival promoted the search for inward renewal of Christians through religious exercise and the distribution of charity. The formation of a Catholic religious order, like *The Oratory of Divine Love*, ignited a passion for the inward search for God and promoted pastoral care, which was lacking in the Catholic church.⁵⁰ Thus, early Catholic reformers attempted to reform the church through austere prayer and contemplative devotions. Also, the passion for the pastoral and social care of the community led to the establishment of hospitals. It also promoted open-air meetings in which the word of God was to be preached to the masses.⁵¹ Catholic religious reforms emphasized liturgy, which aimed at fostering lay participation in parish spiritual, educational, and charitable life with increased parochial and episcopal direction. The changes were to return the order to the religious foundations, and the new movements focused on devotional life and personal relationship with Christ.⁵²

At the center of the Roman Catholic liturgy was the Eucharist, transubstantiation, baptism, and its initiatory policy. Catholic liturgical framework placed more emphasis on the crucifixion of Christ, and his suffering experience was made more visible. Worship also promoted the cult of martyred saints who came into the presence of the community

materially in their relics and visualized in the reliquaries, status, and imagery presented to the Catholic faithful.⁵³ Remarkably, the liturgical reform was less self-centered and more on Christ’s fatality and service. Yates avers that one of the outcomes of the Catholic reforms was that a new concept whereby public liturgy of the Catholic church was to be celebrated was changed, which must be done in a church building and with extreme order.⁵⁴ Thus, the liturgy was standardized at the Tridentine Council with emphasis on the catechism, which became a vital sign of the revival of the Catholic faith.⁵⁵

B. The Paradigm of Religious Education

It is fundamental that education was and remain vital in promoting Catholic spirituality.⁵⁶ The establishment of religious orders helped improve both the education of the clergy and the laity. Educational institutions were established to encourage the training of local princes in Catholic spirituality. Ludden summed the concept of the Catholic reformation as affecting ecclesiastical or structural reconstruction, religious orders, spiritual movements, and political dimension, noting that such reforms included the establishment of seminaries for the right training of ministers in the spiritual life and the theological traditions of the church.⁵⁷ In promoting its internal changes, the Roman Catholic Church through the Council (Trent), vested power on the pope to implement its recommendations.

Admittedly, concerns that were raised by Protestants were put into consideration. At the earlier stage, there was the willingness to admit what Catholicism describes as “legitimate concerns.” As opined by McGrath, Protestant Reformers raised concerns on the place of the Bible in Christian life and thought, and justification by faith, which the Council considered.⁵⁸ The Council went further to include wide-ranging reforms of the institution and structures of the church, which were open to criticism.⁵⁹ Other concerns, such as the growing divide between the clerics and the laity were also received attention. Many of the rural clergies were poorly educated primarily in the Latin and lacked the opportunity for theological training, of which the Tridentine Council, offered reforms.

Consequently, parish priests were to be better educated in matters of theology and apologetics, which was to remove the ignorance of the clergy and to enable all of them to be able to refute the most cogent arguments of heretical teaching and a

⁵³ Hans Kung, *Credo: The Apostles’ Creed Explained for Today* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2003), 26.

⁵⁴ Nigel Yates, *Liturgical Space: Christian Worship and Church Buildings in Western Europe 1500-2000* (Hampshire, GU and Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2008), 14.

⁵⁵ Joseph Francis Kelly, *The Ecumenical Councils of the Catholic Church: A History* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2009), 147; Orlando O. Espin and James B. Nickoloff, eds., *An Introductory Dictionary of Theology and Religious Studies* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2007), 1405.

⁵⁶ Anthony J. Dosen and Barbara S. Rieckhoff, eds., *Catholic School Leadership* (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, INC., 2016), 77.

⁵⁷ Ludden, *Mystic Apprentice Master Volume with Dictionary*, 332.

⁵⁸ Alister E. McGrath, ed., *Theology: The Basic Readings* (Hoboken, NJ & Chichester, West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons, 2018), 190.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Cheslyn Jones, Geoffrey Wainwright, and Edward Yarnold, *The Study of Spirituality* (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 1986), 36.

⁴⁷ Aumann, *Christian Spirituality in the Catholic Tradition*, 157.

⁴⁸ Michael A. Mullett, *The Catholic Reformation* (London and New York: Psychology Press, 1999), ix.

⁴⁹ Margaret McGlynn and Kenneth R. Bartlett, eds., *The Renaissance and Reformation in Northern Europe* (University of Toronto Press, 2014), xix.

⁵⁰ Alastair Armstrong and John Hamer, *The European Reformation, 1500-1610* (Oxford, OX: Heinemann Educational Publishers, 2002), 75.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ken Ludden, *Mystic Apprentice Master Volume with Dictionary* (United States of America: Lulu.com, 2012), 332.

lousy life.⁶⁰ Thus, education was prioritized to allow for the Catholic clergy to be grounded in different areas of discipline like humanism, devotionism, and tradition. As a result, Catholicism developed a curriculum of Catholic spirituality that aimed at indoctrinating Catholic faithful on the traditions and practices of theology.

Another model of Catholic reforms was the education of the laity. Quigley opines that learning received more considerable attention, especially the education of women, which led to the establishment of the Ursulines, a community of religious women who were concerned about the education of other women and charitable work.⁶¹ Importantly, the establishment of the Society of Jesus played a significant role in the training of those who became leaders in the renewal of Catholic life in Europe. Hence, many of the popes were the product of the Jesuit movement. The principal work of the Jesuit order was education with centrality on spiritual direction and retreats. They were also distinguished in theology, astronomy, and other areas of scholarship.⁶² Education was a pious work; it was a means of revealing God's truth and teaching people to live by it. Thus, the emphasis on education was an attempt to combine religious tradition and humanism.

C. Reconstructing the Moral Structure of the clergy and laity

Ludden submits that Catholic Reformation repudiates the pluralism of the Secular Renaissance, which had previously plagued the church, noting that the religious institution was tightened, discipline was improved, and the parish was emphasized.⁶³ Political involvement of Bishops to governmental roles was no longer tolerated because it made many of the Bishops to be landholders, which forced them to be "absentee bishops." Consequently, bishops were given distinct and higher power of supervising all aspects of religious life.⁶⁴ Foremost, the purity of the clergy was much emphasized that led many seventeenth-century clergies to embrace and remain faithful to the practice of celibacy; thus, living in line with the church's moral teachings.

Though education was emphasized, Catholic reforms adopted the model of social and moral reforms.⁶⁵ For instance, sexual sins and gluttony were dangerous and more terrible than avarice and usury. Also, the use of instructional materials for the training of the laity on morality was adopted. In contrast, stricter measures on the virtue of the clergy concerning the women were affirmed. It is noted that the recurring theme of the Catholic Reformation was children of priest's concubine living with him and the fear of establishing

priestly dynasties, which was prohibited.⁶⁶ Many of the priesthood was so involved in commercialism, which was described as simony. They offered almost no example to Christians in their churches of what true discipleship should be.⁶⁷ The most strident issue that confronted the church was sexual immorality among the parish priest, which the Catholic Reformation was committed to reform.

D. Missiological paradigmatic Approach

A significant model of Catholic Reformation was outreach. Catholic spiritual revival necessitated and promoted missionary expansion, which was led by the religious orders. The tremendous effect of these mission exploration was felt in the borders of Africa, Asia, and the Americas.⁶⁸ The Catholic movements were so desirous of spreading the Kingdom of Christ beyond the borders of Europe and were willing to offer any service anywhere and anytime around the world. During the Catholic mission movements, Christianity became global for the first time, and through a handful of visionary leaders were mission organizations and societies founded with zealous men and women passionate to spread Christianity.⁶⁹ The intense approach of the Jesuits, the Franciscans, and the Dominicans challenged even the Protestants to adopt missionary entrepreneurship adopting similar models in Evangelical involvement. Catholic missionaries were willing to take the risk with an unusual kind of devotion to reach new frontiers.

While Protestants were concerned about reforming the existing church, the Roman Catholic Church sought new ways to expand the Catholic faith.⁷⁰ Within the shortest time possible, Christianity became truly global, reaching South America, Asia, and most African borders, especially the coastal regions.⁷¹ The Catholic mission developed a comprehensive financial network, increased information network, and had a central planning body in Rome, which gave the movement the confidence to be actively involved in personal sacrifices to reach new areas.⁷² From the time of Constantine, Christianity had the struggle to remain a state religion with little concern to expand to new frontiers; however, the Catholic Reformation became the first means after many centuries to challenge the church to take the Great Commission seriously. Not only that, but the Catholics also

⁶⁰ The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Council of Trent | Definition, Summary, Significance, Results, & Facts," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, accessed May 1, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Council-of-Trent>.

⁶¹ Thomas C. McGonigle, Thomas D. McGonigle, and James F. Quigley, *A History of the Christian Tradition: From the Reformation to the Present* (New York & Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1988), 22.

⁶² Trent Pomplun, *Jesuit on the Roof of the World: Ippolito Desideri's Mission to Tibet* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, USA, 2010).

⁶³ Ludden, *Mystic Apprentice Master Volume with Dictionary*, 333.

⁶⁴ Derek Jones, *Censorship: A World Encyclopedia*, vol. 1-4 (London & New York: Routledge, 2001), 1243.

⁶⁵ David J. Bodenhamer and Robert G. Barrows, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Indianapolis* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), 162.

⁶⁶ Michael J. Hayden, J. Michael Hayden, and Malcolm R. Greenshields, *Six Hundred Years of Reform: Bishops and the French Church, 1190-1789* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's Press - MQUP, 2005), 87.

⁶⁷ Paul B. Newman, *Growing Up in the Middle Ages* (North Carolina and London: McFarland, 2015), 207; Fred N. Grayson, *CliffsAP World History* (Hoboken, NJ: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2007), 111.

⁶⁸ William J. Collinge, *Historical Dictionary of Catholicism* (Plymouth, UK: Scarecrow Press, 2012), 114.

⁶⁹ Gerald L. Sittser, *Water from a Deep Well: Christian Spirituality from Early Martyrs to Modern Missionaries* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 260.

⁷⁰ Patrick Karl O'Brien and Oxford University Press, *Atlas of World History* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2002), 155cf., Marvin Pery et al., *Western Civilization: Ideas, Politics, and Society* (Australia: Cengage Learning, 2012), 335-336; Lewis R. Rambo and Charles E. Farhadian, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Religious Conversion* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 179.

⁷¹ Peter Marshall, *The Reformation: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, OX: OUP Oxford, 2009), 8.

⁷² Alison Forrester and Seán Alexander Smith, eds., *The Frontiers of Mission: Perspectives on Early Modern Missionary Catholicism* (Leiden: BRILL, 2016).

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challenged the church to do mission, and it led by example. Much Catholic faithful (the Jesuits) laid their lives second only to the time when Christians martyrdom in the first few centuries was an actual test of Christian spirituality.⁷³ The understanding of modern mission cannot be complete without the enthusiastic contribution of the Catholic Mission Movements and Catholic heroes like the Jesuits.

VII. LIMITATIONS OF CATHOLIC SPIRITUAL MODELS

The methodological response of Catholicism that sparked an internal reform did not offer a holistic approach to true Christian revival, which could be described as mainly a bourgeois movement. The Tridentine resolutions provided a practical program for the reconstruction of a militant Catholic church, and the Jesuits were characterized as the vanguard of Catholic Reformation because of the vital role they played in instilling and enforcing the Tridentine resolution. Graff opines that the outcome of the Tridentine Council offered a dramatic hardening of policy, which denied the translation of the Bible into vernacular languages that denied people access to Scripture.⁷⁴ While the Council curiously endorsed some forms of educational reforms and advancement of lay learning, it proscribes direct access to the Bible, which further removed lay congregation from the clergy and texts.

Graff asserts that most of the models adopted were not outrightly aimed at spiritual reformation but to counter the Protestants; thus, literature production was increased to proselytize and make a profit, and Catholic reformers had to promote lay literacy to combat the Protestant struggle for their place in the new religious pluralism.⁷⁵ Also, the increasing separation of the clergy and the laity sparked a religious war. Habsburg submits that the restriction of preaching to the priesthood only left many priests to their devices, and rural clergy served as intermediaries between the rural population and the church authority. Consequently, some dioceses were left in a state of spiritual disrepair, which proved chaos and religious wars that left many dioceses without the presence of a bishop.⁷⁶

Failure of the Tridentine Council to promote a dialogical approach in resolving the conflict between the Catholic church and the Protestant Movement led to an unending rivalry that eventually led to decades of war, which still linger in contemporary Christianity. Magocsi rightly remarked that the tenacity of Tridentine reform took a forceful measure instead, noting that many Protestants were forcefully Catholicized or forced into exile, and their churches were destroyed.⁷⁷ The reformative approach of Catholicism was centered more on the structural and institutional authenticity and authority of the papacy and church tradition. It was not willing to look with indebtedness into the doctrinal issues that

remain the primary concern of the Protestant reformers.

Furthermore, the effort to reform the moral structure of the church led to the emergence of what might be called “moralism.” Rather than providing an enduring spiritual transformation, the Catholic reforms succeeded in emphasizing specific codes, traditions, and practices of the church. Focus on these codes led to the legalistic approach to spirituality and faith, and the sacrament was no longer seen as the basis of moral life but duties that should be carried out, which remained the truth that people must believe.⁷⁸ The accentuated perception of the Catholic reformers on papal supremacy further narrowed the possibility of a lasting doctrinal and practical unity of the church. Appold noted that the Tridentine reforms lacked the unanimity to address the nature of papacy or the relationship of the bishops to the pope but centered on institutional reforms, with no envisioning for reconciliation, which opened the path to competition.⁷⁹

Accordingly, the enthusiastic approach to mission was primarily an effort to expand Catholic territory rather than expanding the gospel. Many volunteers of Catholic mission were influenced by the Tridentine resolution rather than the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Thus, most of the Catholic conquered territories experienced a rush approach that soon needed to be re-evangelized. For instance, in Nigeria, the Catholic mission was soon dismissed because the missionaries were accused of gross immorality such that include involvement in slavery and the taking advantage of Africa’s inheritance.⁸⁰ As a result, when true evangelistic work began in late 1800 and early 1900, though with honest approaches, many Africans rejected or treated the missionaries with contempt. Tene asserts, cruelty takes on a new visage in the seventeenth century with physical abuse of the innocent and the dismembering of bodies, which remove Christian missions in the ethical picture of the world.⁸¹

VIII. TOWARD A SPIRITUAL REVITALIZATION OF THE CONTEMPORARY CHURCH

The contemporary church is clamoring for a revival due to spiritual dullness and deadness that have overwhelmed the traditional Christian belief. This reality is reflected in the dimming reality of the gospel and unbelief. There is spiritual malaise evident within the contemporary church characterized by hypocrisy and self-deception. What the modern church needs is a revival, and different approaches in recent decades have been adopted to actualize the required transformation, which usually ends in revivalism rather than actual revival. Unfortunately, contemporary Christianity tends to seek for spiritual revival through piety without genuine humbling of self and the sinful life on the part of Christians. Many assume that the superficial thought and labors of pastors can lead to real conversion. Although some

⁷³ Anthony E. Clark, *China’s Saints: Catholic Martyrdom During the Qing (1644–1911)* (Bethlehem: Lehigh University Press, 2011).

⁷⁴ Harvey J. Graff, *The Legacies of Literacy: Continuities and Contradictions in Western Culture and Society* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987), 136.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 137.

⁷⁶ Max von Habsburg, *A/AS Level History for AQA The Reformation in Europe, C1500–1564 Student Book* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 110.

⁷⁷ Paul Robert Magocsi, *Historical Atlas of Central Europe* (Toronto, CA: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 19.

⁷⁸ Hent de Vries, *Religion: Beyond a Concept* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 210.

⁷⁹ Kenneth G. Appold, *The Reformation: A Brief History* (West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons, 2011), 180.

⁸⁰ Craig A. Lockard, *Societies, Networks, and Transitions: A Global History* (Australia: Cengage Learning, 2014), 378.

⁸¹ Ran Tene, *Changes in Ethical Worldviews of Spanish Missionaries in Mexico: An Ethical Transition from Sight to Touch in the 16th and 17th Centuries* (Leiden and Boston: BRILL, 2015), 112.

degree of success has been recorded, nevertheless, its sustainable realization seems to loom. What we need is to endure in the teachings of God's word and preparation of the heart through prayer.

What the Christian church needs to do is to rekindle her connection to God, and a restored relationship will reinstate the passion in the hearts of Christians to be committed to God. Christians need to be in an active relationship with God, and this is achievable through education, a return to the truth of Scripture, and a desire to share the gospel rather than be comforted with our traditional Christian routine activities. The 21st-century church must reawaken and concretize these approaches if genuine revival must happen. The church ought to guard itself against the devotional excesses of medieval Christianity or the return to Reformation humanistic Christianity; instead, it should strive to inculcate the ethical teachings of the New Testament that promotes a relationship with God and a lived life of righteousness evident in daily living. Foremost, the church ought to adapt to the changing social context and remove itself from the legalistic approach; instead, it should be openminded and seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in yearning for spiritual revival.

Abreast, the means of achieving all of these are a return to classical Christianity with biblical emphasis, developing a formidable curriculum that teaches biblical spirituality and rekindling of the zeal for global mission. The contemporary church seems to be relaxed and concern with church maintenance rather than church expansion. There is spiritual boredom with emphasis on materialism. The Great Commission has become a task for professionals, and Christian piety is a practice for a selected few. This condition has promoted secularism, pluralism, spiritualism, and moralism within the Christian church. While the Bible remains the standard of Christian spirituality, the Christian church must adopt some dynamic models to actualize genuine revival.

IX. CONCLUSION

The church is continually seeking spiritual renewal, and different measures have been employed to return the church to its biblical stand. Admittedly, a seeker-sensitive philosophy to church growth, with its spirit of inclusivism and de-emphasis on doctrinal clarity and love for truth, has been adopted.⁸² What defines contemporary Christianity is the secularizing forces that are active in shaping the Christian church, which has reduced Christianity to mere entertainment and a pop gospel; thus, losing the grip of the actual content of the biblical message. In the quest for true revival, this study has explored the spiritual state of the Roman Catholic church at the time of the Reformation. Indeed, the Catholic church was not hardened by the clamor for transformations but adopted measures to reform the spirituality of the church. The role of Christian traditions and initiatives plays a significant role in shaping the spirituality of the contemporary church. While the church must consider the practical measures that reformers adopted, it is a return to biblical traditions of spiritual transformation, such as commitment to Bible study

⁸² John MacArthur, *1 Peter MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2004), 234.

and fervent prayer that can offer the church an enduring paradigm for spiritual revitalization.

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