

Abstract

The habilitation thesis titled *Applied Ecclesiology: A Functional-Relational Model of the Contemporary Evangelistic Ecclesial Community* synthesizes the main research directions, academic contributions, and professional achievements developed in the field of practical theology, with a focus on applied ecclesiology as a distinct area of theological research. The work aims to analyze the functioning, organization, and relational dynamics of the contemporary evangelical ecclesial community, as well as to evaluate its response to the cultural, legal, educational, and technological challenges of contemporary society. The research is conducted within an interdisciplinary framework, integrating theological, legal, organizational, and educational perspectives. It aims to formulate a functional-relational model of the ecclesial community that provides relevant tools for the analysis, leadership, revitalization, and development of contemporary church life.

The first part of the thesis presents the author's professional and academic development, teaching and pastoral work, as well as his scholarly contributions through the publication of books, articles, and studies, and his participation in national and international academic conferences. Pastoral work provides the framework within which many of the theological concerns later developed through academic research took shape, particularly in the fields of applied ecclesiology, spiritual leadership, the revitalization of ecclesial communities, the functional organization of the church, and canon law. His scholarly contributions reflect the development of an interdisciplinary research direction at the intersection of practical theology, applied ecclesiology, church law, religious freedom, and contemporary digital education.

A central element of the thesis is the delineation and development of applied ecclesiology as a distinct field within practical theology. Applied ecclesiology is the field of research that analyzes and evaluates the life, structures, practices, and dynamics of the Church to correlate them with biblical and theological foundations and the cultural, social, and historical context in which it carries out its mission. The thesis argues that applied ecclesiology transcends both the predominantly theoretical nature of systematic ecclesiology and the general nature of practical theology by explicitly focusing on the ecclesial community and ecclesial praxis. The original contribution of this research lies in the articulation of an integrative conceptual framework and the development of a functional-relational model of applied ecclesiology, which integrates the organic and organizational dimensions of the church, as well as its relationship to the contemporary cultural, legal, educational, and technological context.

A second major area of research focuses on the functional dimension of the ecclesial community, analyzing the internal dynamics of the church, the relationship between its organic and organizational dimensions, models of spiritual leadership, pastoral processes, and mechanisms for community revitalization. The research proposes a conceptual and methodological framework for analyzing the church's functioning, integrating theological foundations with tools for organizational and strategic evaluation. In this context, applicable models are developed for

pastoral leadership, for the development of a dynamic ecclesial community, and for the revitalization of the church as a process of restoring biblical and practical functionality.

The relational dimension of the ecclesial community constitutes another important area of research, focusing on the relationship between the church and culture, religious freedom, canon law, the digital environment, and the educational transformations brought about by the process of digitization. The research develops a theological reflection on the presence and mission of the church in contemporary society and formulates contextualized ecclesiological paradigms capable of responding to current cultural, legal, and technological challenges. Special attention is given to the relationship between the church and the digital environment, with conceptual distinctions drawn between the “online church” and the “virtual church,” and an analysis of the impact of digitization on the nature of the Christian community, on spiritual authority, and on contemporary ecclesial practices. At the same time, research on education and digital education highlights the pedagogical, legal, and methodological foundations of online training, with an emphasis on theological education and the impact of digital transformations on the contemporary educational process.

The second part of the thesis presents the scientific development program and future research directions, structured around two complementary interdisciplinary axes: *Practicum Ecclesiae* and *Ecclesia et Libertas*. These programs aim to consolidate an integrative academic framework situated at the intersection of applied ecclesiology, practical theology, canon law, religious freedom, education, and contemporary cultural and digital transformations. The *Practicum Ecclesiae* program is focused on deepening research in the fields of applied ecclesiology, spiritual leadership, the revitalization of ecclesial communities, and the impact of digitalization on church life. Complementarily, the *Ecclesia et Libertas* program develops interdisciplinary research on the relationship between the church, law, and religious freedom, analyzing aspects such as the autonomy of religious denominations, church law, denominational education, and the constitutional protection of religious freedom. Furthermore, the thesis proposes perspectives on the development of an interdisciplinary research center dedicated to the study of the relationship between religion, law, and freedom, with the aim of contributing to the advancement of academic research and doctoral training in these fields.

The final section of the thesis, titled “Bibliography,” lists the works consulted in the course of the research, including both the author’s own publications relevant to the thesis’s theological and interdisciplinary arguments, as well as contributions by other authors that situate this study within the context of contemporary academic research.