

"A NEW CREATION IN CHRIST"

by

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DEDICATION

“To meditate on the humility of God incarnate is the strongest medicine for the swelling of our souls caused by pride. To think on this exalted mystery – that God came from on high into lowly flesh – is the surest way to unlock the shackles of sin that bind us to earth.” (Augustine)

This work is dedicated to: -

- The Lord Jesus Christ, I love you more than life. May an attainment of this nature always be for your glory, placing another brick in the foundation of reaching out to serve others. May this work contribute in part, to the revelation of who you are, and not be an attainment for self-glory.

“It’s in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for. Long before we first heard of Christ...he had his eye on us, had designs on us for glorious living, part of the overall purpose he is working out in everything and everyone.”

(Ephesians 1:11 – The Message Version)

- My Wife, Natasha. A constant source of encouragement, the wellspring of Godly advice, my partner and friend. You make this achievement, an all the more worthwhile endeavour.
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“When we face up to the glory of God, we find ourselves facedown in worship...”

- Matt Redman -

ABSTRACT

The title “A New Creation in Christ” served as the basis for the examination of the definitive theological and Biblical concepts of the doctrines of creation, humanity, sin and salvation. It integrated the foci of these doctrines, in constructing a paradigm for establishing what is meant by the dissertation title, ‘a new creation in creation.’ To understand a new creation theology requires a composite structuring of these interrelated doctrines, since no doctrine can be understood vacuously. Humanity was not created in an abstract or theoretical world, and neither were they placed in isolation from creation. Instead, they were very much a part of the created order, and were endowed with specific function or purpose. They interacted with a living world and were accorded the responsibility as its stewards. The consideration of the facets of the doctrine of creation enabled an understanding of humanity’s placement in creation, their purpose and how sin affected creation. This informs the doctrine of humanity in highlighting the biblical emphasis on humanity as the special creation of God. God created humanity in his image, and this image is an intrinsic and indispensable part of humanity’s uniqueness and existence. The constitutional nature of humanity lies in its conditional unity of the whole person. Man is a unity of the physical, the psychological and the spiritual, all of which are purposed to enable him, in fulfilling the intentions of the Creator. The doctrine of sin clarified how sin affected the conditional unity of man i.e. the physical, the psychological and the spiritual dimensions. It further demonstrated the domino effect on creation. This precarious position which humanity found themselves in, required the intervention of God, through the incarnation of Christ. Salvation is the free gift of God in Christ in dealing with the problem of sin, and the consequences thereof. This free gift requires that a human being appropriate salvation in Jesus Christ, through the acceptance of him in faith and repentance. This background established a contextual understanding of a new creation in Christ. The definitive text for our discussion was Paul’s statement in 2 Corinthians 5:17 “If any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come.” Paul’s statement incorporates two elements of salvation. “If any one is in Christ” is suggestive of the first element, which is the subjective nature of salvation. This involves the believer’s conversion through repentance and faith. The second element is the objective

nature of salvation. This is suggested in the next part of the statement “he is a new creation”, which is accomplished through the redemptive work of God in Christ. The resident implication of the reference ‘a new creation in Christ’, is the inauguration of a new humanity that has begun in Christ. A cyclic model for the practical outworking of a new creation theology has been advocated in a threefold consideration of personhood, community and discipleship.

DECLARATION

I, RANDLEE REDDY, declare that this dissertation entitled "A New Creation in Christ" represents my own work, both in conception and execution.

Signed:.....

Date:..... 20 MAY 2005

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Chapter One: Understanding Creation

1. Introduction

1.1 The Psalmist's Question

The Psalmist succinctly captures the *finiteness of human understanding, regarding the relationship between the Creator and creation, in the eighth psalm. His comparative reflection demonstrates the puniness of man in the vast cosmos of creation. More so, the smallness or littleness of physical man and the insurmountable greatness of God is evident in this psalm. To define the essence of this psalm in a simplistic contextual phrase would be to say, that God is indescribably great whilst man in contrast, is finitely minuscule. The true wonder of the Psalmist's reflections are by no means left at the vastness of creation, but he proceeds to ask a relevant question "What is man that You are mindful of him?" This proves an apt starting point for analysis of the redemptive work of Christ, in what the title of this dissertation is explorative of, within the parameters of humanity as a new creation in Christ. Consider the words of Psalm 8 as illustrative of the proceeding discussion.*

To the Chief Musician. On the instrument of Gath. A Psalm of David.

¹O LORD, our Lord, How excellent *is* Your name in all the earth,
Who have set Your glory above the heavens! ²Out of the mouth of
babes and nursing infants You have ordained strength, Because of
Your enemies, That You may silence the enemy and the avenger.
³When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon
and the stars, which You have ordained, ⁴What is man that You are
mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him? ⁵For You
have made him a little lower than the angels, And You have crowned
him with glory and honor. ⁶You have made him to have dominion
over the works of Your hands; You have put all *things* under his feet,
⁷All sheep and oxen—Even the beasts of the field, ⁸The birds of the
air, And the fish of the sea That pass through the paths of the seas.
⁹O LORD, our Lord, How excellent *is* Your name in all the earth!¹

¹*New King James Version*. 1992. Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Publishers. All scripture references, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the New King James version of the Bible.

The nature of this particular psalm has been an issue of debate; with reference to the meaning of the superscripted Hebrew word '*Gittith*'. Some are of the view that David penned this psalm after his killing of the Philistine giant Goliath. An alternate interpretation of the Hebrew is that it could also refer to a song that was sung or played on an instrument by the treading of the winepress. Psalms 81 and 84 provide help in this regard as both also contain this superscription. All three psalms share an emphasis on joyous celebration, alluding to the nature of psalm 8 as a psalm of joy, and hymn of delight.² David takes delight and joyfully expresses his realization of the marvelousness of God's creation. He extends his hymn of praise to ponder the majesty of the Lord, which is manifest in the grandeur of creation. They are the evidences of the greatness of God. The psalmist is at odds within himself when he discovers, that the universe, the heavens, the moon and the stars are but a minuscule view, of the greatness of God. In all probability David penned this psalm at night considering the night sky, as he wrote in verse 3, "When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained..." William MacDonald cites the eloquence of astronomy as a justifiable testator of God's greatness in his explanation of this verse. He explains the concept of a 'light-year' as the measure of the distance that light travels within the space of a year. It is estimated that light travels at 186,000 miles per second. When calculating this against the ratio of seconds to year, it amounts to 31.5 million seconds per year. Hence, this implies that light travels at six trillion seconds in just one year. Add to this equation the fact that there are millions, if not billions of stars, that are light years from the earth.³ What MacDonald's computations allude to, are the sheer mathematical precision that governs the universe, the billions of stars right down to the orbit of the planets within our solar system. The concept alone is difficult to comprehend. It is against such a backdrop that the words of the Psalmist, "the work of Your fingers", take on a new significance. These verses are foundational, to the ultimate question that the Psalmist asks, concerning the significance of humanity. Against the immensity of the universe small and puny man can

² Falwell, Jerry Hinson, (Exec.Ed.) & Woodrow, M.K. 1994. *KJV Bible commentary*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

³ MacDonald, William. 1995. *Believer's Bible commentary: Old and New Testaments*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

easily be mistaken for having little or no significant value. The Psalmist's question "What is man that You are mindful of him?" contains an answer in a rhetorical sense. It is question of self-reflection by David and that of humanity. The significance of humanity is highlighted by it being a product of the creative work of God. God made humanity and accorded to them the function of stewardship over creation itself. Humanity is in unique position within God's scheme of creation. It is part of creation, as well as the occupant of a God-endowed responsibility, as steward. Humanity is the recipient of the personal and intimate care of God, despite being made a little lower than the angels (Heb *elohim*).⁴ Creation is therefore the mirror of God that answers the Psalmist's self-reflective question.

1.2. The Biblical Worldview

The relevance of the Psalmist's question becomes increasingly important, particularly with the passage of time. Notably, the Psalmist penned these words as a means of questioning his place in the order of creation, centuries before the incarnation of Christ. Consider the significance of this question, in lieu of the increased technological advancements in modern science. Humanity's understanding of itself, of the environment, of the earth, plant and animal life and the universe has changed considerably with this revolution of science and technology. All of these issues serve to highlight that God has placed value on human nature and destiny. The biblical worldview of human nature and destiny are best understood within the framework of the interwoven doctrines of salvation, creation and Christology. These doctrines, perhaps, are the most conducive to understanding the true placement of humanity by God within the created order. In the traditional sense, the created order owes it sustenance and origin to God. Hence humanity is a part of God's creative acts. As Genesis chapters two and three suggest, humanity has been given a God-endowed consciousness of the God who created them. God created man in his image and/or likeness implying that man, unlike any of creation shares in a limited sense, some of the faculties of God. In tandem with this they had God-given freedom, by which they chose to respond to the temptations of the serpent in the garden. This is true of humanity's

⁴ Falwell, Jerry Hinson, (Exec.Ed.) & Woodrow, M.K. 1994. *KJV Bible commentary*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

continued experience since that time. They experience the evils of this world as a product of sin, through this God-given freedom, and through the actions of others as well.⁵ The position of humanity has changed as a consequence of the fall. The first Adam, the representative of humanity lost the original estate of dominion and fellowship, thus bringing the entire human race into sin. It is in Jesus Christ the last Adam that humanity is brought into a restored position, in effect, being made into a new creation. Humanity, through the redemptive work of Christ, is now saved from the consequences of sin. The significance of humanity is evident in the coming of Jesus Christ, as the divine-human or 'God-man'. He has conquered the greatest enemies of man i.e. sin and death. Creation itself will eventually come under the redemptive work of Christ, with him as the ultimate ruler of creation. Here again we see that humanity has been invited by God to share in this privilege of rulership (Romans 8:17; Hebrews 2:5-9). This is an indicator of God's ultimate and eternal commitment to humanity. The church is a visible expression as are the believers, of the present and future dimensions of the kingdom of God, of a restored humanity in the image of God through Christ.⁶

The perspective that humanity chooses to use as a framework will determine the potential outlook that will be adopted. The perspective invariably determines the outlook. There are decidedly two concepts that one can consider in the line of this present discussion. Both concepts present radically different outcomes, but are in some ways, inter-related. The first concept is that of size. The Psalmist begins his hymn with an admiration of the glory of the heavens as the works of God. Size is therefore used as a framework of understanding the place of humanity. From the concept of size man is by comparison minutely insignificant. He is but a speck, on the grand design of creation. The second concept is that of significance. The worth of a human being, if it is to be judged by the basis of accomplishments and/or faculties that only a human being can exercise, then mankind is of extreme significance. Humanity then occupies a central place in the universe. The Psalmist echoes this thought when he writes in verses 5-6, "... You have crowned him with glory

⁵ Davies, J.D. 1997. *Themes and Issues in Christianity*. Wellington House, London: Cassel Publishers.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

and honor. You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet...” Davies expresses this thought as follows:

“This raises a curious fact that is often overlooked, namely that it is these large-brained human animals’ own reflection upon the size of the universe that makes them feel insignificant. It is as though the very genius of thought turns against itself when size is the key consideration. If love, or human relationship, or scientific discovery, or poetry, or any other creative product of human life is taken as the basis for judgment, then human beings come to assume immense importance when compared with millions of light years of dust-strewn space”⁷

Both concepts of size and significance when understood mutually, in terms of the immensity of creation and the smallness of humanity, are given sufficient explanation from a Biblical worldview in the doctrine of creation. Both are able to tie the place of humanity within the universe as the expression of the true worth that God places on it.

1.3 An overview of the Doctrine of Creation

The doctrine of creation, apart from the Biblical record, has developed over the preceding centuries evolving through different schools of thought. It is necessary to consider a historical overview of four such schools of thought, which have contributed to the developing tradition, in understanding the doctrine of creation.

1.3.1. Traditional Views of Creation

1.3.1.1. The views of Irenaeus

Irenaeus, an early church father (c. 130 –c.200), was the bishop of Lyons. His teachings proved of great significance and vital contribution to the church as it was during the period in which Gnosticism was developing. Gnosticism was a view that placed great emphasis on knowledge, as the word itself suggests, thus indicating that the spiritual or immaterial

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 64

was of far greater importance than the material. This view maintained that any person or system in the cosmos could be redeemed through knowledge. What was essentially advocated was a type of metaphysical dualism, in which the spiritual realm is separated from the material world, by a great chasm. The material world is inherently evil, whilst the spiritual world is inherently good.⁸ Salvation could be achieved, through knowledge and separation from the material world, which was considered corrupt. To suggest that salvation could be achieved this way implied disconnectedness from the whole of creation. It was into this type of context that Irenaeus developed his teachings. He saw Christ as the one in and through whom all things in creation are reconciled. He added that this unifying that takes place in Christ is by the process of *anakephalaios* or recapitulation, which refers to Christ as the head of all things. This New Testament concept is based on Ephesians 1:9-10. Christ as the head is seen as the central point, or culmination of the unifying of all things, in heaven and on earth. In addition to this, Irenaeus answered the Gnosticism heresy through his emphasis on the humanity of Christ. Through the incarnation, Christ took on full humanity thus uniting the material and immaterial in him. In Christ both material and immaterial elements of the created world are redeemed. What is also important to note, is that Christ came as the second Adam in order to deal with, *original sin of humanity*. He accomplished the work of redemption through his incarnation. Irenaeus delineated this thought even further by arguing, that Christ through the process of *anakephalaios* or recapitulation, brought all of humanity into full maturity. Adam had not only brought humanity into sin, but had also induced a state of immaturity through such actions incurred by him. In Christ, a new creation is ushered in. The whole cosmos is brought into a place of fullness in the person and work of Christ. In other words, when Christ came, his redemptive work did not merely restore humanity into the pre-fall state but he advocated the inauguration of the kingdom of God. The first message of proclamation by Christ as recorded in the synoptic gospels, is that of the message of repentance 'for the kingdom of God is at hand' (Matthew 4:17, Mark 1:14-15). According to Irenaeus, Christ is the embodiment of the glory of God, through whom the full and complete revelation of the person of God occurs.

⁸ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.4.

1.3.1.2. The views of Thomas Aquinas

Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274) was an apologist of the medieval church as well as theologian and philosopher. He held to the *ex nihilo* view that God created the world out of nothing. Aquinas asserted that all of creation is dependent on God and owes its very existence to Him. He further added that all creatures must be understood in lieu of their continuous existence, which comes from God, in what is termed 'the principle of its very being'. In other words, the very existence or principle of being of the creature is one of a continuous dependence on God, implying that God did not create and leave the creature from that point onward for self-dependence.⁹ In addition to these views, Aquinas saw creation as being sacramental i.e. as the visible expression of the transcendence of God by virtue of his presence in creation, although not in a pantheistic sense. He explained that the goal of creation lies in reaching its ultimate purpose or attainment, which is to be united with God. Whilst the views of Thomas Aquinas support the doctrine of creation, it also opens itself up to varying critiques. The obvious critique would be the similar path it treads to that of pantheism, although not overtly so, with regard to the transcendence of God. Notably, he also advocates contradictory views on creation by both affirming it and denying it, at the same time. For example, he adds that 'grace does not destroy nature but perfects it' whilst also arguing, that there will be no final consummation of creation. Notwithstanding this, Aquinas had a notable influence over medieval theology and subsequently, on Reformed and Catholic theologians.

1.3.1.3. The views of the Sixteenth Century Reformers

The sixteenth century defined itself, by the opposing theological views of the reformers of the period, as opposed to the mainstream Roman Catholic Church of the period. Martin Luther's quest, in search for a loving and gracious God, enamored his discovery of justification by faith through grace in Jesus Christ. This brings the sinner into a place of right-standing or ascent to God. This implied the issue of sin and its effect on humanity, was a primary consideration of the day. As such, no human being has the right to come into a place of ascent to God, because of his/her sinful condition. The Reformers saw

⁹ *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q.45 art.3(c).

Christ as the means of provision by God, to redeem humanity from its sinful condition, and accomplish the work of redemption and reconciliation. This implies that God in Christ provides the means of ascent for humanity to fellowship with him. This is accomplished through the descent of Christ in the context of his incarnation. It is in this sense, that the Reformers understood the concept of grace within creation, as an act of the benevolence of God through Christ. This was a departure from the medieval views of God and creation. It resulted in a shift of emphasis from the doctrine of creation itself, to that of the effect of *sin on humanity and the doctrine of salvation*. This became the chief preoccupation of reform theology amongst other aspects of emphasis, with Luther maintaining the presence of God as hidden within creation. Luther asserted that creation should not be considered as a transcendental occurrence at the beginning of time. Instead it should be seen as a divine act of God that is part of the present.¹⁰ Ironically, Luther's views created a separatist view of the relationship between nature and grace stemming from his advocating of the distinction between, the kingdom of the world and the kingdom of God. This resulted in a false dichotomy between the sociopolitical realities of the world comparative to the gospel of Christ. This overemphasis on the doctrines of sin and salvation resulted in humanity being placed in a dominant position, thus minimizing the focus on nature. This served as a foundation to the development of later Western thought showing the dominance of humanity over nature. Humanity no longer saw itself as a part of creation but as something to be empirically investigated and understood as something in and of itself. This gave rise to the birth of modern empirical natural science and eventually such developments resulted in increasing technologies. This enabled new discoveries with such findings being applied to a wide range of fields increasing the processes of industrialization through the harnessing and ensuing exploitation of nature for furthering development. This evolution of Western thought with the dominance of humanity over nature, meant that God was no longer a necessary consideration, for the understanding of nature.

¹⁰ Santmire, H.P. 1985. *The Travail of Nature: The Ambiguous Ecological Promise of Christian Theology*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press. p. 129.

1.3.1.4. The Newtonian View

This increase in secularism of Christian thought through the dominant roles of science, was also the shaping influence of Western society, with varying contributors such as Rene Descartes (1596-1650), Galileo Galilei (1560-1642), Isaac Newton (1652-1727) and Charles Darwin (1809-1882). This Newtonian view of humanity, nature and the inter-relationship with the world became the world-view of the day and is still prevalent today. Isaac Newton's discovery mapped the way forward for modern science. He discovered that nature could be both understood and explained in terms of particles in motion. He added that all matter is a composite of small constituent indestructible particles. Newton introduced basic laws to explain occurrences in nature through the use of mathematical computation with practical experimentation. His views on gravity, mass and motion enabled rational scientific explanations for what could not be previously explained. This was referred to as Newtonian Mechanics, which ruled out any possibility of explanation that did not fit into this view. It became the acceptable view of reality which sought to explain everything rationally thus effectively removing human subjectivity. It ruled out the role of God as the creator of the universe thus emphasizing a mechanistic view of creation above God. The Christian view of God as the creator was at best accepted, but he was relegated to the world of theology, thus drawing a distinction between the modern age and religion. A convenient compromise between science and theology was to allow theology to offer an explanation, in terms of the divine acts of God, in areas or gaps where science could not provide an adequate answer. God was no longer an absolute but was now reduced to an individual's choice, of acceptance or rejection within this Newtonian worldview. The redemptive plan of God focused singularly on humanity and not as an occurrence within the framework of nature i.e. nature was not considered as a part of this redemptive plan. Furthermore, this type of individualistic approach to God encouraged, separateness as opposed to personhood, and the mutual inter-relatedness of social relationships amongst fellow human beings within the natural environment. This Newtonian worldview, a largely Western approach, gave rise to a type of dominance verses subservience relationship within the social strata of human relationships. Thus over the preceding centuries Imperialism and colonialism from the West came to be the

sweeping force over the less dominant or the more subservient of the human population. This was linked with Christianity, at often times the spread of the gospel within a mission context used as the excuse, to justify imperialist expansion. This created a dualistic problem, with the first being evident in exploitation, wars, conquests, and slavery affecting human populations. The second problem was the destruction of the environment through the exploitation of natural resources.¹¹

1.3.1.5. Defining Creation

There are varying definitions that theologians offer with regard to creation. Strong defines “creation” as “...designed, origination by a transcendent and personal God...that free act of the triune God by which in the beginning for his own glory he made, without the use of preexisting materials, the whole visible and invisible universe.”¹² Karl Barth offers a similar definition of creation but sees it as the first of a series of works by God himself whilst it is distinct from God.¹³ E.Y. Mullins emphasizes that creation is a result of the works or creative acts of God.¹⁴ The Biblical records, particularly of the first two chapters of Genesis, make clear that creation is separate from God but is a direct result of the work of his power as the Creator. At this juncture it is necessary to consider the Biblical accounts with reference to creation. The Biblical account of creation, as supposed in the Old and New Testaments, provide the basis from which any examination of the Christian perspective of creation should proceed.

1.3.2. The Old Testament

1.3.2.1. The Pentateuch

The Pentateuch abounds with relevant passages that make reference to the creative acts of God. The very first book of the Bible is accorded the title of Genesis or ‘beginnings’. James Leo Garret summarizes the key aspects of creation within the framework of the six

¹¹ Barbour, I.G. 1966. *Issues in Science and Religion*. London: SCM Press. p. 36.

¹² Strong, A.H. 1970. *Systematic Theology*. Philadelphia: Judson Press. p. 371.

¹³ Edwards, J.O (trans). 1958. *Church Dogmatics. Vol. III*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark. p. 42.

¹⁴ Mullins, Edgar Young. 1917. *The Christian Religion in Its Doctrinal Expression*. Philadelphia: Judson Press. p. 251.

days of creation as indicated in Genesis 1:1-2:4. He points out that each day is an indicator of a composite act of God that is self-contained, yet mutually related to, the successive acts of creation.¹⁵

CREATIVE ACT OF GOD	SPECIFIC DAY	SCRIPTURAL REFERENCE
Creation of the heavens and the earth	----- ----- ----- -----	Genesis 1:1
Creation of light and darkness i.e. Day and Night	First Day	Genesis 1:2
Creation of the firmament	Second Day	Genesis 1:6-8
Separation of the dry land (earth) from the waters (seas)	Third Day	Genesis 1:9-10
Creation of plants and trees	Third Day	Genesis 1:11-13
Creation of the sun, moon and stars	Fourth Day	Genesis 1:14-19
Creation of fish and fowl	Fifth Day	Genesis 1: 20-23
Creation of cattle, creeping things and wild animals	Sixth Day	Genesis 1: 24-25
Creation of humanity i.e. male then female in the likeness of God	Sixth Day	Genesis 1:26-28; 2:7
God rested	Seventh Day	Genesis 2:2-3

Bernard L. Ramm states in this regard, that the creative acts of God were successively climatic, in that each particular thing created was progressive in dimension and nature. The last thing that God created therefore implies, that it occupies a place of honour as the highest of God's creation.¹⁶ Man represents the last creative act of God, and is in a sense, a completion to all that he had made. This thought is echoed in Genesis 1:28, in God's commandment of purpose, that man be fruitful, multiply and have dominion over the earth. All that was created before him, now came under the stewardship of the one that had been created last. Humanity is connected with the created order, as being part of and caretaker

¹⁵ Garret, J.L. 1996. *Systematic Theology: Biblical, Historical & Evangelical*. Grand Rapids: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing Company. p. 292.

¹⁶ Ramm, L.B. 1954. *The Christian View of Science and Scripture*. Grand Rapids: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing Company. p. 172.

over it. Early scholars like George Smith (1840-1876) theorized that the Genesis accounts were similar to, if not dependent on, Babylonian mythology. He based his research on translations of the Babylonian creation accounts of the '*Enuma elish*'. He interpreted the account of Genesis in this light and called it, '*The Chaldean Account of Genesis*.'¹⁷ Other scholars like Eric Charles Rust and James Orr, disagree citing marked differentiation between both. Orr states that the Genesis account is logical, organized and monotheistic. It is the clearest conveyance of God and his acts of creation. This is opposite and contradictory to the *Enuma elish*, which he sees as "...polytheistic, mythological, fantastic in character to the highest degree."¹⁸ Other passages in the Pentateuch that refer to creation, include Genesis 14:19-22 and Deuteronomy 4:32.

1.3.2.2. The Prophets

There are clear indications in the prophetic books that God is the creator of all things. The writers make reference to God as the creator of the heavens and earth and the one who has formed all things (Amos 4:13; Jeremiah 10:12,16, 27:5). The prophet Isaiah uses the Hebrew word *bara* ' which means "to create", no less than 16 times, between chapters 40-55. It carries the idea that God is the one who fashions, forms, produces or creates. The prophet conveys the idea that God is the creator who "...stretched out the heavens" (42:5; 44:34; 45:12); "...spread forth the earth" (45:18) and who "created man" (45:12).

1.3.2.3. The Wisdom Literature

The poetic books or wisdom literature by far, express most succinctly, this aspect of creation as the handiwork of God. Job receives a response from God in response to his predicament of suffering. God challenges Job by describing his creation of the universe, the earth and all in it, informing Job that he rules all by his great power and compassion. Chapters 38-40 contain the poetic challenge that God himself describes to Job of his awesome design of creation. Consider the following passage from chapter 38: 4-19: -

¹⁷ Garret, J.L. 1996. *Systematic Theology: Biblical, Historical & Evangelical. Vol. 2.* Grand Rapids: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

¹⁸ Orr, J. 1905. *God's Image in Man and Its Defacement in Light of Modern Denials.* London: Hodder & Stoughton. p. 38.

⁴Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell me, if you know so much. ⁵ Do you know how its dimensions were determined and who did the surveying? ⁶ What supports its foundations, and who laid its cornerstone ⁷ as the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy? ⁸ “Who defined the boundaries of the sea as it burst from the womb, ⁹ and as I clothed it with clouds and thick darkness...¹⁴ For the features of the earth take shape as the light approaches, and the dawn is robed in red...¹⁸ Do you realize the extent of the earth? Tell me about it if you know! ¹⁹ “Where does the light come from, and where does the darkness go? ²⁰ Can you take it to its home? Do you know how to get there? ²¹ But of course you know all this! For you were born before it was all created, and you are so very experienced! ¹⁹

The above verses allude to another vital aspect that relates to creation, and that is God as the originator and source of all things in existence. It indicates the self-existence and the pre-existence of God in relation to every created thing. God challenged Job, in terms of his lack of understanding of his creative power, when he brought all things into existence. The Psalms capture similar thoughts, as outlined earlier in our discussion of Psalm 8. Other similar Psalms include 24:1-2; 74:16; 89:12; 95:4-5; 96:5; 136:7-9 and 147:4. The book of Proverbs in chapter 8:22-31, whilst highlighting the necessity and benefit of wisdom, mentions all of the works of God.

1.3.3. The New Testament

1.3.3.1. The Gospels

Two particular texts that convey this theme are Mark 13:19 and John 1:1-3. Jesus, in speaking about the signs of the times and the end of the age, refers to beginning of creation in Mark 13:19. John’s opening verse of his gospel is akin to the opening verse of Genesis. The phrase “in the beginning” is the opening verse in both books. The beginning in Genesis is the obvious reference to the beginning of creation, whilst John is emphasizing Jesus as the ultimate eternal expression of God in pre-existent form, who became incarnated. This is foundational to the point that John makes in verse 3, “All things were

¹⁹ *New King James Version*. 1992. Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

made through, and without Him nothing was made that was made.” All of creation owes its existence to Jesus Christ – the divine agent of creation.

1.3.3.2. The Acts of the Apostles

The Apostles refer to God as the creator of the heavens, earth and humanity by employing a creation formula. There are three references in Acts. Peter and John use the first allusion in 4:24 “Lord, you are God who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them.” Paul in Lystra wrought a work healing on the disabled man. The people in response to seeing the cripple man stand up and walk, accord Paul and Barnabus as Hermes and Zeus, the Greek gods worshipped in ancient Lystra. Paul responds by correcting a false notion because the people were presenting offerings to them. He points to the “living God, who made the heaven.” The third reference is recorded in Acts 17:24 in Paul’s address to the Areopagus, “God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth...”

1.3.3.3. The Epistles

Paul, in support of his admonitions to the various churches under his care, draws attention to the necessity of understanding God as the one true creator. In his second letter to the church at Corinth, quoting from Genesis 1:3, he draws a parallelism. He compares God’s commanding of light into existence, which dispelled darkness, with the gospel of Christ as the light of truth. In Romans he refers to God as the one “... who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did” (1:17). Paul in Colossians chapter 1:16-17, demonstrates Christ as the creator of “...all things ...in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.” Peter in his first epistle, in chapter 1:19, refers to God as the faithful creator. The writer to the Hebrews, in delineating the concept of faith in the fourth chapter writes, “By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.”

1.3.3.4. The Apocalyptic Literature

Revelation paints a grand picture of God as the exalted creator of the heavens and the earth (Rev. 4:11; 10:6). It describes the demise of creation as a result of the curse of sin and the ensuing judgment of God. It also speaks of the redemption of humanity and the creation of a new heaven and new earth (Rev. 21).

1.4. The Nature of Creation

To fully understand the concept of a new creation in Christ, one must understand the nature of the redemptive work of Christ. It is necessary to consider creation as a special work of God, and as a distinctively free act of God. This implies that God was not under any obligation to bring the created order into existence. It was a free act of a sovereign being. Had he chosen not to bring it into existence, he would have lacked nothing in, and of himself. He is in every sense perfect and complete within himself. There was no need for self-actualization in the divine self of God in that God was not dependant on his creation in any way. This brings into sharper focus the special place that creation occupies in the works of God. L. Gilkey speaks of the freedom of God as Creator, in that he did not create out of necessity or compulsion, instead out of freedom.²⁰ For God to have created the world out of necessity implies that he is dependent on the world. God's freedom in creating the world is based on love. It must not be mistaken as some overly strong emotional force by which God created. The same would apply to freedom. Creation in light of what Gilkey states, is both an act and expression of divine love.²¹ This necessitates a co-operation between the freedom of the divine in creation, as well as, God's personal and continued care of his creation. This raises the question of why God choose to create the world and everything in it? Pannenberg ventures to answer this question with his assertion that God had only one reason to create the world, which is self-evident in creation, i.e. the reason of existence. He states that "God graciously confers existence on creatures, an existence alongside his own divine being and in distinction from him... we

²⁰ Gilkey, L. 1959. *Maker of Heaven and Earth*. New York: Doubleday. p. 58.

²¹ Moltmann, J. 1985. *God in Creation: A New Theology of Creation and the Spirit of God*. London: SCM Press. p. 75.

see here the intention of the Creator, which is inseparably connected with the act of creation and which has the existence of creatures as its goal.”²²

Hans Bloomberg criticizes this view of creation as a constituent in the freedom of God. He draws a contrast between the created and the creator. He contends that God’s creation of humanity and the order of the universe, from the perspective of the created, rest on the eventuality of the Creator’s whim or notions.²³ Bloomberg’s views suggest that creation is an act of the caprice of God. This view is incompatible with the divine attributes, particularly the eternity of God, since creation would constitute an act of the eternal creator within the context of eternity. Furthermore, what militates against Bloomberg’s views is that the idea of pure caprice suggests an impulsive or momentary act. As indicated earlier in our discussion the creative acts of God occurred in six days as a systematized and planned work of God. It indicates that the pattern of God’s working was with a specific outcome in mind. Even in the creation of man, the creator bestows divine purpose on his creation to have dominion over the earth and to be fruitful in it (Genesis 2). For God to have created the world in mere caprice would imply his abandonment of the world. In other words, God created the world and had no further interest in it. This denies the intention and purpose behind the works of God, rendering the entire created order as an unplanned event. This would imply that humanity is an arbitrarily created work, the result of the caprice of God. This denies the concept of preservation within creation.

1.4.1. Creation and Providence

Scripture is clear that God is personally involved in his creation and has not abandoned it. Whilst he has created it, he also sustains it (Hebrews 1:3). He is said to hold it together (Colossians 1:7); have its existence (Revelation 4:11) and to create life in it (Psalm 104:14). This is highlighted in the incarnation of Christ thus emphasizing the personal attention and love of the creator in the redemption of his creatures (John 1). These allude to the comparative nature between creation and providence. Connected to this comparison

²² Pannenberg, W. 1991. *Systematic Theology. Volume II*. Grand Rapids: Michigan: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing Company. p. 20.

²³ Bloomberg, Hans. 1966. *Die Legitimität der Neuzeit*. Frankfurt am Main. pp. 102-200.

are the following twin concepts, which suggest past, present and future connotations. God's works of creating and preserving are often spoken of in the same passages. Both concepts intimate God as the originator of all things created, and that the source of its existence is contained in him. Apart from him nothing would be in existence.²⁴

1.4.1.1. God produced and still produces

The opening verses of the Bible commence with the theme of creation. Genesis 1:1 accounts for the reader "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth", which shows the original act of production as in past tense. Yet in Genesis 1:11 we read that God is still producing vegetation. The former suggests origination whilst the latter, operation.

1.4.1.2. God rested and is still at work

Genesis 2:3 accounts that God rested from his works of creating or origination. In contrast, Jesus in John 5:17 affirms, that God is continually at work. The former suggests commencement in creation whilst the latter, continuance in creation.

1.4.1.3. God laid the foundations of the earth and is still making it productive

The Psalmist in Psalms 104:5 mentions that God is the one who laid the foundations of the earth. In the fourteenth verse of the same Psalm we read that God is involved in "bringing forth" from the earth. The former suggests origination whilst the latter, operation.

1.4.1.4. God brought the world into existence and yet keeps it in being

The Apostle Paul in Acts 17:24, whilst addressing the Areopagus, mentions that it was God who made the worlds and everything in it. In Acts 17:28 he declares, "for in Him we live and move and have our being..." The former suggests that God is the cause of its becoming whilst the latter, the cause of being i.e. past and present.

²⁴ Geisler, N.L. 1999. *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*. Michigan: Baker Books. pp. 165-168.

1.4.1.5. God created the world and yet holds it together

Colossians 1:16-17 expresses a similar line of thinking of God causing things to come into existence, whilst also causing it to continue in existence. "For by Him all things were created...through Him and for Him...in Him all things consist."

1.4.1.6. God made the universe and yet he still sustains it

Hebrews 1:2-3 conveys the Trinitarian involvement in creation "...by His Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds...and upholding all things by the word of His power." The Father created the worlds through the son and holds it (present tense) together in Christ. The former suggests that God is the one who has caused creation to 'come to be' whilst the latter, the one who causes it 'to continue to be.'

1.4.1.7. The cosmos was created by God and yet has its being through Him

Revelation 4:11 describes God as the one who 'created' all things and all things 'exist' because of his will. The Apostle John is referring to the act of creation and continued preservation.

This implies that it was not possible for God to have created out of caprice. He did not create the worlds and then abandon it. Instead, what the above points illustrate most clearly, is that God as Creator was the necessary source for all things to have been brought into existence. It is the result of the works of his hands. God as Creator is necessary in order to continually preserve that which he has created.

1.4.2. The Concept of Creation

At this juncture, it is necessary to consider the Biblical concept of creation in terms of its origination. The Old Testament is most valuable as the starting point for a conceptual understanding of the nature of creation. Throughout the Old Testament we read of the covenantal relationship that God pursued with the nation of Israel in the forms of the revelation of his nature and person. This was done through the prophets, priests, types and

shadows in the Tabernacle, the institution of the laws and so forth. The concept of creation was an expression of the covenant keeping God with his people. Creation was and is, the forum that God chose, to reveal and express himself to his people. He brought all things into existence and through it, acts to fulfill his plans and purposes. Many have argued that the Old Testament understanding of creation has been influenced by other creation cosmogonies of the Near Eastern religions of the time. R.P. Knierim suggests that ancient Israel were exposed to and familiar with, the creation ideas amongst other Near Eastern religions of the time.²⁵ The acts of the God of Israel did not occur within a vacuum wherein there were no other religious beliefs of the day. The Canaanite religion had a particularly strong influence in the ancient times. The chief Canaanite god was called El who was also referred to as the “creator of heaven and earth.” The father of the Israelite nation, Abraham is said to have connected the God of Israel with that of El. This is illustrated in the incident of the King of Salem, the high priest Melchizedek in Genesis 14:19. The title *El Elyon* or “most high God” is mentioned in reference to the God of Abram. The God of Abraham is later equated with the God of Moses, i.e. *Yahweh* (Exodus 3). Hence *El Elyon* and *Yahweh* were associated as one and the same God, and yet also came to be identified as similar to, the god *El* or the ‘creator god.’²⁶ J. van Seters asserts that *El Elyon* and *Yahweh* were not two separate deities being worshipped by the Israelites. He cites Exodus 6:3 as evidence that the Israelites whilst in bondage in Egypt, did not personally know the God, whom they were worshipping. It is also interesting to note that in Exodus 3:13, Moses asks the God of Israel to identify himself by name. He further adds that in other Old Testament passages like Isaiah 43:5, 10; 45:22 and 46:9, the title *El* is used. This lends support to late dating of the references used in Genesis. This is indicative of the attempt to identify *Yahweh* with *El* as one and the same deity. Notwithstanding this, Seters believes that the possibility of the inclusion of archaic influences in a conceptual sense as preserved by the ancient traditions, could have been passed on. This could have taken on a new understanding in the Exodus framework²⁷.

²⁵ Knierim, R.P., “Cosmos and History in Israel’s Theology,” in *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 3 (1981) pp. 59-123.

²⁶ Cross, F.M. 1973. *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*. Cambridge, MA. pp. 1-75.

²⁷ Seters, van J. *Biblica* 61 (1980). pp. 220-223.

F. M. Cross purports to a similar theory on the plausibility, that there could have been a fusion of the Canaanite god *El* based on the evidences of Exodus chapters 3 and 6, that the ancient Israelites worshipped *El* or a form of *El*.²⁸ However, these are at best theoretical constructs. An alternative thought could be that the God of the Israelites was completely independent from *El*, but occurred against such a backdrop of influence, thus resulting in an infusion of both. This is not entirely accurate. Thus a more accurate explanation would be that *Yahweh* did not fuse with the concepts of *El* thus creating an alternative deity. Instead *Yahweh* redefined the traditions of the patriarchs, the creator *El* and the *El* of Jerusalem, into what the Old Testament defined *Yahweh* as. G. Von Rad theorized that the Israelite understanding of creation is as a result of the covenantal relationship that God had with them. Their experiences of the continued revelations and interventions of *Yahweh* throughout history, better served to enhance their belief and understanding of creation. The converse is therefore, that the covenantal history reaches back to creation, which is the point of origin for this relationship.²⁹ What is inherent to varying religions and/or cultures is the origin of creation and is therefore something that is not necessarily new. What defines the nature and character of the creation account in Israel's understanding thereof, are their experiences of the divine actions of *Yahweh* in history. This has defined the creation of all things as an act of *Yahweh* and is connected with the Biblical conceptions of God. This would explain the exclusiveness that *Yahweh* claims in worship as expressed in the Old Testament (Exodus 20:3; Deut. 4:14). This exclusiveness to worship, according to W.H. Schmidt, is the apparent motive behind the change or adaptation of cosmological functions of *El* or *Baal*.³⁰ Similarly, H.H. Schmidt points out that Abraham's identification of the God that he worshipped with *El* is not identification in the sense, that it is the one and same God of the ancient near eastern religions. Instead, it is a contextualisation or approximation that arose out of the experiences of the worship of *Yahweh*, in comparison to the worship in the *El* or *Baal* religions. This alludes to parallel or identical expressions

²⁸ Cross, F.M. 1973. *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*. Cambridge, MA. pp. 1-75

²⁹ Rad, von G. *OT Theology. 2 Vols.* New York: 1962-1965. I. p. 139.

³⁰ Schmidt, W.H. "Die Frage nach der Einheit des Alten Testaments – im Spannungsfeld von Religionsgeschichte und Theologie," *Jahrbuch für biblische Theologie* 2 (1987) 33-57.

that arose between the worship of *Yahweh* and *El* or *Baal*.³¹ This logic of thinking perpetuated the thought, that the God, who revealed himself at Sinai and throughout history in lieu of the nation of Israel, could not be different from the God who brought the worlds into existence. Hence, the actions of the God of Israel in history, led to identification with the salvation history of the same God who originated all things. What is also interesting to consider, is that not only was *El* associated with *Yahweh*, but with *Baal* as well. *Baal* was seen as the creator and sustainer of the world within the cosmogonies of the Ancient near Eastern religions. This creator and sustainer attribute accorded to *Baal* was transferred to *Yahweh*. In light of this, we see *Yahweh* using both history and nature as the framework within which he chooses to act and reveal himself. He is portrayed as the ruler over chaos, and the one who brought order into it, by his great power. We read in the exilic psalms such as psalm 74:12; 77:12; 89:6 and 104:5 of this chaos motif. This is somewhat similar to the view in the *Enuma Elish*. The problem with this view, however, is that unlike the Babylonian epic or the Ugaritic-Canaanite *Baal* in which there was a struggle with chaos and victory ensued, the Genesis account is clear that God has unrestricted power over all things. He did not battle with chaos, but through the divinely spoken word of his command, brought all things into being.³² This is a distinguishing characteristic between the God of Israel and those of ancient Near Eastern cultures. It indicates the unlimited power of God, to act within his own freedom to create as he wills, and to bring into existence as he chooses. Within the Deutero-Isaiah context, there is a new thought introduced with God's work in creation serving as the presupposing foundation, to a greater and new work that he would demonstrate in history. This new work akin to creation is the work of salvation that he would use to create a new creation. One may argue that God's work as creator can be extended to include the work of salvation through Jesus Christ. Through Christ, God is able to create anew. He is able to bring a new species in the spiritual dynamic of the image of Christ. This would clearly define the basis of our discussion of 'a new creation in Christ' as a work of the creator God who brought the

³¹ Schmid, H.H. "Jahweglaube und altorientalisches Weltordnungsdenken," in *Altorientalische Welt in der alttestamentlichen Theologie*. (Zurich, 1974), pp. 31-63.

³² Pannenberg, W. 1991. *Systematic Theology. Volume II*. Grand Rapids: Michigan: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing Company. p. 12.

worlds into existence. God chose to work within history to inaugurate the process of creating a people in restored fellowship with him, redeemed from sin through the salvation work of Christ. The concluding point in this issue would be to highlight the uniqueness of the Biblical God, in contrast to the other near eastern religions of the time.³³

1.5. The Purpose of Creation

1.5.1. Defining Creation

1.5.1.1. Immediate Creation

The question of the origin of creation has long been an issue of considerable debate. Varying fields of study have attempted to answer the question of how did creation come into existence. None have been able to adequately answer the question of origins. Science has proceeded from an empirical framework, thus ruling out anything outside this domain of study. At best, it has been able to provide theoretical constructs from which one may proceed, to understand the question of origins. The starting point for any individual Christian would be the scriptural referent of Hebrews 11:3, which suggests that the origin of creation be accepted on the basis of faith in God. Scripture provides solution to the question of origin, in the opening book of Genesis, as found in the first two chapters. This is termed the Mosaic account of creation. It points to the existence of the physical and spiritual world, or material and immaterial existences, as been created by God. In attempting to understand the purpose of creation it would be useful to offer a definitive approach to it. Thiessen asserts that the word 'create' is used in two definitive senses in Scripture. The first sense is that of immediate creation. He defines it as: "...that free act of the triune God whereby in the beginning and for his own glory, without the use of preexisting materials or secondary causes, he brought into being, immediately and instantaneously, the whole visible and invisible universe...the first act of God *ad extra*"³⁴ Immediate creation, in contrast to pantheistic views of creation, is a free act of God involving the full and equal participation of the Trinity. The word 'immediate' suggests an instant and direct creative work of God that did not require his use of any pre-existing

³³ *Ibid.*, p.13.

³⁴ Thiessen, H.C. 1979. *Lectures in Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: Michigan: WmB.Eerdmans Publishing Company. p. 111.

materials to create. He brought it into existence by his own violation and for his own glory. Immediate creation suggests an immediate act of God, manifesting immediate results, both visible and invisible or material and immaterial objects in creation. Furthermore, it suggests an all-encompassing act of God that was all-inclusive of every existing thing. This concept is evident in the opening verses of Genesis 1:1 “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” This verse supports the *ex nihilo* or ‘out of nothing’ facet of the immediate creation concept. The fact that God created the heavens and the earth suggests several things: - 1) there were no pre-existing materials that God used to create the heavens and the earth. Hence, it was created out of nothing. 2) The created order was brought into existence, by the free will and violation of God as the sovereign Creator. 3) The universe is not eternal but has been created. It is testament to a greater being that exists outside of it. We shall now briefly consider the *ex nihilo* or ‘out of nothing’ facet of the immediate creation, in contrast with two other views that seek to explain the origins of the universe.

1.5.1.1.1. Three Differing Views of Creation

There are three basic views that have been offered to explain the origins of creation: -³⁵

- The first group are the Pantheists or *ex Deo* or ‘out of God’ proponents. They hold to the view that the material universe arose out of the impersonal nature of God, as opposed to it being the work of a divine creator, who acted outside of himself in his own freedom.
- Materialism or *ex materia* or ‘out of pre-existing material’ proponents are the second group. This includes the atheists and dualists. They maintain that God created out of pre-existing matter and does not involve an original creative work of God.
- The third group are the Theists or the *ex nihilo* or ‘out of nothing’ proponents. They advocate that God brought the worlds into existence, without the use of pre-existing materials, for his own glory and purpose.

³⁵ Geisler, N.L. 1999. *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*. Michigan: Baker Books. pp. 172- 175.

i) *Creation ex Materia*

In discussing this view, one must commence with an interpretation of the worldview on materialism. The Dualists or Materialists view all matter as eternal. Matter or physical energy cannot be created or destroyed i.e. it has always been and will always be. This is best expressed in the first law of thermodynamics, which states that energy is constant. It cannot be created or destroyed. Within this school of creation *ex materia*, there are two opposing groups, those who hold to the role of God in creation and those who do not. The former group included the ancient Greek philosophers. They held to a dualist orientation, in that God and matter always existed concurrently. Plato expressed the thought that creation is simply God's reshaping or reforming of an already existing matter into what he deemed necessary. He stated that matter was formless (chaos) and existed alongside God (*Demiurgos*), who through forms (ideas), structured the formless into specific matter (cosmos).³⁶ The latter group consists of the agnostics and atheists. They hold to matter as the only certainty that has been in existence. They preclude the existence of God from the realm of the origin of creation. Among those who supported this view was Karl Marx (1818-1883), who sought to redefine this aspect of materialism in the context of socialism.³⁷ Similarly, the astronomer Carl Sagan popularized the view that the cosmos is the only certain thing that has always been in existence. God is therefore, a creation of man. Evolution fitted within this category and explained the origin of life as the result of random interplay between matter, time and chance.³⁸ There are several problems with these views: - 1) to suggest that creation was formed and that it did not originate, would mean that the universe always existed. 2) To suggest that God is not an originator or builder but a former of things, implies that he is not the source of all things. 3) Matter is equated with God as existing with him. God is therefore not sovereign over the universe, and has limited power. 4) Creation was not the work of an intelligent being. Hence, all of creation is not an original work brought about in the love and freedom of an all-powerful creator.

³⁶ Hamilton, E. & Cairns, H. (eds.) 1964. "Timaeus", in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*. New York: Pantheon.

³⁷ Niebuhr, R. (ed). 1964. *Marx and Engels on Religion*. New York: Schocken.

³⁸ Sagan, C. 1980. *Cosmos*. New York: Random House.

ii) *Creation ex Deo*

The advocates of this view hold to the existence of a god. As above, within this school there exist two categories of thought. The first group is the Absolute Pantheists, who believe that matter is really an illusion and only the mind or spirit exists. Advocates of this view included the Greek philosopher, Parmenides and the Hindu Philosopher, Shankara. Parmenides argued that everything exists in a unitary state and therefore, all is one. To assert that more than one thing exists, is absurdity. When one adds the question of creation and origins to Parmenides, then it would mean that only god exists whilst creation does not. Creation is an emanation from god in the same way a dream proceeds from the mind. It is purely a reality or illusion. God is the essence of reality and everything else is an illusion.³⁹ The Hindu philosopher described the relationship between God and reality as illusory. Shankara argued that the world or *Braham* upon closer examination is only an illusion or *maya*. In the same token, when an individual examines his/her physical body it is only an illusion of the soul, which is the real construct that lies beneath the illusion.⁴⁰

The second group is the Nonabsolute Pantheists who hold to the multiplicity within the unity of God. For example, as drops of water collide together forming a puddle, so to all things are essentially one and merge into one infinite puddle or pond. Among those who supported this view were, Plotinus (205-270) a neoplatonic philosopher, Benedict Spinoza (1632-1677) a modern philosopher and Radhakrishnan, the Hindu philosopher. *Creation ex deo* subscribes to several views regarding the origin of the world. Firstly, there is no distinction between Creator and creation, as both are seen as one. One is a reflection of the other existing on opposite sides of the same reality. Secondly, the relationship between creator and creation is an eternal one. This implies that the universe is as old as God, in the context of age. Thirdly, creation consists of the same substance as God i.e. both are of the same substance and nature. Creation is a part of the Creator just as God is a part of creation. For example, nature is seen as existing as a part of God and therefore, God is in nature i.e. trees, water, animals etc. Fourthly, humanity is seen as God. It is believed that

³⁹ Kirk, G.S. et al. 1964. 'Proem' in *The Presocratic Philosophers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁴⁰ Prabhavananda, Swami and Manchester, Frederick (trans). 1957. *The Upanishads: Breath of the Eternal*. New York: Mentor.

man needs to self-actualize into God, since all of creation is an emanation from God. There are several problems with these views: 1) Pantheism ignores that there is a distinction between the finite and infinite or the contingent and necessary. Deductive reasoning would prove that pantheism is at best, contradictory. Creation is finite and contingent i.e. consider human beings as an example of this. A human being is not eternal, unchanging and infinite which makes the possibility of being finite, changeable and temporary simultaneously contradictory. All that is in existence is simply because God has willed it to be. 2) The universe is not eternal since it does not exist alongside God and neither can it be equated with him. God simply 'was' before he brought the universe in existence. There was none beside him nor before him, he always was. 3) The pantheist view that God is in all and all is in God is open to criticism. If creation and God are made of the same substance, and the substance and nature of God is eternal; similarly creation should be eternal. If God is in the trees and water, then the substance of God should be in it, thus making it eternal. The degradation and pollution of the planet has resulted in natural resources being destroyed. This implies that creation is not eternal and can be destroyed.

iii) *Creation ex Nihilo*

The doctrine of *ex Nihilo* rests on the argument of theistic origins of creation. It is a Latin phrase that is defined as "out of nothing." The premise of this view is that God created the world out of nothing without the use of pre-existing materials. Many have criticized this view citing it as unbiblical and meaningless. Critics have argued that the phrase "out of" is suggestive of pre-existing material. This is contradictory to the view of the *ex Nihilo* proponents because it insists that there was no pre-existing material. However, the theists respond by stating that to use the phrase "out of nothing" is merely, a positive way of stating a negative concept. This would imply the use of "out of nothing" as opposed to saying "out of something" indicates that God did not use any pre-existing material to create the universe. To state it another way would be, a movement from nonexistence to existence, or from a state of nothing to a state of something. This does not entail that 'nonexistence' is a state 'out of' which God chose to create. The prefix *ex* as used by

theists, is taken to refer to 'out of nothing' as opposed to the usage of the word by Pantheists and Atheists, in meaning 'out of something.' It can therefore be surmised that the tenets of *ex Materia* and *ex Deo* are incompatible with the theist view of God, which is best, represented by the *ex Nihilo* view.⁴¹ Consider the following deductions which hold the above statement true: - 1) A theistic God is an infinite being that is indivisibly and inherently one. He is unified within and of himself. He is transcendent and omnipresent. His presence fills the entire universe but he is not confined by it, nor limited to it. Pantheism confines the presence of God to the universe. God is not subject to the universe since he is without beginning and end. He exists, by his very nature as an uncaused being. In light of this, a theistic God cannot create *ex deo*. He is not a part of creation as to the division of his being, the investing his substance in the ecological world, and the cosmos at large. 2) A theistic God has no equal. He is self-existent and immutable, and therefore cannot create *ex Materia*. Matter or any other eternal substance cannot exist alongside God, as suggested in the dualist view of *ex Materia*, should this hold true then God would not be the only infinite being. The possibility of two infinite beings existing at the same time is problematic. If there were two infinite beings, then it necessitates that they would have to differ from each other. This is a contradiction in terms, because both are infinite thus the same type of being, and therefore cannot differ or be two different beings altogether. Neither can finite beings be infinite, because the potential to be so does not exist. Hence, deducing from our argument above, it could not have preexisted, thus cannot be eternal and cannot become God. 3) Finally, the argument from first cause is another important consideration. First cause suggests a beginning, and if the universe had a beginning then it could not have always existed and cannot be eternal, thus eliminating the *ex Materia* view.

The preceding discussion brings us to the question of what are the essential elements of the *ex Nihilo* view? There are three specific differences that exist between the Creator and the creation. These include the following: - 1) God and creation are radically different in that

⁴¹ Geisler, N.L. 1999. *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*. Michigan: Baker Books.

God is the cause of all things whilst, all things are the effect of his causing it to be. 2) God is self-existent and creation is dependent on him for its existence. 3) God created the space-time continuum and the universe. It was not created in time, suggesting that time existed before. Instead, the creation of the universe marked the beginning of time. The universe, in light of this, had a beginning. God exists outside of time whilst all of creation exists within time. A.H. Strong defines time and space as follows:

“ Yet time and space are not *substances*; neither are they *attributes* (qualities of substance); they are rather *relations* of finite existence... With finite existence they come into being; they are not mere regulative conceptions of our minds; they exist objectively, whether we perceive them or not.”⁴²

There is strong extrabiblical and biblical support for the *ex Nihilo* view. Among the extrabiblical support, evidence is found in the *Elba Archives*, “Lord of heaven and earth: the earth was not, you created it, the light of day was not, you created it...”⁴³ It is also found in 2 Maccabees 7:28, “Look at the heavens and the earth and see everything that is in them, and recognize that God did not make them out of the things that existed.”⁴⁴ In turning to biblical evidence, it is important to note that the *ex Nihilo* view does not rest on the employment of the Hebrew word *bara*, and the Greek word *ktizein*. Both words are interchangeable synonyms for the Hebrew word *asah*, and the Greek word *poiein*, as indicated in Genesis 1:1, Nehemiah 9:6 and Colossians 1:16ff.⁴⁵ Whilst the *ex Nihilo* is not directly stated, it is nonetheless implied. There are numerous and varying passages in both the Old and New Testaments that support the *ex Nihilo* view, such as Genesis 1:1-3, Psalm 104:30, 148:5, Matthew 19:4, Mark 13:19, John 17:5, Romans 4:17, 1 Corinthians 2:7, Colossians 1:16, 2 Timothy 1:9, and Revelation 1:4.

⁴² Strong, A.H. 1969. *Systematic Theology*. Old Tappan, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell Co. p.275.

⁴³ *Elba Archives* as cited in Geisler, N.L. 1999. *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*. Michigan: Baker Books. p.176.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

⁴⁵ Thiessen, H.C. 1979. *Lectures in Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: Michigan: WmB.Eerdmans Publishing Company. p. 112.

John J. Davis in his work *Prison to Paradise*, succinctly expresses the *ex Nihilo* view in terms of the contextual understanding that the Hebrew word *bara* provides, by stating: -

“ The verb *bara* (“to create”) expresses better than any other verb the idea of an absolute creation, or creation *ex nihilo*. The *qal* stem of this verb is employed exclusively in the Old Testament for God’s activity; the subject of the verb is never man. God is said to create “the wind” (Amos 4:13), “a clean heart” (Ps. 51:10), and ‘new heavens and a new earth’ (Isa. 65:17). Genesis 1 emphasizes three great beginnings, each initiated by God (cf. 1:1, 21, 27)...The creative act of God reflected in verse 1, therefore, involved no preexisting material; a sovereign, all-powerful God created the heavens and the earth from nothing.”⁴⁶

1.5.1.2. Mediate Creation

The second sense is that of mediate creation. This concept is somewhat different from immediate creation, as it refers to those acts of God, which did not originate *ex Nihilo*. It is the shaping, adapting and transforming of existing materials for his own purposes. The idea conveyed is that it is a combination of immediate and mediate creation. To commence with this discussion of mediate creation Genesis 1:2 would be appropriate, “And the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep...” There are different schools of thought as to the context of this verse. It is uncertain as to why the earth was without form and void. It is inferred that there must have been a cause and effect event that resulted in the earth being without form. This view creates several problems. Firstly, it raises the question of the nature of original creation i.e. immediate, mediate or both. Verses 1 and 2 are taken as a reference to immediate creation, and Genesis 1:3ff as mediate creation. Some are of the opinion that it could be a combination of immediate and mediate creation. For example, God could have created certain things in immediate creation such as the sun, seeds of plant life, waters etc. He later creates in a mediate sense by: - introducing alternate light apart from the sun, by commanding the earth to bring forth vegetation, and the bringing forth of living creatures. This same understanding would be

⁴⁶ Davis, J.J. 1975. *Paradise to Prison*. : Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker House Books. p. 40-41.

applicable to the creation of man, because in chapter 1:26 we read “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...” We then encounter in chapter 1:27, “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him...” and in chapter 2:7, “And the Lord God formed man of dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul.” If we read these verses in the context of the above thought, then God created the physical composition or body of man within immediate creation. Man became a living soul within mediate creation when God breathed into him. Secondly, should one hold to immediate creation, then what elements or aspects did God consider necessary to create within the framework of immediate creation? Apart from the heavens and the earth, it is suggested that angelic inhabitants of heaven were created (Isa. 42:5; Col. 1:16; Rev. 4:11; Job 38:7; Neh. 9:6).

Thirdly, how does one explain Genesis 1:2? Three theoretical views have been offered as possible explanations in this regard: - 1) The Gap theory was a view theorized by C.I. Scofield. It is suggested that the cataclysm that resulted in the earth being without form and void can be attributed to the judgment of God on Satan, resulting in his fall. Hence, what is recorded in verse 3 following, is God’s six days of recreating the earth. It is argued that Genesis 1:2 should read as, “And the earth *became* without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep...” instead of, “And the earth *was* without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep...” This is supported by the thought that God would not have created the earth as formless and empty. 2) The Restoration theory whilst maintaining the tenets of the above view, places the gap theory as occurring before Genesis 1:1. This implies that verse 1 is merely a summary statement of the works that God accomplished in the verses that follow. As above, verse 2 is indicative of the judgment of God, with no explanation given as to the nature or cause of the judgment.⁴⁷ 3) This has been the most acceptable of views, as it interprets verse 2 as conveying that the universe was in an incomplete state. What follows is an account given by Moses showing the progressive work of God, from a state of incompleteness to completion.

⁴⁷ Waltke, Bruce, K. 1974. *Creation and Chaos*. Portland, Oregon: Western Conservative Baptist Seminary.

Fourthly, the question of the six days of creation arises: - 1) Bernard Ramm articulates the first school of thought as six days of revelation, and not six days of creation. It was a revelation from God to Moses, as six days in the life of Moses, and not necessarily the six days of creation.⁴⁸ 2) The second school of thought is referred to as the day-Age theory, which in essence, is a type of theistic evolution. The theory advocates the six days are long eras of time in which God created the physical universe, and then guided the evolutionary processes over time. This theory seeks to explain the geological ages of the earth over time in light of God's involvement in the evolutionary processes of the earth. Theistic evolution has been taken a step further into what has been termed Threshold evolution. This suggests that God created new things, at his discretion, by stepping in at certain intervals in time. Threshold evolution rejects evolution on a macro-scale, but subscribes to it as occurring on a micro-level, suggesting changes within the living things that God himself had created.⁴⁹ 3) The third school of thought is to interpret the six days as six literal days of creation. This requires an explanation of the term "day." The Hebrew word for day is *yom*, which in the normal context simply means, twenty-four hours unless otherwise indicated. It is assumed that the context of Genesis 1 is referring to twenty-four hour periods. The proponents of this view cite several scriptural evidences in this regard. In the account of Genesis 1, numbers are used in series, suggesting twenty-four hour days. The phrase "evening and morning" denotes the same. In terms of the Jewish calendar, a literal twenty-four hour day ran from sunset to sunset. There is also a comparison of the days of creation to that of a normal week (Exodus 20:11).⁵⁰ One may respond to the above arguments by citing the following: - 1) whilst *yom* is taken to mean a twenty-four hour day, we do not know for certain the context of Genesis 1. One cannot base a view on majority opinion, which does not validate it. Genesis 2:4 uses the phrase "...in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens..." showing that the word *yom* is used consistently with reference to the entire creation account. When one compares 2 Peter 3:8 with Psalm 90:4,

⁴⁸ Ramm, L.B. 1954. *The Christian View of Science and Scripture*. Grand Rapids: Michigan: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing Company. p. 222.

⁴⁹ Camell, Edward, J. 1964. *An Introduction to Christian Apologetics*. Grand Rapids: Michigan: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing Company. p. 238.

⁵⁰ Geisler, N.L. 1999. *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*. Michigan: Baker Books. pp. 267-273.

a different understanding is given of the word *yom*, since a thousand years are as but one day to the Lord. 2) The numbering of the days in series cannot be taken as a reference to twenty-four hours. The Jewish calendar does not demand that numbers in series be taken as twenty-four hours. For example, when the prophet Hosea spoke in his book in chapter 6:1-2 of "... after two days he will revive us... on the third day he will restore us..." he was not referring a literal day, even though the days are numerical. 3) The phrase "evening and morning" is most certainly a reference to a literal day, but it does not mean that it is to be taken as such, in every context. If this phrase were to be taken literally, then it would not refer to a twenty-four period, but only to the period between late afternoon and evening till early morning. When one examines the text closely, the verse in Chapter 1:5 states "... And the evening and the morning were the first day", and not that the day itself consisted of an evening and a morning. It can be taken in a figurative sense as referring to, the end of a period of time and in scripture as cited above, there are numerous references i.e. "the day of salvation" (2 Corin. 6:2), "the day of fury" (Job 21:30), "the day of the Lord" (Amos 5:18) and so forth.

A final thought to consider in the aspect of mediate creation, is the age of the earth. How does one arrive at the possible age of the earth? Geology uses the Standard Geological Column, based on the dating of fossils in rock strata, to place a specific fossil in a specific time period. Geology has introduced the following time periods⁵¹: -

- Precambrian (3,500 million years and more)
- Paleozoic (270-3,500 million years)
- Mesozoic (135-270 million years)
- Cenozoic (present - 135 million years)

This form of dating is not an exact science, as it is based on uniformitarian geology, which requires conditions that have to be created within a laboratory. This ignores the existence of a divine being involved in the origin of creation. Thiessen suggests that the method for

⁵¹ Thiessen, H.C. 1979. *Lectures in Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: Michigan: WmB.Eerdmans Publishing Company. p. 114.

measuring the expanse of earth's geological age could lie in a number of possibilities such as, flood geology, the omissions in the Genesis genealogies and creationism. Adam was created with the appearance of age i.e. he was a fully developed man (Genesis 2). Similarly, there exists the possibility that the same could apply with the earth being created with the appearance of age.⁵²

1.5.2. The Significance of Creation

The significance of the doctrine of creation, when viewed against the biblical framework, is highlighted in varying contexts.

a) The Sovereignty of God as Creator

Creation asserts the sovereignty of God as creator of all. As such, the very existence of creation must always testify of the creator. To focus on the creation more than the Creator, is to move into idolatry (Rom. 1:25). Berkhof points out that nothing within creation is absolute, but by its very nature is created to depend on God. Creation is therefore, finite and limited, requiring the continued sustenance of the eternal Creator.⁵³

b) Creation as an act within the freedom of God

As discussed earlier, creation is an act of the freedom of God. He was under no obligation to create, and neither is he dependent on it, for his existence. God had no need for self-actualization; hence the work of his hands does not in any way, complete him. Creation is an expression of the freedom that God exercised in bringing into existence, that which he deemed necessary, for his own good purpose.⁵⁴

c) Creation as a reflection of the goodness of God

Upon the reading of the Genesis account, one would encounter the pronouncement that after God had created a particular thing, he declared it as good. For example, one would

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 111-118.

⁵³ Berkhof, H. 1956. *The Christian Faith*. New York: Scribner. p. 161.

⁵⁴ Henry, Carl F.H.(ed.) 1962. "Creation" in *Basic Christian Doctrines*. New York: Holt, Reinhart & Winston.

note this in the following references in Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31. Creation owes its existence to the goodness and benevolence of God as Creator. This is apparent in the incident recorded in Matthew 19:16-22, which describes the encounter between the rich young ruler and Jesus. The young ruler addresses Jesus as “good teacher”, to which Jesus responds emphatically, “Why do you call me good? No one is good but one, that is God.” The Lord draws attention to God as the ultimate expression and final norm of goodness, and states that there is no one that is good, except God alone. The goodness of God is evident, in his bringing into existence, all of creation. His goodness is further exemplified in his continued preservation and sustenance of it.

d) Creation and Redemption

The most important thematic focus that one would encounter in scripture, particularly with reference to creation, is that of the redemptive work of God. It is within the framework of creation that God commences with his plan of salvation. He begins with the nation of Israel through continued revelations of himself through the prophets, priests, kings, types and shadows of his work i.e. the tabernacle, and so forth. This is brought to culmination in the New Testament in the person of Jesus Christ, as the ultimate revelation of God in the flesh. God redeems all of creation from the curse of sin through the person and work of Jesus Christ. There is also a correlation drawn between the God of the Old Testament and that of the New Testament, between that of Creator and Redeemer (Isaiah 40-55; Colossians 1:13-17). The church apologist Irenaeus during the second century A.D., in response to the heretical views of Gnosticism and Marcion, sought to clearly emphasize that the God of the Old Testament is the same creator as revealed in Jesus Christ as the Redeemer in the New Testament. God in Christ reconciled all of sinful humanity to himself, through Jesus Christ. Creation and redemption are linked. It is also important to note that redemption cannot be used as the paradigm of understanding in stating that it was the primary objective of creation. This view does not correlate with the Biblical perspective.

e) Creation as testimony to History

Creation is a unique act that belongs to history, and is testimony to it, in terms of the origin of life. However, it differs in this sense from ordinary history in lieu of eyewitnesses. Within the realm of history, the accuracy and account of events that occurred over time were recorded and validated by eyewitnesses. Creation does not fit into history by virtue of this definition, as no eyewitnesses were present to account for this. The essential components for creation to serve as a testimony to history are those of divine revelation and inspiration. Langdon Brown Gilkey states that creation cannot be adequately explained by human or historical methodologies.⁵⁵

f) Creation as an Affirmation of Faith

As stated above, creation must be accepted as coming through the means of divine revelation and inspiration. Creation is therefore to be accepted by faith, since divine revelation can be accepted on no other basis; hence it is an affirmation as such. The Biblical record clearly attests to this principle. In addition to this the Apostles, early church Fathers and Apologists affirm creation as an act of God that must be accepted on the basis of faith. This is indicated in the opening line of the Apostles' Creed "We believe in God the Father almighty, Maker of heaven and earth."

g) Creation as an Expression of the Nature of God

This is an important consideration to note, because creation is an expression of the very nature and person of God. God was under no compulsion or obligation to bring the universe into creation, instead it created all things for his own good purpose. Bertrand Russell states, "Unless you assume a God, the question of life's purpose is meaningless."⁵⁶ Augustine believed that the goodness of God was the basis of his creation of all things. Others such as E.Y. Mullins, observed that God's primary purpose in creation was the

⁵⁵ Gilkey, L.B. 1959. *Maker of Heaven and Earth: A Study of the Christian Doctrine of Creation*. New York: Doubleday. pp. 54 -71.

⁵⁶ Warren, R. 2002. *The Purpose Driven Life*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing. p. 17.

expression of his very nature and person, through the provision of fellowship with his creatures.⁵⁷

h) Creation as a means of Glorifying God

A popular scriptural view as to why God created all things is a reference to the glory of God. It is seen as a testimony to the glory of God, in that God is glorified in, through and by the created order (Isa.43: 7, Ps.19:1; 104:31). A.H. Strong argues that the creation of all things exist chiefly for the glory of God, and not in creation itself. He further points out, that the glory of God should not be seen as a means of self-actualization of the ego of God, in that it is for boosting his self-image. To this end he states, “He who constitutes the centre and end of all his creatures must find his centre and end in himself.”⁵⁸

1.6. Creation as the Work of the Triune God

From the biblical account it is certain that creation is the work of the Triune God. Numerous Old and New Testament passages attest to this. We do not find specific functional roles accorded to the Father, Son or Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. The concept had yet to be fully revealed until the New Testament. We find references in Old Testament passages in this regard, such as Genesis 1:1, Psalm 96:5, Isaiah 37:16; 44:24; 45:12 and Jeremiah 10:11-12. In the New Testament there is a more pronounced differentiation in this regard. Consider the aspect of Paul’s writing to the Corinthian church, in his first letter in chapter 8:6, as illustrative of the Triune God in creation. He writes, “Yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.” In the context of this passage, Paul is addressing the issue of eating food offered to idols, and in this manner, he distinguishes the Father from the Son. He portrays the Father as the source from whom all things come, whilst describing the Son as the agent through whom all things come. Similar thoughts are found in John 1:3, Colossians 1:15-17 and Hebrews 1:10. Texts such as Genesis 1:2, Job 26:13; 33:4, Psalm

⁵⁷ Mullins, E. Y. 1917. *The Christian Religion in Its Doctrinal Expression*. Philadelphia: Judson Press. p. 253.

⁵⁸ Strong, A.H. 1969. *Systematic Theology*. Old Tappan, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell Co. pp.398-401.

104:30 and Isaiah 40:12-13 indicate the Holy Spirit as an active participant in creation. Theologians have often sought to allocate specific aspects of the work of creation, to each of the members of the Trinity. Strong explains the Trinitarian role in creation with reference to the Father as the originator, the Son as the mediator and the Spirit as the realizing cause of creation.⁵⁹ Erickson uses the analogy of building a house as a useful means to explain the Trinitarian role in creation. He points out that in the building of a house, the question at the completion of the house is one of who actually built the house? One may agree that it was the architect who drew the plans thus providing guidelines for the construction of the house. In another sense, it may be the contractor who physically carries out the plan according to the design. The contractor does not physically build the structure himself but has contracted workers, who do the manual labour in the building of the house. However, in order for this to occur materials are required for the building, which comes from the suppliers. Continuing with this form of reasoning, it could be the bank that provides the loan or eventually the owners who legally own the property, paying the bank to this end. Each individual or grouping contributed in some measure in the building of the house. Applying this analogy to creation, Erickson asserts that it is the Father that brought the universe into existence whilst the Son and the Spirit fashioned it according to the design of the Father as the creator. In other words, the Father created the universe, mediating creation through the Son and wrought the work of creation by the Holy Spirit.⁶⁰

1.7. Contrary Views on Origins

Thus far we have discussed the various aspects concerning the doctrine of creation in order to establish a framework from which one may proceed, in attempting to understand the concept of a new creation as a work wrought by Christ, with regard to humanity. We now turn to briefly consider some contrary views on the origins of creation. This issue has no doubt received varying explanations from differing fields of study, supplying possible answers to the question of how did all things originate? The scientific community,

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p.373.

⁶⁰ Erickson, M.J. 2000. *Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker House Publishing. pp. 398-399.

philosophical debates and other religious views have challenged the Christian view on the origin of creation, over the centuries.

1.7.1. Dualism

Dualism refers to the belief in the existence of two coeternal principles of good and evil, or the material and immaterial forces, which are constantly in conflict with each other. Among those that fit into the category of Dualism include Platonism, Zoroastrianism, Gnosticism and Manichaeism. The central tenet of dualism is a type of creation *ex materia*, which is the creation of the universe from preexisting materials. There are three types of dualist beliefs, which are no doubt opposed to the Christian view of creation.

1.7.1.1. Metaphysical Dualism

This type of dualism is expressed in the coeternal principles of good and evil that have existed alongside each other. God is equated with matter. Both are seen as equal, yet distinctive from each other. Matter although equal with God, according to this view, is nonetheless subject to the shaping of God's will.

1.7.1.2. Moral Dualism

Strong defines moral dualism as the existence of two antagonistic spirits that are divine and eternal, yet on opposite ends of the spectrum i.e. one good and the other evil. The difference here lies with the aspect of matter, with it being the instrument or product of the evil spirit being.⁶¹ The aspect of moral dualism is expressed in the religion of Manichaeism, founded in Persia by Mani or Manes (c. 215-275). Manichaeism holds to the above view of two eternal antagonistic spirits i.e. light and darkness, with matter being the instrument of the dark spirit. Despite this, the light or good spirit was still able to produce the elements of the created world, including humanity.⁶²

⁶¹ Strong, A.H. 1969. *Systematic Theology*. Old Tappan, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell Co. pp. 381-382.

⁶² Kessler, C. (trans.) 1965. *Mani and Manichaeism*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston. pp. 43-46.

1.7.1.3. Demiurgic Dualism

This view introduces the concept of a demiurge or a created being who created the universe. This secondary being created by God, served as the agency through whom, God brought all things into existence. This view bears similarity to the New Testament concept of God who is seen as the source of all things, creating the world through Christ Jesus. The difference, however, lies in the aspect of the demiurge since God did not create Christ (John 1:1-3). Marcion advocated this view in the second century A.D. He added that the demiurge that created the worlds from preexisting matter was different from the Father of Jesus Christ. This implies that matter is eternal, existing alongside two other divine beings. The problem with dualism is that it equates good and evil, as eternal. Good and evil cannot be considered as first principles that are coeternal, as they can exist as opposing opposites without being eternal. Furthermore, it is contradictory to the biblical account, which teaches that God is supremely omnipotent and is by nature, good. In dualism, both good and evil are seen as co-equal, thus limiting the supremacy of one over the other. Hence there can be no ultimate. To suggest that one is good and the other is evil would imply the need for a comparable standard outside of these principles. This proves impossible, since it would require a being greater, than an already eternal good and evil. C.S. Lewis observes in this regard:

“Dualism gives evil a positive, substantive, self-consistent nature, like that of good. If evil has the same kind of reality as good, the same autonomy and completeness, our allegiance to good becomes the arbitrary chosen loyalty of a partisan...”⁶³

1.7.2. Monastic Emanationism

This suggests that the created universe is of the same substance and nature as that of God. The universe came to be as it is, during a period of its emanating or outflowing from the

⁶³ Lewis, C.S. *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*. Edited by Walter Hooper. 1970. Grand Rapids: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing. pp. 22-23.

person of God. John Milton in his work *Christian Doctrine*, supported the premise that God created the universe out of himself, thus denying creation occurring *ex Nihilo*.⁶⁴

1.7.3. Creation from Eternity

Creation is viewed as a creative act of God occurring in eternity past. This tends to separate creation from the context of time, suggesting that creation does not mark the beginning of time, since it occurred in eternity. This posits itself more toward a dualist type of belief, since the process of creation occurring in eternity is to suggest, that it is eternal. This bears similarity to the view that matter is eternal, or that God created it in eternity, thus serving as the building block of creation. Origen, the early church father and apologist (185 – 254) held to the belief that there is in existence a world of spiritual beings that have been eternally created by God. In other words, they have their origin in God. They possessed degrees of instability, which led to their eventual move away from God toward nonexistence. This in turn led to their attempt to become embodied in the temporal physical world. Origen adds that the existence of these spiritual beings created as eternal, is necessary for one is to believe in the omnipotence of God.⁶⁵

1.7.4. Continuous Present Creation

This theory holds to a continuous or moment-by-moment creation of the universe, which is therefore, under constant expansion. This suggests that the universe should be perceived as a continued, new and ongoing work that does not derive its source in God. Others like Jonathan Edwards (1708 – 1758) believed that God created the universe, but his act of preserving it, could be equated to a type of continuous creation. Millard Erickson adds that the continuous creation view sees the universe ceasing to be, whilst at the same time, God continually calls it to exist.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Strong, A.H. 1969. *Systematic Theology*. Old Tappan, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell Co. p. 385.

⁶⁵ Norris, R.A. 1965. *God and World in Early Christianity*. New York: Seabury Press. pp. 119-126.

⁶⁶ Erickson, M.J. 1985. *Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House. pp. 391-392.

1.7.5. Atheistic Evolution

William J. Schmitt uses the phrase “spontaneous generation” to describe the existence of life as occurring spontaneously, without any derivation from a divine agency. This view explains that matter or energy, when subjected to the optimum conditions, is able to give rise to the formation of organic forms. It effectively rules out the involvement, and perhaps even the existence of God.⁶⁷

1.8. Contemporary Issues

The Christian view of creation is based on an affirmation of faith derived from the biblical account. There are numerous views that have been postulated over the preceding centuries in response to the biblical account. Some of these views we have examined in our earlier discussions. We now turn to briefly consider some of the contemporary views that have arisen in response to the biblical account. James Leo Garret asserts that there are possibly five main perspectives that are prevalent, with regard to creation and contemporary issues. He adds that the first attitude, particularly amongst some in the scientific community, see dialogue with theologians as futile since most scientific conclusions tend to nullify the existence of a divine being as creator. Secondly, the fundamentalist Christian school, more so Protestants, see dialogue with the scientific community as futile. They perceive that most major scientists as having embraced atheistic evolution. Garret argues that both these groupings tend to border more on the extremes and do not necessarily represent the majority view. Thirdly, conservative groupings within the Protestant and Roman Catholic denominations agree that there has already been a harmonization between the scientific community and biblical teachings, which need to be shared more widely. Fourthly, the antithesis of the third perspective is found amongst the neoorthodox and existentialist Christian thinkers. They argue that there is no possibility of ever arriving on common ground with scientific conclusions and Christian teachings, because both have radically different findings or affirmations. Fifthly, a more broadly encompassing approach is not only found amongst the Christian thinkers, but also extend to other religious and scientific groupings. This view sees the need for ongoing dialogue that should welcome, both the

⁶⁷ Strong, A.H. 1969. *Systematic Theology*. Old Tappan, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell Co. p.389.

exchange of information and constructive criticism, between the scientific and religious communities in order to create greater harmonization on the topic of creation.⁶⁸

1.8.1. Astrophysical Theories about Origins

There are three theories that have been posited in this area. The first is that of George Gamow's "instantaneous or big bang" theory. Gamow argued that the universe was formed as a result of the explosion of dense neutrons from the nucleus of existing dense energy and matter. This meant that dense energy and matter exploded, because its initial volume, which was once small, increased creating the said effect. Fred Hoyle came up with the "steady state" theory, which states that matter at infinite density at zero time, has been continuously forming as a result of the condensing of atoms into stars. These stars in turn die out to form new ones. The third theory is that of Ernst Jules Opik's "oscillating universe." Opik believed that the universe initially existed in a small volume of matter, which gradually increased over the subsequent periods. He added that this period of increase in volume has slowed down considerably, and will eventually stop expanding altogether. A reverse effect will begin with the universe starting to decrease in size, and the whole process of expansion will start anew.⁶⁹

1.8.2. The Evolutionary Theory about Origins

Evolution, in a simplistic sense, refers to the process of development. This view was popularized by the work of Charles Darwin (1809-1882) entitled, *The Origin of Species*. He believed in the theory of common ancestry or evolutionary processes. In other words, all living things evolved through natural processes from earlier, simpler forms of life. There are four categories in this regard.

1.8.2.1. Instantaneous Creation

This view is also referred to as fiat creationism. It suggests that the divine act of creation occurred within a very short and specific time period. Some, in this context of

⁶⁸ Garret, J.L. 1990. *Systematic Theology: Biblical, Historical & Evangelical. Vol. 1*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wmb. Eerdmans Publishing Company. pp. 310-311.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 311-312.

understanding, often interprets the six-day period of Genesis 1 as referring to a type of fixity of species. What this means is that, God created all species within this time period, but they were created in a fixed or permanent state allowing for no change or development within the varying species.

1.8.2.2. Theistic Evolution

Theistic evolution acknowledges the involvement of a divine creator, who set in motion the process of evolution, implying that God created the universe in an initial sense. He then allowed it to evolve from that point onward. Erickson ventures to explain the origin of humanity by differentiating between what he terms 'deistic evolution' and 'theistic evolution'. He refers to deistic evolution as God beginning the evolutionary process and then stepping back from it, in order to allow for self-development. Theistic evolution, Erickson adds, is a way of explaining that God created man allowing his physical nature to develop. This occurred through the evolutionary process whilst specifically creating the spiritual constitution or image of man i.e. the first man Adam.⁷⁰ This theory allows for the immanence of God in creation suggesting that whilst God began the initial creative process, he also allowed for natural selection to take place. This type of context would allow for the development of new life forms.

1.8.2.3. Progressive Creation

This view redefines theistic evolution, by adding that whilst God created all things through the evolutionary process, he guided it by stepping in at specific intervals in time to bring forth new life forms. The advocates of this view included, Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Aquinas. Augustine proposed the concept of *rationes seminales*, *rationes primordiales* or *casual reasons* and/or *seminal principles* as an explanation of the origins of creation. Augustine explained that God instituted seminal principles through his spoken word (Genesis 1-2), thus creating nature. These seminal principles developed into the various dimensions of the natural world i.e. plant, animal and aquatic life. Augustine emphasized that God did not create living things in a seminal form, rather through a

⁷⁰Erickson, M.J. 1985. *Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House. pp. 480-481.

seminal principle, guided the development of all living creatures. Bernard Ramm adds that Thomas Aquinas disagreed with dualist views of the eternity of matter, as well as the theory that creation occurred in eternity. Ramm delineates Aquinas' views as creation occurring by the will of God. Aquinas allows for the evolutionary concept in his view, emphasizing that God is the cause behind the process of development. Progressive creationists, during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries maintained that the physical body of Adam was derivative from prehuman beings, whilst explaining that God created his spirit.⁷¹

1.8.2.4. Creation Science

The "creation science" movement arose as a counter reaction in the United States, to the prevalent views of naturalistic and/or philosophical circles, which denied the involvement of a divine creator concerning the origins of life. Henry Madison Morris, a key proponent of the "creation science" view introduced this theory from both a scientific and Christian perspective. Creation scientists hold that the biblical account of creation should be seen as valid and reliable, in that the Bible is a veritable textbook on science. They reject all forms of evolution, whilst arguing that the account of Genesis 1 should be taken as literal. The six days of creation should be interpreted as six 24-hour periods of fiat creationism. They further advocate, that a proper understanding of creation should proceed from a creation science perspective. Critiques of the movement, such as Davis A. Young and Conrad Hyers argued against the claims of creation science. Young mitigated that it was impossible for the existence of a young earth, as suggested by the literal interpretation of Genesis 1-2. Young cited scientific findings from sedimentation, radiometrics, geochemistry and the earth's magnetic field. Conrad Hyers on the other hand, rejected the creation science interpretation of Genesis as a literal occurrence, arguing that the exegetical purpose of Genesis 1 was merely, to provide an account of the method of creation. To maintain this approach would be to deny the true meaning of Genesis 1, thus

⁷¹ Garret, J.L. 1990. *Systematic Theology: Biblical, Historical & Evangelical. Vol. 1.* Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wmb. Eerdmans Publishing Company. pp. 316-317.

compromising. Hyers further argued, that to take Genesis 1 as literal, would be to make scientific investigation dependent on biblical exegesis.

1.9. The Crisis of Creation

Thus far we have examined the various aspects pertaining to creation, and have established the biblical perspective, that God is the creator of all things. He brought the universe into existence *ex Nihilo*, through the exercise of his freedom and love, as the sovereign creator and God. He was not dependent on creation for his self-actualization, neither was he under any compulsion to create. As indicated earlier, creation was the work of the Trinity. It was the act of a loving and benevolent God as Father. He bestowed the gift of existence on all living things, through Jesus Christ the Son. He administered the existence of all things through the person of the Holy Spirit. With this in mind, it is necessary to consider the crisis of creation, and how God's redemptive plan effects all of creation. The earth is at present experiencing, what environmental scientists term, the "crisis of unsustainability."⁷² This refers to environmental and resource problems that are common globally, which have arisen through mismanagement and exploitation of natural resources, and the environment at large. As a result, humanity has effectively changed the ecology of the planet through such mismanagement and exploitation, adversely affecting the chemistry, the biological systems and the climate of the planet.⁷³ This problem has also been termed an "ecological crisis" that is interpreted as a crisis of global proportions. All of humanity is affected by it, whether directly or indirectly. This "ecological crisis" requires an interpretation of the concept of ecology. Ecology refers to the interrelationship of living organisms with their environment, and how the habits, modes of life and dependence of such organisms necessitate their survival and perpetuation.⁷⁴ What is interesting to consider in relation to the emphasis of this dissertation, in terms of the concept of a new creation in Christ, is the

⁷² Miller, G. Tyler, Jr. 1994. *Living in the Environment: Principles, Connections, and Solutions*. Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company. pp. 5-27.

⁷³ Berry, T. 1991. *Befriending the Earth: A Theology of Reconciliation Between Humans and the Earth*. Connecticut: Twenty-Third Publications. p. 5

⁷⁴ Felicity Edwards, "The Wonder, Agony and Promise of Creation" in De Gruchy, J & Villa-Vicencio, C. (ed). 1994. *Doing Theology in Context: South African Perspectives*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books: p. 90.

Greek word for 'ecology.' The word is derived from *oikos*, which refers to a house or living place. The redemptive plan of God is not limited or confined to humanity, whilst it has been the primary recipient of this plan. God's redemptive plan also extends to all of creation. Romans 8: 20 echoes this thought by stating "For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God." Paul clearly intimates that all of creation has been subjected to bondage, hence the process of decay through the sinfulness of humanity, has set in. However, just as the children of God have obtained freedom from the bondage of sin through Jesus Christ, so to will all creation be liberated from the bondage to decay and will experience true freedom.

1.9.1. The Crisis of Unsustainability

The crisis of unsustainability refers to the diminishing capacity of the earth to continually sustain life, as determined by the natural resources existent on the planet. A resource is that which is extracted from the living or nonliving environment, to meet the specific needs as well as wants, of humanity in general. Resources are categorized by environmental scientists into two broad spheres i.e. material and nonmaterial resources. Material resources are obtainable from the environment and can be quantifiably measured. Water, fertile soil, groundwater, petroleum (oil) are some of the examples of material resources. Nonmaterial resources include copper, aluminum, gold and other precious metals, which are exhaustible and are available only in fixed quantities. The crisis of unsustainability is the inability of the earth to adequately sustain its natural resources and its living systems, as well as humanity, because of the continued process of environmental degradation. When natural resources are used up faster than which they can be replaced by the natural processes, then environmental degradation is said to take place. The earth is unable to sustain the pressure exerted on its systems by humanity, in effect, creating a

crisis. There are a number of contributing factors that add to environmental degradation. These include the following: ⁷⁵

- **Urbanization:** This refers to the destruction of productive land as a result of the erection of concrete jungles i.e. buildings, skyscrapers, towns, cities, roads and the like. Urbanization impedes the existence of plant and wildlife by encroaching, if not destroying, the natural habitats and sanctuaries of plant and animal life.
- **Soil Erosion:** Improper farming and agricultural techniques creates poor cultivation of crops, producing soil erosion. Excessive planting and lack of crop rotation destroys the valuable nutrients in the soil to sustain plant life. On average, about 24 billion tons of topsoil are lost through soil erosion. This constitutes 33% of the world's available croplands.
- **Salinization:** This refers to waterlogging of croplands because of improper irrigation techniques. Croplands that are watered without proper drainage systems, create flooding or salinization. This excess amount of water damages soil nutrients and causes salt buildup. Productivity is hindered in this way.
- **Depletion of Freshwater:** Freshwater can be found in aquifers, streams and lakes. Overuse from the drainage of freshwater from these sources occurs faster, than which it can be naturally replaced, depleting supplies.
- **Destruction of Wetlands and Coral Reefs:** Wetlands are areas on the planet that are filled with, either salt or fresh water (excluding lakes, streams and ponds) for most, if not all throughout the year. Wetlands are vital in the production and sustenance of marine life, waterfowl and other animal life. This in turns sustains the economies of surrounding towns and communities. Coral reefs are marine ecosystems, which can be regarded as the equivalent of tropical rain forests. They are responsible for the sustenance of about one-third of all marine fish species, source of food for fish and other marine life. They also reduce the speed and energy of incoming waves. In fact, coral reefs help protect the coastlines of areas

⁷⁵ Miller, G. Tyler, Jr. 1994. *Living in the Environment: Principles, Connections, and Solutions*. Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company. pp. 5-27.

through the prevention of storms, via this reduction in the energy of waves. It is estimated that between 25%-50% of the world's wetlands have already been destroyed through pollution, drainage or urbanization. There are about 109 coral reef sites globally and 93 have already been damaged through destructive use.

- Deforestation: This refers to the destruction of the world's tropical forests, through the cutting down of trees faster than they can be replaced. Furthermore, a lack of adequate replanting has diminished the number of tropical forests that are in existence globally.
- Overgrazing: Livestock that are allowed to graze on productive land, excessively, causes this. This turns the land into arid, unproductive areas. This process is also referred to as desertification or the formation of deserts. Through overgrazing about 60,000 square kilometers of new desert are formed annually.
- Decimation/Elimination of Wild Species: This is caused by pollution of the habitats of wildlife species, human activities such as commercial hunting and the use of pesticides. This eliminates valuable plant and wildlife species, and has pushed many into extinction, thus disrupting ecosystems.

1.9.1.1. Problems

There are underlying problems and their resultant causes that have given rise to the crisis of unsustainability. We shall briefly explore the dynamics thereof. Miller highlights eleven problem areas: - 1) The issue of global warming; 2) Climate change; 3) Acid rain; 4) Depletion of the stratospheric ozone and urban air pollution; 5) Poisoning of the water and soil through pesticides and hazardous toxins; 6) Depletion of nonrenewable minerals i.e. oil; 7) Depletion and contamination of groundwater; 8) Deforestation; 9) Soil erosion; 10) Desertification (loss of productive land to desert formation); 11) Biodiversity depletion (dying of species). These problems can be directly attributed to population growth and poverty. When poverty is reduced globally, it will then influence the stabilization of the world population. The United Nations classifies countries as either less or more developed countries. More developed countries (hereafter referred to as MDCs/LDCs) are categorized as such, in terms of their industrialization and the Gross National Product

(hereafter referred to as GNP)⁷⁶ of the country per capita. Countries that fall into this category include the United States, Canada, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, the Commonwealth of Independent States i.e. Armenia, the former Soviet Union, Moldova, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan amongst others, and the Western European Countries. The MDCs constitute about 22% of the world's population, but produce 85% of the world's wealth. Furthermore, it utilizes 88% of its natural resources and 73% of its energy, whilst producing much of its pollution and waste. Less Developed Countries (LDCs) are categorized as such, in terms of their low to moderate industrialization and the Gross National Product (GNP) of the country per capita. Most LDCs are located in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The LDCs constitute about 78% of the world's population, but produces 15% of the world's wealth. LDCs utilize about 12% of their natural resources and 27% of its energy. Poverty is present mainly in the LDCs, and such countries have to contend with enormous foreign debts. Hence, such LDCs can contribute only on a small scale to pay the interest on foreign debt through the exploitation of their natural resources, for export to MDCs. Add this to an already problematic situation, the issues of political and economic systems of countries that reward or support the exploitation of natural resources for personal gain. This only serves to increase the divide between the rich and the poor, creating more economic disparity.⁷⁷

1.9.1.2. Causes

In attempting to offer solutions to some of the problems mentioned above, the appropriate place to begin is to identify the root causes. Firstly, the problem of overpopulation is a chief cause of the crisis of unsustainability. Overpopulation refers to a type of situation where there are more people than the availability of natural resources i.e. food, water and the like. An area that has more people than it can support, causes depletion in the natural life support systems. This creates unhealthy living conditions and an increase in environmentally destructive wastes. The carrying capacity of the area is exceeded creating greater poverty. It is estimated that more than 40 million people die prematurely in LDCs,

⁷⁶ The Gross National Product (GNP) is the total market value of goods and services produced by the economy of a specific country for specific use on an annual basis.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

as a result of overpopulation and poverty.⁷⁸ Secondly, the problem of overconsumption of resources by the affluent i.e. in the MDCs. Such overconsumption leads to increases in pollution, the decline of natural resources and the eventual destruction of the environment. As indicated earlier, much of the natural and energy resources of the world are used by MDCs, thus producing high amounts of pollution. Consumption of resources is higher in MDCs than in LDCs. Paul Ehrlich, a biologist cites the following facts as indicative of the disparity between consumption overpopulation between MDCs and LDCs: -⁷⁹

UNITED STATES	INDIA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4.7% of World Population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16% of World Population
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes 21% of World's goods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes 1% of World's goods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses 25% of World's mineral and nonrenewable energy resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses 3% of World's mineral and nonrenewable energy resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes 25% in the generation of pollution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes 3% in the generation of pollution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes 18% in Global emissions of greenhouse gases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes 4% in Global emissions of greenhouse gases

What the above statistics imply, is the comparative ratio of damage done by a single person living in a MDC, with that of a single person in a LDC. Ehrlich points out that it would take between 40-200 children from India to inflict the same amount of environmental damage, as compared to 2 children from the family of people living in the United States. The impact of a MDC is significantly higher, and more harmful to the environment than LDCs. Thirdly, the problem of poverty and/or the underconsumption of resources by the poor in LDCs, is a direct result of the wealth gap between the rich and poor nations. It is estimated that from 1960 to present, the wealth gap between the rich and poor nations has been progressively increasing in terms of the GNP per capita. For

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p.20.

⁷⁹ Ehrlich, Paul, R. & Ehrlich, Anne, H. 1990. *The Population Explosion*. New York: Doubleday.

example, between the years 1972 – 1992, the global GNP increased by 20 trillion U.S. dollars. However, only 15% of this amount went to LDCs. With increasing debt problems in LDCs, such countries end up paying almost four times more in interest on the debt amount apart from the borrowed amount. This perpetuates a cycle of poverty. Fourthly, there is the problem of inefficiency, which refers to an inefficient usage or wastage of natural and energy resources. Fifthly, the problem of global emissions is a major contributor of greenhouse gases⁸⁰ and ozone destructive chlorofluorocarbons⁸¹ (hereafter referred to as CFCs as defined by Tyler Miller). Sixthly, humanity's urge to control nature, instead of exercising stewardship as God intended in Genesis chapters 1-2, creates the destruction of the environment and the lack of care for it.

1.9.1.3. Results

Environmental stresses are the results of the crisis of unsustainability, in which all life forms, particularly human beings are susceptible to. Continued damage to the environment changes either gradually or suddenly, the normal environmental systems that function for the effective management of all living forms. Any stress on the environment puts stress on the inhabitants of the said environment, and has a negative impact on organisms, communities and ecosystems. This is expressed in the following environmental stress indicators affecting organisms, populations, communities and ecosystems: -

- Physiological and biochemical changes
- Psychological disorders
- Behavioral changes
- Fewer offspring

⁸⁰ Greenhouse gases are found in the troposphere (the earth's lower atmosphere) that produces what Scientists term, the 'Greenhouse effect', in which heat is trapped in this lower layer of the atmosphere. This is near the earth's surface, whilst other proportions of heat are absorbed through varying means i.e. ozone, water vapour, other gases. Gases in the lower atmosphere such as carbon dioxide, Chlorofluorocarbons, ozone, methane and nitrous oxide, contribute to the increase in the temperatures of the troposphere when these gases are heated through atmospheric conditions.

⁸¹ Chlorofluorocarbons or CFCs are organic compounds consisting of carbon, chlorine and fluorine. These are commonly found in refrigerators, air conditioners and Styrofoam. These CFCs damage the ozone layer when these atoms of CFCs rise into the stratosphere (second layer of the atmosphere), through the interaction with ozone molecules.

- Genetic defects
- Birth defects
- Cancers
- Death
- Population increases or decreases
- Loss of genetic diversity

1.10. Developing New Creation Ecology

F. Capra and D. Steindl-Rast define ecology, as complexity that exists in the mutually dynamic interdependent relational web, existing in the world.⁸² From our discussions above, it is clear that the world at large is facing an ecological crisis of increasing proportions. The problem can be attributed to a number of factors both exhaustive and historical in nature. As indicated in the Newtonian worldview, the overemphasis on individuality in the Christian faith during the 17-19th centuries, created an imbalance in the biblical view that God created humanity to exercise stewardship over the earth. What occurred was dominance, both with human social relationships, and the exploitation of the environment. This was particularly evident during the imperialist conquest of the Western countries, over what eventually became the third world or less developed countries. In arriving at a proper understanding of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, one must take into account that it is both a holistic one and contextual one. By this is meant that in Christ, humanity is restored in fellowship with God, as well as in his role as steward over the earth. The crisis of unsustainability is directly linked to the cause and effect factors, stemming from socio-political injustices and exploitation of the environment for gain. *Humanity's separatist attitude from nature has blinded it to the inter-relationship that it shares with the environment. To exploit or administer change in one part is to affect the whole, and in turn the whole affects the part, whether on a microcosmic or macrocosmic level. All of this alludes to the issue of core identity. As the emphasis of this dissertation is to explore the biblical concept of a new creation in Christ, there is an introduction of a new*

⁸² Capra, F. & Steindl-Rast, D. 1991. *Belonging to the Universe: Exploring on the Frontiers of Science and Spirituality*. New York: Harper-Collins p. 159.

phase of identity that is wrought by the reconciliatory work of Christ. Creation was not brought into existence by God as a static cosmos of the universe, constellations, planets and the ecological dynamic of plants, animals and the environment of earth. Instead, any study of the ecological dynamic of the planet is assuredly, one undergoing constant change. Humanity is therefore part of a constant dynamic, and not separate from the world in which it lives in. This complexity adds to, and defines our core identity. It defines our social identity, and either positively or negatively affects the world in which we live in. What is needed is to develop what can be termed 'a new creation' approach, and/or understanding to the planet we live in. In addition to this, humanity reaching a true understanding in terms of their creative function or purpose as God intended it to be, would then constitute true identity. The Apostle Paul states this thought in 2 Corinthians 5:17 "If anyone is in Christ he is a new creation, old things have passed away and all things become new."

John states in Revelation 21:1-5, that after the redemptive plan of God has reached its culmination, a new heaven and a new earth would reconstitute the old heaven and the old earth. The world of sin and decay, of social injustice and inequality, of human depravity and social degradation, and all the consequences of sin will have passed away. He captures in this verse the thought of humanity's ultimate enemy, death, which would have ceased to exist. At that point, humanity would be ushered into the last phase of being 'a new creation' in Christ. This eschatological Parousia has served as a consolation throughout the centuries, to suffering humanity, especially the believers. This type of eschatological expectation has not been without extremist views, and even wildly fanatical ideas that have surfaced over time. However, it does not deny the inherent truth of the biblical teaching concerning the second coming. Eschatology, which is the doctrine of last things, is the pivot of the salvation experience of the Christian. Thus at the heart of the Christian faith lays the anticipation that reality as it is, is not reality as it will be. This anticipation has therefore, become a source of comfort in times of suffering. God, as he intervened throughout history has promised to intervene at the end of all things, to usher in a new dimension of life. In other words, it will be a visible expression of what Paul envisaged in

his new creation theology. A new creation eschatology is redefined in the context of suffering and decay in the present world. Creation will undergo transformation, thus changing sinful reality into sinless reality. We shall explore this aspect in more detail in chapter six when discussing God and suffering humanity. The point to consider, is the present concern of a decaying creation. Does one merely continue in exploitation justifying that the end will come regardless? New creation eschatology comes to have direct influence on developing a new creation ecological theology.

True spirituality is linked to an understanding of ones' identity as believers. The questions of who we are and why we are on the planet are answered succinctly in Christ's redemptive work. This informs the necessity that the planet has been given into the care of humanity as stewards, and should be taken care of until this task has been abdicated back to the Creator. What is needed is to adopt a new creation approach to the world in which we live in, and to meet the needs of a dying world as best as we are empowered to, particularly through the Christian faith. This links theology and spirituality, and demands that it be realized in the praxis of faith. Spirituality would become the new eyes through which reality may now be perceived, not in a fanatical or estranged way, alienating ourselves from the world that we live in. Instead, it is a 're-visioning' of reality from a biblical perspective. It obligates one to act practically, becoming social catalysts to transformation of the current, in foretaste of what the future is yet to be. Whilst conceptually, the thoughts posited above sound noble and necessary, it is by no means an easily achievable one. This task proves challenging, when one takes into account the negative dynamics, of societal conditions, political interplay, economic disparity, religious apartheid, both inter and intra religious groupings. It is nonetheless an achievable goal. It requires all spheres of the Christian faith to act accordingly, setting the proverbial pace for the race and encouraging the participation of other religions, society and governmental organizations at large, to realize this. This is clearly expressed in Moltmann's emphasis on the culmination of creation, not lying in humanity as is commonly thought. He adds that the peak of creation lies in the Sabbath. He states, "...after action comes letting things be, and after creation comes existence... The Sabbath is the consummation of creation; without

it creation is incomplete.”⁸³ Moltmann’s idea of ‘letting be’ could be extended, not just to a passive approach to creation passing by, but an active participation of the exercise of good stewardship. Active participation as stated above, lies in partnership between spirituality and theology. The basis of this would be, the fundamental and universal biblical admonition of love.

Felicity Edwards adds in this regard: -

“The context of the doctrine of creation today is global as well as local, and scientific as well as theological. What is needed is a dialogue between global realities and specifically local issues, and between theology and the findings of science, integrated with appropriate spirituality and praxis, and working with the interrelationship between inner reality and outer world.”⁸⁴

Edwards argues that a new paradigm of thinking has emerged in science, which lends itself to a participatory one, overriding an individualistic and exploitative worldview that has been prevalent during the preceding centuries. This new paradigm stems from Einstein’s theory of relativity and from the field of quantum physics. Both these fields have indicated that the Newtonian principles that previously held strong influence over Western thinking are not applicable in a general or overall sense. For example, the views concerning absolute time and space, the existence of elementary solid particles and an objectification of nature have been replaced by the alternatives that Einstein’s findings have highlighted. The emphasis of this new paradigm is the interrelationship of the part to the whole. The focus is on wholeness, as opposed to separateness. F. Capra and D. Steindl-Rast maintain that there are no such considerations as separate parts instead everything is intrinsically connected, and is merely a manifestation of the underlying

⁸³ Moltmann, J. 1989. *Creating a Just Future: The Politics of Peace and the Ethics of Creation in a Threatened World*. London: SCM Press. pp. 84-85.

⁸⁴ Edwards, Felicity “*The Wonder, Agony and Promise of Creation*” in *Doing Theology in Context: South African Perspectives*. De Gruchy, J & Villa-Vicencio, C. (Eds.). 1994. South Africa: David Phillip Publishers. p. 97.

whole.⁸⁵ Furthermore, Edwards suggests a threefold consideration in discussion of this paradigm. Firstly, the true meaning of the personhood of God and his acts of creation can be realized through science, instead of being undermined by it. Secondly, theology should not venture to take the place of science, by attempting to justify or explain what cannot be otherwise understood using scientific rationale. Instead science should be allowed room to investigate where theology cannot. Thirdly, theology should not feel the need to credit or validate itself by simply agreeing with, or perhaps using the latest scientific theories. It should maintain its uniqueness. This does not need to result in a type of separateness between theology and the sciences, but should result in mutual co-operation.⁸⁶

1.11. Aims and Emphases of Dissertation

This chapter has been explorative of the doctrine of creation, which serves as the starting point in the paradigm for understanding, the concept of a new creation in Christ. It is necessary to note that humanity was not created and placed in a vacuum; rather God placed humanity within an environment. It is apparent from the opening chapters of Genesis that God intended a Tritheistic level of relationship i.e. fellowship with him, fellow human beings and with the environment. It is for this reason, as Genesis chapter 2 suggests, that God placed Adam in a natural environment. The Garden of Eden or paradise, as has been commonly referred to, was a real and living environment that was meant to be the home of Adam. Even when God created Eve, she was placed alongside Adam in this same environment. God intended for them to exercise stewardship and/or authority in caring for this environment. The garden was also the intended centre of creation, because God had commanded them 'to be fruitful and multiply... to replenish the earth.' There are several implications that arise with regard to humanity's placement in the garden, as it is directly related to the doctrine of creation. Creation is testimony to the fact

⁸⁵ Capra, F. & Steindl-Rast, D. 1991. *Belonging to the Universe: Exploring on the Frontiers of Science and Spirituality*. New York: Harper-Collins. p. 159ff.

⁸⁶ Edwards, Felicity "The Wonder, Agony and Promise of Creation" in *Doing Theology in Context: South African Perspectives*. De Gruchy, J & Villa-Vicencio, C. (Eds.). 1994. South Africa: David Phillip Publishers. pp. 97-100.

that there is no ultimate reality, other than the Creator himself. God's act of divine creation is unlike any other. It is completely unique. God was not dependent on the use of any pre-existing material to accomplish this work. This, unlike human acts of creation, was not and could not be frustrated by the quality of the material. Creation, apart from it being a testimony to the goodness of God, was created inherently good. Every created thing that was made was good. We see this indication and emphasis in Genesis 1:10, 12, 18, 21, 25, the declaration of God, that everything that he made was good. Creation also places responsibility on the shoulders on humanity. Sin cannot be used as a justifiable excuse to explain evil behavior and the maladies of the human race. It must be remembered that sin was a choice of free will. Another important implication is, that this doctrine guards against the depreciation of the incarnation of Christ. The fact that God became flesh, taking on human form, indicates that the material world is not inherently evil. God chose to become flesh so that through the same means that sin came into creation, would serve as the same means by which it would be redeemed. It guards against the views of Docetists, who believed that Christ merely possessed a human body and did not actually take on human form.

The extreme of asceticism is also addressed by this doctrine. This form of belief has been practiced during the Middle Ages as the means to achieve a God realization. Asceticism has suggested that the physical body is evil, and should not be pleased or satisfied. Attention should be given to the spirit aspect of the body. Spirituality was equated with the avoidance of the bodily appetites, and focus on the spirit. The new creation in Christ approach, acknowledges the full work of salvation, which does not ignore the physical appetites or fleeing from it. Rather, the process of sanctification handles or relates to, the process of living in the physical or material world. Lastly, the fact that all of creation owes it origin to God, suggests interconnectedness between all parts of creation. Human beings are therefore in a sense, connected with one another through this affinity of having of having a common Creator. Matthew 6:26-30 records God's love not only for humanity, but also for all of creation. This further emphasizes the need for a return to an ecological

theology i.e. care for the earth as worship to God.⁸⁷ Creation is the work of a loving and caring God. A new creation in Christ warrants a movement away from, an anthropocentric approach to the world and a movement toward, a theocentric approach. All creation is still to be subjected to the liberation that comes from the redemptive work of Christ. The human race therefore, has a vital role to play in the liberation of the planet, because creation itself is in constant process. The starting point for achieving this purpose is 'to experience prayer as the co-operative opening up of creation to God.' This in turn makes possible 'authentic transformation, forgiveness, reconciliation... new creation'⁸⁸ There is a need for personal involvement, as D.E. Walsh argues, that we must move from relegating responsibility to everyone else and as being far away and distantly remote. It must become a burning and definitive responsibility that is on everyone's doorstep.⁸⁹ Global problems affect the whole, which in turn affects the part. There is a need to think globally, whilst contextualising it, by acting locally.

The purpose of this dissertation is to understand the redemptive work of Christ, in relation to the believer, within the context of creation. Paul makes reference in 2 Corinthians 5:17, to the concept of the believer being "in" Christ, through the redemptive work "of" Christ. This implies that the believer, by virtue of definition as, one who has accepted Jesus Christ as personal Saviour and the teachings of the Bible as the standard for his/her life, is in a positional change. The believer is now a new creation in Christ. This will serve as a paradigm, for developing a contextualized ministry that is relevant and effective. The gospel message is the message of God in Christ, to a suffering humanity. Throughout the Old Testament period, the biblical record abounds with accounts of the revelatory work of God to his people. The message to the nation of Israel was a message of covenant, of hope and repentance. This same message is personalized in the person and work of Christ. The message of the gospel is one of repentance, covenant, reconciliation and hope. Paul's text

⁸⁷ Erickson, M.J. 2000. *Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker House Book Publishing. pp. 392 – 411.

⁸⁸ Edwards, Felicity "The Wonder, Agony and Promise of Creation" in *Doing Theology in Context: South African Perspectives*. De Gruchy, J & Villa-Vicencio, C. (Eds.). 1994. South Africa: David Phillip Publishers. p. 99.

⁸⁹ Walsh, D.E. 1984. *Staying Alive: The Psychology of Human Survival*. Boston: Shambhala. p. 3.

captures the essence of what has been achieved by God in Christ. The resurrection of Christ achieves for humanity, the transformation of the entire race. We see this train of thought continuing in the verses following chapter 5:17, "Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation." Paul is clear that God in Christ reconciles all things, thus the counterpart of transformation in humanity, is that of the cosmos. Paul's metaphor in Romans 8:22, is that of the groaning of all creation in anticipation, of its desired redemption. Christ's domain of accomplishing God's work of a new creation, is broad and encompassing, to include the entire cosmos. Thus, Christ becomes a 'cosmic Christ' becoming the transforming agent of all things (John 1:1-14, Col. 1:1-16ff, Heb. 1:3). The question that begs consideration is what creation being liberated from? Sin has consequences, which will be discussed in greater detail in chapter three. Creation has been subjected to 'futility, agony...dissolution, impermanence, decay, falling away into nothingness,'⁹⁰ which has resulted in the natural world being riddled with ecological disasters that take human life. Moral evil, natural disasters, the crisis of unsustainability are all manifestations of the consequences of sin. The incarnation, life, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ have redeemed all of creation by dealing with sin itself. The destiny of creation, caught in a hopeless situation, has changed to awaiting transformation that will come through this liberating power of Christ's work.

The desired liberation of creation as reflected in what Paul describes as 'groaning', is yet to reach fulfillment. The promise of creation lies in its ultimate liberation. Even though salvation is immediate for the believer, the benefits are yet to be realized when the eschatological expectation as accounted in Revelation 21:1-5, is fulfilled. The believer has experienced a measure of this liberation (Rom. 8:19-23), which will be manifest cosmically, after the conclusion of the eschatological plan of God. This highlights the

⁹⁰Edwards, Felicity "The Wonder, Agony and Promise of Creation" in *Doing Theology in Context: South African Perspectives*. De Gruchy, J & Villa-Vicencio, C. (Eds.). 1994. South Africa: David Phillip Publishers. pp. 93-94.

cause and effect principle emanating from the entry of sin into the earth. The free will choice of Adam and Eve (Gen. 3) was the causal point for the entry of sin into creation. The effect and/or consequences of their actions subjected all of creation to the decay of sin. The free will choice of each human being in recognition, acceptance and practice of *the person and work of Christ* is the entry point into this transformation.

The approach that I will use in the following chapters will be to explore the aspects that relate to the work of Christ so as to create a holistic understanding of who Jesus Christ is. In addition, it will also involve discussion of how the church should convey the message of his gospel across the cultural, social, economic and political divide in the present world. Some aspects have been briefly discussed in this chapter. We shall be exploring in the following chapters the aspects of: -

- Understanding humanity as the basis of a new creation in Christ.
- The effect of sin on humanity.
- The doctrine of salvation.
- The concept of “A New Creation in Christ.”
- Conclusion – A suggested model for practical application

Chapter Two: Understanding Humanity - The Basis of a New Creation in Christ

2. Introduction

In the previous chapter, we examined the doctrine of creation as the starting point for a discussion of the 'new creation' concept, which the Apostle Paul speaks about in his second letter to the Corinthian church. In understanding the doctrine of creation, varying aspects were highlighted commencing with the biblical worldview, in lieu of humanity's place and purpose in the scheme of creation. Consideration of the traditional worldviews of Irenaeus, Thomas Aquinas, the sixteenth century reformers and the Newtonian view indicated a progression from Monism to Dualism. This eventually moved to the Newtonian influence of an individualistic separatism from the natural world. The nature of creation is seen in the work of God as an expression of his personhood, graciously conferring the ability of existence upon all of creation. Creation was not created out of necessity, but out of the immense providence of God. Thus, all creation has its origin in God. We then proceeded to examine three defining views of creation i.e. *ex deo*, *ex materia* and *ex nihilo* as part of the concept of immediate creation, before proceeding to discuss mediate creation. The significance of creation lies in the sovereignty of God, and in his goodness as a benevolent Creator.

2.1. Covenantal Partnership

In this chapter, we will be exploring the doctrine of humanity, in order to proceed further in establishing what the facets of a new creation in Christ entails. Christian anthropology plays a vital role in defining the concepts of human nature and destiny. The human race has wrestled with the issue of self-understanding since ancient times. The search for self-understanding invariably brings to forefront the question of identity. In other words, 'Who I am?' 'Why am I here?' or 'what is the meaning of life?' are essential core identity questions that humanity has asked itself, in order to arrive at possible answers. Whilst other disciplines such as medical science, biology, sociology and psychology have offered differing perspectives to the quest for self-understanding, theology attempts to take into account such perspectives, and

integrates them into the human dynamic of life.⁹¹ To understand humanity, would also require consideration of the doctrine of sin, which will be examined in chapter three. All of these aspects can be surmised in a central premise, which is in the question of, what does it mean to be human? Adrio König ventures to answer this by suggesting, that one cannot be truly human without being in relationships. He structures his answer to the question of what essentially constitutes a human being, by using the concepts of 'covenant partner' and 'image'. He maintains that both these concepts are married in a singular focus i.e. our relationship with God. He surmises his view by stating that human beings are created in the image of God to live in covenant partnership with him. This is important in establishing a proper foundation as to how one perceives other human beings. König does point out that whilst relationships are of vital and lasting importance, they are by no means the defining element, of what it means to be human. A human being cannot be defined by the simple reduction of human nature to a relationship. Berkhof asserts that human beings can choose to enter into relationships, whilst being able to exist over and above it, is also able to develop in his/her humanness on the basis of such relationships.⁹²

Psychologists like Carl Jung (1875-1961), explained human personality in terms of the ability to relate within or without the context of relationships. This is evident in the concepts of introversion (shy, timid, reflective) and extroversion (outgoing, sociable, assertive).⁹³ Covenant partnership with God is the conduit through which proper knowledge of God flows, thus enabling one to build proper knowledge of fellow human beings.⁹⁴ It is interesting to note the differing theological views that have been postulated in this regard. Some have suggested that a proper understanding of humanity should proceed from understanding the first man Adam, in a pre-fall status. This has served as the traditional Reformed position. Christ is viewed as the standard against which humanity should measure itself, whilst others point out that

⁹¹ Berkhof, H. 1971. *Man in Transit*. Wheaton: Key Press. pp. 11ff.

⁹² Berkhof, H. 1979. *Christian Faith*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing Company. pp. 181ff.

⁹³ Jung, Carl. 1967. *Collected Works*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press.

⁹⁴ König, Adrio, "The Broken Human Image of God" in *Doing Theology in Context: South African Perspectives*. De Gruchy, J & Villa-Vicencio, C. (Eds.). 1994. South Africa: David Phillip Publishers. pp. 102ff.

the biblical understanding of humanity can be used, with emphasis on the attributes of love, obedience and fellowship with God.⁹⁵ To this end König adds:

“The fact that we are God’s covenant partners implies that we are different from God, whereas the idea that we are God’s image implies that we are somehow similar to God. By using covenant partner and image as our main building-blocks, we are able to construct a relational view of human beings. We are created to live with God, with other people and with nature.”⁹⁶

In order for humanity to attain self-understanding requires an understanding of God. In line with König’s concepts of covenant partner and image, one may add that these not only speak of relationship, but also of purpose. The constituent element that relates or joins both concepts is love. As 1 John 4:7-8 records, God is defined as love, not just in attribute but also in person. In this covenant partnership love becomes the basis of relationship and God expects this to be reciprocated in fellowship with him and with fellow human beings. The biblical record abounds with examples of God establishing a covenant type of relationship with the human race i.e. Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, the disciples and the early church. In each of these covenantal relationships God is the initiator, whilst humanity is the recipient. This does not absolve humanity from any responsibility in terms of their involvement in this covenantal relationship. It is important to remember, that this covenantal partnership between God and humanity is not based on equality, as humanity can never attain equality with God. Instead, it is a relationship that is fixed with God as the faithful partner, even though humanity is in a sinful position. God’s faithfulness to this covenantal partnership is clearly illustrated in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Christ becomes the mediator of a covenantal partnership that God had established with Adam back in the Garden of Eden. It is also the ultimate expression of the love of God that is indicative of God assuming the responsibility for a sinful humanity,

⁹⁵ Barth, Karl. 1959. *Church Dogmatics*. Vol III: Part 2. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark.

⁹⁶ König, Adrio, “*The Broken Human Image of God*” in *Doing Theology in Context: South African Perspectives*. De Gruchy, J & Villa-Vicencio, C. (Eds.). 1994. South Africa: David Phillip Publishers. p.102.

and having made the effort of restoring the relationship. God was under no obligation to redeem humanity as Genesis 3 reveals. It was humanity that had violated this covenantal partnership through disobedience. Thus, it becomes a covenant of mercy and grace. The provision for sinful humanity has been made in this relationship in Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of sin through his blood. This is accessible through the medium of confession, repentance and obedience. Paul defines this covenantal partnership, by referring to the work of Christ as initiating a new covenant (1 Corin. 11:23ff). Although God has made every necessary provision for humanity to continue in this partnership, despite the entry of sin into the equation of covenant, it still remains for humanity to respond. It is the nature of responding to God that also defines, how we respond to fellow human beings within the world around us. God has placed the responsibility of response upon the shoulders of humanity through the aspect of choice. Despite this, we should still remain cognizant of the fact that it is God who bestowed this responsibility upon us. Choice cannot, and should not, remain as justification for independence from God.⁹⁷

2.2. Human Nature and Destiny

Having briefly touched on the aspect of covenant partnership as an expression of self-understanding, we now turn to consider an analysis of human nature and destiny. Vernon O. Elmore discusses the issue of human nature and destiny by stating:

“ ‘Who am I and where did I come from? What makes me different from other creatures?’ Philosophers, theologians, and scientists have mulled over these questions. The effort to explain human life has spawned religions, philosophies, legends, sagas, and scientific theories...the human being continues to try to account for himself.”⁹⁸

To understand who we are, is to understand who God is. The Psalmist intimates in the eighth psalm, that humanity has been crowned with the bestowal of God’s love. From the creation narrative of Genesis, a number of considerations come to light. The final

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 102-105.

⁹⁸ Elmore, V.O. 1986. *Man as God’s Creation* in *Layman’s Library of Christian Doctrine*, Vol. 6. Nashville: Broadman Press. p. 24.

creative act of God, after having brought the elements of the physical cosmos into existence, was humanity. Humanity is therefore, representative of the pinnacle of God's creation. Furthermore, humanity is created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27), which is accorded to no other living creature within creation. To understand human nature is to understand the image of God, since the incarnation of Christ is testament to God taking on human form, and human nature. It is essential to draw attention to the fact that our understanding of what constitutes human nature, is gained from observation of oneself, and other human beings. This is at best a poor reflection, of what God originally intended true humanity to be. At this juncture, we shall briefly discuss the humanity of Christ. Adam in the pre-fall state was created in the image of God as essentially good. Humanity was created good. They were intended to exist as such, in the constant presence of God. The entry of sin marred the nature of humanity, introducing another dimension of expression and influence. Human nature began to manifest over the course of time, the consequences of sin. Paul describes this as 'works of the flesh' in Galatians 5:19-21 as adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness and so forth. There was a need for the restoration of true humanity, which only God could accomplish. Before we proceed to discuss the doctrine of humanity, an apt starting point would be to discuss the necessity of the incarnation, within the framework of the humanity of Christ.

2.2.1. The Humanity of Christ

The incarnation was a direct result of the fall of humanity. God became flesh in order to address the problem of sin. Ontologically, humanity could not remain in relationship as originally shared, because sin created a gap in the fellowship of God and man. Spiritually, human nature was now depraved and sinful, disqualifying humanity from free and open access to God. Morally, as Paul indicated in his letter to Galatia, human nature underwent moral degeneration forcing human beings into a helpless situation. This meant that self-redemption or restoration was an impossible task. God had to offer the solution to an otherwise unsolvable problem. He revealed himself to humanity through the incarnation of Christ, by transcending to the level of

humanity. In Christ, the work of salvation is accomplished. Christ is one person. He is deity and humanity in union, not existing as a third form but uniquely separate yet co-existing as one. F.F. Bruce remarks, "Christians have in heaven a high priest with an unequalled capacity for sympathizing with them in all the dangers and sorrows and trials which come their way in life, because He himself, by virtue of His likeness to them was exposed to all these experiences."⁹⁹ Both the deity and humanity of Christ testify to his absolute oneness. The humanity of Christ validates the genuineness of his earthly life, the crucifixion, the resurrection and the ascension. The deity of Christ makes the accomplishment of this redemptive work possible. The humanity of Christ asserts the true nature of humanity as God intended it to be. God chose to identify with his creation on a personal level, by choosing to become one of humanity in order to reveal himself to humanity.

The uniqueness of Christ lies in his identification with the sinful condition of humanity, whilst he himself remained sinless. Christ's experience of earthly life as a human being exposed him to all of the varying elements of human life, thus becoming the representative of humanity before God. The humanity of Christ was not a contrived or divine humanity as the Docetics have maintained. Christ was in every sense fully human and a part of the world of humanity, except without sin. Some might be inclined to argue that the sinlessness of Christ was an unfair advantage. Perhaps, even that his divinity tipped the scales to an unbalanced comparison with that of the human race. Arguably, this line of reasoning does not hold true. Christ is referred to as the second Adam (1 Corin. 15:20-24, 44-45), implying that he came in the same position as the first Adam, sinless and having the power of choice. The method of overcoming temptation that Christ chose was the use of the scriptures (Luke 4:4, 8, 12), as opposed to the exercise of divine power. Consider the following comparative chart between the first Adam and Christ as the second Adam.

⁹⁹ Bruce, F.F. 1967. *Commentary on the Book of Hebrews* in *New International Commentary on the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing Company. p. 85.

THE FIRST ADAM – THE HUMAN RACE	THE SECOND ADAM – JESUS CHRIST
Sinned through disobedience (Gen. 3:12-13)	Restored humanity through total obedience to the Father (Phil. 2:5-11)
Fellowship with God severed (Gen. 3: 22-24)	Restored fellowship with God (John 14:6)
Human nature marred by sin (Gen. 4:1-15)	Restoration of the image of God in humanity i.e. human nature (Rom. 5:6-21)
Lost dominion over the earth (Luke 4:6)	Promised redemption of all creation (Romans 8:17)
Penalty for sin imposed i.e. death (Rom. 6:23)	Gift of eternal life (Rom. 6:23)
Succumbed to the temptation of the serpent (Gen. 3:6)	Resisted the temptation of the devil (Luke 4:1-18)
Created, possibly as a fully developed aged human being (Gen. 2:8-18)	Born as an infant undergoing normal human developmental processes (Luke 2:5-7, 40)

The above comparison draws attention to the question and answer of why the humanity of Christ is important? The history of the early church is indicative of the person of Christ, particularly his humanity, being a source of constant debate. As pointed out earlier, Docetism was one such heresy that maintained that Jesus only appeared to be human and that his incarnation was illusory. He was considered more of an apparition. The Docetics maintained that the material world is inherently evil, thus it is contradictory to the very nature of God to choose to become flesh, which is corrupted by the physical realm.¹⁰⁰

2.2.1.1. Evidences of the Humanity of Christ

Numerous evidences authenticate the humanity of Christ. These include the following aspects¹⁰¹: - 1) the biblical accounts indicate that Jesus was a human being that possessed all human attributes. For example, references in scripture describe Jesus as a definite human person, using words referring to human persona: - “She poured this

¹⁰⁰ Bethune-Baker, J.F. 1903. *An Introduction to the Early History of Christian Doctrine*. London: Methuen. p. 80.

¹⁰¹ Thiessen, H.C. 1979. *Lectures in Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing Company. pp. 219-222.

perfume upon my body” (Matt. 26:12), “...through the offering of the body of Christ” (Heb. 10:10); “Touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have” (Luke 24:39). 2) Jesus had a normal human body, in that he had to be born through the process of conception in the womb of Mary. He had human parentage and siblings. Luke 3:23-38 records the genealogies of Christ tracing his lineage back to Adam. 3) He underwent ordinary human development, as Luke 2:40 indicates that he grew in strength and wisdom. This would point to both the physical and mental developmental processes human beings go through. He is described as having a soul and/or spirit (Matt. 26:38, Mark 8:12, John 12:27, 13:21). 4) He is accorded human names such as: “Jesus”, the Greek equivalent of Joshua (Matt. 1:21 cf. Acts 7:45, Heb. 4:8); “son of Abraham” (Matt. 1:1); “son of David” (Matt. 9:27, 12:23, 15:22); “Son of Man” (Ezekiel 2:1, 3:1 cf. Matt. 16:28, 26:64ff). 5) He experienced the sinless infirmities of human nature: weariness (John 4:6), hunger (Matt. 21:18), thirst (John 19:28) and temptation (Luke 4:8). 6) Jesus Christ is referred to as a man. This was a designation that Jesus applied to himself. It was also used by other people who came into contact with him (John 8:40, 1:30, Acts 2:22, 1 Cor. 15:21, 47, Phil. 2:8).

2.2.1.2. Implications of the Humanity of Christ

What does the humanity of Christ draw attention to, in so far as its’ bearing on the human race? There are several implications that one can note in this regard: 1) God became flesh to deal with the problem of sin, as reflected in what John writes, “And you know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin” (1 John 3:5). Christ redeemed humanity from the curse of sin by offering his life as ransom, which means that his death was a substitutionary sacrifice (Heb. 2:16-17). 2) He, in triumphant finality, brings destruction to the works of the devil. Hebrews 2:14 records, “Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.” Christ’s redemptive work on the cross brought defeat to Satan (John 12:31; 14:30). 3) The humanity of Christ makes him our representative before God as a high priest and mediator (Heb. 4:15). He shares in the

sufferings of humanity because he himself experienced pain, suffering and eventually death. He also came as the second Adam, fulfilling what the first Adam could not (Rom. 5:18-19). Christ therefore entered into the experience of every element of human life apart from sin, which qualified him as a faithful high priest, “for we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin...let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need (Heb. 4:15ff). 4) There is a restoration of true humanity as God intended, through restoration of purpose, i.e. stewardship and/or dominion exercised in love and submission to God (Eph. 1:22, Heb. 2:8, Matt. 28:18, Rev. 3:21, Luke 19:17-19). 5) Christ becomes the ultimate standard for humanity, in and through his humanity. This makes the example of Christ reachable and acceptable, in lieu of his accomplishing this through his humanity, as stated in the following verse, “for you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps” (1 Pet. 2:21). God leaves a clear example of what he intended humanity to be, and there is an anticipated expectation, that we should all endeavour to be like him (2 Cor. 3:18). 6) The humanity of Christ demonstrates the nearness of God i.e. a personal Creator interested in fellowshiping with his creation. The incarnation nullifies the idea that God is far removed and unreachable, but is immanent and reachable, in and through Christ Jesus (John 1:14). 7) The humanity of Christ also serves a revelatory function to God, the Father. Throughout the Old Testament God reveals himself through the prophets, priests and kings admonishing them to follow his precepts and commandments. God revealed himself through theophanies or temporary self-manifestations. He did this in order to reveal aspects and/or attributes of himself i.e. the burning bush (Ex. 3). Differing attributes of God were revealed throughout the Old Testament i.e. love, holiness, justice, veracity, righteousness, mercy and so forth. Christ becomes the full or complete revelation of the Father as seen in the New Testament. He redefines the concept of God as that of father (Matt. 6:9). Jesus in John 14:9, clearly identifies himself as the revelation of the Father, and we are to relate to God as such. We become the children of God (Matt. 5:45, John 3:3-5). 8) The humanity of Christ is a

confirmation of the covenantal promises of God (Rom. 15:8-12). The life of Jesus is often portrayed as a fulfillment of the prophetic promises that God had made in times past during the Old Testament period. The first prophetic promise is recorded in Genesis 3:15 "He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel." Other prophetic promises include Isaiah 7:14, 9:6 and Micah 5:2. The Old Testament prophecies describe the coming of Christ in a twofold sense i.e. as the Saviour of humanity (Ps. 16:8-10, 22:1, 18, 41:9-11) and as a King (Gen. 17:6, Deut. 17:14-20, 2 Sam. 7:12-17, Ps. 2:8, Zech. 14:9). 9) The first coming of Christ is preparatory for his second coming, as Hebrews 9:28 states "Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, not to bear sin, to those who eagerly wait Him, for salvation." The completion of the salvation work of Christ will manifest in the removal of all those who believe in him, thus no longer keeping them in the presence of sin. 10) Most importantly, Christ's incarnation becomes the ultimate pattern for humanity in eternity. This is expressed in Christ's continuance in the maintenance of his humanity. He appeared as a man after his crucifixion and resurrection (John 20:25-27). He maintained the sinless infirmity of eating (Luke 24:41-42). He ascended to heaven in bodily form as a human being, and still maintains this form (Acts 1:11, 7:56, Rev. 1:13).

2.3. The Necessity of the doctrine of Humanity

The doctrine of humanity proves of great necessity in understanding other related doctrines, as it proves a convenient point of departure. Humanity brings into focus aspects of other doctrines such as sin, the church, Christology and salvation. Had God chosen not to create humanity, there would be no need for the incarnation to have taken place. Salvation would therefore have been unnecessary. The apparent danger from an unbalanced interpretation of the doctrine of humanity, can lead to an incorrect understanding of the worth of the human race. This has a domino effect on how one interprets other doctrines. Unlike most other doctrines, Christian anthropology has as its' subject of study, the human race. Thus the human being either as the observer or the one being studied becomes the central subject of its discourse. As intimated earlier, understanding humanity impinges on how we

understand ourselves and how we understand God. This understanding will affect praxis, either positively or negatively. What would be some of the reasons that one could posit in support of the necessity for the study of this doctrine? Perhaps the most viable of all tenets to commence our discussion, would be the platform created to converse with a nonbeliever, relating the gospel message. Whilst the temptation might be to commence with a conversation centering on God, Jesus Christ or even the biblical admonitions concerning the former, it would no doubt lose the attention of the hearer. The subject of discussion as a good starting point would be humanity, thus using a point of commonality. Paul Tillich's correlative approach offers a workable model in this context. Tillich maintained that interpretations of life vary from society to society, thus causing the specific society to develop an understanding of reality based on its' own discoveries. This is evident in the cultural, societal and technological aspects of the society. In other words the art, politics, technology and societal interactions expresses a type of interpretation of reality that the specific society has discovered.¹⁰² It is also an indicator of the questions that the society has been asking, because the conduits of expression lie in the culture of the society. Tillich argues that the starting point would be to understand the cultural context of the society and then develop a contextualized theology to respond accordingly. The questions of the society can be discussed, and answers posited through an understanding of the challenges facing it, as opposed to an imposition of theological ideals.¹⁰³ A definitive understanding of the terms 'culture' and 'society' would be necessary at this point. Culture can be defined as the values that members of a given group hold important, norms that they follow and the material goods they create. Values are considered more of abstract ideals, whilst norms are more observable rules or principles, that people are expected to follow. In other words, the dos' and don'ts' that are people of the society are expected to observe. For example, a norm in Western society is that of a monogamous marriage, in which persons are expected to remain faithful to a single married partner. This norm as opposed to a polygamous marriage where more than one partner may be part of a marriage simultaneously. This

¹⁰² Tillich, Paul. 1951. *Systematic Theology*. Vol. 1. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. pp. 5-22.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, pp. 59-86.

is an accepted norm amongst some African and Middle Eastern cultures.¹⁰⁴ Culture has often been thought of as a reference to the higher attainments of art, philosophy, literature and music. Culture is far more encompassing than this, as it entails the lifestyle of members of a particular society or groupings within that society. It includes the style of dress, family lifestyles, marriage customs, patterns of work and work ethics, religious and/or ceremonial practices and entertainment pursuits. It extends further to include the types of material goods that they create, and that would be common to that particular grouping i.e. bows and arrows, eating utensils, medicinal products, books, food and machinery. This is popularly evident in the tourist trade of differing countries, when foreign and even local tourists purchase material goods that form part of the lifestyle of groupings within societies within geographical regions or countries.¹⁰⁵ A society can be defined as a system of interconnected or inter-related relationships that links or joins individuals together.¹⁰⁶ A culture can exist only within a society, and a society can only exist as long as there is culture. Culture tends to define humanity as 'being human' or essentially what many perceive to make the human race more human. Within culture and society, language becomes the means of expressing the values, norms and lifestyle within and of, that particular grouping. This further imbues the development of a self-consciousness that becomes the means of association with a particular culture i.e. Japanese, Chinese, Mexican, Red Indian and so forth.

Peter Worsley cites an interesting example describing the meeting of cultures that proves apropos here. The Western Pacific over half a century ago was the home to the native islanders. These islanders had begun construction of wooden models of aeroplanes. These elaborate wooden aeroplanes took hours to construct, despite the fact that none of the islanders had seen an aeroplane in close proximity. What is interesting is that these models were not designed to fly. They were constructed under the guidance of the local prophets, making these models a part of the religious movement of the islanders. The local prophets maintained that the construction of

¹⁰⁴ Giddens, Anthony. 1993. *Sociology*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers. pp. 31-32.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

these wooden models were a form of obeisance to the skies, so that 'cargo' may be provided by the sky. Cargos were types of goods that Westerners had brought for themselves, when coming onto the islands to stay. The islanders anticipated that a new era would dawn upon the island. They believed that if they continued this faithful rite, it would result in the Westerners or 'whites' disappearing, and their ancestors would return to the island. The islanders believed that they would eventually come into the possession and/or experience of these goods that the white Westerners brought to the island whilst still maintaining their cultural beliefs. This illustration conveys Tillich's method of correlation, in that the islanders were asking the question of how could they possess the wealth of the Westerners, yet still maintain their traditional and/or cultural belief system. There was a longing for their ancestors to return to them in order to inaugurate a new era of living for them. The construction of the wooden models of aeroplanes represents a clash between traditional ideas and customs of the islanders, with that of new modes of living as seen in the 'cargo'. They perceived the 'cargo' that the whites brought in, as representative of the power that they possessed, assuming that the mysterious flying objects were the source of their wealth. Thus the islanders through the best way they knew, tried to bring these mysterious flying objects under their control, in order to gain power and wealth through the acquisition of the 'cargo.' The islanders knew little of Western life, technology and culture, and therefore interpreted the activities of the Westerners in terms of their own culture and tradition. This type of assimilation has been a common approach throughout the centuries, when peoples of varying civilizations came into contact with other peoples. In some cases such assimilations proved negative, upsetting the cultural dynamic of the society. The imperialist conquests during the sixteenth centuries and thereafter, brought the Westerners into contact with the native inhabitants of the places they ventured into labeling them as barbaric or savage, because these 'opposing' cultures did not correlate with their own.¹⁰⁷ Christian theology is strategically positioned to enter into the dialogue with

¹⁰⁷ Worsley, Peter. 1970. *The Trumpet shall Sound: A Study of 'Cargo Cults' in Melanesia*. London: Paladin.

cultures and societies, engaging in contextual and relevant ministry of the gospel of Christ.

Secondly, the doctrine of humanity has become the subject of study amongst many disciplines of the behavioural sciences from sociology to anthropology to psychology. Even sub-disciplines of these fields purport to examine specificities of human behaviour and related issues. The number of disciplines that have developed in this regard, has increased over the last century. All of these are an attempt to better understand what constitutes humanity, and the need to explain the dynamics of human behaviour. The world has become a place where complex human issues come to occupy central importance as human problems affect the *global dynamic of the world*. Unlike the previous centuries where a techno-centric culture was absent, this last century has grown alarmingly in this awareness. The sobering realization that has emerged is that *human problems can no longer be relegated to the country or place of locale*, but it comes to affect the world at large. The global economic system is proof of this. World events have come to influence the exchange rates, interest rates and *import/export trading etc*. Human problems affect the economy forcing attention to the resolve of such issues. Thus global organizations such as the United Nations, Aid distribution agencies, World Health agencies etc have come to play vital roles in *aiding the possible resolution of human problems in varying countries*. A study of this doctrine from a biblical view proves of increasing value, particularly in this post-modern era, where a plethora of human complexities in social ills, problems and the search for meaning in life exists.

Thirdly, this current era has given rise to a generation in identity crisis. Young people have emerged from childhood searching for the fundamental values that are supposed to underpin humanity. Instead, they find lines of shifting morality where nothing appears to be absolute. Ethics and morality have become self-interpretative for many. Issues of right and wrong have blurred against the backdrop of individualism and technology. Whilst the behavioural sciences would argue that the identity crisis is a normal part of the developmental process of humanity, it can be argued that even the

development of identity does not guarantee, a balanced and holistically integrated person. Increase in divorce rates, the breakup of the family and the emergence of family issues, both on a parental and childhood level, lead to the poor socialization of people. This becomes visible as the individual grows older and the absence of values, morals, ethics that would have been instilled through the family, religious sectors and educational institutions, did not take place. Humanity is a race of apparent contradictions. Whilst it is capable of achieving enormous feats of space exploration, technological advancements, progress in medical and physical sciences, it is also capable of committing atrocities, violence wars bringing devastation, and all kinds of evil acts. Why then, is there an increasing crisis in identity and self-understanding? A possible source would be the loss of appreciation and knowledge of historical roots. This serves as the ideal avenue for the enculturation of young people.¹⁰⁸ History serves as the source of learning about past societal problems, challenges and the roots of a nation, culture and/or society. Ignorance of this proves dangerous since the proverbial phrase of history repeating itself can become a reality. The resolution in the crisis in self-understanding can be aided by understanding where one has come from, through an understanding of and active engagement with, one's historical roots. Christian anthropology answers the crisis of self-understanding and/or identity by drawing attention to humanity as the image and express creation of a loving and benevolent Creator. The origin of humanity becomes the starting point for achieving self-understanding, education in morality and ethics and fulfillment of purpose when one understands that humanity owes its existence to God. Fourthly, arriving at a proper understanding of the doctrine of humanity informs the way for more effective ministry. Understanding human nature and destiny in a holistic sense i.e. as physical, emotional and spiritual beings will require that ministry takes into account all of these spheres to ensure a balanced approach.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ Erickson, M.J. 2000. *Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House Publishing. pp. 480-486.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 480-486.

2.4. Theories of Human Nature

The implications of the doctrine of humanity have been discussed above, demonstrating the necessity of having a balanced understanding. However, this has been approached from a biblical perspective, and contemporary views do not necessarily share in the same ideologies. There is need for the Christian theological views of humanity to interface with varying contemporaneous views regarding the origin, nature and purpose of humanity. Such fields as intimated to earlier, include the behavioral, medical and social sciences. We shall briefly examine some of the theories of human nature as posited by some of these disciplines. Both M.J. Erickson and Dale Moody have offered detailed explanations of some of these non-Christian views of humanity. The following comparative analysis briefly summarizes their explications of non-Christian views of human nature.¹¹⁰ An examination of such views proves useful for effective dialogue to occur. It further enables the Christian anthropological view to engage, in a more meaningful way in offering relevant solutions or answers to issues of human life. For the purpose of this dissertation, an overview will be offered on the explications of M.J. Erickson.

Dale Moody	M.J. Erickson
Biological Man (Darwin, Bergson, T.H. Huxley, Julian Huxley, Teilhard de Chardin)	Man as an Animal
Political Man (Marx)	Man as a Machine
Psychological Man (Freud, Skinner)	Man as an Economic Being
Philosophical Man (Sartre, Heidegger)	Man as a Sexual Being (Freud)
Theological Man (Wolfhart Pannenberg, Jurgen Moltmann)	Man as a Pawn of the Universe (Bertrand Russel, Sartre, Camus)
	Man as a Free Being
	Man as a Social Being

¹¹⁰ Garret, James Leo. 1990. *Systematic Theology: Biblical, Historical & Evangelical*. Vol 1. Grand Rapids, Michigan: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing Company. pp. 403-404.

2.4.1. Man as a Machine

This theory holds man as a machine, in terms of labour or the ability to accomplish work. The human being is evaluated by his ability to accomplish work through the strength, energy and skill that he/she possesses. This is best understood in the employer/employee context, or in the world of work. An individual is hired on the basis of the ability to perform. In turn the person works in exchange for the acquisition of money, over a specific time period each day. The employer generally outlines the conditions of work. A human being can be compared to an automaton or machine, in the sense that a machine can replace him/her, when technology enables the same job function to be carried out by machine. It removes the human element from work i.e. concentration, health, accuracy and wage as opposed to a machine that is void of such elements. In this equation of man as a machine, the chief concern is productivity and not the well being of the individual. Thus, if the same job can be done for a cheaper rate with higher levels of efficiency by a machine, then the human being has outlived his/her usefulness. This view is akin to what may be termed, performance based evaluation. This approach of basing the worth of a person on that individual's ability to perform has also entered the church. Churches, theology faculties and other similar Christian organizations operate on this principle. Advertisements are placed for jobs and specialists are required to accomplish such. A church, based on the Pastor's ability to perform and to accomplish the job description, will hire such an individual. Members of churches may be viewed in terms of, numerical growth and their capacity to offer financial support to a church through tithes, offerings and the like. Man as a machine reduces a human being as a means to an end of productivity.

2.4.2. Man as an Animal

This view contends that a human being is primarily an animal and is a part of the animal kingdom. Just as an animal undergoes the developmental process, evolving into higher forms so to, human beings have experienced a similar derivation from an animal form. Perhaps the only quantifiable difference lies in the physical structure and the stimulus response pattern. This theoretical approach to human beings is

common to behavioural psychology. John B. Watson (1878-1958) popularized this school of psychology by publishing a paper in 1913, entitled "Psychology as the Behaviourist Views it." Watson argued that psychology would only reach pure objectivity as found in physics, chemistry and biology, only if it moved away from its preoccupation with the mind and consciousness. Watson maintained that the introspective method commonly adopted in Psychology, which focused on understanding the mental state as a means of explaining behaviour, should be discarded. He advocated that directly observable and measurable actions and events occurring in the environment should be considered as the focus to explain human behaviour. He introduced the school of behavioural psychology. For example, general psychology would try to explain pain by asking questions of an individual that was pricked by a pin.¹¹¹ Behavioural psychology would use the approach of observing the actions and responses of an individual pricked by a pin and explain behaviour accordingly. The work of Russian psychologist Ivan Pavlov (1849-1936) demonstrated the behavioural approach. Pavlov studied salivation in dogs through a process termed 'classical conditioning.' He commenced his research through the use of an unconditioned stimulus, which was food and elicited an unconditioned response, i.e. a response elicited reflexively in the absence of learning. He would introduce food to the dog and it would automatically salivate. He then paired the food with a neutral stimulus i.e. a bell or food dish and introduced it to the dog, thus producing salivation in the dog. The neutral stimulus then became a conditioned stimulus and the response of the dog became a conditioned response. By using the neutral stimulus alone, Pavlov was able to elicit a conditioned response i.e. salivation in the absence of food.¹¹² Behavioural psychology saw human beings purely in terms of behavioural responses or biological drives present in their environments as opposed to inner mental experiences. In this way, human behaviour can be controlled through reinforcement, either positively or negatively.

¹¹¹ Tavis, C. & Wade, C. 1990. *Psychology*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers. pp. 16-17, 400-401.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 207-209.

2.4.3. Man as a Sexual Being

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) developed a school of thought in explaining human personality called psychoanalysis. Freud argued that the conscious aspect of awareness is merely the tip of the iceberg in the total personality of an individual. He pointed out that below the conscious awareness lies the unconscious aspect of human personality. This contains unspoken desires, wishes, ambitions, passions and conflicting thoughts between desire and duty. Freud believed that these unconscious desires have a greater wield over the conscious behaviour of a human being. There is a need to probe beneath the surface, to arrive at the true aspects of human behaviour through what he termed, psychoanalysis. This method advocated that an individual through free association i.e. talking about anything that pops into one's head, would invariably reveal unconscious desires or thoughts, since the unconscious houses hidden desires, passions and feelings.¹¹³ Human behaviour according to this approach is primarily sexual. Freud's approach to human behaviour was referred to as psychodynamic. This was in explanation of the psychological energy (the libido or psychic energy is that which stimulates life or sexual desires) resident within a person, and its flow or movement that takes places through the behaviour of the individual. Freud structured human personality according to three major systems i.e. the id, ego and superego. The id is the reservoir of the psychological energy of inner drives and desires in the person, remaining unaffected by the external environment. The aim of the id is the fulfillment of pleasure. The ego is the system that aims at balance between the desires of the id and the demands of reality.¹¹⁴ Freud described it as "in relation to the id, [the ego] is like a man on horseback, who has to hold in check the superior strength of the horse...often a rider, if he is not to be parted from his horse, is obliged to guide it where it wants to go; so in the same way the ego constantly carries into action the wishes of the id as if they were its own."¹¹⁵ The superego is the voice of reason or morality that controls the feelings or emotions of the id, that rewards or punishes based on obedience of the rules or violation of

¹¹³ Ibid., pp. 386-392.

¹¹⁴ Freud, Sigmund. 1933. *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*. New York: Norton. pp. 103-108.

¹¹⁵ Freud, Sigmund. 1962. *The ego and the Id*. (Joan Riviere, translator). New York: Norton.

them.¹¹⁶ Accordingly, human behaviour is directed and/or influenced by these three systems within the personality. Freud believed that a healthy person is one that has a balance between all three systems. A person controlled by the id would manifest behaviour that is selfish and impulsive, seeking primarily to satisfy these desires, fuelled by the libido or psychic energy. A person controlled by the ego would struggle with maintaining a balance between instinctive or personal needs with that of societal pressures or the demands of reality. A person controlled by the superego would be highly authoritarian, legalistic and very rigid.¹¹⁷ An unbalanced person would therefore be a maladjusted individual. This view sees human personality as being fueled by sexual drives or desires. Whilst Freud's views on human personality prove controversial, the central tenet is nevertheless a plausible one. In present society, the tendency to use human sexuality as a means of provocation in consumerism has increased considerably over the last century. Some argue that Evangelical and Charismatic Christianity are overly legalistic in this regard, maintaining a judgmental attitude toward human sexuality.¹¹⁸ This criticism may not hold water in terms of the sexual revolution in this post-modern era. Sexuality has become a major driving force of influence on human behaviour. Arguably, it has always been a major influence, but perhaps the level of influence has changed somewhat. This is evident in the HIV-Aids pandemic affecting the globe.

2.4.4. Man as an Economic Being

This view contends that economic forces drive human behaviour. Materialism becomes the focus of the human being, since the primary needs lie in the acquisition of basics in the physical dimension. Food, shelter and clothing are the most basic of human needs and are part of the material world. When these needs are satisfied then fulfillment is attained. A number of social ideologies have occurred in the recent past, particularly in the past few hundred years. Social change has been accelerated in modern, and into now post-modern society, by a complexity of issues. Economic influence has been viewed as a primary catalyst of social change. Karl Marx (1818-

¹¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 108-110.

¹¹⁷ Tavris, C. & Wade, C. 1990. *Psychology*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers. p. 390.

¹¹⁸ Fletcher, Joseph. 1967. *Moral Responsibility*. Philadelphia: Westminster. p. 83.

1883) developed the view of a materialist conception of history. Marx argued that economic forces, not human values and ideals, promote social change. Perhaps the starting point was communism, which considers history as a *progressive movement* occurring in stages driven by economic forces. These stages included slavery, where wealth belonged to a few who exercised power over other human beings, thus controlling the society of the day. Secondly, feudalism was another economic driving force that developed during the middle ages inaugurating a lord-peasant relationship. Thirdly, capitalism developed wherein the production of goods and services induced consumerism. Those who were able to own the production aspect of the system became the ruling class, based on wealth and ownership.¹¹⁹ Those who owned the means of production were able to hire people to work in the production process i.e. *the working class*. The working classes do not own the means of production and therefore do not own their own means of livelihood. They are dependent on the providers of the capital to provide employment for them. Capitalism thus becomes a class conflict between the capitalists and the working class. Marx believed that dialectical materialism or capitalism would gain ground when private ownership of the production will no longer be possible and all means of producing will be owned by the state. This will effectively remove the economic gap, thus classes will no longer exist, promoting the possibility of an egalitarian and a more participatory social order. This is a form of socialism or communism, as Marx used these concepts interchangeably. It will reduce the monopolization by the few, who are able to wield economic and political influence, invariably directing the society.¹²⁰ Industrial Capitalism is a good indication of the far-reaching influence of this system. It is undergoing constant expansion and the accumulation of increasing wealth through its' systems of production.

¹¹⁹ Erickson, M.J. 2000. *Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House Publishing. pp. 489-490.

¹²⁰ Giddens, Anthony. 1993. *Sociology*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers. pp. 707-709.

Consider what Marx comments with regard to modern Capitalism:

“...has given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country...It has drawn from under the feet of industry the national ground on which it stood. All old-fashioned national industries have been destroyed or are daily being destroyed. They are dislodged by new industries, whose introduction becomes a life and death question for all civilized nations, by industries that no longer only work upon indigenous raw materials, but raw materials drawn from the remotest zones; industries whose products are consumed, not only at home, but in every quarter of the globe.”¹²¹

2.4.5. Man as a Pawn of the Universe

Humanity is seen as the pawn on the chessboard of the universe, controlled by forces in society and the world at large that determine their destinies. The destiny of a person is seen as the random occurrence of forces beyond the control of the individual. Human beings are therefore liable to manipulation by powers greater than themselves, whether it is political, economic or social. The human being is subject to hopelessness and futility because he/she has no control over his/her life. A word popularly used to describe the random occurrences of life is ‘fate.’ Fate is seen as that which is allotted or decreed to be experienced in life. Bertrand Russell describes man as the product of the random or as “...the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms...brief and powerless is Man’s life; on him and all his race the slow, sure doom falls pitiless and dark...”¹²²

2.4.6. Man as a Free Being

A human being is the architect of his/her own destiny. Freedom is the chief characteristic of this view, emphasizing the individuality and uniqueness of each human being. The antithesis of freedom i.e. bondage and restraint, is the enemy of the human being realizing their true potential. Governmental structures are perceived as

¹²¹ Marx, Karl & Engels, Friedrich. 1968. ‘Manifesto of the Communist Party’, in *Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels: Selected Works in One Volume*. London: Lawrence & Wishart. pp. 38-39.

¹²² Russell, Bertrand. 1929. *Mysticism and Logic*. New York: Norton. pp. 47-48, 56-57.

stabilizing forces to ensure that all individuals are able to freely exercise their rights. A comparative approach in explaining man as a free being, is with that of paternalism. Whilst a family and more so the parent(s), provide an environment for the growth and development of the child, no guarantee is given for the prevention and/or experience of failure. As a matter of fact, failure is advocated within the context of freedom as opposed to restraint or regulation. This view adds that three relevant issues are vital in order to exercise and experience freedom, as an essential element of the human personality. The underlying foundation for these three requisites is information. The acquisition of information will enable an individual to make an informed choice, resulting in the fulfillment of the three requisites for action. These include: 1) knowing what to do i.e. the information enables informed thinking for possibilities in a given situation. 2) The willingness to do it i.e. knowing what to do, must result in exercising the choice, by wanting to make the necessary decision. 3) The ability to accomplish what one has decided to do. The fundamental problem with this approach, is that having the information does not necessarily mean that it will be the right information, for the specific situation. Secondly, the source of such information will invariably influence, either positively or negatively, the subsequent decisions that follow i.e. making the information valid as truth or false. Thirdly, information in and of itself can be construed as neutral, but the conduit of such information, may not in all cases be neutral. Fourthly, this view assumes that the individual's interpretation of the choice made to be right, even if failure does occur it is still nevertheless the experience of freedom. Fifthly, if one is to follow the logic of reasoning of this view then the following holds true. The failure to exercise choice is a failure to exercise freedom and this is a violation of what constitutes human nature. This brings into the discussion the whole 'nature versus nurture' debate, where blame for failure can be laid at the door of genetic predisposition or the environment. Lastly, the converse of this argument also holds true. The prevention of the exercise of choice by one individual over another is a violation of freedom, and thus, a violation of essential humanity. This view is predominant in varying degrees in the practice of democracy, wherein the freedom of choice is expressed by such documents as governmental constitutions, the bill of human rights and so forth.

2.4.7. Man as a Social Being

Sociologists account the interesting incident of the wild boy of Aveyron. On the 9 January 1800, a child emerged from the nearby woods of the village of Saint-Serin, in southern France. The boy displayed animal-like tendencies, despite being able to walk upright. He was unable to communicate in any human language, only in shrill and noisy cries. He had no sense of human hygiene, social skills or understanding of how to interact with a human being. He was captured by police and taken to a nearby orphanage. Later, he was taken to Paris where he was aided in the socialization process. Whilst being able to grasp the basics with great difficulty, he remained aloof and unconcerned with the normal aspects of human life, until his death in 1828. A priest who observed the boy on a daily basis provided the following account of the boy:

“All these little details, and many others we could add prove that this child is not totally without intelligence, reflection, and reasoning power. However, we are obliged to say that, in every case not concerned with his natural needs or satisfying his appetite, one can perceive in him only animal behaviour. If he has sensations, they give birth to no idea. He cannot even compare them with one another. One would think that there is no connection between his soul or mind and his body...”¹²³

Man as a social being is defined by the ability to socially interact with other human beings. A human infant is totally dependent on the caregiver for the first few years of its life. Hereafter the child grows physically and socially (including mental and emotional processes) through the interaction with other human beings (family/caregivers or significant others). To this end, Thomas Oden comments that a human being is only fully human, when functioning within a social group.¹²⁴ Furthermore, to view humanity as the sum of the total social interaction with other human beings, would open up the converse to discussion. The lack or absence of socialization would mean that the individual experiencing such would be less than

¹²³Shattuck, Roger. 1980. *The Forbidden Experiment: The Story of the Wild Boy of Aveyron*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux. p. 69.

¹²⁴Oden, Thomas, C. 1972. *The Intensive Group Experience*. Philadelphia: Westminster.

human as in the case of the wild boy of Aveyron. Some have argued that perhaps, there is no such thing as a human nature, only that which social relationships and interactions accord it to be.

2.5. The Biblical Basis of Humanity

Having discussed the seven theories of humanity, one would observe that each theory postulates its own understanding of what would constitute the basis of humanity. Each of these views suggests interesting and reflective considerations, but they are inconclusive. To put it simplistically, they are unable to define what makes a human being human? Can a human being be defined only on the basis of what he or she needs, or is able to do as in the economic, social and mechanistic theories? The biblical basis of humanity delineates several points to consider. Firstly, humanity is the result of the specific thoughts and intents of a divine Creator, and not the product of arbitrary processes. This intimates that because humanity has its origin in God, there must follow a resultant purpose that God intended for humanity to possess. Secondly, God was under no compulsion or obligation in creating humanity. The origin of humanity rests solely on his benevolence as Creator and is an act of his free will. God is neither dependent on nor does he require self-actualization through the creation of humanity. Thirdly, the resident image of God that has been bestowed as an inherent and central part of humanity is what defines humanity, as a unique part of creation. Whilst God did create humanity to exist in separation from the rest of creation, he did intend to share a higher level of interaction with humanity. From the biblical account one may surmise that humanity shares a unique relationship with God that no other constituent part of creation shares. God intended to have a personal relationship with humanity as seen in Genesis 1-2. This is expressed in: - 1) humanity being made in the image of God. 2) God's delegation of function and purpose in stewardship over the earth. 3) God's command that they perpetuate the earth by reproducing after themselves. 4) God's instruction to them regarding the limits and boundaries in the garden. 5) His provision of food. The human being is therefore able to develop a personal consciousness of God, and is able to exercise the ability of choice in responding to the Creator, in the dynamic of a personal relationship. Romans 5:10 expresses this as

“since we were restored to a friendship with God by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be delivered from eternal punishment by his life.”¹²⁵ In Christ, humanity’s relationship with God has been re-defined. By responding to God in Christ, one’s relationship takes on many differing aspects. God is now our Creator, Lord, Saviour, Redeemer, Judge, Father and Friend. Humanity is called to express love and devotion to God through reciprocation in worship, service and obedience. Fourthly, as C.S. Lewis remarked, “all that is not eternal is eternally useless,” adds to the biblical consideration that humanity has been created with an eternal dimension.¹²⁶ God created humanity in a finite point i.e. humans had an origin, thus a beginning, as with all of creation. Despite this, human beings are intended by God to live in the eternal future as Romans 6:23 comments that “... the gift of God is eternal life.” The gospel message has to draw attention to this aspect that this life is temporary, and the eternal dimension of existence awaits them. This must be conveyed holistically, in order to avoid a fatalistic understanding of eternity that negates attention to this current life. The decisions of this life inform and affect the eternal one.

Fifthly, humanity is a part of physical creation and is therefore a physical being. This means that the human has physical needs that require satisfaction i.e. food, shelter and clothing. Any obstacle to the fulfillment of these needs will hinder the ability to reach spirituality. Abraham Maslow called the progression of meeting basic needs and then progressing to complex ones, as the “hierarchy of needs.” He arranged his understanding of human motivations in a pyramid form. He contended that human needs move from the basic biological to the mediate psychological, and finally to the point of self-actualization and self-transcendence. He believed that in order to proceed to the next level of the pyramid, one must first resolve the needs of the current level. For example, a person will not be thinking about attaining accomplishments or being successful, if he/she is experiencing hunger. Similarly, an individual cannot reach a point of culmination in self-actualizing, if basic needs are

¹²⁵ *New Living Translation*. 1996. Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers.

¹²⁶ Warren, Rick. 2002. *The Purpose Driven Life*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing. p.50.

not met.¹²⁷ The basic premise of Maslow's theory is relevant to the aforementioned point. Human beings are unified beings, in that there must be a balance among and fulfillment of the spiritual, emotional and physical needs. Sixthly, human beings are inherently social beings, and are created to exist within and by social relationships, within the physical world. To live in this physical world requires interaction with it, albeit on differing forms and levels. However, the important point to consider is that the chief end of humanity's purpose, cannot be attained through selfish pursuits and fulfillment of one's own happiness. Rather, as has been pointed out, our very existence rests in God and fulfillment can be reached when our chief end becomes the realization of service in commitment to God. Seventhly, the search for self-understanding and identity that has pervaded the global culture over the last century has often been sought in all types of pursuits. Some of these include materialism or the acquisition of things, the belief in total freedom in controlling one's destiny as a form of liberation or even the succumbing to the inevitable fate allotted to each person. Christian anthropology ventures to answer the quest for meaning in life or the search for self-understanding and identity, through the realization, acceptance and response to the divine initiative of the Creator. *The true and complete revelation of himself is in Jesus Christ. Identity is to be found in the divine, and is defined by the individualistic and corporate concern and approach that God has for all humanity. He cares, according to Luke 15:3-7 for each person as a unique being, whilst simultaneously caring for the entire world. John 3:16 intimates that "God so loved the world..."*

2.6. The Origin of Humanity

We now turn to the question of the origin and character of humanity. The issue of origin has been an area of considerable debate. It raises the question of the beginning of civilization, the age of creation and the development of language and culture over time. Contemporaneous questions posited by the natural and behavioural sciences and the demands of a technological society warrant attention. Questions of, how did humanity develop into what it has become today? Did humanity develop from the

¹²⁷Maslow, Abraham. 1970. *Motivation and Personality*. New York: Harper Publishing.

original pair i.e. Adam and Eve, or are there other possible explanations of origins? The biblical scholar is confronted with such questions and those that relate to them. The context, which would serve the following discourse, is captured in the analysis of the origin of the human race. In the question of the origin of humanity, the methodology of God's creative act in this regard, is pertinent. Did God's creative act entail immediate creation or mediate creation? In other words, did God create man¹²⁸ through direct involvement in the creative process or did he set in motion what theistic evolution contends, that man evolved from lower forms through natural processes? In this regard, there are differing schools in postulating possible explanations of origins. Two schools are worth mentioning at this point. The first school referred to as *Threshold evolutionists*, contend that humanity is the result of direct immediate creation. The comments of Donald Grey Barnhouse summarize the threshold evolutionary view. He states that one should not even consider the view that "... God intervened in the past, even in the midst of a long evolutionary process, and created man as an entirely new factor..."¹²⁹ The second school of thinking belongs to the category of mediate creationism. This is suggestive of the intervention of God at specific points in the evolutionary process of the human being thereby creating the spirit and/or soul. The culmination of this long process resulted in eventual Adam or man. This has long been the view of the Roman Catholic Church i.e. the soul of a human being is immediately created by God.¹³⁰

2.6.1. The Biblical Account of Adam and Eve

The biblical account of the creation of man is found in Genesis 1:26-27, "Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea...over all the earth...so God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him..." The second account is found in Genesis 2:7 "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed

¹²⁸ The title 'man' will be used in a generic sense to refer to humanity, in our ensuing discussions in this and the following chapters, from this point onward. Note that the personal pronoun 'he' will be employed for convenient reference. This should be taken in a gender sensitive and generic context i.e. *male and female*.

¹²⁹ Barnhouse, D.G. "Adam and Modern Science," *Eternity Magazine*, Vol. 11, No. 5 (May 1960).

¹³⁰ Clarkson, John F., et al., (Eds.) 1955. *The Church Teaches*. St. Louis: B. Herder Book Company.

into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.” Both these accounts are the most direct references to the creation of humanity. From the above verses, one may ascertain the following pertinent inferences: 1) God did not create humanity, as he did in his previous creative acts in Genesis 1:1-25. All of the previous creative acts were *de novo* or created afresh. It was as a result of the spoken word of God. The phrase “And God said...” occurs no less than seven times (1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24). It indicates the methodology of God’s creative acts occurring through the spoken word. Humanity was not created in the same fashion as other elements of creation were. 2) The first part of Genesis 1:26 indicates that God had given due consideration to the creation of man by first engaging in the decision create. God’s decision reflected the parameters that he had determined. Man was to be made in the image of God and he was to have dominion over the earth. Clearly, before humanity was created, God had already set forth the pattern and purpose of the human being. 3) What follows God’s decision was the actual process of creating man. We are told that God created man in his own image and that he had formed him from the dust of the ground. 4) Man was constituted, as a living being when the breath of God entered him. Arising from this biblical account, it is believed that God created Adam and Eve as the first pair of human beings. However, some theologians have asserted that the existence of Adam and Eve should not be taken literally, but as symbolically. Emil Brunner challenged the interpretation of the Genesis account based on what he termed as external and internal evidences.¹³¹ In terms of external evidences, Brunner pointed out that the evidences presented by the natural scientific approaches of paleontology and evolutionary biology, conflicts with the biblical account of creation. These findings indicated a far more primitive form of humanity, as opposed to what biblical evidences purport to, of a once perfect and balanced creation. In light of this, Brunner argued that the church should abandon its position of accepting the existence of a literal Adam and Eve. From the aspect of internal evidences, Brunner disagreed with the theological position of maintaining that the creation of Adam and Eve is, a part of or in tandem with, empirical history. For Brunner, this implied a contradiction in terms since the biblical account was contrary

¹³¹Brunner, Emil. 1947. *Man in Revolt*. Philadelphia: Westminster. pp. 85ff.

to scientific evidences. The removal of the historicity of the account of Adam and Eve would ensure that the doctrine of humanity is expunged of inaccuracy and would help humanity in focusing on the right aspects of creation. It should be seen as a type of parable in terms of the relevant application for today. Furthermore, according to Brunner, the biblical account of a human being named Adam is of no significant importance since the ultimate emphasis should be turned toward each of us as human beings.¹³²

Whilst Brunner's approach is interesting, it does present specific problems. How does one interpret the Genesis account? Did the writer intend for it as an actual historical record concerning actual events and persons during this period? The contextual understanding of the word 'Adam' would suggest an amiable solution to this theory. In one sense 'Adam' can be interpreted as 'human' as opposed to taking it as a name. In light of Pauline theology, this general view cannot be taken at face value. Paul refers in Romans 5:12-21 and in 1 Corinthians 15, to the condition of human sinfulness in relation to the person or individual called 'Adam.' In contrast to this he also draws a parallelism with the 'man Jesus Christ.' Thus the veracity of Paul's argument rests on the actuality of the man, Adam as opposed to taking it in a generic or symbolic sense of humanity. Pauline soteriology hinges on the explanation of the origin of human sinfulness as coming through the disobedience of the man, Adam. He was considered the federal head of the human race, and by representation of his choice, the fall of humanity occurred. This would prevent the interpretation of the word 'Adam' in a general sense.¹³³

2.6.2. The Antiquity of Humanity

The age of the human race is a part of the subject of origins since it is assumed from the biblical account that the age of the human race is confined to the creation accounts. This developed the view that human existence was only for a short period, based on the attempt to calculate the time of creation to the existence of the first

¹³² Ibid, pp. 85ff.

¹³³ Erickson, M.J. 2000. *Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House Publishing. pp. 498-501.

human beings, from genealogical passages in Genesis. Humphrey Johnson, a Catholic Anthropologist considered the accepted Western view in this regard, as plausible. The creation of Adam and Eve could be dated, roughly to about sixteen centuries before the universal flood that occurred during the time of Noah, and therefore about forty centuries before the birth of Christ.¹³⁴ Johnson computes possible dates based on the Samaritan Pentateuch as 4243 B.C. and the Septuagint as 5382 B.C.¹³⁵ Anthropologists have argued on the exact specificity of time period of a date, based on various findings of human skeletal remains through the use of geological data, and chemical aids such as fluorine. Assessment of human skulls, jawbones and the like in different geographical locations has included some of the following, which place these findings within the Stone Age period¹³⁶: -

- 1) The Neanderthal man in Germany (1875ff)
- 2) Cro-Magnon man in France (1868ff)
- 3) Java man (1891ff)
- 4) Piltdown man in England (1912ff)
- 5) Peking man (1921ff)

Other views claim dates for the differing anthropological periods, with support from the development of tools, culture and religious practices. For example, the use of burial practices by the Neanderthal man can be traced back between 40,000 to 100,000 years. The Java mans' use of language indicates a time span of about 400,000 years.¹³⁷ There are numerous approaches to the issue of the antiquity of man, which present different solutions. We shall briefly consider four such views in explanation of the age of the human race. Firstly, the view of non-necessity advocates that the determination of the age of the human race bears no importance to current humanity. The non-necessity view points out that it would be an impossible task to

¹³⁴ Johnson, H.J.T. 1923. *Anthropology and the Fall*. New York: Benziger Brothers. pp. 3-4.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 30, n.1.

¹³⁶ Johnson, H.J.T. 1948. *The Bible and Early Man*. New York: Declan X. McMullen Company. pp. 33-61.

¹³⁷ Moody, D. 1981. *The Word of Truth*. Grand Rapids: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing Company. pp. 205-210.

determine the age of the human race, and even if such a determination were possible, it would hold no direct bearing on theology. Other scholars beg to differ on the point of non-necessity, arguing that the age of Adam in terms of when he was created does have a bearing on theology. The argument proceeds on the descriptions offered in Genesis four concerning the descendents of Adam, which require explanation. These descriptions can be taken as reference to Neolithic man. These help one understand from an anthropological perspective, the type of humanity that existed during this period.¹³⁸ Secondly, the existence of tools is taken as reference to the art of tool making. Donald Wilson adds that the ability to fashion tools is a sign of advanced culture and the making of tools implies a use for them. This would indicate that humanity at this point, could not have been subhuman. Wilson further mentions that tool making emerged, possibly one to two million years ago.¹³⁹ The problem with this view, is that the assertion that tool making can be used as a defining attribute of early humanity, seems untenable. It suggests that in the absence of tool making, humanity at that point could not be subhuman. To equate full humanity as opposed to sub humanity based on the development of tools is narrow and biased to the inherent possibilities of what defines a human being. Furthermore, in describing tool making one would use a referent or standard to evaluate such tools against. This would mean that based on the type, shape, material and use of the tool would determine it to be of a particular standard. It then comes down to a relative interpretation of standard, thus determining the degree of civilization. This is open to bias.

Thirdly, the burial of the dead by Neanderthal man is considered to be a religious practice that can be used as a defining characteristic of humanity. This is dated back to about 50,000 years. Religious practice, in terms of this view, would suggest belief in the divine thus setting the human being apart from any other creature. The problem here is that religious practice does not imply belief in the divine, as it could be an operant condition of fear or custom. It presupposes that the religious practice is understood as foundational to morality and ethics resident in that period. The burying

¹³⁸ Erickson, M.J. 2000. *Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House Publishing. pp. 508-509.

¹³⁹ Wilson, D.R. "How Early is Man?" in *Christianity Today* (September 14, 1962): 27-28 (1175-76).

of dead could be for any number of reasons, other than belief in the divine i.e. hygienic conditions, fear of the unknown, and development of a custom or tradition not based on religion. *Fourthly, the use of language by human beings would imply a sophisticated interaction in relationship form with God, or by one that is created in the image of God. Based on the development of language, a correlation can be made with the biblical account, citing the onset of culture as evidence. This view would then advocate that human origins could be traced back to about 30,000 - 40,000 years, and that the first human was more akin to Cro-Magnon man. This view presents itself as the most plausible of the four theories of human origin. The use of language as implication of culture would prove tenable, in order for the transmission of the experiences of early humanity to occur. This would be the primary means of doing so. The Genesis account does indicate Adam and Eve communicated with God, and each other, through language. This means that the existence of language was from the inception of their creation, in order for communication to take place. Erickson argues that whilst this view may be plausible, the problem that arises is the question of the Neolithic elements, found in the biblical record of Genesis 4. He surmises the Neolithic problem by stating that if the immediate descendents of Adam i.e. Cain and Abel engaged in Neolithic practices such as agriculture, as mentioned in Genesis 4, then it would contradict the time of the origin of Adam (30,000 years prior). It creates a generational gap of about twenty thousand years, if the placement of the date of the Neolithic period is accurate, as occurring between 10,000 – 8,000 years prior.¹⁴⁰ A number of possible solutions can be offered in light of this: -*

- 1) The advocacy of Pre-Adamism: This view developed during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Some of the advocates of this view included Arthur Rendel Short (1880-1953) and Eustace Kenneth Victor, amongst others. This theory differentiates between fossilized human i.e. subhuman, prehuman or pre-Adamite, and biblical human i.e. Adam, Eve and the descendents. Pre-Adamism maintains that fossilized humanity died prior to the creation of biblical humanity.

¹⁴⁰ Erickson, M.J. 2000. *Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House Publishing. pp. 509-510.

God created Adam as a *de novo* act bestowing spiritual character that the pre-Adamites did not possess.¹⁴¹ Ramm asserts that there are three possible texts that militate against this view: "...and there was no man to work the ground" (Gen. 2:5); "But for Adam no suitable helper was found" (Gen. 2:20) and "she (Eve) would become the mother of all the living" (Gen. 3:20). These texts raise the issue that from an anthropological perspective, it would be difficult to tell when pre-Adamites no longer existed, and when biblical humans began.¹⁴²

- 2) The biblical genealogy of Genesis 4 may be a condensed version of the narratives of several persons into one coherent account. Thus, assuming that Cain and Abel were not the direct or immediate descendants of Adam.
- 3) The meaning of the word '*adam*' as found in Genesis 1:26 and 2:7, refers to the human race as a whole. Genesis 4:1 and 5:3 on the other hand, should be taken as a proper noun referring to an individual that existed later in the time period.
- 4) James Oliver Buswell adds that the interpretation of the statement by Moses in Genesis 4 should be considered in a broader sense, in order to account for translation aspects of what was actually meant. Cain and Abel could have practiced a far more primitive form of agriculture and animal herding.¹⁴³
- 5) Agricultural and animal herding practices could have pre-dated the Neolithic period, implying that it may have been in use as early as the time of Adam.

The most amiable of solutions would be that of three and five above. The third point allows for correlation with Pauline theology that accounts for the commission of sin by the man Adam (Rom. 5). Whilst the interpretation of the word may also apply in a general sense to all of humanity the fall of humanity is best explained in light of this.

¹⁴¹ Ramm, Bernard. 1954. *The Christian View of Science and Scripture*. Grand Rapids: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing Company. p. 316

¹⁴² Ibid. pp. 316-317.

¹⁴³ Buswell, J.O., III, 'Adam and Neolithic Man,' *Eternity* 18, no. 2 (February 1967): 39.

The fifth point allows for the explanation of agricultural and animal domestication in light of the biblical account of origins as dating 30,000 – 40,000 years. It should be noted that none of these views are conclusive and are at best inferences based on plausible data.

2.6.3. The Evolutionary Hypothesis

The evolutionary hypothesis hinges on the argument, that the origin of man can be attributed to the evolution from lower life forms. Charles Darwin was the proponent of the theory of evolution. He based his argument on a mechanism he termed ‘natural selection.’ This mechanism implied that all life undergoes evolution through a process of natural selection or the developmental stages of nature. It is explained in terms of small scale or micro-evolution and large scale or macro-evolution. The micro-evolutionary view has been readily accepted, since it refers to the adaptive abilities of life forms to the surrounding environment. This is often used in explanation of differences in the same species i.e. cats, dogs, rodents that have evolved through natural selection processes. Macro-evolution explains evolution on a large scale, accounting for every living form developing from a single-cell or microbe to human beings, in the chain of evolution. Darwin believed that all life originated from a common source through a process of chemical reactions i.e. the generation of cells necessary for life to occur through the chemical interaction of gases and water. Natural selection takes over from this point, encouraging mutations and species development, in order to survive in the environment that it finds itself in. Evolution explains this in terms of the survival of the fittest and the extinction of the weakest.¹⁴⁴ There are arguments used in support of the evolutionary hypothesis such as:¹⁴⁵

- 1) The argument of comparative anatomy: This view points out that there are similarities between the anatomy of man and higher vertebrata. This is taken as indication, that both man and animal evolved from a common source or

¹⁴⁴ Geisler, N.L. 1999. *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Publishing. pp. 224-225.

¹⁴⁵ Thiessen, H.C. 1979. *Lectures in Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing Company. pp. 152-153.

alternatively, that man evolved from an animal. The difficulty with this line of reasoning is that it cannot explain why total development has not occurred in these higher vertebrata in comparison to man i.e. human physiology. It also cannot account for the possibility of continued evolution. In light of this reasoning, man has either stopped evolving or will continue to do so. The questions will then be, what will man's final evolutionary state be, and when will it reach finality? It should also account for changes in the human physiology.

- 2) The argument of vestigial organs: Here the argument is based on the apparent non-functionality of specific organs in the human body such as the appendix, thymus gland and the tonsils. Evolutionists agree that these vestigial organs may have served a function in the primitive ancestry of man but through evolution man has no longer need of them. This is a subjective argument in that the absence of explanation does not imply that there is no explanation for the use of such organs. Science may have not yet discovered the uses of such organs. Evolutionists substantiate that these organs can be removed without any apparent harm to the human body. The same is true of other significant organs like the lungs or kidneys used in organ donorship. These organs have a significant function, even though they can be removed without causing harm to the body.

- 3) The argument of embryology: In this case, evolutionists assert that there is a parallel development between the process by which a human fetus develops, and the evolutionary process i.e. a single-celled organism to a fully developed adult of the species. The argument of parallelism does not take into account dissimilarities and reverse stage development. For example in the human being, the heart develops first in order for circulation to occur for the body to function. This is opposite to the earthworm, in which circulation develops first, but there is no heart. Furthermore, because embryological development may take place in the same way as with other life forms like animals particularly mammals, does not imply that they are the same or that they developed from a common source. It is at best, speculative science.

- 4) The argument of biochemistry: This is a similar view to embryology in that all living organisms are said to share a common or similar bio-chemical makeup. The same critique would apply since similarity does not mean commonality. In addition, most animal and plant life require similar biochemicals such as acids, proteins, lipids, fats etc.

- 5) The argument of Paleontology: The evidence of fossil record is often used as support for the evolutionary hypothesis. Evolutionists maintain that fossils are rock strata, embedded with remains of life forms that once existed. They explain that fossil records are evidence of two particular features i.e. stasis and sudden appearance. Stasis refers to the form in which the species are preserved i.e. most species look similar in condition or form in the fossil, as when they first disappeared. This prevents any explanation of morphological change, and offers no pertinent information, in terms of direction of the species. Sudden appearance refers to the lack of gradual development in a species in a given area. Instead, the fossil shows a sudden and immediate development of the species. These features are contradictory to evolution in that it cannot explain the transition of one life form into the next i.e. single celled organism to fish to reptile to animal to man. There is no continuity in the fossil record, thus the possibility of a sustained link in the evolutionary process, is difficult to explain scientifically.¹⁴⁶

- 6) The argument of Genetics: This is based on the genetic code of every living being as a function of heredity, meaning that, built into each genetic code are specific genetic structures. Such structures would allow only for specific changes to occur within that category of species. Thus, the arrangement of genetic material or DNA patterns can experience variations, thereby producing different species. These variations are taken in support of changes that are constantly occurring in species. The sudden appearance of a species could have only taken place, according to this view, through changes in the genetic code. The same argument can also be used

¹⁴⁶Geisler, N.L. 1999. *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Publishing. pp. 226-227.

against the evolutionary hypothesis i.e. the arrangement of the genetic code to produce a unique species would imply the intervention or act of a supernatural intelligent being. The sudden appearance of a species does not mean that it came through an evolutionary process. Rather it can also be taken to mean that such could have not occurred randomly producing such specificity of species, both unique and original in design, although similarities may be present.¹⁴⁷

Evolution can be considered more of speculative science rather than empirical science. Much of what evolution contends is based on speculation, and has since been challenged by many scientists, since it cannot be empirically proven. The biblical account for the origin of man attributes such an occurrence to the work of a divine Creator, the act of a supernatural being. Robert Kofahl remarked that:

“The most powerful evidence for creation and against evolution is, in our opinion, to be found in specific evidences of intelligent, purposeful design. This evidence is all around us and is something the layman as well the scientist can appreciate. The authors of *The Creation Explanation*: accept the claim of the Bible to be the word of God. They accept the opening chapters of Genesis, therefore, to be true to scientific fact. This is their fundamental postulate and they make no apology for it.”¹⁴⁸

The biblical origin of man is to be accepted on the basis of faith. It cannot be scientifically proven, although as Kofahl contends, that man is in himself testimony to the purposeful design of God.

2.6.4. Biblical Arguments in support of the uniqueness of the Creation of Man

The biblical arguments provide support for the acceptance of the literal teaching of Scripture, regarding the origin of man. Numerous biblical references assert this argument as valid as found in Gen. 1:27; 2:7; 2:22; 5:1; 6:6; Deut. 4:32; Ps.100: 3;

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 227.

¹⁴⁸ Kofahl, R. E. & Seagrave, K.L. 1975. *The Creation Explanation*. Wheaton, Illinois: Harold Shaw Publishers. p. 78.

103:14; 104:30; Job 33:4; Isa. 45:12; 1 Cor. 11:9 and 1 Tim. 2:13. It is clear that humanity exists as a result of the special creative act of God. Duffield & Cleave venture to explain the special creation of man through an etymology of the Hebrew words used in Genesis 1:26-27 and 2:7. They cite the following explanation as a context for understanding the intrinsic value or worth of humanity to God. It would be useful to once again quote these three biblical references: -

- “Then God said, “Let us **make** man in our image...” (1:26)
- “So God **created** man in His own image...” (1:27)
- “And the Lord God **formed** man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (2:7)

The Hebrew words are cited as emphasis on the following words: -

- “make”: ‘*bara*’ as “the production or effectuation of something new, rare, and wonderful”
- “created”: ‘*asah*’ as “to form, to construct, to prepare, to build”
- “formed”: ‘*yatzar*’ as “to form or shape as a potter working would vessels of clay”

The sequence of the words is used as explanation of the creative process that God worked through, in bringing humanity into existence. In Genesis 1:26 the Triune God states “Let us **make** man in our image”, which can be interpreted as “Let us *asah* man in our image.” The meaning is then “let us produce, effectuate something new, wonderful and rare in our image.” This implies a production stage, with God contemplating the purposeful design of a being after his image. In Genesis 1:27 we read, “So God **created** man in His own image” which is taken as ‘*asah*’ i.e. God formed, constructed, built something new and rare in his own purpose. In Genesis 2:7 we read, “And the Lord God **formed** man of the dust of the ground” which is taken as ‘*yatzar*’ i.e. God formed and shaped man from the dust of the ground as a potter would work with clay. The same verse also indicates that the breath of God constituted man as a living soul. Dust according to Duffield, identifies man with the

scene or place of his fall, whilst the breath of life identifies him with God as the divine Creator.¹⁴⁹ Therefore, man is of the earth but created for fellowship with God. Other texts are cited where the word '*bara*' is used such as Genesis 5:1, 6:7, Deuteronomy 4:32, Isaiah 43:1, 7, 45:12 and Malachi 2:10. The New Testament texts indicating that God created man, include Col. 3:10, Rom. 9:20, Jas. 3:9 and 1 Corin. 15:45. The uniqueness of the creation of man lies in the personal involvement of God in the creative process, if we take Duffield's view into account. Further testament to the uniqueness of man is the breath of God resident in him (Gen. 2:7), which differentiates him from all other living creatures. Man possesses the breath of God indicating an aspect that God chose to impart to humanity something that he had not done with the rest of creation. This demonstrates the purpose of God in creating man for his glory (Is. 43:7). When humanity accepts this understanding and proceeds towards the fulfillment of it, then the realization of whom God is, and who we are is reached. It is one of constant progressive realization that cannot reach saturation point.

2.7. The Image of God in Humanity

The image of God forms a crucial part of the human identity. It informs us where we have come from and who we essentially are. The image of God in humanity is an attempt to ask the question of what makes us essentially human? What we understand about humanity determines what we understand about God and what we understand about fellow human beings. It informs and defines the nature of the relationships that we share with God and fellow humanity. The differentiation of the biblical understanding of the image of God and what humanity has become after the fall, is perhaps, far different. It is clear that sin did affect humanity. As to how the image of God was affected, if at all, requires an understanding of what is meant by the image of God. Clearly, our understanding of what constitutes biblical humanity and what we see of current humanity, do not correlate. It is a case of humanity before and after the fall, and the ensuing new creation view of humanity brought about by Jesus Christ.

¹⁴⁹ Duffield, G. & Cleave, N.M. 1983. *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*. California: U.S. p. 121.

2.7.1. The Biblical View

The bible indicates that humanity has been created in the image of God. No other creature is said to possess or to have been created in the *imago Dei*. What is meant by the image of God? The Hebrew *Tselem Elohim* and the Greek equivalent *eikon tou theou* convey an understanding of the image of God in man, according to the contextual understanding of Genesis 1:26-27. A general definition of image would suggest that man is similar but not identical to God, and is a representative of him.¹⁵⁰ The writer of Genesis employs the words 'image' and 'likeness' in verse 26. The Hebrew translation for image is 'tselem' and the word for likeness is 'demuth.' Commentators consider both these words as a type of Hebrew parallelism, in which they are used interchangeably for added emphasis.¹⁵¹ Both 'image' and 'likeness' add to the meaning, that man is similar but not identical to, the object or image he mirrors. In other words, he is a representative of the image of God. A number of varying interpretations have been offered in explanation of what is best understood by the biblical context of the words 'image' and 'likeness.' Some of the interpretations offered in summary view are expressed as: -¹⁵²

- 1) When God created man, he was created in conformation to an ideal form, which God possesses.
- 2) The image is representative of the dominion or stewardship that man has over the earth and its' created things.
- 3) A reference to the personality of man i.e. intellect, mind and emotions.
- 4) The ability of man to share in a level of communication with God that no other created thing is able to do. Man has the ability to exercise choice in engaging in rational fellowship and communication with God.
- 5) The original pre-fall state of man i.e. holiness and righteousness.
- 6) The triune being of man i.e. body, soul and spirit.

¹⁵⁰ Grudem, W. 1994. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House. p.442.

¹⁵¹ Duffield, G. & Cleave, N.M. 1983. *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*. California: U.S. p. 123.

¹⁵² Ibid., p. 123.

Grudem offers a succinct definition of the words “image” and “likeness” as: -

“...an object similar to something else and often representative of it. The word is used to speak of statues or replicas of tumor and of mice (1 Sam. 6:5, 11), of paintings of soldiers on the wall (Ezek. 23:14), and of pagan idols or statues representing deities (Num. 33:42; 2 Kings 11:18; Ezek. 7:27; 16:17). The word *likeness* (*demut*) also means an object similar to something else, but it tends to be used more frequently in contexts where the idea of similarity is emphasized more than the idea of being a representative or substitute (of a god, for example). King Ahaz’s model or drawing of the altar he saw in Damascus is called a “likeness” (2 Kings 16:10), as are figures of bulls beneath the bronze altar (2 Chron. 4:3-4), and the wall paintings of Babylonian chariot officers (Ezek. 23:15).”¹⁵³

These definitions offer an understanding of God’s intention in creating man i.e. not another God or a form of God, but a representation of God. The parameters of this representation are outlined by God himself, in Genesis 1:26-27 following. The inference is that to fully understand the likeness or image of God in man, one must first begin with who God is. This is to know God in his person, attributes and nature and how this relates to man. This enhances our understanding of the nature of man as relating to the nature of God. This thought is evident in Genesis 5:3 which states, “When Adam had lived a hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth.” The same Hebrew words ‘*demut*’ [likeness] and ‘*tselem*’ [image] are used in this context. Here the idea is that Seth was the son of Adam in likeness or image. Seth was not identical to Adam but was similar to him, as a son is to a father. Other Old Testament passages include Genesis 9:6 where reference is made to man in the image of God, therefore prohibiting murder, in Song of Songs 2:3 and Ecclesiastes 17:3. The New Testament references include 1 Corinthians 11:7, where man is seen as the image and glory of God. The Greek word εἰκὼν or ‘*eikon*’ is used for image. Ephesians 4:23-24, 2 Corinthians 3:18 and Romans 8:29 use the word image, in reference to the believer being transformed into the image of Christ, through the salvation.

¹⁵³ Grudem, W. 1994. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House. pp. 442-443.

The question that arises, is how did sin affect the image of God in man? The first reference is found in Genesis 9:6, in which God accords to Noah the permission to institute the death penalty for those who commit murder. The verse bears the phrase "...for God made man in his own image" which implies that even after the fall, God still considered a measure of his likeness present in man. He therefore saw murder as a violation of his image that was still present in humanity. The New Testament parallel would be James 3:9 "With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude [likeness] of God." Similitude accounts for likeness, which all humanity possesses. After sin, humanity lost its original holiness, righteousness and purity in person and/or character. The image in his total person was corrupted and manifest in his thinking [mind], feeling [emotions] and choosing [will]. Prior to the fall, humanity had total use of all of these faculties to fully glorify God. After the fall, these faculties could now be used to achieve or fulfill evil, sinful and selfish desires. The primary method of expression of the image of God was thus corrupted i.e. the ability to communicate in holiness and purity was lost. It is clear that after the fall, man still possesses the image of God, but not in the same level as prior to the fall. Whilst we may still have the ability to represent God, sin distorts the measure of this representation, and makes the accomplishment of this difficult (Rom. 7). To understand what it means to be truly and fully human cannot be attained from observance of other fallen human beings, since they distort the true image of God, because of sin. The incarnation of Christ as a human being is a true representation of humanity before the fall. Salvation makes the possibility of completely recovering the image of God achievable, through the person and work of Christ. The New Testament explicitly describes the progressive nature of Christ's redemptive work. Thus, humanity can be transformed progressively into the image of God through the exercise of salvation. Discipleship allows the believer to grow in the knowledge of God through internal and external spiritual practices and beliefs, and become more like Christ (Col. 3:10; 2 Corin. 3:18). The ultimate goal of the Christian life is to be conformed in person and character, into the image of Christ (Rom. 8:29). The culmination of the salvation experience lies in the complete restoration of the image of God in humanity. Adam's act of disobedience effectively brought all of

humanity into the experience of sin and death, with no possibility of returning to humanity's original state. Christ not only experienced sin and death, but also dealt with the problem of sin, removing the penalty of death (Rom. 6:23). Humanity is given a new opportunity at returning to a complete restoration of the image of God.¹⁵⁴

2.7.2. Theories regarding the Image of God in Humanity

There are three specific views that have developed in explanation of the image of God in man. Each view purports to explain what it believes to be the defining characteristics of the image of God in humanity. We shall briefly consider each of them.

2.7.2.1. The Substantive View

As the above title suggests, the emphasis is on a substantive or important characteristic of human nature. There is a lack of consensus as to what this specific characteristic might be. This has been the most popular of the three views and has been the dominant theory during the last century. Some assert that the substantive image is the physical appearance or physiological makeup of man. They base this view on a literal interpretation of 'tselem' as 'statue' or 'form.' This is an accepted Mormon view, as they advocate that God possesses a body. Others view the substantive of the image of God as the ability to reason or the rational capacity of man. The enlightenment period of the 18th century saw an increase in focus on man's ability to reason. David Cairns points out that rationalism permeated the varying fields of study, including theology.¹⁵⁵ Reason as a part of human nature, has been understood in differing ways, changing in context from the enlightenment period to the present day i.e. from a philosophical approach to contemplative to scientific empiricism. The ability of humankind to function in and with reason is argued as a similarity to God. It is thought that this is the distinguishing characteristic that separates man from animal. However, to use reason as the sole basis for defining the image of God is narrow and limiting, to both human and God. To do so would limit

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, pp. 444 – 445.

¹⁵⁵ Cairns, David. 1953. *The Image of God in Man*. New York: Philosophical Library. pp. 58ff.

our understanding of God to a single attribute i.e. reason. It neglects the total function of all of the other attributes i.e. love, holiness, mercy etc. A third approach to the substantive view was the differentiation between the terms “image” and “likeness.” Origen held to this view indicating that God bestowed his image on man at creation. This was an instantaneous occurrence but God did not confer his likeness immediately, only doing so at a later time. Similarly, Irenaeus adopted the basic tenets but defined the image of God in Adam, as his ability to exercise choice through reason. He defined likeness as the endowment of spiritual attributes upon Adam by the Spirit of God. Irenaeus explained the fall of humanity as Adam losing the likeness (spiritual characteristics), whilst still keeping the image (reason, free will).¹⁵⁶ This view was taken and developed further by medieval scholasticism, meaning that the image represented God in man in his capacity to reason and choose. The likeness represented the moral attributes of God that man possessed i.e. goodness and moral purity. The fall of man resulted in the likeness being destroyed or lost, whilst the image remained intact. This is problematic, in that one can remain fully human (including the non-believer) despite being sinful (loss of the likeness). It is akin to Gnosticism in that natural reasoning would enable one to gain knowledge of God. The other assumption would be that one could practice good works in one’s natural humanity apart from any spiritual quality or characteristic. This is reminiscent of Catholic theology.¹⁵⁷ It was the reformer, Martin Luther that discovered that the words ‘image’ and ‘likeness’ have the same meaning, thus invalidating the commonly held view of the time. He proposed a unitary view of the image of God, adding that all aspects of the human nature were corrupted by sin, although the image does exist, albeit in fragmentary parts.¹⁵⁸

2.7.2.2. The Relational View

The basic tenet of this view is that the essential component of image is in the ability of humanity to engage in relationships. When an individual is actively involved in

¹⁵⁶ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5.6.1.

¹⁵⁷ Cairns, David. 1953. *The Image of God in Man*. New York: Philosophical Library. pp. 114 -120.

¹⁵⁸ Martin Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, in *Luther’s Works*, (ed.) Jaroslav Pelikan, trans. George V. Schick. St. Louis: Concordia. 1958, vol. 1, pp. 60ff.

relationship, that person is said to display the image of God. Two proponents of this theoretical postulation were Emil Brunner and Karl Barth. Brunner believed that the image could be understood, in both an ontological and epistemological framework, through the word of God. He considered the word of God as the basis of faith in Christ, and as the means of appropriating the full image of God in humanity. Brunner contended that the image concept could be understood in terms of two aspects i.e. the formal and material. The formal aspect refers to the distinguishing characteristics of human beings from animals i.e. the ability to reason and choose. This aspect still functions in the human being, even after the fall. The material aspect refers to the ability of the human being to respond to God, and to express love to fellow human beings in relationship. This brings into effect the material image.¹⁵⁹ Karl Barth's premise on the image of God centered on a communion in relationship explanation. Barth felt that the image is not something that the human being possesses, nor is it an outward act. Instead, it is understood as that which God brought into existence, as stated in Genesis 1:26 "Let us make man in our image." It is a partnership with a being similar to himself, in certain respects. He explained this communion in relationship, as both a vertical one (with God) and a horizontal one (with fellow human beings). This communion in relationship is seen in the emphatic statement of the triune God "Let *us* make man..." This verse, says Brunner, is expressive of a type of self-encounter and self-discovery that God experiences in such communion. In the same way, the human being is able to experience this self-encounter through communion with God and with other humans, making it a dynamic relationship.¹⁶⁰ Barth added that to understand true humanity, is to learn from the humanity of Christ, as he is the embodiment of the full revelation of true humanity.¹⁶¹ The problem that arises with the relational view is that it adopts an existentialist approach to the image of God in man. It assumes a universality of the image of God as expressed in Brunner's formal and material aspect theory. Accordingly, the human being is still in the image of God, regardless of the sinful position he may be in even if he chooses to

¹⁵⁹ Brunner, Emil. 1947. *Man in Revolt: A Christian Anthropology*. Philadelphia: Westminster. pp. 64-65, 98, 105-106.

¹⁶⁰ Barth, Karl. 1958. *Church Dogmatics*. Vol. 3, part 1. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark Publishing. pp. 184 – 185.

¹⁶¹ Barth, Karl. 1960. *Church Dogmatics*. Vol. 3, part 2. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark Publishing. p. 41.

rebel against God. This is contradictory, in that the basis of the *image* is *relationship*. In order for the *material image* to be present, the human being must choose to respond to God in relationship. The formal aspect assumes that even though persons are sinners, humans are already in relationship with God, even if one chooses not to exercise choice in entering such a relationship. There is no clear biblical support for this position. In addition to this, the relational view assumes that all human beings are already in or are able to enter into relationship with God and fellow human beings. Neither Brunner nor Barth, takes into account the prerequisites for entering into the nature of such a relationship.

2.7.2.3. The Functional View

In this case, image is understood as an aspect of function. Image is expressed in what a person does and is more of a pragmatic approach. Proponents of this view cite the latter part of Genesis 1:26, asserting that the function of man is to exercise dominion over the earth. They also cite the commandment by God to humanity in verses 27 following, to be fruitful and to have dominion over creation. The image of God is expressed when humanity fulfills the commandment of God through the exercise of dominion. In addition to the above text, Psalm 8:5-8 is also cited as proof that God created man in his image, and expressed his desire for them to have dominion. It then becomes a question of functionality. Reformed scholars refer to this approach as the 'cultural mandate.' The parallel to the great commission of Christ, to go forth and produce disciples (Matt. 28:18-20), is seen in God sending of humanity to have dominion over the earth. The comparison of Genesis 1 and Psalm 8 at face value seems to convey the similar idea of the dominion of man over creation. However, unlike Genesis 1, there are no specific references to the *image and likeness* in Psalm 8. Thus, if verses 7-8 of the Psalm are taken as a reference to have dominion because it shares a context with Genesis 1, then it is a narrow interpretation. Psalm 8 contains no explicit references to image as Genesis 1 does. The idea of dominion as a function of image is more conjecture. Furthermore, the Genesis account does not link dominion as a function of image, since man was created in the image of God before he was accorded the privilege of dominion.

2.7.3. The Original Character of Man

The character of man is defined by the image of God, and we have defined what is understood by image in the biblical context. The original character of man refers to the significant attributes that define man. Most theologians agree on four defining attributes, which we shall briefly outline.

2.7.3.1. Moral Likeness

Some have tried to define humanity solely on the ability to rationalize. Man is a moral being whilst this does not define him in a holistic sense. The moral likeness is the responsibility or accountability that man has toward his Maker and Creator. It asserts that man has a conscience i.e. knowledge of right and wrong, which is meant to be a form of guidance to him. The idea of conscience is evident in the Old Testament and is described in terms of function in Leviticus 5:3. The conscience is the means of expressing one's understanding of right and wrong, with the urge to do right. A guilty conscience is the state of the conscience in violating moral principles. The conscience is supposed to channel morality into action, but this is generally the ideal understanding since it can also be defiled, seared and weak. The moral likeness is seen in God's impartation of laws and commandments to man in Exodus 20. Hodge links moral likeness with moral conformity to God by stating of man that: -

“He is the image of God, and bears and reflects the divine likeness among the inhabitants of the earth, because he is a spirit, an intelligent, voluntary agent, and as such he is rightfully invested with universal dominion. This is what the Reformed theologians were accustomed to call the essential image of God, as distinguished from the accidental.”¹⁶²

2.7.3.2. Not a Physical Likeness

The bible is clear that God is a Spirit (John 4:24) and therefore does not possess a body. Man does not share a physical likeness with God because of God's incorporeal

¹⁶² Hodge, Charles. 1952. *Systematic Theology. Vol. 11*. Grand Rapids: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing Company. p 99.

nature (Col. 1:15; 1 Tim. 1:17; Heb. 11:27). There are accounts in the biblical record of God appearing in human form (Gen. 17, 18). Christ is the incarnation of God in the flesh. He took on human form and nature (Phil. 2:7) and is compared to the first Adam (Rom. 5). The pre-fall state of man in terms of his physical appearance could have been one of perfect health and freedom from sickness.

2.7.3.3. Social Likeness

God is not only considered an expression of love, but is love. It is an expression of his very nature. Humanity was created by God to function as a social being, since God himself possesses a social nature in the trinity. The social likeness is seen in Genesis 2:18 “It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.” God created the woman to share in intimate fellowship with man, as a function of the social likeness. Humanity was created with a social likeness, which reaches its fulfillment in communion with God

2.7.3.4. Mental Likeness

Humanity has been created with the ability to think, reason and learn. Man is able to engage in abstract thinking, and in the use of language for interaction and communication. Human creativity expresses the mental likeness in art, literature, and scientific and technological exploits. The human being is able to express complex emotional states such as sadness, joy, anger, laughter and so forth. Scripture testifies to the fact that God endowed man with a mental capacity (Gen. 1:28; 2:19ff). Charles Hodge expresses the mental likeness as the attributes of the conscience, reason and will. Man is a free moral agent, with the ability to exercise choice, based on his mental faculties of rationality and morality.¹⁶³ This is considered a distinguishing characteristic between man and animal. Grudem comments on this unique attribute by stating that: -

¹⁶³ *ibid*, p. 96ff

“Animals sometimes exhibit remarkable behaviour in solving mazes or working out problems in the physical world, but they certainly do not engage in abstract reasoning – there is no such thing as the “history of canine philosophy,” for example, nor have animals since creation developed at all in their understanding of ethical problems or use of philosophical concepts etc. No group of chimpanzees will ever sit around the table arguing about the doctrine of the Trinity or the relative merits of Calvinism or Arminianism!”¹⁶⁴

2.8. The Unity and Constitution of Humanity

After having considered the differing aspects that make up the doctrine of humanity, our last consideration will be the constitution of humanity. This entails discussion of what one understands the human makeup to be i.e. unitary, dualistic or tri-part beings. One’s understanding of human constitution will affect how we deal with human nature. Should we hold to a unitary view then it would mean that humanity has a single component of being, i.e. a combination of body, soul and spirit as constituting one substance. This creates the problem of which element in this unitary substance is the larger constituent or the smaller? How then does one understand and relate to human nature? The same line of reasoning would apply to other views that one might hold regarding human constitution. The unity of man is linked to an understanding of the constitution of man. The issue of unity asks the question of the commonality of man i.e. are all members of the human race descendents from the same original pair of human beings? We shall consider each of the relevant elements in this regard.

2.8.1. The Unity of Man

The biblical teaching concerning the unity of man is clear that all human beings are descendents from a single pair. The theory of multiple origins has often been referred to as polygenism or polygeneticism. This theory surfaced during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by scientific anthropologists that sought to explain that humanity had multiple origins through the process of independent evolution. Theologians have

¹⁶⁴ Grudem, Wayne. 1994. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, p. 446.

disagreed on the exact nature of Polygenism, with some in favour and others in rejection of it. The Roman Catholic Church rejected this view, pointing out that such a view does not correlate with the teachings of scripture, particularly that of original sin. The emphasis being, that sin came into the world through the choice of the individual, Adam. Protestantism holds to the doctrine of original sin with focus on the imputation of sin, which could have only taken place through the organic unity of man.¹⁶⁵ Others such as Dale Moody have accepted the view of polygenism. Moody draws a distinction between what he terms, 'collective Adam', 'representative Adam' and 'individual Adam.' He cites as evidence, Cain's building of the city of Enoch (Gen. 4:17); the age of Jericho as the oldest to house human inhabitants other than Adam, Eve, Cain and Abel and the mark placed on Cain (Gen. 4:15). Scientific Anthropology from around 1976 has moved away from a polygenetic view of humanity's origins, maintaining that all human beings are descended from a common stock. They make reference to the most recent of descendents i.e. *Homo sapiens*.¹⁶⁶ Another aspect relating to the unity of man is the question of, how would one explain racial diversity amongst the human race? Here as well, there are differing opinions as to the biblical explanation. Theologians such as John William Dawson have argued that Genesis 10 is not an explanation of the origin of racial differences. It should be seen as a historical account of the migrations of the Chaldeans to parts of Eastern Europe, Northern Africa and Western Asia.¹⁶⁷ Bernard Ramm agreed that the biblical record found in Genesis 10-11, presents no clear case to support the view that racial diversity occurred through the Babel incident. Neither can the arguments of the sons of Noah be used as justification to explain different race groups.¹⁶⁸ On the other hand, theologians like Arthur C. Custance, have considered Genesis 10 as support of the origin of racial diversity in humanity. He argued that it could be traced back to the families of Shem, Ham and Japheth, with each of these families being accorded specific responsibilities. For example, the Shemites were given spiritual

¹⁶⁵ Garret, James Leo. 1990. *Systematic Theology: Biblical, Historical & Evangelical*. Vol 1. Grand Rapids, Michigan: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing Company. pp. 412-413.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., pp. 413-414.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 414.

¹⁶⁸ Ramm, B. 1954. *The Christian View of Science and Scripture*. Grand Rapids: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing Company. pp. 336-337.

responsibility, the Hamites technological responsibility and the Japhethites intellectual responsibility. Custance explains the origin of the “coloured” race groups as descendents of Ham.¹⁶⁹ There is no clear explanation offered to explain racial diversity. However, one should not lose sight of the fact that all human beings share in unity or oneness, with God as the Creator. Diversity should never become the basis for racism, or anything that threatens the fundamental unity of humanity, despite the existence of differences.

a) The Old Testament

The Old Testament indicates that all human beings share a common parent, and therefore a common nature. The Genesis accounts of the creation of man show that God created man in his image (1:26-27). God created male and female with a divine mandate to be fruitful, multiply and replenish the earth (1:28). Eve is referred to as the mother of all living (3:20).

b) The New Testament

Pauline theology assumes the organic unity of man in the doctrinal admonitions. Paul affirms organic unity in his address to the people of Athens “And God made from one every nation of men to live on all the face of the earth...” (Acts 17:26). He delineates the fall of humanity as a result of the sin of the first man, Adam that brings the entire human race into a sinful condition. In this respect, Paul discusses the doctrine of salvation available to those in Christ (Rom. 5:12,19; 1 Corin. 15:21ff; Heb. 2:16). We find his discussion on the future resurrection of humanity, starting from the analogy of the one man, Adam (1 Corin. 15:22). We may agree with this line of Paul’s reasoning that all human beings are descendents of Adam, and share in the same punishment for sin.

¹⁶⁹ Custance, A.C. 1975. *Noah's Three Sons: Human History in Three Dimensions*, vol. 1, The Doorway Papers. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing. pp. 12-14.

c) **The Testimony of History and Science**¹⁷⁰

- i) *The testimony of history: This is verified through the nations and tribes that have historically lived in both, the Northern and Southern hemispheres. A common ancestry can be traced in these tribes and nations, to the fertile crescent region.*
- ii) *The testimony of linguistics: Many scholars support the origin of language, in terms of monogenesis. This implies uniformity in original phonology, syntax and grammar, and vocabulary. This gives support to a common source of origin for language or a “universal parent language.” Thus, the accounts of Genesis 10-11 are in agreement with this type of theory.*
- iii) *The testimony of physiology: All human beings share a common physiology i.e. blood, organs, body temperature etc. All human beings are susceptible to similar types of diseases. In the case of blood transfusion, all individuals within the same blood type category, regardless of race, are able to receive such transfusions.*
- iv) *The testimony of psychology: All human beings share a common psychological structure i.e. the mental and moral characteristics. In light of this, Berkhof adds that all of humanity irrespective of nation or tribe, has the same common souls. There is commonality in instincts, drives and passions and mental characteristics.*¹⁷¹

2.8.2. The Constitution of Man

From our discussion of the origin and image of man, the basic tenet of scripture is that humanity has been created, with both a physical and spiritual constitution. Man has been created with a physical body from the dust of the ground (Gen. 2:7), and a spiritual part or the “living soul” component, initiated by the breath of God entering man. The physical body of man made of dust, is thus an earthly element. At the same time, he has the breath of God, which is a heavenly element. The combination of both suggests, an interrelationship enabling man to function as one, in order to fulfill the purpose of the Creator. To state it differently would be that man has an immaterial and material nature. The immaterial part is thought of as the soul and spirit whilst the

¹⁷⁰ Thiessen, H.C. 1979. *Lectures in Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing Company. pp.158-159.

¹⁷¹ Berkhof, Louis. 1965. *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing Company. p. 189.

material is the physical body. This presents an obvious question in lieu of the above, how many parts constitute man? Is he twofold or threefold in nature or being?

2.8.2.1. The Material Part of Man

The ancient Greeks thought of the body as a type of prison for the immaterial or the soul. They saw the physical body as the source of evil. Gnosticism advocated the purity of the immaterial and the evil nature of the material. This first century cult believed that the soul could never be affected in any way. Hence, if the physical body were used in the practice of evil, it would do no harm to the immaterial. The epistles of John counter this teaching as heretical, asserting the validity and necessity of the incarnation of Christ. There are scriptural references that indicate that the physical body has a purpose: ¹⁷²

- Man has a mortal body, created from the dust of the earth, and will return to dust at the end of his life (Gen. 3:19; 18:27; Ps. 104:29).
- The physical body has been uniquely and wonderfully created by God (Ps. 139:14-16).
- It is a temporary dwelling place for the real person that dwells within (2 Pt. 1:14; 2 Cor. 5:1).
- Man will eventually gain a new resurrection body that will be in relation with the natural body (1 Cor. 15:44, 50-53; Jn. 5:25; 1 Thes. 4:16; Lk. 24:39).
- The body of a redeemed person becomes the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit, and should no longer be yielded to sin (1 Cor. 6:19-20).
- The body is considered as a holy and living sacrifice, when presented to Christ (Rom. 12:1).
- The body that man has bears the image of God, and of Adam. In Christ, man will inherit a glorified body, which will be in the image of Christ (1 Cor. 15:45-49).

¹⁷² Duffield, G. & Cleave, N.M. 1983. *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*. California: U.S. pp. 125-128.

2.8.2.2. The Immaterial Part of Man

The immaterial element of man i.e. nature and personality, is considered as the life force or life element that defines man as a living being. Man has the breath of God in him, which makes him alive (Job 12:10; Ps. 33:6; Is. 42:5 and Acts 17:25). Behavioural scientists choose to explain the immaterial element, i.e. personality, as a function of the interdependent working of the electrical, chemical and physical components of the human brain. The rational ability of man is explained in the physical manifestation of human behaviour. Duffield distinguishes no less than nine scriptural references, to the immaterial element of man. He states that each of these terms used, describe the immaterial element from a different perspective.¹⁷³

- Life (Mk. 8:35)
- Soul (Mk. 8:36)
- Spirit (Ps. 31:5)
- Mind (Rom. 7:25)
- Heart (Eph. 6:6)
- Strength (Lk. 10:27)
- Self (1 Cor. 4:3-4)
- Will (1 Cor. 7:37)
- Affections (Col. 3:2)

The biblical words most often used, in description of the immaterial element, are “soul” and “spirit.” The Hebrew word for soul is “*nephesh*” and for spirit is “*ruach*” whilst the Greek rendition for soul is “*psyche*” and for spirit is “*pneuma*.” It is apparent from texts in both the Old and New Testaments, that these words are used interchangeably. The use of these words interchangeably, is akin to a form of Hebrew parallelism in which different words are used synonymously, to convey the same idea. For example in both the Old and New Testaments, the words “soul” and “spirit” are used interchangeably: -

¹⁷³ Ibid., p. 129.

- “And so it was, as her *soul* was departing (for she died), that she called his name Ben-Oni...” (Gen. 35:18).
- “And he stretched himself out on the child three times, and cried out to the Lord and said, “O Lord my God, I pray, let this child’s *soul* come back to him” (1 Kings 17:21).
- “Into your hands I commit my *spirit*...” (Ps. 31:5).
- “A haughty *spirit* goes before a fall...” (Prov. 16:18).
- “Now is my *soul* troubled...” (John 12:27).
- “When Jesus had said these things He was troubled in *spirit*...” (John 13:21).
- “My *soul* magnifies the Lord, and my *spirit* rejoices in God my Saviour.” (Luke 1:46-47).

Furthermore, all four words in both Hebrew and Greek, convey the same meaning i.e. breath or wind. It shows that the derivation of life, which is the breath of God resident in man, in the following texts: -

- “The wind [*pneuma*] blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit [*pneuma*]” (John 3:8).
- “But there is a spirit [*pneuma*] in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding” (Job 32:8).
- “The Spirit [*pneuma*] of the Lord hath made me, and the breath [*ruach*] of the Almighty hath given me life (Job 33:4).
- “All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the *spirit* [*pneuma*]” (Prov. 16:2).

The moral constitution of man is part of the immaterial element, and is generally thought of as the “soul”, or as the conscience and the will. The moral constitution can be defined as the interaction of various components working together. Thiessen comments, “Intellect enables man to discern between what is right and what is wrong;

sensibility appeals to him to do the one or the other, and will decides the issue. But in connection with these powers, there is another which involves them all, and without which there can be no moral action.”¹⁷⁴ The Greek word *suneidesis* is used for conscience, appearing about thirty times in the New Testament. It refers to the self-knowledge that man possesses in relation to a standard of right and wrong.¹⁷⁵ The conscience is the seat of judgment over ones’ acts, thoughts and behaviour in relation to this standard of right and wrong. It is assumed that the conscience is informed of moral standards of right and wrong. This would normally come through family education, societal and governmental structures and most importantly, the religious sector. The will is seen as the power of the soul, in exercising the right to choose between right and wrong or differing motives, and then direct activity based on this choice.¹⁷⁶ The nature of man provides the framework within which the will may operate. Man can choose to do anything that falls within the parameters of his nature. The principle of will is expressed in the fall of humanity, as Adam’s nature was good and he could have exercised the power of choice not to sin. The choice that Adam made changed the parameters of his nature to a sinful one, thus informing his choices. The resultant difficulty is now the reverse of the pre-fall nature or state, in that now, man struggles not to sin. The redemptive work of Christ operates through the will of man in restoring to him a nature of Christ-likeness, and enables him to want to choose to serve God (Jn. 7:17; Phil. 2:13).

2.8.2.3. Basic Views of the Constitution of Man

There are three views concerning the constitution of man, each of which dictates what the makeup of the human nature should be understood as. Whilst it is an agreed fact that man has a material body, the area of debate arises as to what the makeup of the immaterial part is. We shall enumerate the basic tenets of each position.

¹⁷⁴ Thiessen, H.C. 1979. *Lectures in Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing Company. p. 162.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 162-163.

¹⁷⁶ Bancroft, E. H. 1949. *Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House. p. 146.

a) The Trichotomous Theory

The Alexandrian fathers of the early church such as Origen, Clement of Alexandria and Gregory of Nyssa popularized this view. The trichotomous theory holds that man consists of three parts i.e. body, soul and spirit. Each of these distinctive elements is distinguished by its specific characteristics. The physical body of a human being has a unique physiological structure, although plants and animals also have physical structures or bodies. The soul is the psychological aspect that is the basis of reason, emotion and thought. The soul is thought of as the seat of the human personality. It is argued in some circles that animals possess what can be termed 'rudimentary souls', but is not to the same degree of complexity as a human being. The spirit element of man is perhaps the most unique of the three. It is the conduit through which a human being can respond to, discern and understand spiritual stimuli. The spirit is seen as the seat of the spiritual character or nature of the person.¹⁷⁷ Some proponents of this view add that at the time of death, each element is dealt in accordance with its nature. This means that the physical body returns to the ground, the soul ceases to exist and the spirit returns to God. Others consider both the soul and spirit as returning to God.¹⁷⁸ This theory uses several New Testament passages as a basis, as well as subtle forms of Greek metaphysical influences. The Greek metaphysical view considered the body as the material aspect and the soul as the immaterial aspect. The spirit was considered as the element that brought both these aspects together, in a mutual relationship. Thus the soul and body are able to relate to each other through the spirit. This view is extended to include the idea, that when the soul relates to the body it can be considered as carnal or mortal, and when to the spirit, as spiritual or immortal.¹⁷⁹

Some of the scriptural references cited in support of this view include the following: -

- "May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our

¹⁷⁷ Delitzsch, Franz. 1966. *A System of Biblical Psychology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Publishing. pp. 116ff.

¹⁷⁸ Thiessen, H.C. 1979. *Lectures in Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing Company. p. 161.

¹⁷⁹ Erickson, M.J. 2000. *Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House Publishing. pp. 539-540.

Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess. 5:23). Paul writes here referring specifically to three distinctive parts i.e. body, soul and spirit.

- “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb. 4:12). In the case of this verse, Trichomists view it from a substantial perspective i.e. the word pierces the soul itself and the spirit itself.¹⁸⁰
- Paul in 1 Corinthians 2:14 – 3:1 speaks about the types of human beings as “natural” or “of the flesh” [*sarkikos*], “carnal” or “unspiritual” [*psuchikos*] and “spiritual” [*pneumatikos*] This is seen as an allusion in support of a three-part view.

b) The Dichotomous Theory

As the title suggests, this theory advocates a two-part composition of man. This includes the physical or the body as the material element and the soul or spirit as the immaterial element. It gained widespread support throughout the early church particularly after the Council of Constantinople in 381. Advocates of dichotomism assert that whilst the Old Testament presented a strong unitary view of man, this was replaced in the New Testament period by a dualistic type of view. This implies that the human being is dualistic, and therefore consists of body and soul. Berkhof cites the belief that when the physical body dies it returns as dust to the earth, whereas the soul is the immortal element that survives. This is the defining quality that sets man apart from the animals i.e. the immortal or immaterial element.¹⁸¹ The arguments that the dichotomists use in support of their views are also counter arguments against trichotomism. If one is to take into account the texts that are used by the Trichotomists as a reference to each of the distinctive elements of body, soul and spirit then some texts present problems. For example in 1 Thessalonians 5:23, the references are taken as support to the three-part view, but the same approach would

¹⁸⁰ Hiebert, D. E. 1971. *The Thessalonian Epistles*. Chicago: Moody Press. p. 253.

¹⁸¹ Berkhof, L. 1953. *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing Company. pp. 191-192.

make no sense if applied to Mark 12:30 “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.” This would then mean that there is a fourfold division of the human person. The other counter argument presented is the interchangeable use of the words “soul” and “spirit” as evident in: -

- “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life [*psuche*], what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body...” (Matt. 6:25) and “And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matt. 10:28). Both these verses speak of body and soul.
- “Then the body will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it” (Eccles. 12:7) and “For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed” (1 Cor. 5:3). Both these verses speak of body and spirit.

Genesis 2:7 is taken as reference to the creation of man. When God breathed into man, he became a living soul. It should be seen as one principle. The use of the terms “soul” and “spirit” are used in scripture in reference to both man and animals (Eccl. 3:1; Rv. 16:3). The use of the term “soul” is also attributed to the Lord or Jehovah (Jer. 9:9; Is. 42:1; 53:10-12; Heb. 10:38). The body and soul are spoken of in scripture as constituting the whole person, and to lose one’s soul would be to lose everything (Matt. 10:28; 1 Cor. 5:3; 3 John 2; Matt. 16:26 and Mark 8:36 ff.) Liberal theologians such as L. Harold De Wolf and William Newton Clarke contend that the body and soul are two separate elements, which make up the human being. The body is the seat or basis of the soul, which is the true person that acts through the physical body. The soul can then exist apart from the body after death, whilst the possibility of bodily resurrection still exists.¹⁸²

¹⁸² Erickson, M.J. 2000. *Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House Publishing. pp. 539-540.

Augustus Strong was an advocate of the dichotomous view and he delineated his support by stating that: -

“The immaterial part of man, viewed as an individual and conscious life, capable of possessing and animating a physical organism, is called *psuche*; viewed as a rational and moral agent, susceptible of divine influence and indwelling, this same immaterial part is called *pneuma*. The *pneuma*, then, is man’s nature looking Godward, and capable of receiving and manifesting the *Pneuma hagion*; the *psuche* is man’s nature looking earthward, and touching the world of sense...Man is therefore not trichotomous but dichotomous...has unity of substance.”¹⁸³

c) The Theory of Monism

Monism developed as a neoorthodox view, as a reaction to the teachings of trichotomism and dichotomism of the immortality of the soul. The monist view asserts to a singular unity of the human being, and thus does not consist of differing parts. The human being is thought of as a radical, indivisible unity. Monism explains the biblical references of “soul” and “spirit” as synonymous terms employed to describe the unity of man. The biblical view of body, soul and spirit should be interpreted as self or a singular being. The body is considered the key element of being a human being and the soul cannot exist apart from the body. When a person dies there is no possibility of the existence of the soul. This rules out life after death. H. Wheeler Robinson explains the Hebrew terms “body” and “soul” as an exhaustive or comprehensive view of the human personality, and should not be seen as two separate parts. He considers the Old Testament worldview of human nature as a psychophysical being, existing in unity with the body, being animated by the soul. Thus the body is the expression and form of personality and not the house or dwelling place for the soul. In other words, the body is the soul and the soul is the body i.e. a psychophysical construct.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸³Strong, A.H. 1969. *Systematic Theology*. Old Tappin, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company. p. 486.

¹⁸⁴Wheeler, H.R., in “Hebrew Psychology,” in *The People and the Book*, (ed.) Arthur S. Peake (Oxford: Clarendon, 1925), p. 362.

2.8.3. The Conditional Unity of Man

The above three theories advocate a specific perspective in the interpretation of scripture, making it more of a subjective approach, rather than an objective one. What needs to occur is a balanced approach to the Old and New Testament views. The Old Testament conveys the idea of the human being's constitution as a unity, whilst the New Testament conveys a *body and soul* approach. Neither is overtly clear in the postulation of a specific understanding by which one may interpret human constitution. What the biblical record is clear on, is the post-death experience i.e. the immaterial aspect will continue to exist (1 Cor. 15; 2 Cor. 5:2-4). The New Testament does offer support for the occurrence of the glorified or resurrected body. Erickson's model of conditional unity proves an apt approach to the constitution of humanity. This view agrees that the human being should be seen as a materialized unitary being.¹⁸⁵ The body is the prerequisite for the existence of the human being. The bible indicates that a person is a materialized whole and should not abandon the body or see it as evil. The body at death reaches decomposition upon the return to the earth, whilst the immaterial part still survives. The immaterial will return to the material body at the resurrection, whilst the new body will be reconstituted, taking into account elements of the old. Thus, conditional unity explicates the premise that focus should not be placed solely on the body as in monism, or the separation of each of the parts of man as in trichotomism and dichotomism. Instead it should be a case of *both/and* i.e. both body and soul/spirit not body or soul. It is analogously understood as the existence of a unitary compound, consisting of both material and immaterial elements. The composition is not easily distinguishable and no conflict exists between these parts. At death the unitary compound ceases to exist, with the material dissolving away and the immaterial continuing to exist. At the resurrection, the immaterial will return to a material body thus reconstituting a new compound.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁵ Erickson, M.J. 2000. *Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House Publishing. pp. 554 -555.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 556.

2.9. Conclusion

The importance of the doctrine of humanity is expressed in the covenantal partnership that we share with God and fellow human beings. It is clear that the human being has been accorded a nature and destiny by God, and has been created in his image. We may surmise the following points that warrant attention. Firstly, the creation of *humanity draws attention to the implicit inference of the word 'creation'*. Human beings are a creation of God and owe their origin to the Creator. God brought humanity into existence and is involved in the continued preservation of man. This is testament to the intrinsic value and worth of man that is evident in his very creation. Because God has created us we owe our existence to him and any attempt to act independently from him, would be futile. To ignore the existence of the Creator and his causation of human life, in no way militates against the Creator, but it affects the creature and prevents understanding of purpose and destiny. To discover purpose one must go to God. Secondly, the issue of human identity and the search for self-understanding is answered, when one accepts that God is a being of purposeful design, specific goal and directed intent. Who we are is derived from our understanding of who God is. We are not random occurrences or the product of evolutionary processes, but the result of the conscious intention of a divine being. Understanding our identity also means accepting that we are human and thus limited in capacity, ability and knowledge. Human identity is understood against the backdrop against which God created humanity. When God created Adam, he placed him in a natural world and gave him the responsibility of stewardship over it. We are not called to dominate the created world for self-gain as chapter one has outlined. True stewardship means that we act responsibly in love in caring for this world and for one another as an expression of who we are in Christ. Humanity was not placed in a vacuum but in the context of a dynamic and living planet. Thus, one must be cognizant of this fact. We should not see ourselves as separate from the world, but as a part of it. Whilst we understand that the present world is under the decay of sin and awaits the liberation from this bondage, this offers no justification for an escapist approach to creation. Thirdly, as the biblical doctrine of the origins of humanity suggests, all human beings are descendents of the original pair i.e. Adam and Eve.

This infers a common bond or unity that should be recognized as the basis of relationship. In other words, a type of 'family hood', in that at some point all human beings are related and share a common lineage and origin. The positive aspect is that all humanity share in the same God and Father as the Creator of all. This is realized only in and through Christ. The negative aspect is that all humanity has been affected by sin, since all have sinned and fall short of God's glory (Rom. 3:23). John 3:16 indicates that God's love is bestowed on all humanity. As Christians, the call is to manifest this love in exemplifying the teachings and lifestyle of Christ, in the broader family of humanity. The image of God is universal to the entire human race, thus dignity and worth should be accorded to all human beings. The exercise of dominion as history indicates, has resulted in slavery, war, exploitation and the like, in which fellow human beings exercise control over the other. The ultimate understanding of God's love from a Christian perspective, must lead to the fulfillment of the great commission (Matt. 28:18-20).

Fourthly, the value of human life has a high premium, because all human beings carry the image of God. One must be aware that life is sacred and should treat one's own life, as well as that of others, in full awareness of the sanctity of life. This should cultivate the responsibility of treating all people with this in mind, not encroaching the legitimate exercise of the freedom of another (excluding those who have chosen to give up the right to freedom by committing crimes). Fifthly, our ultimate example is that of Jesus Christ, and we should strive to an emulation of his life and teachings. We understand true humanity in the person and work of Christ and are called to live in a new creation consciousness (2 Cor. 3:18). There is a need for ongoing discipleship that expands our understanding of God and brings us into the continued process of transforming into the image of Christ. Finally, the implication of the model of conditional unity of treating all human beings as unities, must manifest in a holistic approach in ministry. The praxis of conditional unity must take into account that human beings need continued help in all levels of their person. It adds that because of this unity of man, there is an interrelationship between the physical, psychological and spiritual elements that must be taken into account. Thus, a balanced approach to

living must give attention to all areas of our person. The need to convey spiritual truth in order to help the spiritual condition of the person cannot be done in isolation of the total person.

Chapter Three: The Impact of Sin on Humanity

3. Introduction

In the previous chapter, we proceeded to examine the doctrine of humanity as the basis for understanding the 'new creation' concept. The starting point for our discussion was an understanding of the *covenantal partnership that God initiated with humanity as the means of expression for relationship*. Human nature and destiny focused attention on the identity of a human being thus to understand who we are, is to understand who God is. The ultimate expression of true humanity is reached in understanding and patterning ourselves after the person of Christ. The incarnation of Christ enables one to understand the humanity of Christ and appreciate the nearness of God. His identification with, and experience of the sufferings of the human condition, testifies to the personal involvement of a loving and gracious Creator, who places immeasurable value on the true worth of a human being. The necessity of the doctrine of humanity and the theories of human nature inform and allow for a creative interaction with the biblical tenets regarding Christian anthropology. The origin of humanity has been the source of considerable debate in many circles. The views of the natural and behavioural sciences were discussed. The biblical record affirms that man is a creation of God and that all of humanity has descended from the original pair of human beings. The image of God and the constitution and unity of man, were the closing aspects of our discussion of understanding humanity as the basis of a new creation in Christ.

The Bible in Genesis chapter 3 accounts for us, the greatest tragedy of the human race. This is a sharp contrast with the opening verse of Genesis chapter one, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth". The first two chapters describe how the cosmos and all of the facets of creation came into existence by the spoken word of God. There is an affirmation by God himself that all he created was good. The apex of God's creation, his crowning feature is found in Chapter 2:27, "So God created man in His own image..." There is a progression of events up to the third chapter, at

which point we are introduced to the fall of man¹⁸⁷. What follows the fall of man, are the resultant consequences of man's action. From our enumerations of the doctrine of humanity, one may surmise the consequences of Adam's actions and their effect on the entire human race. The perpetuation of sin through the natural generations proceeding from Adam has manifested its negative results and consequences on mankind. This has been evident throughout history. This makes any study of sin vitally important, in understanding how humanity has been affected by it, what the consequences are, and how the person and work of Christ has effectively dealt with the problem of sin. Harmatology from the Greek *armatia* (αρμαρτια) is that aspect of systematic theology, which examines the varying elements of the doctrine of sin. To offer a concise definition of sin would be to state that it is any action, thought, motive or the like that is in opposition to God. It is to violate the principle of the preeminence or supremacy of God, in relation to humanity's accordance to sin, place and power that should otherwise belong to God. Sin has been the subject of many debates throughout the centuries and is an important area to consider. It is inter-related to many other doctrines central to the Christian faith. It brings into question one's perception of the nature of God since this serves, as a determinant for what one would come to understand about sin. Sin is a violation of the person and nature of God. Therefore in order to ascertain what sin is and how it has affected the human race since the fall, an understanding of who God is proves necessary.

How one defines the nature of God, affects one's definition of sin. Should the perception of God be contrived, as high and holy and that he expects man to live up to this standard of holiness, then man's sinful nature puts him into a precarious position. Thus, the failure to conform to this standard or any deviation from it would be defined as sin. The opposite approach would also prove true. Those that perceive God as an imperfect being, that is far removed from all earthly existence and has left humanity to its own devices, would not view sin as a serious problem. For example, the view we hold concerning the nature of God also affects our understanding of sin.

¹⁸⁷ The terms 'man' and 'humanity' will be used interchangeably in reference to the human race, *mankind or humanity at large*, from this point on. It should be viewed in a generic sense as referring to, both male and female.

Apart from one's understanding of the nature of God, there are other factors that relate to or derive from the equation of sin. The doctrine of humanity is best understood in relation to sin. The image of God in humanity informs the purpose that God created man to function in relationship with him as a reflection of his nature. Man's failure in the garden to conform to the standard of God through the exercise of choice in obedience to God, resulted in sin. Hence humanity cannot be judged on any other standard except that of God's. The theories of human nature discussed in chapter two prove useful in how one understands sin. Should one adhere to the view that man is a free being then he is responsible for his own actions and judgment takes on new parameters in light of this. Should one view man as a pawn of the universe, then the inevitability of fate as the determining cause of what is meant to happen, will define sin as thus. The doctrine of salvation hinges on dealing with the problem of sin. The incarnation of Christ is chiefly concerned with the effectuation of the redemptive plan of God in the restoration of all humanity into a new relationship nullifying the effect of sin. Should one view salvation as something to be attained in addition to what one already possesses or is doing i.e. good works, ethics, morality then it can be seen as a minor requirement. Alternatively, if human beings are depraved and in complete need of divine help then salvation is essential. The corresponding degree of salvation to the understanding of sin, as an indicator of the severity of the human predicament, would involve the need for a greater measure of salvation. The expression of ministry and its emphases are also affected by the doctrine of sin. How one would view the human being would affect how one would invariably conduct and express ministry. Ministry would be affirming of the love of God, positive and encouraging if one views the human being as essentially good and as creation in the image of God. Similarly, ministry would be repentance orientated emphasizing the need to turn to God, if the view of humanity is one of radical sinfulness in desperate need of God's help. Finally, the type of response-reaction approach to societal and global problems would be governed by the type of view that one has of sin. It would bring into play the whole 'nature-nurture' influence. If human beings were perceived as good or even neutral, then the problems of society would be attributed to environmental influences. This can easily be solved through affecting the

status of the environment. This implies that the problem of human behaviour could be solved, if the environment is changed. The approach of changing the pattern of human behaviour and thinking would be the focus if the problem were seen as resident in the human being.

In this chapter, I will attempt to examine the basic premises of the doctrine of sin. The parameters of our discussion will include the nature, source, results and magnitude of sin. A related area of consideration would be the social dimension of sin and the aspect of temptation, in terms of mans' responsibility in the redemptive plan of God. The starting point would be to ascertain the background to the fall of man in light of the law of God and the nature of sin. It is necessary however, to gain an understanding to what the term "sin" actually means. This would enhance our *understanding of the concepts relating to sin* and we would arrive at a more balanced view concerning this doctrine. It must also be remembered that there are diverse streams of thought that many theologians hold regarding sin. This chapter will consider those that are relevant to the dissertation focus of a new creation in Christ.

3.1. Defining the concept of sin

3.1.1. The Background to the fall of man

The background to the fall of man would be an appropriate starting point, before attempting to offer a conceptual definition of sin. One of the many definitions of sin is a transgression of the law of God. The law can be understood as the expression of will enforced through power. All law by virtue of this definition is the action or deed of the subject that must conform to the will of the lawgiver, who has the power to enforce this. Some have argued that the word "law" necessitates a lawgiver and should therefore be dropped. In terms of the use of the word, it's connotation changes in differing circles, *from the laws of gravity, thermodynamics, motion etc in the natural or physical sciences to the laws of nature to its' use in legal terminology.* The synonym that some have suggested is a method of action or an order of sequence. The law of God, as the obvious inference reflects in the phrase, is that it presupposes God as the lawgiver. The law of God is therefore the expression of his will, and he

enforces that will by his power.¹⁸⁸ In this regard two aspects of the law of God can be identified.

3.1.1.1. The Elemental Law

This refers to the law, which God has instituted into all of creation, governing both rational and irrational creatures. It is evident in all substances, forms and aspects of the universe. Elemental law is further divided into two subcategories i.e. the physical and moral laws. The physical law is that which governs the natural universe, but is not an end in itself. It exists for the purpose of ensuring the fulfillment of moral order. The synoptic gospels record numerous incidents where Christ was able to supercede the physical laws by walking on water, calming storms, turning water into wine and so forth. The interruption of the physical law by God is often termed as a miracle or *supernatural intervention*. The *moral law is understood in relation to rational beings*. The moral law would presuppose the lawgiver, the free moral agent, and the power to enforce the exercise of the law with parameters for dealing with disobedience to it. The law of God can be understood, as an expression of the moral nature of God and the requirement would be total submission and conformity to this. The moral nature of God is an indication of his holy nature and humanity is required to conform to such (Matt. 5:48 and 1 Pet. 1:16).¹⁸⁹ The following may be surmised from this *understanding of law of God in lieu of the moral nature of God*: -¹⁹⁰

- The law of God is a part of the person and nature of God.
- It stands to reason that if the law is a part of the person and nature of God and God is eternal, the law is therefore not a temporary phenomenon. It is in the will of God to determine how long the law should exist in a binding sense. One should also bear in mind that certain laws are applicable in specific time periods.
- It is not an arbitrary inference or set of rules.

¹⁸⁸ Thiessen, H.C. 1979. *Lectures in Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing. p. 168.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 169.

¹⁹⁰ Strong, A.H. 1969. *Systematic Theology*. Old Tappin, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company pp. 536 – 542.

- There are variations of the law i.e. some are considered eternal (Matt. 22:37-40) whilst others are based on the permanent relationship of human beings with one another (Rom. 13:9; Gal. 5:14).
- The law has a purpose, and as such requires fulfillment of that purpose.
- The law of God is positive and requires positive conformity to God's nature.
- The law is negative, in that an inability to conform to it is met with sanctions for disobedience.
- The law is holistic governing the conditional unity of man i.e. body, soul and/or spirit.
- The law is not based on a consciousness or awareness of it but exists regardless of whether it is perceived or not.
- In terms of humanity as a free moral agent, the law is applicable to all of mankind as well as the universe at large.

3.1.1.2. Positive Enactment

The second aspect of the law of God is termed positive enactment. This is a reference to the visible published statutes or ordinances of God. The bible is the sum total of the positive enactment of the published ordinances of God. The bible in both the Old and New Testaments contain records of the laws of God with each set of laws governing specific areas and together forming the complete law of God. For example, the Old Testament contains the Ten Commandments or Decalogue (Ex. 20); laws of offerings (Lev. 1-7); laws of purity (Lev. 11-15) and priestly laws (Lev. 8-10).

What then is the purpose of the law of God? It may be understood in a positive and negative sense. In a positive sense the law of God is to enable man to understand sin, realize his sinful condition and turn to God. When man understands the law, it increases his understanding of the nature of sin and how it affects his relationship with God. He now begins to understand sin as a transgression against God thus it becomes a relational understanding. It is there to lead him to a realization of his need for Christ and his sinful condition (Rom. 3:19ff, 7:1ff, 5:13). It also reveals the nature of God i.e. holiness, justice and righteousness. This is best understood in the

tabernacle of Moses and the requirements for entry into the outer court, inner court and the holy of holies. It was intended to draw attention to the holiness of God, through the adherence to principles of holiness, by following the physical patterns in the items of furniture of the tabernacle i.e. the brazen altar, the altar of incense, the bronze laver, the golden lamp stand and so forth (Exodus 26 – 30). The holiness of God also meant that in order for one to approach God, there are conditions and requirements that must be fulfilled. The introduction of the priesthood was to serve the role of a mediator in aiding the approach of sinful humanity before a holy God. The requirements of the law meant that approach to God was possible only in certain conditions. This conditional approach to God can be attributed to the consequences of the fall of humanity. The positive enactment of the law of God to humanity is stated in Genesis 2:16-17, “And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day you shall surely die” The law was made clear and the consequences of disobedience. As free moral agents they chose to disobey the law of God and through their actions brought all of humanity into a sinful condition. They were prohibited from entering the Garden of Eden, which was symbolic of the once open relationship they had shared with God. In this regard Gen. 3:22-24 states, “Then the Lord God said, “Behold the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever” – therefore the Lord God sent him out of the garden... so He drove out the man...” With this understanding Paul declares that Christ served as the means to end the requirements of the law for righteousness, thus allowing man to come before God (Rom. 10:4; Gal. 3:24). The law had a purpose and that was the preparation of man for the entrance in God’s presence and ultimately for the coming of Christ. The coming of Christ draws attention to the problem of the sinfulness of man, his inability to fulfill the requirements of the law and the holiness of God. Christ fulfills the conditions of the law, satisfies the holiness and justice of God and accomplishes the redemptive work as the second Adam, the representative of humanity.

3.1.2. Defining the concept of sin

Any reading of the Bible would indicate that it is a record of the history of the human race, struggling in a state of sinfulness and rebelliousness against God and their treatment of fellow man, from such a position. 'amartia' (αμαρτια) is the Greek word used for sin. St. Augustine saw sin as any thought, word, or deed contrary to the eternal law of God. However, in secular Greek, the meaning was a missing of the mark, a defaulting from a standard. It represented an imputed fault as well as a feeling of guilt. It speaks of a failure to reach a goal or losing one's way. In terms of the Biblical meaning of the Greek word, the idea of sin is closely related to the Hebrew concept of 'hata'. This means to sin, to incur guilt before God, especially by violating his law. Other Hebrew words that hold a similar meaning are 'awan' and 'peshah'¹⁹¹ The word "sin" is first mentioned in the bible in Genesis 4:7 in which the Lord speaks to Cain concerning Abel, "If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, *sin* lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it." The word "sin" in this verse relates to the Hebrew word 'chatta' that speaks of an offense, a misdeed. There are numerous variations of the root words, as well as other synonyms that are used to describe sin in both the Old and New testaments, in the specific contexts of the scriptural passages.¹⁹² For example: -

3.1.2.1. The Old Testament Definitions of sin

'hattath'	-	a missing
'pesh'	-	rebellion; transgression
'won'	-	perversion
'resh'	-	impiety

3.1.2.2. The New Testament Definitions of sin

'parabasis'	-	transgression
'adikia'	-	unrighteousness
'asebeia'	-	impiety

¹⁹¹ Turner, N. 1981. *Christian Words*. Nashville, Tennessee: T & T Clark Ltd.

¹⁹² Erickson, M.J. 2000. *Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Publishing. pp. 583-595.

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- ‘anomia’ - violation of law
 ‘epithumia’ - desire for what is forbidden

Strong defines sin simply as inherent selfishness on the part of humanity.¹⁹³ This would appear as a narrow definition and as contradictory to a wider understanding of any pursuit, which is for the betterment of the self. For example, Jesus encouraged his disciples to “...lay up treasures for yourselves in heaven where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal” (Matt. 6:20). The pursuit of spiritual growth of oneself cannot be considered as a selfish endeavour. All sin cannot be necessarily defined as selfishness, since people can selflessly serve and devote themselves to the pursuit of specific goals for the betterment of others i.e. good works, attainments, the worship of idols etc. Whilst this may contradict biblical principles yet the motive may not be selfishness. However, Strong includes in his definition of selfishness the following explanation:

“...that choice of self as the supreme end which constitutes the antithesis of supreme love to God... love for that which is most characteristic and fundamental in God, namely, his holiness... a fundamental and positive choice of preference of self instead of God, as the object of affection and the supreme end of being....”¹⁹⁴

Orr defines sin as an act of choice inferring that it is voluntary and deliberate (Gen. 3:2-6; Rom. 1:18,28), hence never necessarily inherent in man’s physical or finite nature.¹⁹⁵ He expands on the above definition of sin by stating that sin is the conception of a wrong attitude towards the commands that God gives. It is also a refusal to allow ones’ self to be guided in life by the restraining and directing influence of the knowledge of God’s power.¹⁹⁶ According to Hebrews 3:12,19 sin is unbelief. It is a centering on something other than God, such as the human self or

¹⁹³ Strong, A.H. 1969. *Systematic Theology*. Old Tappin, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company pp. 567ff

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 567,572.

¹⁹⁵ Orr, J. (ed.). 1939. “Sin” in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. Grand Rapids: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing.

another object, person etc. It is a reflection of an attitude of the heart. It is an attitude of indifference and disobedience to what God has called us to obey i.e. his will. The will of God for man is revealed in his law, his word even in conscience should all these things express themselves in a settled disposition, conduct or behavior, deed or even word. From the above definitions given of sin, we can easily identify that it is a non-conformist attitude to and a moving away from, the standard of God's holiness. There are various aspects that we shall now consider that will elucidate our understanding of sin.

3.2. The Nature of sin

Many differ as to what constitutes the nature of sin. Many theologians offer differing explanations in terms of their own referential frameworks of understanding. Some theologians have argued that sin is a purely religious concept and can only be understood as such. Gustav Aulen argues that sin is a concept that can only be used in a religious sense¹⁹⁷ whilst James Orr maintained that sin is that which occurs when we wrong humanity and God.¹⁹⁸ Berkhof sees it as "a lack of conformity to the moral law of God in either act, disposition, state."¹⁹⁹ This would then imply that clearly sin goes against the moral law of God, which is intrinsic to his character. It violates the holiness of God. This teaching is evident in scripture, as illustrated in the prophet Isaiah's encounter with God, in the sixth chapter of his book. He saw his sinful nature in light of God's holiness. The cries of worship from the Seraphim "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!" emphasizes the holiness of God. The threefold repetition is the accordance of praise to God for his holy nature. The Hebrew word for holy is '*qadosh*', which means that which is set apart, dedicated to sacred purposes, clean and morally pure. It implies separation from the profane and anything defiling, whilst simultaneously being separated to everything

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Wahlstrom, E.H. (trans.). 1960. Gustav. E.H.A. *The Faith of the Christian Church*. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press. p. 259.

¹⁹⁸ Orr, James. 1905. *God's Image in Man and Its Defacement in the Light of Modern Denials*. London: Hodder & Stoughton. p. 213.

¹⁹⁹ Berkhof, L. 1965. *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing Company. p. 233.

holy and pure.²⁰⁰ Leviticus 19:2 records, “And speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘You shall be *holy* for I the Lord your God *am holy*.’ This verse highlights one of the Hebrew names of God ‘*Qadosh*’ or “the Holy One” or ‘*Qadosh Yisrael*.’²⁰¹ The experience that the prophet Isaiah had, was to gain an understanding of the holiness of God as one who is separated and unapproachable, in terms of the contextual understanding. His experience was to recognize his own sinful state revealed in comparison to the holiness of God. Other scriptures, which point to sin as a transgression of God’s law, include James 2:8-12, 1 John 3:4 and Gal. 3:10,12. Buswell’s definition of sin is appropriate in the context of Isaiah’s experience, as anything contrary to the holy character of God.²⁰²

3.2.1. Philosophical theories concerning the nature of evil/sin

1) The Dualistic theory holds that evil exists alongside good and these are eternal in nature. Both good and evil or light and darkness have always been in constant conflict. They will continue to remain in this diametrically opposed position. This view stemmed from the early Greek philosophy of Gnosticism. The Gnostics were of the belief that the material body of man was evil whilst the spirit was inherently good. In essence, sin is construed as a part of evil thus making sin an eternal concept. Good and evil as seen as equal but opposite and neither side triumphs over the other. There are several problems with the dualistic theory. Firstly, it implies that God is finite and therefore a dependent being. The possibility of two infinite things existing simultaneously is contradictory to the scriptural view of the eternity of God. Secondly, it reduces the omnipotence of God since goodness is an attribute of God. To consider evil as the equal opposite is to ignore the supremacy of God over all things. Thirdly, sin is seen as a type of moral evil, which militates against the scriptural view of man has having a sinful nature.²⁰³

²⁰⁰ Hayford, J. W. 1991. *The Spirit-Filled Life Bible*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers. p. 171.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

²⁰² Buswell, J.O. 1978. *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion*. Vol. 1. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House. p. 264.

²⁰³ Thiessen, H.C. 1979. *Lectures in Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing. p. 178.

2) Leibnitz developed the theory that sin is merely privation. This view contends that the world we live in is the best possible one and sin is an unavoidable part of it. Further, sin cannot be deemed as an agency of God, therefore it must be simply privation or negation. Hence, no cause is needed. This however creates the idea that sin is just a little more than inconvenience that has befallen man. It also creates the distinction between physical and moral evil.²⁰⁴

3) Spinoza postulated sin as an illusion. He believed that sin occurred as a result of man's inadequacy of knowledge concerning the infinite and eternal essence of God. In other words, if man had an adequate knowledge of God then everything he would see would be in God, hence he would not be able to see sin. A critique of Spinoza's theory is that knowledge of God cannot save a person from the problem of sin. This shares similarities with Gnosticism. In addition, Spinoza considered sin as illusory, thus avoiding the issue that man is responsible for sin and sinful actions. It is manifest in action and behaviour and is a part of the nature of man and therefore cannot be an illusion. It also fails to explain how sinful acts can be accounted for.²⁰⁵

4) Sin is a want of God-consciousness due to man's sensuous nature. Schleiermacher contended that man's awareness of sin depends on his consciousness of God. Simply put, when man becomes aware of God he is immediately awakened to the struggle of the sin nature. This opposition that he experiences stems from his sensuous nature, because man is in touch with the physical world. In essence, sin is a type of sensuousness. In light of this view, Schleiermacher interprets Paul's teachings on the fleshly or carnal man in a literal sense.²⁰⁶ The problem with Schleiermacher's view is that God is perceived as being indirectly responsible for sin. The senses are not the source of sin, as humanity was in possession of these faculties in a pre-fall state. It tends to support the idea that sin can be dealt with through the depravity of the senses, which is a type of asceticism. By weakening the physical body or sensuous nature the power of sin cannot be weakened. Sin is a part of the nature of

²⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 179.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 179.

²⁰⁶ Schleiermacher, Frederick. 1963. *The Christian Faith*. Vol. 1. New York: Harper & Row. pp. 271-273.

man and the senses are just a conduit of experience and expression. Sin came in by the choice of man.

5) In this case, sin is considered as a want of trust in God and opposition to his kingdom, due to ignorance. This view holds that sin can only be understood from a Christian viewpoint. Hence, man becomes aware of sin only when he experiences the redemptive work of God. He then becomes aware of his lack of trust in God. The problem with this view is that it paints a picture of sin being mere ignorance. Furthermore, the unsaved person is able to distinguish between the fundamental principles of right and wrong. Other religions also advocate the principle of good as opposed to evil.

6) Sin is selfishness. Strong held this view that sin should be seen in terms of selfishness i.e. a choice of self rather than God as the object of love. It is important to note that whilst there is an element of selfishness in all sin, yet it cannot be said that selfishness is the nature of sin.²⁰⁷ As intimated earlier, no explanation is readily offered in view of selflessness. For example, misguided selflessness is evident in the elements of martyrdom, for what would be considered a noble cause. This is illustrated in the suicide bombers in Islamic fundamentalism or the patriotism of the Japanese kamikaze pilots in World War 2.

7) Sin consists in the opposition of the lower propensities of human nature to a gradually developing moral consciousness. This theory is simply the doctrine of sin being understood in the light of the theory of evolution or a derivation of an early animal nature that was seen as present in early man. Frederick F. Tennant, the proponent of this theory. He considered those naturally inherited qualities, deriving from the brute or lower evolutionary form, as the makeup of the material or substance of sin.²⁰⁸ This substance achieves a type of theoretical or abstract materialization, which can be termed sin. This occurs when man develops a sense of morality and

²⁰⁷ Strong, A.H. 1969. *Systematic Theology*. Old Tappin, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company pp. 567ff.

²⁰⁸ Tennant, F.F. 1902. *The Origin and Propagation of Sin*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 26ff.

indulges in sin. Tennant regarded the Genesis account of the creation and fall of humanity as untenable. He argued that it conflicts with the views of science and other related disciplines that maintain the original righteousness of man, impossible. He added that sin is universal yet it is the individual sinner that must be held accountable for it, since it is based on individual choice. Tennant states:

“Man fell, according to science, when he first became conscious of the conflict of freedom and conscience. To the evolutionist sin is not an innovation, but is the survival or misuse of habits and tendencies that were incidental to an earlier stage in development, whether of the individual or the race, and were not originally sinful, but were actually useful.”²⁰⁹

All these philosophical views attempt to define the nature of sin without understanding that the essential nature of sin is a deviation or moving away from the standard that God has set. It is also a violation of his laws. To gain a balanced view of sin requires, that it always be defined in relation to God.

3.2.2. The Scriptural View of sin

1) Sin is a specific kind of evil: Here, sin is seen as a type of moral evil. It must be remembered that sin is not something that came upon man unaware and destroyed all that was good in him. Instead, scripture shows that man deliberately chose to follow the evil path of sin over God’s path of obedience (Gen. 3:1-6; Isa. 48:8; Rom. 1:18-32).

2) Sin has absolute character: By this we mean, that there is a clear distinction between good and evil and there is no neutral place. A person that is good does not become evil by diminishing his goodness but a radical qualitative change leads him to evil. Sin is not a lesser degree of goodness. Sin is absolute and does not occupy a neutral place (Matt. 10:32-33; 12:30).

²⁰⁹ Ibid., p.82.

3) Sin always has relation to God and his will: Sin can only be defined in relation to God and his law. A popular formal definition of sin is “a lack of conformity of the law of God” (Rom. 1:32; 2:12-14).

4) Sin includes both guilt and pollution: Guilt can be defined as that which deserves condemnation or a liability for punishment for violation of the law of God. Sin has with it guilt and this guilt is an inherent quality of sinners. Guilt is seen as the penalty imposed by God upon the sinner as a violation of his law. Pollution is the corruption that is a result of sin. Hence, from the time of Adam, all are guilty and possess this corrupt nature (Eph. 4:17-19; Rom. 8:5-8).²¹⁰

5) Sin has its seat in the heart. Sin resides in the heart, which is seen as the center of human intellect, will and affection (Prov. 4:23; Jer. 17:9).

6) Sin does not consist exclusively in overt acts: Sin does not consist of overt acts but also in sinful habits, and a sinful condition of the soul. Simply, the sinful condition of the soul forms the basis for sinful habits, which manifest in sinful deeds (Matt. 5:22,28; Gal. 5:17,24).

In terms of the scriptural view, sin can be defined as the lack of conformity to the moral law of God, either in act, disposition or state.

3.2.3. Other Views of sin

3.2.3.1. The Pelagian View of sin:

Pelagius believed that man must have the ability to do good since God commanded him to do so. This implies that man has a free will and he can decide for/against doing good or evil. In other words, whether a man does good or evil is dependent on his free and independent will. Furthermore, Pelagius added that there is no such thing as a moral development in man. Good and evil are separate actions in man. Extreme departures of the Pelagian view of sin contend, that there is no such thing as a sinful nature or sinful dispositions. Adam was created in a state of neutrality, in a moral sense. Adam was neither good nor bad but as a result of his choice of sin, he became

²¹⁰ Berkhof, L. 1965. *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing Company. p.233ff.

sinful. The Pelagian view held that there are no sinners but only sinful acts that are committed.²¹¹ There are four main objections that one may identify with regard to the Pelagian theory. Firstly, the view that God can hold man liable only for what he is personally responsible for is contrary to scripture. The more a person sins, the more sinful he becomes and he moves further away from good. Secondly, to assert that man has no moral character reduces him to a mere animal like state. This insinuates that he possesses no real inner life. Thirdly, the view that choices and/or deeds are in no way determined by man's character, proves to be an unsubstantiated theory since all that a person does is a reflection of his character. Fourthly, the Pelagian theory can give no explanation to the universality of sin.

3.2.3.2. The Roman Catholic view of sin:

According to the Roman Catholic view, real sin occurs, as a part of the conscious will. It is held that anything not in accordance with the will of God is deemed part of a sinful character. This view holds that an "indwelling concupiscence" or desire is what served as a cause of man losing his original righteousness. This loss of righteousness cannot be seen as sin but rather as what occurred because of this indwelling desire. All the descendents of Adam therefore do not possess a sinful state but only a negative condition.

3.2.3.3. Theological Categories

Theologians surmise the nature of sin and its effects on humanity, by describing what they consider to be defining characteristics, according to relevant categories. At this juncture, an outline of the differing theological categories would summarily conclude our discussion of the nature of sin.

²¹¹ Thiessen, H.C. 1979. *Lectures in Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing. pp. 186-187.

a) **Thiessen's Thematic Categorization of sin**²¹²

- 1) Sin is a specific type of evil: He holds that there are two different kinds of evil i.e. physical evil and moral evil. Physical evil consists of floods, wild animals, earthquakes etc. Sin is a type of moral evil.
- 2) Sin is a violation of the law of God: Sin is essentially defined in terms of the law of God. Sin is therefore a transgression of the law of God.
- 3) Sin is a principle or nature as well as an act: The view here is that the acts of sin stem from sinful principles or nature. For example, the type of fruit that comes from a specific tree depends on the nature of the tree. Thus evil fruit proceeds can only from a corrupt tree.
- 4) Sin includes pollution as well as guilt: Sin is non-conformity to the law of God, and it is guilt as well as pollution. The bible testifies of the pollution of sin as in "the whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint" (Isa. 1:5).
- 5) Sin is essentially selfishness: all forms of sin can be traced to selfishness. For example sins like selfish affections, selfish ambitions, appetites all relate to self.

b) **Erickson's Terminological Categorization of sin**²¹³

Erickson employs various terms to describe the essential nature of sin. He outlines seven characteristics or terminological phrases, which defines sin.

- 1) Missing the mark: a voluntary, culpable mistake. It is a willful choice to miss the mark.
- 2) Irreligious: speaks of the absence of righteousness.
- 3) Transgression: going beyond a set limit.
- 4) Iniquity or lack of Integrity: It refers to a failure to fulfill the law of God. It is a deviation from the right course.
- 5) Rebellion: to rebel or transgress against God
- 6) Treachery: a breach of trust
- 7) Perversion: a sinner becomes twisted or distorted by committing acts of sin.

²¹² Ibid., pp. 171-175.

²¹³ Erickson, M.J. 2000. *Christian Theology*: Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Publishing. pp. 583-593.

The Old Testament view of sin deals largely with external acts of the people, which did not conform to the law. However, in the New Testament there is a focus on the very thoughts and desires of the heart that now can be sinful. Jesus strongly condemned people doing good with wrong motives or intents (Matt. 6:2,5,16). What can we then surmise about the nature of Sin? Sin is not only wrong acts but it is also a disposition of the heart. Hence, we sin because we are sinners. To conclude on the nature of sin, we need to ask the question, what is the nature of sin? From the above discussion, it is clear that there are a plethora of definitive understandings with regard to sin. Terms like missing the mark, perversity and rebellion in comparison to a violation of the law of God, all define the nature of sin. A common aspect of the nature of sin, that is evident in all of the explanations offered, is that the sinner fails to fulfill God's law or to conform to the standard that has been set. There are many ways in which this failure occurs, such as going beyond a set standard; not doing all that God commands or doing things with wrong motives. It is implicit in the nature of man and influences and affects negatively the thoughts, actions or deeds of a person. It cannot be understood as only affecting a specific part of the human being whilst the other parts remain unaffected. The sin nature is indicative of affecting the human nature thus the whole person.

3.3. The Source of sin

We now turn to consider the origin or source of sin. An important, yet interesting question that must be considered, is where did sin come? This question has been the veritable wellspring of discussion in the minds of philosophers, theologians, behavioural scientists and others for centuries. The answer to this question would serve as a basis for understanding and explaining human behaviour. The obvious starting point would be an affirmation of scripture that the origin of sin does not rest with God. He cannot be blamed for it. The very definition of sin presupposes the referential point being God, since it is a violation of his person and nature. Sin is the choice of non-conformity to the law of God. To consider God as the source of sin is contradictory to his character. Hence, "to blame God for sin would be blasphemy

against the character of God.”²¹⁴ The character of God is often referred to in scripture as an absolute, or that, which is eternally constant and therefore reliable. He is eternally trustworthy, the source of goodness and the Judge of all the earth. The foundation of his throne rests on righteousness and justice (Psa. 11:4-7; 1 John 1:9; Psa. 129:1-4; Heb. 6:10). He is holy, loving, merciful and immutable (Hab. 1:12; Psa. 90:2; Mal. 3:6; James 1:17; Isa.57: 15; Eph. 2:4; Rom. 5:8). Deuteronomy 32:4 describe God, as “His work is perfect; for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and right is he.”

Other considerations as to the origin of sin are equally futile should it fall outside the scope of biblical explanations. Sin is not the product of random occurrences in the universe or the result of animalistic propensities dormant in primal man. The dualistic approach that evil or sin is eternal and has always existed alongside good, is to engage in error. This would equate the power of sin or evil to the same level as God. It would be contradictory to the redemptive work of Christ who conquered sin and death as the enemies of humanity. He would have been unable to do so if sin or evil was equal in power or nature to him. Another debatable explanation of the source of sin is the ordination and providence of God. The providence of God implies that everything in creation is the result of his will; it would stand to reason that evil or sin has been ordained by God to come into the world, although, he did not cause it. It would also mean that he takes no pleasure or delight in it. This view would also state that the ordination of God extended to its method of entry through the voluntary choices of free moral agents. It must not be construed that God wanted sin to enter the world or even ordained how it should come into the world. He merely gave to humanity the ability to voluntarily choose. The result of their choice was the entry of sin. Although God ordained that sin would come about it does not mean that God is the cause of it. He is removed from sin or evil in its entirety. There are scriptural references that allude to the providential role of God’s purposes over all things. For example “God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to

²¹⁴ Grudem, W. 1994. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House. p. 492.

those who are called according to his purpose” (Rom. 8:28); the words of Joseph to his brothers “You meant evil against me; but God meant it for good” (Gen. 50:20); “...the Lord has made everything for its purpose, even the wicked for the day of trouble” (Prov. 16:4). One should take care that this approach does not create a type of fatalism in that everything is predetermined including those who would be good and those who would be evil. We must be aware of the voluntary choices that humanity is capable of making. All creatures will be judged for the evil that they commit (Isa. 66:3-4; Eccl. 7:29; Rom. 9:19-20). John Calvin comments through the following analogy on the subject of God’s ordination: -

“Thieves and murderers and other evildoers are the instruments of divine providence, and the Lord himself uses these to carry out the judgments that he has determined with himself. Yet I deny that they can derive from this any excuse for their evil deeds. Why? Will they either involve God in the same iniquity with themselves, or will they cloak their own depravity with his justice? They can do neither.”²¹⁵

Some have argued that the origin of sin rests solely upon the willful and deliberate choice made by the fallen angels as well as humanity. Satan is considered the originator of sin and had sinned before any human beings committed any sin. This is supported by the explanation that Satan tempted Eve in the form of a serpent, implying that he was already sinful (Gen. 3:1-6; 2 Cor. 11:3). New Testament passages refer to Satan through phrases such as a “murderer from the beginning” (1 John 3:8); “father of lies” (John 8:44) and that “the devil has sinned from the beginning” (1 John 3:8).²¹⁶ The phrase “*from the beginning*” can be interpreted as threefold: - 1) that sin originated in Satan (the devil); 2) because of his fallen nature that came about as a result of his choice, he enticed others to sin i.e. other angelic beings (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6; Isaiah 14:12-14; Job 1:7-2:7); 3) he was the agent of temptation in the garden of Eden. However, it should be remembered that Adam and

²¹⁵ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Library of Christian Classics, (Ed.) by John T. McNeill and trans. by F.L. Battles, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), 1:217 (1.16.5).

²¹⁶ Grudem, W. 1994. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand Rapids:

Eve were not forced to sin but chose to sin. In terms of humanity, sin can be understood as having its 'origin' (where origin in this case, is the starting point and not the originator or the cause of it) in the actions that Adam and Eve chose to make in the garden. The first sin would be the eating of the fruit of the forbidden tree. The action constituted a violation of the principle of obedience that God had instructed them in. We shall briefly consider some theories that have developed in response to the question of the origin of sin.

3.3.1. Animal Nature

This theory holds that man evolved from animal and therefore possesses an inner animal nature and has impulses that drive him. This view held steady in the nineteenth century and gained popularity as a result of research done by Charles Darwin. People like Frederick R. Tennant argued that the Genesis account, as well as other biblical theology, offered a convenient explanation to explain away the problem of sin. Otto Pfleiderer offered a philosophical view. He stated that sin could be traced back to the animal impulses from primate evolutionary forms. Therefore, when people sin it is not sinful but it is a mere expression of the inner impulses. Tennant also adds that by virtue of these inner impulses we are first natural beings before we are moral beings. The evolutionary development of man over time has progressively increased his understanding of what sin is. Tennant argues that the natural impulses serve as the driving force for the development of humanity and this impulse decreases with increased development. The more developed a human being becomes the more conscious he becomes of sin.²¹⁷

3.3.2. Anxiety of Finiteness

The theorists Reinhold Niebuhr & Albrecht Ritschl, believed the source of sin as arising from man's finite nature and his struggle to find himself, in terms of his aspirations.²¹⁸ For example, man is faced with a finite part of his nature i.e. insecurity.

Zondervan Publishing House. pp. 414-416; 492-493. (continuation of footnote 216, p. 145).

²¹⁷ Tennant, F.F. 1902. *The Origin and Propagation of Sin*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp 90-94.

²¹⁸ Niebuhr, R. 1941. *The Nature and Destiny of Man*. Vol.1. New York: Scribner. pp. 180ff.

As a result he is faced with problems that threaten him, which becomes distressing to him. He may take one of two ways to overcome this: he may overstep his limit as a human being in order to gain power over the situation or he may take an intellectual approach to the situation. In other words, man knows that he is limited but tries to overstep this limit or finitude. This overstepping causes an imbalance and disturbs the harmony of creation. This is then the source of sin. Niebuhr quotes the example of Lucifer in Isaiah 14:12-15. He argues that Lucifer's fault lay in the fact that he overstepped his position. His ambitious nature to ascend to the throne of heaven caused him to step outside of his finite position and he sinned. This is the same as in the case of man.

3.3.3. Existential Estrangement

The proponent of this theory Paul Tillich, speaks of sin having its origin on an existentialist basis. Tillich refers to various ancient myths among which he places the Genesis account of the fall of man. He concludes that there are subhuman as well as superhuman figures, in all of these myths that influence man to sin. In the Bible he cites the example of the serpent that influences man to sin. He views God as being the basis or ground of all that is and not as "a" being. Therefore, all that exists is built upon this ground and man is estranged or alienated from this ground of being. Man's existence is one of estrangement and "...estrangement is sin."²¹⁹ Tillich in the same vein states that sin cannot be defined solely as estrangement but as the turning away from what one belongs to. Like Tennant, Tillich also rejects a literal acceptance of the Genesis account of the fall of man. Thus an existential interpretation of the fall would be based on a moment-by-moment experience. In other words, man is in a fallen and unfallen state at the experience of every moment.²²⁰

3.3.4. Economic Struggle

This view is held by liberation theologians, which have under their banner, feminist and black theology. This view rejects the privatization of sin in that sin should not be

²¹⁹ Tillich, P. 1957. *Systematic Theology*. Vol. 2. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. p.46.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 29ff.

seen as an individual's broken relationship with God. The emphasis here focuses on the economic and social dimensions of sin. Consider what James Cone comments on the source of sin: "Sin is not primarily a religious impurity, but rather it is the social, political and economic oppression of the poor. It is the denial of the humanity of the neighbor through unjust political and economic arrangements."²²¹ A major aspect of sin is the exploitation and oppression of people. Gustavo Guterrez describes sin as being selfishness, the inward focus on self or turning in on oneself. He takes this view further by asserting that a refusal to love one's neighbors is a refusal to love God. This is the essential cause of economic struggle, poverty, injustice and oppression. Guterrez draws a comparative understanding of the oppressed and the oppressor in this inequitable system. He justifies the use of violence by the oppressed as a means of liberating themselves, whilst condemning the use violence in oppression to maintain an unequal system.²²² James Fowler in his developmental analysis of Liberation theology categorizes Guterrez and Cone amongst others, as either "ideological theologians" or "theologians of balance."²²³ The ideological theologian like James Cone, argues that God can only be identified with either the oppressed or the oppressor. There is no place for compromise or balance in Cone's belief. The latter group see the difference between good and evil within the oppressed and oppressor and not between them. To summarize the view of sin according to this view would be to see it as the perpetuation of economic, social and political injustices by the oppressors. Sin as relating to the oppressed would be their response to such injustices i.e. bitterness, hatred for the oppressor. The use of violence by the oppressed however, although justified by Guterrez, is a contentious point.

²²¹ Cone, J.H., "Christian Faith and Political Praxis," in *The Challenging of Liberation Theology: A First-World Response*, (Ed.) Brian Mahan & L. Dale Richesin (Maryknoll: Orbis Publishing), 1981, p.57.

²²² Guterrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation*, (trans.) Caridad Inda & John Eagleson. (Maryknoll: Orbis Publishing), 1973, p. 35.

²²³ Fowler, J.W., "Black Theologies of Liberation: A Structural-Developmental Analysis," in *The Challenge of Liberation Theology: A First-World Response*, (Ed.) Brian Mahan & L. Dale Richesin (Maryknoll: Orbis Publishing), 1981, p.86.

3.3.5. Individualism & Competitiveness

Harrison Sacket Elliott held the view that individualism and competitiveness is the cause or source of sin. He believed in the existence of sin and that although man sins he is not sinful at all. He did not believe in the corrupt and depraved nature of man. He cites the example of a family relationship to aid understanding of his theory. The relationship between a father and son is illustrative. Should a son rebel against his father or challenge his authority, the sin would not lie in the son asserting his authority. Instead, sin according to Elliot, is the son's assumption that he is his own person and his attainments are a result of his accomplishments. The underlying meaning is that sin in the son is individualism. Sin would be the abuse or denial of one's natural heritage and focus on the self.²²⁴ It is comparable to the view that sin is essentially selfishness. The four main tenants of Elliot's can be summed up as follows: -²²⁵

- 1) Sin, according to Elliot, is the denial or misuse of a social heritage that one has received. There is a struggle for individualism that human beings face, in order to attain a desired goal.
- 2) To view man as a sinner proves illogical. Sin cannot be defined, as it does not represent a single entity, but rather a combination of different acts. Furthermore, Elliot believes sin cannot be reduced to a single type of behavior.
- 3) To call man a sinner can be psychologically damaging to him. To emphasize on sin and guilt can result in an individual engaging in destructive behavior.
- 4) Man is not born with innate tendencies or drives. There is no affinity in him either toward good or evil. Man possesses an "a-moral" nature i.e. a neutral nature therefore he has no predisposition toward good or evil.

²²⁴ Elliot, H.S. 1940. *Can Religious Education Be Christian?* New York: Macmillan. pp. 152-153.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.169-171, 191.

Elliot sees sin as a learned behavior and not something innate. All this stems from an individualistic & competitive nature that one individual experiences against another. A solution to this source of sin, says Elliot, would be to promote group activities, which emphasize co-operation between individuals.

3.3.6. Jewish Conceptions of sin

There are three basic conceptions of sin in this regard: -

- 1) The first theory examines the two natures of good (*Yetser tov*) and evil (*Yetser ra*). It is held that wicked people are controlled by evil impulses, whilst good people are able to exert control over such impulses.
- 2) The second theory concerns angelic beings called "Watchers", as mentioned in Genesis 6:1-4. These angels cohabited or sinned with human females.
- 3) The third theory relates to the Pauline view of sin that all are held guilty because of Adam's sin.

3.3.7. Agnosticism

The Agnostics can be traced back to the time of the Greek Sophists, the Sceptics and empiricists such as Aristotle and Hume. This view holds that there is insufficient biblical evidence to form a detailed theory of sin. To say that there is a connection between the original sin of Adam and the human race is seen as mere philosophical speculation.

3.3.8. Semipelagianism

This view holds that because humanity is weakened with Adam's nature, man still has free will to maintain faith in God. It teaches that the human nature is so weakened by the fall, that man will inevitably sin.

3.3.9. Natural or Genetic Transmission

The law of inheritance or the genetic makeup of a human being serves as the transmitter of the corrupt nature. It maintains that spiritual traits are transmitted in the same way as natural traits are.

3.3.10. The Biblical Position

From the above theories discussed, it is clear that there are several variations on the source of sin. We shall briefly summarize the biblical teaching on the source of sin. There are two falls that the bible speaks of. The first fall where sin originated, was in the angelic being Lucifer, as discussed earlier this chapter. Some contend that pride was the basis of this sin, which caused Lucifer, and one third of the angels to fall (Jude 6; Rev. 12:7-9). A popular passage used in support of the theory of pride, as the original sin, is Isaiah 14:12 –15: -

“How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn!
How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations
low! You said in your heart, *“I will ascend to heaven; above
the stars of God; I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the
mount of assembly in the far north; I will ascend above the
heights of the clouds, I will make myself like the Most High.”*
But you are brought down to Sheol, to the depths of the Pit.”

The immediate context of this prophecy is the judgment of God against the king of Babylon. A parallelism is drawn with that of the fallen angel, Lucifer, whose name is translated as ‘light bearer.’ This prophecy is considered as having a dual application as stated above. Hebrew literary devices, particularly in prophecy, would use earthly events to offer descriptive understanding of heavenly events.²²⁶ The judgment against this earthly king was his vaulting personal ambition to be equated in authority and power with God. The important point to note here is the symbolic intent without reading too much into the passage. The repetition of the “I will” statements uttered against God as the source of authority and power is a symbolic intent of ambition, selfishness and pride.²²⁷

The second fall that scripture speaks about refers to the fall of man. The first sin committed by humanity is recorded in Genesis 3:1-12. The account of Genesis 3 highlights three areas necessary for consideration. Firstly, sin brought doubt to the veracity of God’s word as the absolute for humanity. The basis of the temptation that

²²⁶ Grudem, W. 1994. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House. p. 413.

Satan used with Eve was the possibility of possessing knowledge of good and evil (vs.5). He brought doubt to the veracity of God's commandment to them (vs. 2-3). Hence, the quest for knowledge and the underlying motive, led them to sin. Sin draws doubt to the absolute authority of God and his word. Secondly, sin colours one's perception of what is right and wrong. There is no ultimate standard of morality but grey areas. Humanity interprets rightness and wrongness on personal discrimination or that, which appears to be right. The aim at gaining knowledge was to know good and evil and therefore become like God (vs. 5). Eve did not rely on the command of God to serve as the basis for the choice she made. Instead she considered the serpent's words and used her own discrimination for evaluating right and wrong. Thirdly, sin challenges the identity of a person. Adam and Eve were created in the image of God and their identity was defined in relation to the person of God. However, according to verses 5-6, Eve ate of the fruit of the tree for wisdom so that she may assume an identity similar to God. The words of the serpent "...you will be like God..." (3:5) is an identity issue. Perhaps it was a type of displacement that Satan was manifesting in attaining his unfulfilled personal ambition to be like God. He uses the same cause of his fall as the basis of the first temptation of man. The point to note is that the source of sin in humanity cannot be attributed to the temptation of the serpent alone, but with the free moral choice that the first human beings made. Although the serpent influenced Eve, she was a free moral agent and was not forced to give into the temptation.

In conclusion of our look at the source of sin, there are several points worth mentioning. Firstly, Adam's sin affected the whole human race since all humanity is united in him (Rom. 5:12-21). Secondly, the fall of Adam created a corrupt nature in man. He is unable to do any good without the help of God. Good here does not refer to good works but to the merits of salvation (Psalm 51:5). Thirdly, all have sinned and have a sinful nature. This speaks of universal sin (Rom. 5:12; 19). Fourthly, as a result of sin, people including infants, are subject to punishment. This includes physical, spiritual and eternal death (Rom. 5). Fifthly, all infants are considered

²²⁷ Hayford, J. W. 1991. *The Spirit-Filled Life Bible*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers. p. 981.

sinners because of the sin nature. The destiny of the soul of the child is determined by God's foreknowledge of how that child would have lived his/her life. God is the ultimate judge (Rom 2:14-15; Gen. 18:25). Sixthly, through Adam's disobedience all were made sinners. Through Christ's obedience all are made righteous through God (Rom. 5:19). Seventhly, one man's sin brought death and condemnation upon all people (1 Cor. 15:21-22). Eighthly, God cursed the ground because of Adam's sin. Lastly, Christ had to take on sinful nature, although sinless, in order to atone for our sins (Gen. 3; 17-18; 2 Cor. 5:17).

3.4. The Results of sin

Important considerations worth examining are the results or consequences of sin. Sin has very serious consequences and has eternal effects. The results of sin can be classified into two categories: those that affect one's relationship with God and those results that affect the sinner.²²⁸

3.4.1. Results affecting the relationship with God

Adam and Eve had been sharing close communion with God prior to sin. God was their close companion, as one may infer from Genesis 3:8. It is evident that they shared a close relationship with him. However, this relationship changed after they violated God's law, becoming enemies with him. God had not changed or alienated himself from humanity, instead by virtue of Adam and Eve's choice, humanity had moved away. A pertinent question to consider is how sin affects humanity's relationship with God? In addition, what changed in the relationship dynamic in the pre and post fall experience?

a) Divine Disfavour

The Old Testament characterizes God as 'hating' the wicked (Psa. 5:5; 11:5). God takes a strong view to sin because his very nature is holy. It seems on first glance, that God shows favor to some and disfavor to others. This does not reflect a fickle or

²²⁸ Erickson, M.J. 2000. *Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Publishing. pp. 620-636.

biased nature on God's part. God's nature is unchanging and when we sin we move into the area of God's disfavor. It was humanity that violated the relationship with God and not vice versa. The New Testament identifies those who sin as being the enemies of God. God does not hate sinners but is opposed to the sin that they engage in (Rom. 8:7). God's wrath is present upon all sin but is not yet manifest.

b) Guilt

Guilt is a penalty imposed upon sin by God. Guilt is not an irrational feeling, but is a state that man experiences because he has violated God's law. He is therefore subject to punishment for this. It is the sinner who experiences guilt. In what ways does sin and guilt affect man's relationship with God? God had appointed man as the caretaker or steward of his kingdom. Man has complete charge over all things. In return, God asked for worship and obedience. Man failed to do this and misused all that God had given him. Man dishonored God in this way.

c) Punishment

Because of sin, we are liable to God for punishment. God's punishment of sin is retributive. This idea is popular in Hebrew thought. Retribution, or as the Hebrew renders it "*naqam*", means to "avenge, take vengeance".²²⁹ Genesis 9:6 reflects this thought. This means that because of the nature of the crime, one of destroying the image of God, a fitting penalty must be imposed. God is not concerned with punishing the sinner but with justice being maintained. Punishment is usually indirect and may take an internal or external form. External punishment can be sin violating laws like ill health. Internal punishment may be feelings of guilt etc. The bible speaks of sowing and reaping as with sin and righteousness (Gal. 6:7-8).

²²⁹ Smith, Ryder Charles. 1953. *The Bible Doctrine of Sin and of the Ways of God with Sinners*. London: Epworth Publishing. p.47.

d) Death

Death is the main result of sin. God mentions this in Genesis 2:17, that Adam and Eve would die, should they eat of the tree. Romans 6:23 speak of the wages of sin being death. Death that man experiences is threefold.

- i) **Physical Death:** Man is mortal and therefore must die. This is made clear in scriptures like Hebrews 9:27 and Romans 5:12. Physical death is faced by all in the world. The physical body is now subject to disease, sicknesses, weather, all of which could result in physical death.
- ii) **Spiritual Death:** Spiritual death is related to physical death in that the soul is separated from God. God in the Garden of Eden stated to Adam and Eve that they would surely die, should they violate his commandment to them (Gen. 2:17; Eph. 2:1,5). Spiritual death is a consequence of violating God's laws. Sin separates man from the presence of God.
- iii) **Eternal Death:** This is the finality of spiritual death. It is the eternal separation of the soul from God. Punishment accompanies this eternal separation (Matt. 10:28; 2 Thess. 1:9; Heb. 10:31).

3.4.2. Results affecting the sinner

There are seven areas or results that the sinner experiences. These include the following²³⁰:

a) Enslavement

People become slaves to sin. It becomes addictive and habitual. One sinful act leads to another. Eventually, sin gains dominion over the person that he cannot escape from it.

²³⁰ Erickson, M.J. 2000. *Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Publishing. pp.632-635.

b) Flight from reality

The nature of sin is such that it results in an unwillingness to face reality. People generally avoid *thinking about the harsh reality of sin*. The reality of sin is eventual death. The fact that people don't like talking about death is seen in their usage of words like "passing away", "called away" etc. Another effect of sin is old age. People also don't like thinking about growing old. Euphemisms like "senior citizens" or the "elderly" are used, to couch in more user-friendly language, the harsh reality that life will eventually end.

c) Denial of sin

People deny sin in the same manner as they would deny the inevitability of death. They tend to relabel the consequences of sin, by attributing it to something like sickness or circumstances. People admitting to wrong, but not taking the personal responsibility for it, also deny sin. There is always an attempt to shift the responsibility to someone else. This is seen in Genesis 3:11-13 when Adam blamed the woman for his sinful act.

d) Self-Deceit

Jeremiah mentions that the heart is wicked and deceitful. People tend to deceive themselves and are readily able to judge others. Jesus asked the question in Matthew 7:3: "Why do you see the speck in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?"

e) Insensitivity

People become insensitive, as they begin to sin more and more. They eventually become dead to the promptings of the conscience. Therefore, when people have their consciences seared, it is because they have given fully into the sinful nature. The Holy Spirit and the word of God, no longer readily and easily convict them.

f) Self-centeredness

Sin causes a focusing of attention to self. There is a focus on one's own personal needs and wants, above those of other people. People in this state, tend to draw attention to themselves and what is important to them.

g) Restlessness

There is always a continual desire for more. There is never a true state of satisfaction that is reached. John D. Rockefeller responded to the question "How much money does it take to satisfy a man?" by stating "Just a little bit more". With the nature of sin, the more we get, the greater the desire becomes to have more.

3.4.3. Results affecting other Human Beings

*Sin has an effect on the way people respond to each other. There are four areas that warrant our attention in this regard.*²³¹

a) Competition

Sin creates a self-centeredness with the result individuals seek own goals and desires. This creates conflict or competition with other individuals. There is a tendency to desire the same that another person has like cars, houses, money etc. The bible calls *this covetousness. There is always competition in some form or the other, as in the case of why we have wars. People fight each other for land, money and other such things (James 4:2).*

b) Inability to empathize

We tend to lose focus on the needs of others because we are so concerned about what our own personal needs are. We lose our ability to show concern or empathize with others. It is for this reason the bible speaks of *brotherly love and care for others (Phil. 2:3-5).*

²³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 635-636.

c) Rejection of Authority

Any opposition to one's personal desires or will is seen as threatening. There is a rebellion and resistance to authority.

d) Inability to Love

People lose their ability to love. We tend to be suspicious, bitter or self-absorbed, rather than showing concern over the welfare of others.

These three views reflect the effect that sin has on man's relationship with God, himself and with others.

3.5. The Magnitude of sin

The magnitude of sin is those aspects of which we ask the questions how extensive is sin and how intensive is sin? The following is a brief attempt to answer these questions.²³²

3.5.1. The Extent of Sin

Sin is a universal problem, which scripture testifies to. For example, "There is no man that does not sin" (1 Kings 8:46); "In thy sight no man living is righteous" (Ps. 143:2). This universality of sin is not limited to sinful acts, but is the result of a sinful nature. Therefore, all human beings are sinners.

The Old Testament teaches on the universality of sin. This is apparent in God's flooding of the earth in the time of Noah. The bible accounts for us in Genesis 6, that the sin was so great that God had to destroy the whole earth, save Noah. David also testifies to the fact that all men are corrupt (Ps. 141:1-3). David was a man after God's own heart yet he had sinned on numerous occasions. Although the bible makes reference to characters like Abraham, Enoch, Job, there is none perfect. All these people had their shortcomings. Isaiah 53:6 illustrates the universality of sin with his statement of "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his

²³² Ibid., pp. 638ff

own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.” The New Testament makes the extensiveness of sin very clear. The Apostle Paul mentions in Romans 3, that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. He draws his explanations from Psalms 14; 53; 5:9 and 140:3, together with Isaiah 59. Paul makes it very clear that, he is talking about both unbelievers and believers. This is further illustrated in his address on Mars Hill, when he calls all men to repent (Acts 17:30). The very fact that we are human implies that we have a sin nature from Adam. Consider what Ryder Smith says in this regard: “The universality of sin is taken as matter of fact. On examination, it will be found that every speech in Acts, even in Stephen’s and every epistle just assumes that men have all sinned...”²³³ Finally, all people are subject to death which points to the universality of sin.

3.5.2. The Intensiveness of sin

The intensiveness of sin deals with the question how intense or deep is sin? I will look at the Old and New Testament views concerning this.

a) The Old Testament View

In the Old Testament there is mention of sins, rather than a sinful disposition. The prophets condemned sinful acts. The motives or internal sins were condemned. The prophets, Jeremiah & Ezekiel in their writings, viewed sin as a sickness of the heart. It was deemed a spiritual sickness, hence a focus on the intents and motives. Jeremiah mentions in Chapter 17:9 “the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately corrupt; who can understand it?” In a similar vein, Ezekiel mentions that God desires a change of heart from his people (Ezek. 11:19). Hence, the Old Testament view focuses on the heart. The wicked person committed such acts because his heart devised such evil intents (Eccl. 7:29). Psalm 51 draws attention to sin as an inward disposition of the heart. David saw the need to have his heart purified and removed of all sin.

²³³ Smith, Charles Ryder. 1953. *The Bible Doctrine of Sin and the Ways of God with Sinner*. London: Epworth Publishing. pp. 159-160.

b) The New Testament View

Jesus, in the New Testament spoke of the inner condition of the heart. Sin is therefore perceived as a matter of motives and intentions of the heart. Matthew 5:21-22 highlights this point by mentioning that a person who is angry with his brother is just as guilty as one who committed murder. Sin begins with the very thought, let alone the act. Should a man lust after a woman, even though he may have not physically committed any such act, he has committed sin. Jesus adds to this by stating, that actions proceed from the heart. The character of the heart determines the nature of the action (Matt. 15:18-19). Paul holds a similar belief that sin is a result of human nature. In human nature there is an inclination toward evil.

3.5.3. Conclusion

Many theologians have employed the term “total depravity” when referring to sin. This concept derives from texts like Genesis 6:5; Ephesians 4; 18-19 and Romans 1:18-32. Total depravity must not be understood as total sinfulness and that a sinner is completely unregenerate.²³⁴ This concept can be understood in the following ways:

- a) Sin affects the entire person. Sin does not only affect one part of the person, like his body or his mind. It affects the entire being (Rom. 6:6). This includes mind or reason, will, emotions and body.
- b) Motives are not always pure therefore; good acts can be done for wrong reasons. Everything that is done, is not done out of love for God. Hence, the very good that we do is tainted with sin, because the love of God is not in it (John 5:39-42).
- c) Sin is “candy-coated” so that it may be appealing. Under the misleading appearance lies the darkness of sin. This reflects what the heart is like.
- d) Importantly total depravity is an absence of love for God. It is a failure to love and serve him.
- e) The sinner, regardless of what he may do, is unable to remove the sinfulness in his nature. Asceticism is a good example of this. Martin Luther, the great reformer

²³⁴ Berkhof, L. 1953. *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing Company. p. 246.

discovered that no good work could save a person from sinfulness. It is faith in Jesus Christ that earns a person salvation (Eph 2:8-9).

In conclusion on discussing the magnitude of sin, what can we say of original sin? It is necessary to examine Romans 5:12-19. Paul argues that death came into the human race as a result of Adam's sin. Death is universal and the root cause of death is sin. How can Adam's sin affect me today? The argument may be one of "I was not present in the garden and therefore I should not be held responsible?" This requires some explanation. Adam sinned in the garden through an act of disobedience. As a result all humanity received a corrupt and sinful nature. All people are therefore guilty in the sight of God. The original sin of Adam is imputed to us through natural generation. To the question of not being present in the garden we must understand that Adam was the federal head of the human race. We are all part of Adam and therefore bear the result of all of his actions. Therefore, Adam as well as all humanity sinned, although we were not personally present with him. Children that are born are not condemned because they have not come to an age of accountability in moral and spiritual matters. In Romans 5, Paul draws a parallelism between Adam and Christ. Through Adam we have gained a corrupt and sinful nature, which results in death as the penalty for sin. Through Christ we gain righteousness and eternal life. Therefore Adam's act of sinfulness was imputed to us even though we were not there. Similarly, Christ's act of redemption is also imputed to us even though we had no part in it. In both instances it is through an exercise of choice on our part.

One would view sin as being inherited from the original sin of Adam. As such, all mankind is sinful, as mentioned in Romans 3:23. From the time a baby is born, it is into a sinful world with both physical and moral evil. The earth is in decay and is in a process of constant pollution in resources and the environment. Man has a sinful nature, which is activated when he commits acts of sin. In every person there is the possibility of goodness and evil. Try as we may, we cannot overcome the desire to sin, because it is imputed to us. We need God's help and Christ provided the help in the following ways: Firstly, he was born into a sinful world but maintained a pure

nature. He reminded man of God's original purpose in the garden i.e. fellowship. He brought man back to God even though it was man who moved away from God. Secondly, he led a sinless life and took upon him all our sins, sinful natures and dispositions thus overcoming the innate sinful nature in man. He shed his blood that we may be cleansed of all sin. *God is holy therefore through Jesus sinful man is now holy and has access to God.* Thirdly, His death and resurrection removed the penalty of sin, which is death. Sin therefore has no dominion over man (Romans 12:1) and we should no longer lead lives that are under the burden of sin.

3.6. The Social Dimension of Sin

Until this point in our discussion, we have examined the concept of sin in light of individual acts of sin or the person as a single being. However, scripture makes reference to sin in terms of a group or collective sense. For example, the Lord addresses society as a whole, in the time of Isaiah as recorded in Chapter 1:18. It states "Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your doings from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice..." Clearly, this is a responsibility of the whole society and not just an individual. How then does one understand the social dimension of sin? We tend to become so sensitized to our own state of sinfulness that we don't really notice the sinfulness of a larger group or society that we are part of. I may never think of killing anyone or stealing, but I may be a part of a larger group that does so. People through various ways involve themselves in such actions i.e. financial involvement; direct approval. People may not be fully aware that they are involved in such acts. The social dimension of sin is explicated in the following reasons.²³⁵

- a) People are not inclined to view matters as being personal to them, if they are not directly involved in it.
- b) People become so conditioned by their membership in a group that their perception of reality is altered by it.

²³⁵ Erickson, M.J. 2000. *Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Publishing. pp. 660 ff.

- c) People do not recognize group selfishness because it may involve a reflection on *individual selfishness*.
- d) When people are part of a group, it is not very clear to them of how excessive their behavior becomes. For example, supporters that grow rowdy at a football match.
- e) Evil becomes less real to people if they are removed from its presence.

3.6.1. The Biblical View of social sin

What does the bible say concerning the social dimension of sin? There are three specific aspects that we can focus on, from biblical teachings. These include the world, powers and corporate personality.²³⁶ I will briefly examine each.

3.6.1.1. The World

The bible refers to the world in terms of the Greek word "*kosmos*". It has various definitions in light of the context used, but it generally denotes a spiritual force. The world is a type of embodiment of evil. There are four characteristics that one can mention of the world that is evident from the writings of John and Paul.

- a) The world is an organized system of a spiritual force that is evil. This system exists apart from evil and wicked individuals. This system operates with a particular opposition to Christ and his kingdom. It has a particular mindset that is corrupt.
- b) Satan has control of the world. It is the domain of his kingdom. Satan uses institutions and structures in the world to achieve his evil purposes. He is opposed to the working of God and his people in the world.
- c) The world is evil in its very nature. The bible warns the believer not to be influenced by the corrupt nature of the world.
- d) The eventual end of the world is judgement from God.

²³⁶ Ibid., pp. 660 ff.

3.6.1.2. The Powers

The concept of powers has been greatly explored by Paul in his writings. This concept was popular during the Hellenistic period, during which Paul lived. Jewish Apocalyptic writings mention various classes of angels. Each class occupying a different level in the heavens. A class of angels called “powers” was seen as personal spiritual beings that influence the events on earth. However, Paul draws a distinction between angels, principalities and powers in Romans 8:38-39. In Colossians 2:8-20 Paul mentions that these “powers” exercise control over persons in the world. They were created by God to keep order within a society. Berkhof views these powers as part of the invisible aspect of creation.²³⁷ They were to keep order in creation. As a result of the fall, Satan now influenced these powers in carrying out his own personal plans. This is made clear in Ephesians 6. Hence these powers are behind institutions, societies, and cultures and enslave them to sin. Paul however mentions the authority of Christ over these powers in Colossians 2:13-15. He mentions the threefold work that Christ’s death has achieved: -

- Christ has disarmed the powers.
- Christ has made a public example of these powers.
- Christ has triumphed over these powers.

3.6.1.3. Corporate Personality

This refers to the actions of individuals that are not to be regarded as isolationist. They are to be seen as a corporate personality or an action of the collective whole. For example, Achan took forbidden items from Jericho and brought punishment upon the nation of Israel. Paul mentions that the whole of humanity is held accountable because of Adam’s sin. The actions of the individual cannot be separated from the society as a whole. Everything around us like the political, social and economic systems we live within, all contribute to evil conditions. Sin is an intrinsic part of all of these structures and the individual cannot escape it. Everything in the world has

²³⁷ Berkhof, H. 1962. *Christ and the Powers*. Scottsdale: Herald Publishing. p. 11.

been affected by the fall. All of creation awaits the day when it will be liberated from the bondage of sin (Rom. 8:18-25).

3.6.2. Conclusion

In conclusion of our look at the social dimension of sin, how can we overcome such precarious conditions? Many have held a threefold consideration in this regard.²³⁸

3.6.2.1. Regeneration

This approach sees the sins of the individuals as a composite whole. In other words, *societal problems of sin are made up of individuals, who have this sin problem*. The solution would be to change the mindsets of individuals and this would affect the direction that the society takes. Regeneration holds that human beings are essentially sinful and depraved. The internal nature is sinful and this is what needs to be addressed.

3.6.2.2. Reform

This approach holds that the problems of society are more than those of individuals. A broader strategic method must be employed, which should alter the larger structures of society. This reform must include working through the political system, which can pass laws to prohibit evil acts. Mahatma Gandhi advocated the reformation of colonial India through his policy of passive resistance and non-violence.

3.6.2.3. Revolution

Revolution is by far the most radical approach. It suggests that the very structures of society must be destroyed, removed and replaced. This view sees the societal structures, as so corrupt that transforming them through simple redemption is impossible. An overthrow of the system must occur to achieve change. This view is held mainly by liberation theologians and is very aggressive in nature.

²³⁸ Ibid., pp. 660 ff.

The approach to the social and individual evils of society should be addressed by a combination of approaches, rather than just one of the above. Each approach on its own lacks total success but combining them creates the desired results. Jesus Christ taught kingdom principles that were seen as radical in the society of the day. The context of Christ's ministry occurred against the backdrop of the Roman Empire. The world, in which Jesus was born into, had a form of superficial stability and unification. The Roman Empire was the single sovereign power that gave structure to a form of stability and unification. The Emperor was the sovereign ruler of the empire and exercised political power through military administration and the senate. The Roman people were controlled through this exercise of power. Luke 2:1ff indicates that Jesus was born during the time of Caesar Augustus (27 B.C. – A.D. 14). Jesus redefined the understanding of God and his relationship to humanity, through the dynamics of the kingdom ethics, as relating to the social structures of the day. The Jewish people expected a radical military overthrow of the Roman Empire.²³⁹ Jesus redefined all aspects of the spiritual and social elements of the person and how he should relate to these societal structures. Erickson suggests that regeneration together with non-violent reform is the best solution to combat sin and evil.²⁴⁰

3.7. Conclusion

In conclusion of our examination of the doctrine of sin a point of departure in surmising the main aspects of our discussion would be to consider the role of temptation with regard to sin and the responsibility of man. In discussing the role of temptation with regard to the sin, a brief overview is essential. What was the need for temptation? To answer this question, one must first understand the position of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. In Genesis 2, we read of the creation account of man and scripture affirms that man was created in the image of God. This implies that they were created as morally free sinless beings. It is important to note that while they were created in the image of God, they were not divine in nature like God. Thus, the potential to sin was there. However, they did not know any sin. They only knew good

²³⁹ Kee, H.C. 1983. *Understanding the New Testament*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Publishing. p. 14.

²⁴⁰ Erickson, M.J. 2000. *Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Publishing. pp. 673-674.

as God created them as essentially good beings. Sin already existed in the person of Lucifer. His pride caused him to attempt to overthrow God. This resulted in the origin of a sinful nature. From our earlier discussion, sin is a missing of the mark or standard of God. Lucifer did not conform to God's law and therefore sinned. The position of Adam and Eve was that of fellowship with God in the garden. Eve supported Adam in his role as the caretaker of the garden.

An interesting point to briefly digress on, is God's statement in Genesis 2:16. God commanded Adam to eat of every tree in the garden, which also included the tree of life. He forbade the eating of fruit from the tree of knowledge. Had they been obedient to God, they could have enjoyed eternal life. Their disobedience resulted in their removal from the garden. They were deprived from eating of the tree of life because they now knew sin. In considering the role of temptation, what was the need for temptation? It must be remembered that God allowed man to go through the temptation, but did not cause it (1 Cor. 10:13). Three reasons may be offered for God allowing temptation to enter the garden.

3.7.1. The Need for Probation

God gave to man the power to choose. Man was not created as an automaton or robot that would do anything that God would ask him to do, without involving any choice. He had an inclination toward God and his power to choose could allow him to deliberately choose God. Probation or testing was necessary, although God already knew the outcome that man would fall. It provided a way for God to show his benevolence through redemption.²⁴¹

3.7.2. The Need for a Tempter

Sin was a cause outside of man. Satan had no external temptation but willfully and of his own violation, sinned against God. Had sin not originated in Lucifer's act of pride, then sin could have originated solely in humanity's act of disobedience. This

²⁴¹ Thiessen, H.C. 1979. *Lectures in Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing Company. p. 176.

does not imply that sin was inevitable, regardless of how it originated. This leans toward a fatalistic view of sin. God left a possibility for man's redemption in the equation of man's choice to disobey him by sinning. He was not obligated to do so.

3.7.3. The Possibility of resisting temptation

Although temptation was present, it had no power to force man to sin. Man had the power to choose, either to obey God or to give in to the temptation. Should man have resisted the temptation what would have been the outcome? The responsibility of man lay in his power to choose. Man's responsibility can be categorized into two areas: his responsibility before the fall and after the fall. Temptation with regard to sin had no power over man. Man knew no sin and therefore had the ability to resist the temptation. He could have merely heeded to what God commanded him to do. Temptation was the incentive for man to sin but it was not forced upon Adam and Eve. The serpent did not pluck the fruit from the tree and force them to eat it. They did so of their own free moral choice and violation. This was when sin entered man. Hence, the fall of humanity occurred. The responsibility of man before the fall is found in Genesis 1:26,28-30. God created man so that he would have dominion over all that he had created. We see Adam carrying out this responsibility in Genesis 2:19-20 when he named the creatures that God had created. The responsibility of Eve was to be of support to Adam in his responsibility over creation (Genesis 2:21-24).

When man allowed sin to enter in, through his disobedience, his responsibility changed considerably. He no longer shared a close communion with God. They could no longer have fellowship with him because they had sinned. They had chosen to alienate themselves from God. The following changes can be noted from Genesis 3:14ff.

- 1) They were now afraid and could not have fellowship with God (Genesis 3:10).
- 2) They lost their dominion over creation and were removed from the garden to till the earth (Genesis 3:24).

2) Eve lost the joy of God's blessing upon childbirth. She now was to experience pain when giving birth.

4) Adam now had to work and toil the ground and was therefore responsible for providing for his family.

In conclusion, the role of temptation with regard to sin was not the cause of man's sin. The cause lay in his choice to eat of the tree and in the representative principle that was violated i.e. obedience. The responsibility of man is now to accept the consequences of his act. This consequence of sin is death. As discussed earlier, the penalty is threefold i.e. physical, spiritual and eternal death. God in his mercy provided the means of restoring humanity into fellowship with him through the person and work of Christ. He became the propitiation for our sins. This is the true reflection of Christianity – the wide expanse and the insurmountable depth of the love of God toward man (Psalm 8).

Chapter Four: Salvation

4. Introduction

In the previous chapter, we examined the impact of sin on humanity by commencing with the approach, that sin is defined in relation to God. To understand sin, one must proceed in understanding the nature of God, as this informs its definition. Sin is often defined as a transgression of the law of God. This required our consideration of the facets of the law of God as the background to the fall of man. The elemental law and positive enactment are two theological categories of the law of God. The elemental law deals with the natural and moral laws, whilst positive enactment deals with the published statutes or ordinances of the law. The other aspects of an examination of the doctrine of sin, included discussion on: - 1) the nature of sin i.e. philosophical theories of sin, scriptural views of sin, other views of sin. 2) The source of sin i.e. theories of original sin. 3) The results of sin i.e. those that affect the sinner's relationship with God, those that affect the sinner and those that affect other human beings. The next area of the impact of sin on humanity was the magnitude of sin that focused on the extent and intensiveness of sin. Lastly, the social dimension of sin considered the effect of sin on a societal level. This meant looking at the biblical concepts of the world, of spiritual powers and corporate personality. Some solutions offered were reform, regeneration and revolutionary approaches. Our concluding issue was the aspect of temptation with regard to man, and the means of resisting it.

This chapter is the proverbial link in the chain of our discussion of a new creation in Christ. A new creation is the new species or type of humanity that God inaugurated through the redemptive work of Christ. It served as the means of restoring fellowship and purpose that he originally intended. It is a redemptive work wrought for all humanity, but appropriated by those who choose to accept in faith, Christ Jesus as the means of salvation. This chapter considers the doctrine of salvation, which is the application of the redemptive work of Christ, to those who choose to accept it. The golden text of scripture, John 3:16, has often been interpreted as the sum total of the salvation plan of God, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten

son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” Should one interpret this text in light of our dissertation scope, it would mean that God loved(s) the world despite the fallen condition of man. He demonstrated this love by giving to the world, a way of overcoming sin and death through his son Jesus Christ. He does not merely provide a way of escape so to speak, but he establishes the benefit of believing in him, by bestowing eternal life. In order to receive salvation, one must also receive the only means that God used to accomplish this promise i.e. Jesus Christ. Scripture records a clear and unequivocal attestation to the only means of salvation in the words of Jesus in John 14:6 “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life; No one come to the Father except through me.” Our thesis statement of this chapter could be stated thus, although God’s love is pronounced upon all humanity through his plan of salvation, only those who appropriate the person and work of Christ in faith [through acceptance, belief and praxis] will be saved. It is the task of the proceeding chapter to discuss the varying aspects of salvation, in relation to the doctrines of creation, humanity and sin. This enables a context for understanding an enumeration of the facets of a new creation in Christ.

4.1. The Referential Points of Salvation

Salvation has three referential points through which one may understand it. Firstly, it is related to God. Sin is the transgression and rebellion against the person and nature of God. It is a violation of his law, bringing humanity into a position of enmity with God.²⁴² The lawgiver has to deal with the violation of his laws through the inflicting of a penalty as a form of retributive justice. The difference between punishment and discipline would help define what a penalty is. In most legal systems the imposition of a penalty by a court of law, is not necessarily just for the reformation of the offender. Neither is it purely for the prevention or deterring of others from similar such actions. Discipline is an act of love, the purpose of which is to help the offender (Jer. 10:24; 2 Corin. 2:6-8; 1 Tim. 1:20). Punishment is the result of justice and is retributive. For example, a person that has committed murder and is sentenced to death, cannot be reformed or disciplined through such a punishment. It is clearly

²⁴² Evans, W. 1974. *The Great Doctrines of the Bible*. Moody Press: Chicago. p.78.

retributive. Applying this understanding to the justice of God would require that retributive justice be carried out. Secondly, it is related to humanity. Sin affected the entire human race earning man a sinful, depraved and guilty nature in effect, changing his position before God. Hence, a penalty for sin was required in payment of the vindication of the justice of God. The natural consequences of sin, as outlined in Genesis 3:16-19, was the curse of the earth, hard labour and the pain of childbirth. The full penalty of sin was death (Rom. 6:23). The only way that man could pay this penalty was through the suffering of the penalty of death, eternally. Perhaps this would have been the requirement of God from sinners, had he imposed this demand of the law on them. Instead, God himself chooses to meet the requirements, because of the actuation his love and compassion for the sinner.²⁴³ Humanity was in a precarious position unable to redeem itself. Thirdly, it is related to Jesus Christ. The justice of God required payment for sin in the form of the penalty of death. Humanity's sinful condition disqualified them from satisfactorily paying the full penalty. Christ becomes the propitiation of our sins, achieving the work of reconciling man and God, to a relationship of open communion.²⁴⁴

4.2. The Promised Redemption

4.2.1. The Background to God's Plan of Redemption

Any reading of scripture would highlight the soteriological work of God, as being accomplished over time, through a definite plan and method. This is intimated by Ephesians 1:4, "...just as He [God] chose us in Him [Christ] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." God enacted his plan, despite his prescience of the fall of man into sinfulness. Despite the consequences of the fall, humanity did not lose knowledge of God and/or sin. Human beings possess an intuitive knowledge of God or the existence of a divine being in some small measure, although it may be expressed in differing ways, from polytheism to pantheism. The Apostle Paul affirms this line of thinking by stating that all creation

²⁴³ Berkhof, L. 1933. *Manual of Christian Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing Company. p. 214.

²⁴⁴ Berkhouwer, G.C. 1952. *The work of Christ in 'Studies in Dogmatics.'* Grand Rapids: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing Company. p. 255.

in itself is a testimony to the existence of God (Rom. 1:20; Acts 14:15-17). Similarly, all humanity has some knowledge of sin, with some holding to belief in the existence of sin over that of God i.e. Agnostics. The evil and chaos of the world around, is too strong an argument to convince them otherwise. However, the nature and conceptions of sin may differ from that of scripture. The bible does indicate in both the Old and New Testaments, that God set in motion a redemptive plan to deal with the problem of sin and restore humanity. The Old Testament describes God's revelatory purposes in the form of the law and the prophets. The Mosaic Law contains numerous references to the introduction of the system of law instituted by God. This is evident in the theophanies of himself to his people, the sacrificial system, the laws of holiness and purity, the priesthood, the tabernacle and its furniture. All these point to the introduction of the law, in preparation of the Israelites to become revelatory instruments of God to the surrounding nations. Most importantly it pointed to the macrocosmic redemptive plan of God that was progressively unfolding. The Prophets were responsible for the discharge of the message of God, to act as his voice, to give counsel and direction, revelation, warning and future redemption to the people of God. The Old Testament contains explicit prophetic references foretelling the nature of Christ's coming, the scope of his work, the ultimate accomplishment of God's redemptive plan and even allusions to the second coming of Christ. Consider some of the following references cited in the Psalms and in the book of Isaiah, that have been fulfilled in the New Testament.²⁴⁵

Textual Reference	Christ's Prophetic Portrayal in Scripture	Fulfillment in New Testament
Psalm 16:10	Rises from death	Matthew 28:7
22:1	Forsaken by God	Matthew 27:46
22:16	Hands and feet pierced	John 20:27
34: 20	Bones unbroken	John 19:32, 33, 26
41:9	Betrayed by a friend	Luke 22:47
69:21	Given vinegar and gall	Matthew 27:34
Isaiah 52:14; 53:2	He will be disfigured by suffering	Mark 15:17-19
53:1	He will be widely rejected	John 12:37-38
53:4-5	He will bear our sins and sorrows	Romans 4:25; 1 Peter 2:24-25

²⁴⁵ Hayford, J. W. 1991. *The Spirit-Filled Life Bible*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers. pp. 772, 1033.

All of the references cited are directly concerned with Christ, especially the period of the crucifixion, as part of his atoning work. Other scriptural references that posit the salvation plan of God, are found in various typologies or shadows of Christ and his redemptive work, in human persons, events, offices and institutions: -

a) Persons

- Adam (Rom. 5:12-21; 1 Cor. 15:45)
- Melchizedek (Heb. 7:1-3)
- Joshua (Deut. 18:18; Acts 3:22f.)

b) Events

- The wilderness wanderings (1 Cor. 10:6-11)
- The Passover (Exodus 12:11; Matt. 26:18; 1 Cor. 5:7; Heb. 11: 28)
- The Day of Atonement (Exodus 30:10; Lev. 16:30; 17:11; 23:28)
- The brazen serpent (John 3:14-16)

c) Offices

- Prophet (Acts 3:22)
- Priest (Heb. 3:1)
- King (Zech. 9:9)

d) Institutions and Symbols

- The tabernacle of Moses (Ex. 26:1; Acts 15:16; Heb. 9:11)
- The tabernacle of David (1 Sam. 4:1 – 7:1; 2 Sam. 6; 1 Chr. 13-16; Joel 2; Acts 15:16,17; Heb. 12:22)
- The veil (Heb. 10:20)
- The incense (Rev. 8:3)

Each of the above elements are types or shadows that were introduced as physical constructs to convey a spiritual principle of God's ultimate plan of salvation. The references contained in the New Testament to each of these elements indicate

continuity in God's workings. Salvation is therefore a definite plan of God that was fulfilled through the direct intervention of God, at various points in human history. It cannot be seen as an arbitrary work or as an afterthought of God in dealing with the fall of humanity. It was in the eternal purpose of God that was fulfilled through Christ (Eph. 3:11). Salvation has to be understood in terms of: - 1) the provision of it; 2) the recipients of it; 3) the method of execution or accomplishment; 4) the conditions and means of receiving it and 5) the application of it and growth in it, leading to transformative living. God's methodology of accomplishing the work of salvation was progressive and anticipative as seen in the coming of the Messiah (Is. 9:6). The provision of salvation entailed the plan of redemption that God become flesh. The method of execution was the cross. It required that Christ fulfill the work of the father through his crucifixion, resurrection and ultimate ascension to the right hand of God. The consummation of the work of Christ will be realized in the eschatological fulfillment of scripture. The recipients of Christ's work were the redemption of all of humanity and creation from sin in its entirety (Rom. 8:18). The conditions and means of receiving it are for those who choose to believe in Christ through repentance and faith. The application of salvation and growth in it is accomplished through the Holy Spirit. He is God's designated agent of transformation of the individual believer, through the processes of regeneration, sanctification and conviction.

Why did God not redeem man immediately after the fall? He could have offered an immediate solution to the problem of sin in the garden. Instead, he chose to use the fullness of time (Gal. 4:4) as the period of preparation, in sending his Son. Perhaps, the answer to this question lies in understanding what God revealed about himself throughout human history, and the purpose for doing so. This is echoed in God's desire to disclose to humanity, the full realization of the effect of the nature and consequences of sin, brought on after the fall. It is evident in God's introduction of the law, which was meant to reveal the powerlessness of all humanity, in attempting to regain the knowledge of God and their former position. Man's inability to fulfill the law, apart from God's help, demonstrates that he is incapable of self-redemption. Despite all of man's endeavours of learning and attainments, he is unable to save

himself from sin and death. The most important lesson that God taught humanity is that forgiveness of sin and restoration of relationship with him is only possible if propitiation is made (Rom. 3:25). Christ becomes the propitiation for sin, by taking the place of humanity as a substitutionary sacrifice. These purposes were necessary in preceding the coming of Christ. God used human persons, events, offices and institutions in preparation for the coming of Christ. Whilst each of these elements served a preparatory function, they also proved the failure of humanity in fulfilling these tests or requirements. For example, the Mosaic Law was intended to help the Israelites to understand the nature of God, through the conditions of approaching him. The wilderness wanderings indicate numerous incidents of failure to fulfill the requirements of the law, the most apparent of which are found in Exodus 20 and 32, respectively. Exodus 20 accounts for God's issuing of the Ten Commandments to Moses, as the law for his people. The second commandment, of not engaging in the worship of any other gods or the making of graven images, is emphasized in 20:22-23. Exodus 32 records the making of a golden calf as an image of worship for the people. This was a direct violation of the law that God had explicitly forbid his people from committing. Despite knowing the law, they still did not fulfill it. This pattern of disobedience is repeated constantly throughout the Old Testament. The book of Judges records the failure of the Judges to offer stable leadership to the Israelites. There was a constant cycle of repentance, idolatry and apostasy. Furthermore, other Old Testament books like Daniel, Hosea, and Habakkuk amongst others reflect the subjection of the Israelites to captivity by surrounding nations. This occurred during differing periods in their history, as a result of their disobedience.

The New Testament also records the response of humanity to God's laws, as in the rejection of Jesus as the promised Messiah. Notwithstanding this, God revealed his plan of redemption through Christ as Paul states in Ephesians 1:7-9, "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace...having made known to us the mystery of his will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself..." The medium of the church was chosen by

God as the means of expressing this message of reconciliation through the gospel of Christ.

4.2.2. Understanding Redemption

Redemption as understood by John Suggit, is the regaining of freedom by humanity. The Genesis account reveals that sin robbed man of the original freedom that he possessed in relation to God. Sin brought the alienation of the human race from their true calling or purpose. The disobedience of Adam and Eve brought all of creation into bondage. Freedom, according to Suggit, is that which God gave Adam and Eve as the measure of experience of his fullness in connection with their purpose in creation.²⁴⁶ Accordingly, all of scripture is an account of the struggle by humanity to regain this freedom, not in relation to what keeps them in bondage, but in terms of what once was. Redemption is simply the ransom paid in exchange for the freedom of one in bondage. It is the initiative of God based on his love to redeem all creation to himself as an act of his sovereignty as Creator. He was under no compulsion or obligation to do so rather it was an act of divine love. The deliverance of the Israelites from the bondage of the Egyptians is an example of God's exercise of redemption of his people. The institution of the Passover feast in Exodus 12 was a reminder of the proof of the presence of God and his personal protection as a result of obedience to him. The celebration of the Passover reminded the Israelites of their deliverance by God from Egyptian slavery. The Passover was celebrated in the month of Nisan or Abib (March-April). It marked the beginning of a new year symbolic of the new life that God granted to his people through deliverance. The feast was commemorated through the sacrifice of an unblemished lamb after a period of four days. This is a type of the 'lamb of God', Christ the Redeemer (John 1:29; Rev. 5:12).²⁴⁷ This is the context for understanding the concept of redemption. The following texts contain the concept of redemption in relation to the people of Israel: -

²⁴⁶ John Suggit, "Redemption: Freedom Regained" in *Doing Theology in Context: South African Perspectives*. John De Gruchy & C. Villa-Vicencio (eds.) 1994. New York: Orbis Books. pp. 113ff.

²⁴⁷ Hayford, J. W. 1991. *The Spirit-Filled Life Bible*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers. p. 98.

- “You in your mercy have led forth the people whom you have *redeemed*...” (Ex. 15:13).
- “... but because the Lord loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and *redeemed* you from the house of bondage...” (Deut. 7:8)
- “... O Lord God, do not destroy your people and your inheritance whom you have *redeemed*...” (Deut. 9:26)
- “... the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you...” (Deut. 13:5)
- “But now, thus says the Lord...” Fear not, for I have *redeemed* you, O Israel...” (Is. 43:1)
- “I have blotted out, like a thick cloud, your transgressions, and like a cloud, your sins. Return to me, for I have *redeemed* you” (Is. 44:22)
- “Let the *redeemed* of the Lord say so...” (Ps. 107:2)
- “For I know that my *Redeemer* lives...” (Job 19:25)

In the context of these words, particularly the references in Exodus and Deuteronomy, redemption is described by the use of the Hebrew *ga'al* or *padah*. In the original sense *ga'al* referred to a kinsman and *padah* meant to buy back or redeem something through the payment of money. The Greek equivalent is *lutrousthai* and *lutron*. The inherent idea being conveyed is that God acts as the kinsman redeemer of his people in regaining them as his personal possession through payment for them. This understanding is employed by the New Testament writers in describing the work of redemption that is effectuated by Jesus Christ. Christ is seen as the Redeemer of humanity and all creation through the offering of his life as a ransom in payment for their purchase (Acts 7:35; Luke 1:68, 71; 24:21; Mark 10:45; Rom. 3:24; 8:23; 1 Cor. 1:30; 6:20; Eph. 1:7). The Greek *lutron* or *lutroomai* is used for ‘ransom’ when referring to the death of Christ as such (Luke 24:1; Titus 2:14; 1 Pet. 1:18) whilst the compound *apolutron* is used about ten times (Luke 21:28; Rom. 3:24; 8:23; 1 Cor. 1:30; Eph. 1:7, 14; 4:30; Col. 1:14). In Pauline theology the redemptive concept is similar to that found in Hebrew thought. Paul employs secular language of the day

used to refer to the purchase of slaves in order to give them freedom. This would mean a change in master for the slave. It is with this idea in mind that Paul speaks about redemption for the believer through the death of Christ as a ransom. The believer now has a change of master and now belongs to Christ (1 Cor. 6:19-20). The change of position of the individual is now one of being 'in Christ' and is therefore a new creation.²⁴⁸ It is a change of identity. A new creation in Christ entails humanity regaining freedom and becoming reconciled with God. It is apparent in Paul's use of Greek word *kurios* to refer to Jesus as master (1 Cor. 6:19-20). Deissmann comments in this regard on the usage of *lutron*,

“When anybody heard the Greek word *lutron*, “ransom,” in the first century, it was natural for him to think of the purchase-money for manumitting slaves. Three documents from Oxyrhynchus relating to manumissions in the years 86, 100 and 91 or 107 A.D. make use of the word.”²⁴⁹

It is through the redemptive work of Christ that humanity is brought back into restored fellowship with God. The fall brought humanity into enslavement, bondage to their own sinful desires and alienation from God. In Christ, freedom is regained with liberation from the slavery and from the bondage of sin. This makes Christ the new master or *kurios* of those he has purchased (Rom. 6:22).

4.2.2.1. Models of Redemption

The New Testament writers employ differing imagery or metaphors to explain the redemptive work of Christ. The writers, in order to convey an emphasis on a particular aspect of the person and work of Christ, use these imageries or models as tools. The intention lies in the relevance to their readers of the day and the overall theme(s) of their book(s). These models are complementary as they together form a paradigm for understanding the total work of Christ. There is no doubt several models

²⁴⁸ John Suggit, “Redemption: Freedom Regained” in *Doing Theology in Context: South African Perspectives*. John De Gruchy & C. Villa-Vicencio (eds.) 1994. New York: Orbis Books. pp. 114-115.

²⁴⁹ Deissmann, Gustav Adolf. 1965. *Light from the Ancient East*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Publishing. pp. 327-328.

that can be identified from the New Testament, however our focus will only consider four such models.

4.2.2.1.1. The Sacrificial Model

This imagery is found in the epistle to the Hebrews. The entire letter addresses the role of Christ as the mediator of the new covenant. The early readership was considered to have been Jewish Christians that were wavering in faith due to persecutions. There was a great temptation to return to Judaism. With this in mind, the writer draws a comparative understanding of Christ and his superiority over the old covenant. The work of Christ supercedes that of the Mosaic economy and the writer shows this in Christ's supremacy over the prophets (1:1-3); angels (1:4-2:18); Moses (3:1-19); Joshua (4:1-13) and Judaism (7:19-10:39). The sacrificial model is used in support of the redemptive work of Christ. Christ's death is sacrificial in serving as an atonement and propitiation for sin (Heb. 9:11-12; Rom. 3:21-26). From the sacrificial system of Leviticus 6:2-7 and 4:13-20, atonement was required for forgiveness of sin. This was possible through a substitutionary sacrifice. Sacrifice was the primacy of the Old Testament dispensation to receive forgiveness in dealing with sin. Hoeksema remarks on the sacrificial system, "They were called sin offerings or trespass offerings, and are said to bear the sins of the offender, to make expiation for sin, to be a propitiation, and to cover the sins of the people in the sight of God. And their fruit is the forgiveness of sin."²⁵⁰ This understanding is applied to the sacrificial model of perceiving the work of Christ as the basis for the purchase of the freedom of humanity. Christ as the high priest makes the ultimate offering or sacrifice of himself representing all of humanity and restores their relationship with God (Heb. 5:5-10, 9:11-15).

4.2.2.1.2. The Vicarious Model

This implies that Christ did not die for his own sins but for that of fallen humanity (John 8:46; Heb. 4:15; 1 Pet. 2:22). The New Testament abounds with references to

²⁵⁰ Hoeksema, H. 1966. *Reformed Dogmatics*. Grand Rapids: Reformed Free Publishing Association. p. 389.

the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ as sinless. Although he was born sinless and committed no sin, his death was vicarious. Paul states this in his second letter to the Corinthian church, “He made him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (5:21). The vicarious model adds to the substitutionary model through the definition of the Greek preposition ‘*huper*’, as used in 1 Cor. 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:14 and Gal. 1:4. The Greek preposition is defined in three ways: - 1) “in behalf of”, 2) “for the benefit of” and 3) “in the place of.” When placing these three definitions together in the context of the vicarious model, it would mean that Christ died on behalf of the sinner, for the benefit of the sinner and in the place of the sinner. The vicarious work of Christ was an act of choice that he made as an expression of the love of God. This is illustrated in the following scriptural references: -

- “...I lay down my life for the sheep... no one takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have the power to lay it down, and I have the power to take it again...” (John 10:15,18)
- “But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Is. 53:5-6)
- “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8)
- “... who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness – by whose stripes you were healed” (1 Pet. 2:24)
- “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Mk. 10:45)

4.2.2.1.3. The Satisfaction Model

This model of redemption asserts that the death of Christ satisfies the justice and the law of God. Sin, as chapter three enumerated, is a violation of the person and nature of God earning his displeasure. Humanity came under condemnation and God had the

right to demand the penalty for this violation. In other words, a penalty has to first be paid before the sinner can be set free, so that justice has been realized. The problem was that the penalty had to be paid for sin whilst also requiring that the sinner be set free. Christ's death satisfies the justice of God whilst also justifying the sinner (Rom. 3:25ff.). In terms of the law of God, humanity was unable to meet the demands of the law. Thus through the vicarious nature of Christ's work, the demands of the law are met. This biblical understanding was used by the church fathers in the attempt of contextualising that Jesus was the full revelation of the person and nature of God. The salvation work of Christ was understood as instating the reconciliation of God and man in totality. The redemption of humanity could have only been accomplished through the two natures of Christ i.e. divinity and humanity yet being one person. He bridged the gap between God and man satisfying the requirements for such a relationship to operate. Hodge expresses the basic tenet of the satisfaction model as "no further punishment can justly be demanded for that offence. This is what is called the perfection of Christ's satisfaction. It is perfectly, from its own worth, satisfies the demands of justice."²⁵¹

4.2.2.1.4. The New Creation Model

A more apt title would be the "re-creation" model of Christ's redemptive work. Johannine theology commences in the namesake gospel, of Christ as the agent of creation that God uses i.e. God incarnate or the word becoming flesh (John 1:3). This is parallel to the Genesis creation account of all things having their origin in God. Similarly, Christ is the agency through which God effectuates the existence of original creation. Jesus Christ becomes the agent of re-creation through his person and work. Sin brought destruction to original creation but Christ inaugurates new life thus bringing into effect a new creation. Genesis 1 records that all elements of creation came into existence by the spoken word of God. John 1 records that the word became flesh referring to a new and higher dimension of the presence of God with regard to creation. God takes on human form and engages with his creation from birth

²⁵¹ Hodge, Charles. 1952. *Systematic Theology. Vol. II.* Grand Rapids: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing Company. p. 482.

to the time of his crucifixion, resurrection and ascension. He now creates anew through his role as the second Adam and as the Redeemer and Saviour, 'a new creation.' This simply means that God redeems man by reconciliation with him through Christ. However, it is much more than the mere restoration of man to original fellowship but the dawn of the fulfillment of God's redemptive plan (Eph. 1:4). One might add that God re-creates all of creation not in an *ex nihilo* sense, but through Christ deals with the root cause of the fall. In effect he dealt with the power of sin and death over humanity. The final redemption is to be eschatologically realized when the presence of sin and death are removed. Salvation would be the entry point into a new creation personhood that Paul writes about. Salvation is the application of the work of Christ received through faith. The new creation personhood begins at this point with a new identity but it is progressively realized through the process of discipleship.

4.3. Early Views of Salvation

The early church fathers, apologists and other writers of the day had developed views of salvation based on their understanding of the scriptural accounts of the person and work of Christ. They attempted to offer theoretical frameworks from which one may proceed in understanding salvation. As will be seen, not all of these views proved to be correct interpretations against the whole soteriological Christology that the bible provides in terms of our present understanding.²⁵²

4.3.1. The Views of Irenaeus

Irenaeus believed Jesus to be the representative of humanity and thus came as the second Adam, taking a human form. Through his obedience and submission to God, he was able fulfill what the first Adam could not. Christ overcame the temptations of the devil, eventually defeating him. This victory was gained for all humanity because Christ was in a position of the second Adam, representing all humanity. This meant that all who are in Christ are able to experience this same victory. The views of Irenaeus were supportive of the biblical view. However, over time Irenaeus' views

²⁵² John Suggit, "Redemption: Freedom Regained" in *Doing Theology in Context: South African Perspectives*. John De Gruchy & C. Villa-Vicencio (eds.) 1994. New York: Orbis Books. pp. 117-121.

were misinterpreted and argued for a literal understanding of Mark 10:45. This meant that whilst the death of Christ served as a ransom in payment of the penalty of sin, the question of whom it was paid to, became a point of contention.

43.2. The Views of Gregory of Nyssa

The views of Gregory of Nyssa supported the theory of the ransom payment, through the death of Christ, as being paid to the devil. This meant that humanity had become slaves of the devil by virtue of their sinning and had to be bought from the devil by God. Thus God had to make payment to the devil in order for humanity to be set free. This creates a false understanding of salvation. It defines salvation purely in terms of a ransom payment to the devil. It does not account for the problem of sin and how it is dealt with in terms of this view. Furthermore, it gives the devil undue power over humanity and reduces the omnipotence of God as having to pay the devil in order to *gain humanity its freedom*.

43.3. The Views of Anselm

Anselm, the archbishop of Canterbury developed a model of understanding the biblical concept of salvation during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. He developed an approach by asking the question *Cur Deus Homo* or *Why did God become Man?* He argued that human beings were conquered by the devil but never belonged to him. Therefore there was no need for a ransom to be paid since nothing was owed to the devil. He defined sin as a refusal to pay the debt that all humanity owed God and it robs God of honour that belongs to him. Anselm added that because humanity was already in debt to God, any further sinful act increases their indebtedness to God. It also decreases any possibility of being able to repay this debt. Christ came as perfect humanity and was able to repay the debt owed to God and satisfy the honour of God. In effect, Anselm argued that there was none able to fulfill this role and for this cause *God himself had to become human. In order to defeat the devil he had to be divine. In Christ, divinity and humanity accomplishes the work of salvation.*

4.3.4. The Views of Anthanasius

Anthanasius considered Christ to be the incarnate *logos* or word of God who has the power to re-create and/or renew creation. He saw the work of Christ as accomplishing defeat over evil and enabling humanity to become a new creation. The incarnation of Christ was able to bring out a re-creation of humanity and this was inaugurated by the resurrection of Christ. This view contains similar elements as the new creation model, discussed earlier. Anthanasius emphasized that the word of God or the *logos* brought humanity into a new position of fellowship with God and restores the original purpose that God intended.

4.3.5. The Views of Abelard

Peter Abelard's view centered on understanding the person and work of Christ as one of servanthood, to which all Christians are called to follow as an example (John 13:13-16). He cited the life, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus as an example of obedience and love in that Christ voluntarily offered his life so that others may share in God's love. Abelard argued that the life of Christ should not be seen as merely an ideal that one should attain, instead the Christian is empowered by Christ to follow in his example to live a life of service. Christ brought freedom to humanity, and the exercise of this freedom is an indication of true moral worth. Abelard contended that the redemptive work of Christ is an expression of the freedom of the love of God that was exercised in Christ. The believer is enabled to respond in freedom to God in his love (John 15:13). He draws a comparative link between the sovereignty of God and humanity as free moral agents. He indicated that God possesses and understands freedom in totality, as it is fundamental to the exercise of his choice. One might add that freedom originates in God and is demonstrated in the exercise of his attributes. Abelard believed that humanity was given the ability to exercise freedom by God and to rightly exercise this ability in Christ is a demonstration of true humanity.

4.3.6. The Views of Augustine

Augustine viewed salvation as the future anticipation of the eternal reign of the kingdom of God. He saw salvation as the escape from future punishment or from the

penalty of sin. His popular work, *The City of God* or *Civitas Dei*, saw the church as the community of the redeemed that are journeying toward the future kingdom rule of Christ. In one sense the redeemed are already ruling in that they have been set free from sin. However, it is also in the future, since the eternal reign of God and his people has yet to occur. Augustine distinguished between two communities. The first being the community of the redeemed that has been predestined to eternally rule with God. The second group being the community of the wicked that has been predestined to eternal punishment. Augustine's theology had a considerable influence on the early church and Western theology. This resulted in the development of the doctrine of *Extra ecclesiam nulla salus*, postulated by Cyprian of Carthage during the third century. He taught that salvation was not possible outside the church. It gave the church unbiblical authority, leading to the belief that redemption from sin was possible through rites of the church. This became the dominant view of the Roman Catholic Church and saw the introduction of unbiblical teachings on the forgiveness of sin through indulgences, freedom from purgatory etc. Such teachings served as the impetus for the reformation of the sixteenth century to occur.²⁵³ The true understanding of salvation was lost to a legalistic one of rites, traditions and practices that the church advocated as the means to salvation.

4.3.7. The Views of Luther and Calvin

Martin Luther rejected the views of the Roman Catholic Church. He taught that salvation was a result of personal faith in response to the person and work of Christ. The thesis of his belief hinged on the doctrinal standpoint that a sinner is justified by the grace of God in Christ and is justified by faith in him. Salvation was not the result of good works but faith in Christ was the basis for salvation and this followed in good works. Luther's emphasis on salvation shifted from the predominant view of the Middle Ages of the church as the locus of salvation. He advocated that an individualistic response was necessary and the church should be understood as a company of individuals that have personally responded to the redemptive work of

²⁵³ Latourette, Kenneth Scott. 1965. *Christianity through the Ages*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers. pp. 169-176.

Christ. This creates a community of the redeemed and not vice versa. John Calvin supported the Cyprian understanding of salvation that the church was the only means to receive it. This meant that membership in the church achieved redemption for the believer. Calvin defined the church as the place where the word of God is preached and followed; and where the sacraments are administered.²⁵⁴

4.4. Contemporary Views of Salvation

We now turn to consider what some of the contemporary views of salvation are. The early views of salvation indicated that over the centuries of the history of the church different interpretations were offered regarding salvation. Similarly, contemporary views discussed below are also an attempt to contextualize salvation, in order to respond to the issues in their particular situations. It becomes the approach of a situational soteriology.

4.4.1. Liberation Theology

Liberation theology may also be defined as a sociological theology. This contemporary approach is not singular but composite of smaller differing sociological perspectives such as liberation or third world, black and feminist theologies. It is considered more of a movement than a theology since the emphasis is on how salvation or the person and work of Christ are sociologically relevant. Such views have been emerging from Latin America, Africa, Asia and the United States.²⁵⁵ This would imply that there are divergent beliefs in this regard. Deane Fenn describes the basis of liberation theology as "...the effort to relate the teachings of the Christian faith to the lives of the poor and oppressed. Theology begins and ends with the downtrodden and their vision of life."²⁵⁶ Liberation theologians contend that the developed nations perpetuate a capitalistic society and grow richer at the expense of the underdeveloped nations. It is a system of oppression and poverty where the weak and powerless are exploited by the rich and powerful of the developed nations. The

²⁵⁴ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Library of Christian Classics, (Ed.) by John T. McNeill and trans. by F.L. Battles, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), 4:4.

²⁵⁵ Haight, Roger, S. 1985. *An Alternative Vision: An Interpretation of Liberation Theology*. New Jersey: Paulist Publishing. p. 15.

²⁵⁶ Fenn, W.D. 1981. *Contemporary American Theologies*. New York: Seabury. p. 62.

disparity gap between the rich and the poor is increasing constantly. It introduces greater conditions of poverty, unemployment, slums and other problems. Salvation is seen as deliverance from oppression and exploitation. Liberation theology argues that the biblical account is reflective of God's deliverance of the oppressed from bondage. This is evident in the deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage as in the Exodus account. Other Old Testament books indicate God's deliverance of the Israelites from the bondage of other oppressive nations, such as the Babylonians, Assyrians and the Philistines. Christ is seen as the liberator of the oppressed and as reflective of a God who is concerned with the downtrodden, poor and the marginalized groups of society. James Cone asserts the understanding that "Christian theology is a theology of liberation. It is the rational study of the being of God in the world in light of the existential situation of an oppressed community, relating the forces of liberation to the essence of the gospel, which is Jesus Christ."²⁵⁷ Leonardo Boff in his definitive work on liberation theology, *Jesus Christ Liberator*, asserts that the central message of Jesus' proclamation was the liberation of those who are oppressed. To understand who Jesus really is, is to understand his message of liberation in that he "...breaks the social conventions of the period."²⁵⁸ Salvation, as is Christian theology, is understood to be one of praxis as opposed to orthodoxy. Gustavo Gutierrez emphasizes correct action as opposed to correct thinking as the matrix of theology. He saw that the orthodox Latin American view of salvation was purely eschatological and escapist. The oppressed and exploited saw their present sufferings as temporal and a part of the earthly life. They anticipated the next life as the true determination of one's destiny. It meant that the socio-political context of their sufferings was seen as unimportant and transitory. It created the perception of salvation and/or faith in Christ as realized or practiced in forms of self-abasement and humility, which counters any form of the cardinal sin i.e. pride. This escapist orthodoxy served as the very means by which the rich would enforce exploitation.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁷ Cone, J.H. 1986. *A Black Theology of Liberation*. 2nd ed. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Publishing. p. 4.

²⁵⁸ Boff, Leonardo. 1978. *Jesus Christ Liberator: A Critical Christology for Our Time*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Publishing. p. 73.

²⁵⁹ Gustavo Gutierrez. 1979. "Liberation Praxis and Christian Faith," in *Frontiers of Theology in Latin America*, (Ed.) Rosino Gibellini. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Publishing. p. 3.

The essence of salvation was not to be seen as purely spiritual redemption but it meant a change or challenge to the social order. Gutierrez expresses the dynamic of the 'sociopraxis' of the faith as essential. It must marry the spiritual element with corrective social action. He states,

“...in the liberation approach sin is not considered as an individual, private, or merely interior reality-asserted just enough to necessitate a “spiritual” redemption which does not challenge the order in which we live. Sin is regarded as a social, historical fact, the absence of brotherhood and love in relationships among men, the breach of friendship with God and with other men, and, therefore, an interior, personal fracture. When it is considered in this way, the collective dimensions of sin are rediscovered.”²⁶⁰

4.4.2. Existential Theology

Existentialism developed as a movement in the mid-twentieth century. Some of its major proponents included Søren Kierkegaard, Martin Heidegger, Karl Barth and Rudolf Bultmann amongst others. The most popular of existential theological views was that of Rudolf Bultmann's demythologization of the New Testament. He based his approach on Martin Heidegger's concepts of objective and subjective knowledge as well as authentic and inauthentic existence. According to Heidegger, objective knowledge is that which can be empirically tested and is based on scientific data. Objective knowledge is correspondent to the object signified. Thus it rules out any possibility of subjectivity because it has no bearing on objective facts. The knower or subject's attitude is irrelevant. On the other hand, subjective knowledge is focused on the inward state of the knower and brings the subjectivity or biasness of the knower to the subject of discussion. Logic would be a diametric opposite to subjective knowledge as there is no basis for understanding it. This means that one's perception of another human being cannot be considered as objective knowledge, since it is a conglomerate of one's personal emotions that define one's understanding of that person. The same approach is true of all human beings including the perception of

²⁶⁰ Gutierrez, Gustavo. 1973. *A Theology of Liberation*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Publishing. p. 175.

self. Objective knowledge of self may be based on human physiological data i.e. scientific fact. However, it is not possible to really know who we are in the same way. The knowledge that we have about ourselves is subjective.²⁶¹ In the same way, Bultmann advocated a theory of demythologizing the gospels since they cannot be considered as a source of objective knowledge. His method of form criticism informed the view that the gospels were subjective documents that were based on the experiences of the writers. They were faith documents and not objective records. In addition, the gospels were the result of oral transmissions that had been passed down by the early church and at possible points could have been altered by an experiential approach. The gospels should be considered more of a *Sitz im Leben* or situation in life of the early church and not a factual account of the life of Jesus.²⁶² He discounts the authenticity of the miraculous or supernatural events recorded in the gospels, as it cannot be treated objectively. It is contrary to the laws of nature. Events that occurred in the gospels that are construed as miracles should be seen as conceptual language that the writers used to express events they could not otherwise explain. In offering a solution to this problem, Bultmann employs the concepts of Martin Kähler with regard to history. The first concept is *Historie*, which is factual history or what actually occurred. This can be seen as objective and is based on research methodology. The second concept is *Geschichte*, which is the impact of such historical events on the persons witnessing them. This is subjective, and is therefore, literary myth. Bultmann believed that such accounts must be demythologized in order to discover the existential meaning that would transform the lives of the readers.²⁶³ Another consideration that Bultmann leans on is that of authentic and inauthentic existence. Authentic existence implies an authenticity or reality that must be attained in order to discover who we really are and what we are called to do. It would mean that we should live our lives in such a way that would fulfill this authenticity through the exercise of freedom of choice. The converse also proves true in terms of

²⁶¹ Heidegger, Martin. 1962. *Being and Time*. New York: Harper & Row Publishing. p. 85.

²⁶² Rudolf Bultmann, "The Study of the Synoptic Gospels," in Rudolf Bultmann and Karl Kundsinn, *Form Criticism*. New York: Harper & Row Publishing. 1962. pp. 71-74.

²⁶³ Rudolf Bultmann, "The New Testament and Mythology," in Rudolf Bultmann et al., *Kerygma and Myth: A Theological Debate*, (Ed.) Hans Werner Bartsch. New York: Harper & Row Publishing. 1961. pp. 4-8, 10.

inauthenticity, which is a conformist type of living. It is the failure to be real and authentic by choosing not to exercise one's freedom but instead choosing to follow others.²⁶⁴ Bultmann re-defines these concepts in terms of the modern man. He cites a dichotomy of self-oriented behaviour and autonomy. The former is aimed at fulfilling the desires of self. The latter is living independently of God in the belief that the achievements of life can produce identity. An existential salvation is the need to move away from self-orientated and autonomous behaviour toward God and the understanding of one's true self. By responding to salvation through faith one is able to achieve an authentic existence by trusting in God. He characterizes sin in light of this, as the quest for material realities.²⁶⁵

4.4.3. Secular Theology

The consideration of secular theology is a shift of emphasis, from the religious pursuit of God to a *maturity of self-affirmation, as the key to knowing God*. Secularism had promoted the strong influence of the tangible and visible realities of this world, as the basis from which one may obtain and experience salvation. This shift toward secularism brought change in the belief of the sovereignty of God as the Creator. Various reasons can be attributed for the introduction of secular theology. The advancements of science and technology now began to offer explanations of events, occurrences and the origin of things through scientific rationale, that was once thought to have been explained by the existence of a supernatural being. For example, the origin and existence of the universe was previously explained as the result of God's creating it. Science would explain it as the product of random occurrences in the interaction of gases. In addition, such advancements in science and technology have increased the capacity of human knowledge. Medical science has progressed tremendously and is now able to deal with human problems without the necessity of a divine being. The problems of humanity can be solved without God's help i.e. cures for diseases, childbirth through fertility drugs, genetic research, longevity etc. This

²⁶⁴ Heidegger, Martin. 1962. *Being and Time*. New York: Harper & Row Publishing. pp. 163-168.

²⁶⁵ Bultmann, Rudolf. 1958. *Jesus Christ and Mythology*. New York: Scribner Publishing. pp. 39-40.

removes the need for God and people have therefore become increasingly secular.²⁶⁶ One of two possible responses to secularism from the greater church can be adopted. The first response is seen as the orthodox apologetic approach in which secularism is to be avoided and treated as a competitor. Thus the church would refute the teachings and/or influences of secularism i.e. the elements of humanism, philosophy etc. The biblical teachings would be considered as the only basis from which one should approach the problems of humanity. The second response, that of Dietrich Bonhoeffer is one of mutual cooperation with secularism. Bonhoeffer suggested that a “religionless Christianity” be adopted.²⁶⁷ He expressed this concept in terms of the age and maturity. Just as a child is not a child forever, but has to grow up and become mature, living independent of his/her parent, in the same way God expects the human race to come to a place of independence. This independence must result in self-sufficiency. Bonhoeffer argued, contrary to popular thought, that God was not present in religiousness. To be religious is to be dependent on God, avoiding the move toward independence and maturity. Salvation is therefore the escape from religiousness into irreligiousness. It is to abandon traditional ways of understanding and knowing God. It is not abandoning the world in order to embrace God; rather it is embracing the world in order to embrace God. This can be achieved through the realization of one’s abilities and/or capabilities and making use of it. It is achieving an independence from God, an affirmation of self and ultimately living in the world. Thomas Altizer comments on secularism stating that God is immanent within creation. His transcendence into immanence has commenced with the incarnation of Christ and has reached finality. To use Bonhoeffer’s word, God is now present in irreligiousness and salvation can be achieved by seeking him, through involvement in the removal of social oppression.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁶ Paul van Buren. 1963. *The Secular Meaning of the Gospel*. New York: Macmillan Publishing. pp. 1-20.

²⁶⁷ Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. 1972. *Letters and Papers from Prison*. New York: Macmillan. pp. 278-280.

²⁶⁸ Erickson, M.J. 2000. *Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Publishing. pp. 914 – 915.

4.4.4. Contemporary Roman Catholic Theology

The predominant theology of salvation has been that the church is the only means of experiencing saving grace. The administration of the sacraments is the direct means of receiving this grace. This has been the view as far back as the twelfth century. There is a distinction between human nature and grace. Accordingly, the human nature is said to consist of a passive capacity for grace as well as the desire for grace, but are unable to satisfy these requirements. Grace is therefore from God and it is the impartation of divine life to humanity. Among those who have re-defined the traditional positions on grace is Karl Rahner. He considered humanity as already having the potential grace for knowing God and as such, is already exercising it. He argued that grace is intrinsic to creation i.e. in humanity and in nature. This means that a human being can never really exist outside of grace since he already possesses it. Whilst there has been debate on the issue of whether a person can know God apart from the church i.e. the channel of god's grace, the contemporary Roman Catholic view has still posited that the church remains the exclusive channel of salvation. However the church has sought to broaden its definition to include the possibility that all human beings can still know God. Traditionally, the church has viewed its role in salvation as central and advocates union with church as the means of receiving it. In this regard, where union is not possible the desire for it would be construed in the same light. Membership is extended to include the visible and invisible components. It is the converse of the earlier more traditional view, i.e. the presence of the church actualizes salvation whilst the experience of salvation implies the presence of the church. Yves Congar defines membership in terms of visible and invisible components by stating, that it is best seen as occurring in varying degrees. This has been a similar position of the Vatican Council. In essence, three groups have been identified based on their position. The first group are the visible members or the genuine Catholics i.e. those who have accepted membership and are incorporated into the church. The second group is those who may have an attachment to the church by virtue of being in other churches outside the domain of Catholicism. Here the belief is that these Christians are not separated from God but are nevertheless in an insecure position as compared with those of the first group. The third group is those who are

not Christian, but have an innate tendency or desire to know God. They should be seen as related to the church in this way. The contemporary Roman Catholic view of salvation has incorporated elements of the Protestant views on justification and sanctification. Hans Kung's research has been the most notable, basing his work on the theology of Karl Barth. He identifies objective justification, which is the work of salvation actively achieved through God's doing, whilst the human being is a passive recipient of it. The second aspect Kung notes, is that of subjective justification which is the opposite of the first. Here the human being is actively involved in responding to salvation whilst God is passive in the sense that the work has been complete.²⁶⁹

4.4.5. Evangelical Theology

The Evangelical view is based on understanding the effect of sin on human nature and the relationship with God. In chapter three, we outlined the main tenets of sin and its impact on the human race resulting in the fall of man. Evangelicals use the biblical record of the Genesis account, in support of their theological standpoints. Salvation is primarily understood as the restoration of relationship with God through a new nature. In Christ, humanity is brought into right standing with God. Sin is considered as the fracture of humanity's relationship with God since it is perceived as a violation of the law and transgression against the person and nature of God. It has produced consequences, both immediate and eternal. It occurred through an act of disobedience and because it construed a violation of the law of God, the penalty imposed was death. Sin has affected human nature by bringing it into a sphere of depravity, sinfulness and an inclination toward evil. Human beings are said to have a sinful nature. The sinful nature and the fracture of relationship with God produced negative effects on all aspects of human life i.e. relationships with fellow human beings on individual and societal levels. Based on this context, salvation requires that the sinner be pardoned for sin and absolved from a status of being guilty. Evangelicals see this requirement fulfilled in the person and work of Christ through the following essential processes, which constitute the totality of salvation: -

²⁶⁹ Ibid., pp. 915-917.

1) **Justification:** Here the legal status of the sinner is changed, when salvation is experienced through acceptance by faith. When this occurs, the sinner is said to be justified i.e. the sinner is restored in relationship with God by virtue of being in union with Christ.

2) **Adoption:** This is the relational aspect of salvation, where the sinner now justified, is entitled to the adoptive experience of having God as a father. The sinner is now in a position of favour and intimacy in experience of God's love.

3) **Regeneration:** The change of nature, from the inclination toward evil to righteousness, is termed regeneration. It is a change of the disposition of the heart. This is the phase of new birth and spiritual development, with the Holy Spirit as the agent of transformation.

4) **Sanctification:** This is a continuance of regeneration with emphasis on progressive spiritual growth. It is progression in holiness or becoming holy, as the term *sanctification* suggests. *It is the process of continual cleansing and reaches saturation point at death.*

5) **Glorification:** This is ultimate perfection of the believer, occurring at death.

4.5. Predestination

This simply refers to God's sovereign choice exercised over humanity as to which persons are purposed for eternal life or eternal death. It has been and continues to be, an area of considerable debate. The origin of the doctrine can be traced back to the controversial debate between Pelagius and Augustine. Reformed theology has used the term "predestination" in a broad sense. It has incorporated the elements of election, that which is applicable to believer and reprobation, that which is applicable to the unbeliever. The doctrine of predestination is an extensive consideration and the scope of our discussion does not permit a full analysis of this doctrine. What is essential to our discussion is the relationship to the broader context of salvation. I shall present a brief overview of the main tenets of this view. Predestination can be defined as "...an act of God before creation in which he chooses some people to be saved, not on account of any unforeseen merit in them, but only because of his

sovereign good pleasure.”²⁷⁰ Some theologians prefer the use of the term *election* as opposed to predestination. There are direct references in scripture to such a concept as election or predestination. These references are worth mentioning, in light of developing a proper and balanced approach to this doctrine. Some of the popular passages often cited by proponents of predestination include: -²⁷¹

- “And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of God; and as many as were *ordained to eternal life* believed” (Acts 13:48).
- “For those whom he *foreknew* he also *predestined* to be conformed to the image of his Son...and those whom he *predestined* he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified” (Rom. 8:29-30).
- “Though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad, in order that *God’s purpose of election* might continue, not because of works but because of his call, she was told, “The elder will serve the younger.” As it is written, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated” (Rom. 9:11-13).
- “Israel failed to obtain what it sought. The *elect* obtained it, but the rest were hardened” (Rom. 11:7).
- “He *chose* us in him *before the foundation of the world*, that we should be holy and blameless before him. He *destined* us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace” (Eph. 1:4-6).

4.5.1. The Historical Development

Historically, the doctrine developed as a counter response from Augustine to the views of a British monk called Pelagius. Augustine saw all human beings as inheriting a sin nature from Adam. This propensity to sin was passed down to the descendents of Adam. The original sin meant that Adam lost a previously held freedom since he had been created with true freedom. All humanity does not possess the freedom to choose good over evil. The propensity of the sin nature influences

²⁷⁰ Grudem, W. 1994. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House. p. 670.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 671-672.

humanity, more toward evil than good.²⁷² Pelagius who considered himself a moralist disagreed with Augustine. He argued that the imputation of Adam's sin could not be passed on to his descendents since God has uniquely created all human beings. All human beings have not inherited a sin nature from Adam and God judges the sins of each individual accordingly. The fall of Adam should be seen as more of a bad example. God does not compel anyone to do good, neither does he work internally through the soul. Instead he uses external means.²⁷³ In responding to Pelagius, Augustine's views developed into what became the doctrine of predestination. He greatly emphasized that the sin of Adam was an act of choice that had serious consequences on the entire human race. He considered all humanity as a part of Adam's sin, in effect bringing all human beings into a sinful position. Whilst humanity still possessed freedom of choice, it was tainted by sin and therefore inclined to evil. Complete freedom is restored to humanity through the grace of God, enabling man to return to choose good over evil. God chooses the optimum conditions, in which such choices can be made in choosing good, based on his omniscience. God knows the decisions that an individual would make in a given situation or condition because of his omniscience. He would know under what conditions an individual would choose to do good. His grace works in tandem with our wills. He enables us to choose good by effectively bringing us into the right condition, for such choices to be made.²⁷⁴ Predestination refers to this act of freely choosing to do good because God has imparted his grace to work with our wills. He has predetermined the conditions in which these choices of doing good can be made. Simply, God has chosen some to experience this grace in doing good whilst not choosing others. God has already predetermined in eternity those he would need over others. He makes such choices based on his sovereignty. Differing groups have advocated the Augustinian position throughout church history whilst others supported the teachings of Pelagius.

²⁷² Augustine, *The City of God* 14.12.

²⁷³ Pelagius, *Letter to Demetrius* 16-17.

²⁷⁴ Augustine, *To Simplician – On Various Questions* 1.2.13.

4.5.2. Differing Views on Predestination

4.5.2.1. The views of Calvinism

John Calvin (1509-1564) a reformer developed a specific and articulated approach, in explaining the doctrine of predestination. He stressed the sovereignty of God and believed in God "...governing heaven and earth by His providence. He so overrules all things that nothing happens in it without His counsel."²⁷⁵ This is central to understanding the Calvinist doctrine of election, that God sovereignly chooses specific persons to be recipients of eternal life. This is expressed in the way he chose the nation of Israel to be his covenant people, his choice of calling specific people into specific offices like Moses, Joshua and even Jesus' choice of his twelve disciples.²⁷⁶ This concept of God's choosing specific people for specific purposes is evident in both the Old and New Testaments. Calvinists argue that all human beings are totally depraved because of sin and cannot experientially respond to the grace of God. Reference is made to original sin i.e. the sin of Adam effected the entire human race creating a corrupt nature that was imputed to all human beings. This theory supports the Augustinian thought that man is unable to do any good because he does not possess the capacity to do so, due to the imputed sin nature in him. Another tenet of Calvinistic predestination is its efficaciousness. This implies that those whom God has predestined to come to faith in Christ, will do so because God has foreordained it. Those that have been elected to faith will be saved to the end irrespective of the events of the earthly life. Predestination exists in eternity since God foreordained the elect (used in reference to those chosen by God) and not during the time of the existence of the individual. It is unconditional and not based on the ability or merits of those chosen persons. It is immutable and therefore cannot be changed, what God has decided on is unchangeable.²⁷⁷ In addition to the above aspects, some Calvinists have introduced the idea of double predestination, that while some have been destined to be saved some are destined to be lost. Finally, the order of God's decrees is a vital area of Calvinism. The issue here is whether or not God decreed the salvation of the

²⁷⁵ Latourette, K.S. 1965. *Christianity Through The Ages*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers. p. 179.

²⁷⁶ Benjamin B. Warfield. 1929. *Biblical Doctrines*. New York: Oxford University Press. pp. 62-65.

²⁷⁷ Berkhof, L. 1953. *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing Company. pp. 114-115.

elect prior to the foreordaining of the fall of man. Three positions may be identified in terms of the decrees of God: -²⁷⁸

a) Supralapsarianism

1. The decree that some be saved whilst others are lost.
2. The decree in creating both the elect and the reprobate.
3. The decree that both the elect and reprobate fall.
4. The decree that only the elect receive salvation.

b) Infralapsarianism

1. The decree that human beings be created.
2. The decree that the fall occur.
3. The decree that some be saved whilst others are condemned.
4. The decree that only the elect receive salvation.

c) Sublapsarianism

1. The decree that human beings be created.
2. The decree that the fall occur.
3. The decree that salvation be provided for all.
4. The decree that some be chosen to receive this salvation.

4.5.2.2. The views of Arminianism

James Arminius advocated a particular understanding of predestination in the Netherlands during the sixteenth century. Arminius believed that God intends for all people to be saved. Numerous scriptural texts are cited in support that God desires for the entire human race to be saved such as: -

- “This is good, and pleases God our Saviour, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of truth” (1 Tim. 2:3-4).
- “I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked...” (Ezek. 33:11)

²⁷⁸ Erickson, M.J. 2000. *Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Publishing. p. 931.

- “The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise... not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9)

The universality of salvation is in its invitation to all human beings who are capable of meeting the requirements for receiving it. For salvation to be for a select few is contradictory to the biblical teachings. The Arminian view explains that some individuals are foreordained to experience salvation whilst others are not. It is based on the argument that God is able to determine by omniscience those who would accept salvation in Christ Jesus, and thus foreordain them to receive salvation. Romans 8:29 and 1 Peter 1:1-2 are used in support of this assertion. Some of the teachings of Arminianism are also a form of refutation of Calvinist views of predestination. Some of the criticisms that have been posited include the fatalistic approach of Calvinism in that if God has already predetermined everything then any action on the part of man would be senseless. Calvinism also rules out the work of evangelism and missions in proclaiming salvation since it has been predetermined that only a select people will be saved. Proclamation of the gospel is then futile.²⁷⁹

4.5.3. Conclusion

The doctrine of predestination has not been a widely accepted doctrine because of the controversial interpretations of scripture and the claims to the election of some over the other. There are a number of objections that one may raise in analyzing this doctrine. Firstly, it rules out the element of choice and is contrary to the scriptural view that God created man as free moral agents. It would imply that if some people were elected to be saved over others there is no exercise of choice. The elected individual had no choice in accepting Jesus as his/her personal savior rather he/she was elected to be saved. Secondly, the human race is mere puppets or robots in the hand of God since he has already chosen on their behalf. For the human being to have no real choice or part of the decision making process concerning his eternal destiny would be a fatalistic view. The attitude would be attributing everything to chance or what is meant to occur will occur. It then absolves the individual from taking

²⁷⁹ Erickson, M.J. 2000. *Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Publishing. pp. 931 – 932.

responsibility over his/her life. Thirdly, it negates the proclamation of the gospel and contradicts the incarnation of Christ. The very essence of the gospel message is to reach the lost. The incarnation of Christ serves the purpose of the redemption of all humanity not just a few. All evangelistic proclamation is therefore a futile effort since the unbeliever has already been decreed to condemnation. Fourthly, it militates against the nature of God's attribute of justice. Justice is based on fairness. For God to decree some to condemnation, without giving them the opportunity to accept or reject him, violates the very attribute of his justice. It is in God's will that all be saved, but as to whether this would really occur is uncertain, since only God is omniscient (1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9). However, judgment of these individuals cannot be biased or partial. It has to be based on justice and impartiality. In this case the choice that the individual makes determines his future destiny.

4.6. Understanding Salvation

Salvation is simply the application of the work of Christ to the life a person. The last part of this chapter requires discussion of the nature or components of salvation, in answering the question of how salvation is applied to one's life. It may be understood in two categories. The first are those elements that relate to the human being, in effect the believer, once he has accepted the Lord Jesus. The second are those that relate to God, in effect the work of Christ with regard to the believer. The areas that involve the believer may be termed as the subjective aspects of salvation whilst those relating to God may be termed as the objective aspects of salvation. There are things that need to take place in the application of the work of salvation such as: - the hearing of the gospel message; the work of regeneration by the Holy Spirit; the response to and acceptance of it through repentance and faith; engaging in spiritual growth through church membership; the participation and finally, the process of glorification in the immediate presence of God. Theologians have often used the above processes or steps in salvation as constituting the *ordis salutis* or the order of salvation. The following proves a useful categorization of the order of salvation: -²⁸⁰

²⁸⁰ Grudem, W. 1994. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House. p. 670.

Subjective Aspects

- 1) Election: God's choice of people to be saved
- 2) The Gospel Proclamation: sharing the gospel message
- 3) Regeneration: being born again or new birth
- 4) Conversion: this is possible through faith and repentance

Objective Aspects

- 5) Justification: the change of legal status before God
- 6) Adoption: membership in a church as a part of the family of God
- 7) Sanctification: the right conduct of life
- 8) Perseverance: remaining a Christian
- 9) Death: going to be with the Lord
- 10) Glorification: receiving a resurrection body

There are differences in categorization by various theologians, but the basic elements are generally the same. Each of these categorizations can be considered as sub-doctrines; perhaps even doctrines in their own right, and are therefore exhaustive in nature. We shall briefly enumerate the necessary aspects that would offer a holistic definition as to how the work of salvation is applied in the life a person.

4.6.1. Subjective Aspects of Salvation

4.6.1.1. The Gospel Proclamation

D) Effective Calling

It is helpful to distinguish between the concepts of "special or effective calling" and "general calling." The former is addressed to specific persons designated by God for specific function. The latter refers to the general gospel call to salvation made to all people through open proclamation. In the general call, all who hear the message do not necessarily accept the gospel and very often reject it. Whilst the effective call may occur in exactly the same way as the general call, the difference lies in the choosing of individuals for a special or effectual call and/or purpose. The following scriptural references make clear the concept of an effectual call: - Romans 8:30, 1:7, 11:29; 1

Corinthians 1:9, 1:23-24; Luke 14:23; Ephesians 1:18; 1 Thessalonians 2:12 and 2 Thessalonians 2:14 amongst others. The effective calling is unique in that the presentation of the gospel is made in an extraordinary way through the working of the Holy Spirit in the life of the person. The message elicits a definite and positive response from the hearer and is termed an effective calling. God calls the hearer through the gospel proclamation to respond in faith to Christ.²⁸¹ Examples of the effectual call in the bible include: - Moses (Ex. 3:1-22); Abraham (Gen.12: 1-3); Gideon (Judg. 6:11-27); Samuel (1 Sam. 3); David (1 Sam. 16); Peter, James and John, the inner circle of the disciples (Matt. 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20; John 1:35-51); Lydia (Acts 16:4) and so forth. In all of these cases one would identify a special call made by God either through supernatural intervention or through human proclamation. This call extends beyond the universal salvation call to a personal encounter with the hearer through persuasiveness and illumination of the gospel. The important point to note is that the effective call requires that the hearer make a choice even though it may be persuasive and extraordinary. It is still voluntary and an act of choice. The effectual call enables the person to grasp the fundamentally revealed truth of God and respond to it with full understanding of the message. In terms of the *ordis salutis* the special calling is prior to conversion but is inherently connected to it, since salvation is the basis or starting point of any special call.

II) General Calling

As mentioned above, a general calling is the universal call of the gospel to all people through the agency of human proclamation. It is also referred to as an external calling. It is not as effective as the special calling since there is the possibility of rejection. This does not give precedence or importance to the effective call over the general call, as both are part of salvation. Furthermore, it does not negate the effectiveness of the general call; regardless of the response, the gospel should still be proclaimed (Matt. 11:28; Isa. 45:22; Rom. 10:14).

²⁸¹ Ibid., p. 693.

III) The Gospel Message

In both of the above aspects of the gospel proclamation, the communication of the message proves vitally important. This means that the hearer must be able to understand the elements of what the gospel is about, the necessity of accepting it, how one is able to receive it and the process thereafter. The clarity and effectiveness of the message determines the level of response of the hearer. However, this does not mean that if the hearer rejects the message, that the communication of the message was a contributing factor. People may still reject the gospel even if the presentation thereof is highly effective. One must remember that people still have to exercise choice in this regard. What should be the method of communication? The starting point would be for the communicator to understand the message himself. This is often accomplished through bible study courses on the elements of salvation, evangelism programs and methodologies, discipleship training. In addition, specially focused mission agencies and similar such organizations should focus on evangelistic proclamation. The medium and method of communication may vary depending on the context of the environment and the people group being targeted. The essential elements of the message are, however, still consistent. The following methodology is suggested: -

- 1) An explanation of the human situation i.e. all people are sinners before God (Rom. 3:23).
- 2) An explanation of the consequences of sin i.e. death. This should be translated into immediate needs which are the person's life (past & present) and long term needs (future, death and eternity).
- 3) An explanation of who Jesus Christ is and the nature of his coming.
- 4) An explanation of how Jesus Christ has met humanity's need for salvation.
- 5) An invitation to respond to Christ personally, through repentance and faith.
- 6) The benefits of salvation i.e. forgiveness, eternal life.

Thereafter, depending on the response of the person, the salvation call can end positively or negatively. A positive response would require that the persons then be placed in a new believers' class of a local church, a ministry or organization to help the individual acquire the fundamentals of the Christian faith. This should then translate into church membership and discipleship. The gospel call is evident in the words of Jesus in Matthew 11:28, "Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your soul. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

4.6.1.2. Conversion

Conversion has to do with one's response to the gospel. It may be defined as a "willing response to the gospel call, in which we sincerely repent of sins and place our trust in Christ for salvation."²⁸² It represents the starting point of the journey of Christian life, in which a previous lifestyle is abandoned, in order to embrace a new life in Christ. It is an abandonment of a sinful life to a new life. It can be explained as a spiritual turning from sinfulness to righteousness. There are two dynamics that enable conversion to take place in the life of a person i.e. repentance and faith. Taking both these dynamics into account, conversion is the willing response to the gospel call by turning away from sinfulness through repentance and turning to Christ in faith. Repentance is the negative aspect since it is a turn away from sin, whilst faith is a positive aspect in turning to Christ.²⁸³ Both repentance and faith are interrelated and work together to produce conversion. In order for an individual to accept Christ in faith, he has to first turn away from sin. Faith in Christ would create awareness of who he is and of one's sinfulness. It motivates the need to turn to Christ in receiving his provision of righteousness. Conversion may be an instantaneous occurrence like the Philippian jailer in Acts 16:30 or it may take a longer duration of time like that of King Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4:1-37. The logical order that may be suggested in conversion is that repentance precedes faith.

²⁸² Ibid., p. 709.

²⁸³ Charles M. Horne. 1971. *Salvation*. Chicago: Moody Press. p. 55.

D) Repentance

Repentance is the forsaking or abandonment of sin thorough Godly sorrow. Both the Old and New Testaments contain references to repentance. The Old Testament uses two Hebrew words that convey a sense of what repentance is understood as. The first Hebrew word is *nacham*, which means, “to lament or grieve” in relation to one’s emotional state when pondering the situation of others. It is said to arouse sympathy or compassion. When *nacham* is used in relation to pondering one’s own situation or actions then the emotions aroused is that of repentance.²⁸⁴ This is evident in the following text, “My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes” (Job 42:5-6). The second word is *shub*, which is the call to a type of genuineness in repentance before God. This is indicated in the messages of the prophets to the nation of Israel to repent (2 Chron. 7:14; Isa. 59:20). The New Testament also uses two words in defining repentance. The first Greek word is *metamelomai*, which means, “to have a feeling of care, concern, or regret.”²⁸⁵ This word expresses remorse or feelings of guilt for wrong doing as in the case of Judas in his betrayal of Jesus (Matt. 27:3). In the case of *metamelomai*, the word simply conveys deep regret or remorse with no indication of any change of heart as a result of such feelings. The second word is *metanoeo*, which means “to think differently about something or to have a change of mind.”²⁸⁶ This is clearly different from *metamelomai*, in it’s meaning. It is the context of *metanoeo* that is mainly used in the New Testament when people are called to repentance. This is seen in the example of Peter’s sermon at Pentecost in Acts 2:37-38, “Brethren, what shall we do?” Peter replied, “*Repent*, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.” That repentance is a prerequisite for conversion is made clear throughout the New Testament, regardless of the social, cultural, political and economic contexts of the day. The nature of repentance is threefold: - 1) It affects the intellect since it involves a change of mind and thought. This is illustrated in the parables of the prodigal son (Luke 15) and the Pharisee and

²⁸⁴ Brown, Francis et al. 1955. *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*. New York: Oxford University Press. pp. 636-637.

²⁸⁵ Erickson, M.J. 2000. *Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Publishing. p. 948.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 948.

the publican (Luke 18). In both cases, it involved a change of mind or thought thus implying repentance. 2) It affects the emotions since it is an expression of remorse and guilt about one's sin. It is often seen as anguish or anxiety in an emotional form, as in Psalm 38:18 "For I will declare my iniquity; I will be in anguish over my sin." 3) It affects the will and disposition in that it is a deliberate change of attitude resulting in a turning away from sin and a turning to God. This would require that a confession of sin occur to God and if necessary, to man (Matt. 5:23-24; James 5:16). It should be followed by a conscious decision to forsake sin (Isa. 55:7; Prov. 28:13; Matt. 3:8-10). The positive action in repentance is the last step of turning to God (1 Thess. 1:9; Acts 26:18).²⁸⁷ Repentance is total and complete when it occurs collectively in each of these three areas. It is not a form of remorse or guilt only, since a person can be remorseful but not have a change of heart. Often guilt is an act of the consciousness of the person and it may be purely an emotional response to a specific act of sin committed. Repentance must always be understood in relation to God, in that a turning toward him must serve as the motivation to abandon sin. It must manifest a genuine commitment to positive change.

II) Faith

Faith is the positive expression of trust in the person and work of Christ as the means to receive salvation. It is to express trust in the promises of God's word and to actualize such trust, by choosing to believe in the person and work of Christ. It is a fundamental doctrine to the gospel and is the means of accessing the grace of God. Both the *Old and New Testaments contain references to faith*. There are two Hebrew verbs that convey a sense of what faith is. It is interesting to note that there are no Hebrew nouns in usage, when a definition of faith is offered. The closest noun would be *emunah*, which is used in Habakkuk 2:4. It is translated as "faithfulness."²⁸⁸ The apparent reason for verb usage as opposed to noun usage is, faith was considered as an action rather than a state of being or possessing. When a person is said to have faith in God it would be taken as the actions that the person does to express his faith

²⁸⁷ Evans, W. 1974. *The Great Doctrines of the Bible*. Moody press: Chicago. p.140-141.

²⁸⁸ Brown, Francis et al. 1955. *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*. New York: Oxford University Press. p.53.

and not passively possessing faith. The first Hebrew word is *am'an*, with each verb stem expressing a different form of action. For example, the Qal stem sees faith as “to nourish”; the Niphal stem sees faith as “to be firm, established, or steadfast” and the Hilphil stem sees faith as “to consider as established, regard as true, or believe.”²⁸⁹ Faith in terms of the above verb stems would mean, a nourishing of oneself or one’s person in order to be firmly established or steadfast by regarding as true, through believing in the promises of God’s word. The second Hebrew verb is *batach*, which simply refers to a form of confidence or trust. The New Testament uses one word, namely *pisteuo* (verb) or *pistis* (noun), which is translated as “to believe what someone says, to accept a statement (particularly of a religious nature) as true.”²⁹⁰ Examples of this verb or noun form are seen in some of the following accounts: - the Syrophenician woman (Matt. 15); the Centurion (Matt. 8) and the blind man (Mark 10). Each of these individuals expressed trust or confidence in Christ for healing. The most popular biblical description of faith is found in Hebrews 11:1,6 “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen...but without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those that diligently seek Him.” Chapter eleven in its entirety, does not define faith, but describes how it worked in the lives of various Old Testament persons. The writer uses the Greek in an emphatic sense in verse one by stating, that faith is based on an established conviction of the realization or confidence [the word ‘substance’ denotes a title deed] in God and in the promises of his word. Faith as relating to salvation involves two components. Firstly the component of ‘believing that’, relates to the word of God. It is based on evidence or facts and is therefore an issue of credence. In terms of this component to have faith is to assent to or believe in the promises of the word or the work of Christ. The second component is ‘believing in’, relates to the person of Christ. Both components work together in producing holistic faith. It is a relationship between the *assensus* or *credentia* and the *fiducia* or the belief in the credence and the person. Scholars have often drawn the distinction between both these components with the emphasis of one

²⁸⁹ Ibid., pp. 52-53.

²⁹⁰ Erickson, M.J. 2000. *Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Publishing. p. 952.

over the other.²⁹¹ A.C. McGiffert saw that Protestant Scholasticism considered the transmission of revelation i.e. knowledge or information as basically intellectual faith.²⁹² Emil Brunner on the other hand, saw faith as an experiential or personal encounter with God as basically one of personal trust.²⁹³ Faith is not compartmental and cannot be defined as either credence or personal trust. Instead, it is the inter-working of both that enables one to fully understand God.

4.6.1.3. Regeneration

Regeneration is a supernatural act of God whereby the individual believer is imparted with new and divine life. In effect, it is a process of transformation of the believer's life upon the acceptance of Christ through a communication of new life. Unlike conversion where it involves the human response, regeneration is an act of God. William Evans' definition proves useful, in that he defines it in a positive and negative sense,

“Regeneration is not a natural forward step in man's development; it is a supernatural act of God; it is a spiritual crisis. It is not evolution, but involution – the communication of a new life. It is a revolution – a change of direction resulting from that life... the danger lies in making regeneration a natural phenomenon, an advanced step in the development of a human life, instead of regarding it as a crisis... regeneration is the impartation of a new and divine life; a new creation; the production of a new thing. It is Gen. 1:26 over again. It is not the old nature altered, reformed, or re-invigorated, but a new birth from above.”²⁹⁴

Accordingly, Evans defines regeneration as a spiritual crisis. The old life cannot be maintained since it is conflicting with the new life that comes from a spiritual transformation. It is not a reformation of the old nature into the new nature rather it is

²⁹¹ Hordern, William. 1959. *The Case for a New Reformation Theology*. Philadelphia: Westminster. pp. 34-35.

²⁹² McGiffert, A.C. 1961. *Protestant Thought Before Kant*. New York: Harper & Row Publishing. p. 142.

²⁹³ Brunner, Emil. 1946. *Revelation and Reason*. Philadelphia: Westminster. p. 36.

²⁹⁴ Evans, W. 1974. *The Great Doctrines of the Bible*. Moody press: Chicago. p.152.

a complete transformation (John 3:3-7; 5:21; Eph. 2:1,10; 2 Cor. 5:17). The word 'transformation' implies that the existing nature would be unable to serve as the means for the channeling of the impartation of a new spiritual life. This highlights the depravity and sinfulness of the human nature as a result of the fall. The Greek word *palingenesia* as used in a literal sense to convey the concept of regeneration is found in Matthew 19:28 and Titus 3:5. Both texts speak of renewal or rebirth. George Eldon Ladd in discussing the role of the Holy Spirit in Johannine theology asserts the need to be 'born again', as recorded in John 3, in Jesus' encounter with Nicodemus. He adds that the human being does not possess life although existing, meaning that he is spiritually dead. The Holy Spirit enables the believer to possess new life that is a gift from God, through the believer being born again. This requires new birth, not in a physical sense since man is alive. In this context, it is in a spiritual sense. In terms of Jesus' statement to Nicodemus "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born *again*, he cannot see the kingdom of God", the word "again" in the Greek *anōthen*, is rendered is "from above." The text should read, "...Unless one is born from above" drawing attention to the nature of this new birth since Nicodemus understood it in a physical sense. The inner working of the Holy Spirit forges a new identity for the believer. He is qualified as a believer by virtue of accepting Christ in conversion through repentance and faith, and is transformed through regeneration. The theological understanding is the same in Pauline theology in terms of a new creation in Christ. This lies at the heart of the Christian life.²⁹⁵ There are scriptural accounts that indicate the nature of a new birth and its necessity to enter the kingdom of God: -

- "A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances" (Ezek. 36:26-27).
- "But God, who is rich in mercy... when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ..." (Eph. 2:5,7).

²⁹⁵ Ladd, G.E. 1974. *A Theology of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing Company. p. 290.

- “And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him...” (Col. 2:13).
- “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead...” (1 Pet. 1:3).
- “You have been born anew, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God...” (1 Pet. 1:23).
- “He chose to give us birth through the word of truth” (James 1:18).

The characteristics of regeneration include complete transformation or the effectuation of something completely new. This is an effectuation of newness in terms of the person’s nature and/or character. It is an effectuation of a new nature and not change of the old (Gal. 2:20; 5:24-25; Rom. 6:1-11). It counters or nullifies the stronghold of the sin nature over the person in terms of putting to death the old nature (Eph. 2:1-10). It is the restoration of the pre-fall human nature and the inauguration of a new life in fulfilling God’s purpose. Importantly, scripture is clear that the new birth is an instantaneous occurrence and not a process (John 1:12-13; 2 Cor. 5:17; 1 John 2:29; 5:1,4; 1 Peter 1:3, 23; Eph. 2:1). Whilst regeneration may be an instantaneous work it is not an end in itself but the means to a new life. It is the starting point to engage in discipleship.

4.6.2. Objective Aspects of Salvation

4.6.2.1. Justification

Justification is a relational concept to righteousness since the legal status of the believer changes. The penalty of sin is death based on the judgment of the law of God. Justification is the justifying or right standing of the sinner through the meeting of the requirements of the judgments of God’s laws on the believer. It is the imputing of the righteousness of Christ to the believer enabling the justification of the sinner before God. It is a gift of God and therefore an undeserved obtainment (Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:8-9) since it is not based on human merit. Justification addresses two inherent problems facing the sinner. The first problem is that of the sin nature resulting from

the fall. The second problem is that of the penalty of sin. The sin nature has been dealt with through regeneration and a new nature has been imputed. This new nature is based on the righteousness of Christ and is not a work accomplished in any sense by the believer. Although the sin nature has been dealt with, the problem of the penalty of the law still remains since a violation of the law has taken place. Justification deals with this problem, as mentioned above, through a change of legal status i.e. from sinfulness to righteousness. The penalty of the law is satisfied, in and through the work of Christ. He satisfies the demand of the law that 'the wages of sin is death' through his redemptive work. He imputes righteousness to the believer thus justifying him before God. Ladd defines justification as "...the declaration of God, the righteous judge, that the man who believes in Christ, sinful though he may be, is righteous – is viewed as being righteous, because in Christ he has come into a righteous relationship with God."²⁹⁶ The Old Testament uses the verb *tsadaq* and the derivatives thereof, to refer to righteousness. It is defined as the conformity to a standard or norm that is made possible through the declaration of one being righteous or justified.²⁹⁷ The contextual use of the word varies in different passages of scripture ranging from individual righteousness like Tamar (Gen. 38:26) and David (1 Sam. 24:17; 26:23). However, it is often understood in a forensic or juridical context.²⁹⁸ This legal approach to righteousness is a reference to the ruling or declaration of the judge, that a person is either guilty or free from guilt (Ps. 9:4; Jer. 11:20). A person that is declared righteous is qualified to right standing before God. The Greek word for 'justify' is *dikaioo*, which in the general sense means, "to declare righteous or just." There is a difference between making someone righteous and declaring them to be righteous. The believer is not made righteous before God because of his sinful nature but has been regenerated through repentance and faith in Christ. He is declared to be righteous before God in a forensic sense that he is acquitted of guilt as a judge would acquit an accused person. The human being is most certainly guilty and God as the righteous Judge deemed punishment necessary for transgression of the law. The

²⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 437.

²⁹⁷ Brown, Francis et al. 1955. *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*. New York: Oxford University Press. pp. 842-843.

²⁹⁸ Erickson, M.J. 2000. *Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Publishing. p. 968.

penalty has to be paid first in order for the sinner to be pardoned. God does not waver the penalty of the law and neither does he lessen its effect on the sinner. It is through the atoning work of Christ that the full penalty of the law is met. The sinner is acquitted of guilt because Christ has paid the penalty. Both Christ and the believer are brought into union with the spiritual assets of Christ now being made available to the believer, since Christ came as the second Adam or the representative of humanity. This avoids the contention by some scholars like Vincent Taylor, William Sanday and Arthur Headlam that God's justification of the sinner is declaring them to be righteous when they are not. God declares the believer righteous through Christ's work.²⁹⁹ We are justified by God through our faith in Christ. Paul writes in Romans 5:1, "Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." It was the doctrine of justification by faith that was fundamental to the theology of Martin Luther. His understanding that man has been declared righteous through the saving work of Christ changed his thinking on justification. Luther discovered the biblical teaching of Romans 1:17 that God's righteousness precedes works and not the other way around. Faith in Christ justifies the sinner and is prepared for good works. Faith results in works (James 2:7). Luther expressed it as faith in Christ declares the sinner righteous for the performance of good works.³⁰⁰ There is a useful distinction that one must draw; one is justified *by* faith and not *for* faith. In other words it is not because of faith that God justifies one but faith serves as the means of appropriating the righteousness of Christ. The result of being justified by God is that the believer is enabled to live righteously before God (1 John 3:7). It also earns the believer security in the future judgment of God (Rom. 5:9; 1 Thess. 1:10).³⁰¹

4.6.2.2. Adoption

Adoption is a change of status from condemnation and guilt to one of favour with God. Justification changes the standing of the sinner by canceling the penalty whilst

²⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 969.

³⁰⁰ Bromiley, Geoffrey. W. 1978. *Historical Theology: An Introduction*. Grand Rapids: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing Company. pp. 229, 231.

³⁰¹ Thiessen, H.C. 1979. *Lectures in Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing Company. pp. 278-279.

adoption restores the sinner to a position of favour. It is also understood as becoming members of the family of God or as the children of God. The New Testament bears reference to the idea of adoption that the believer has a new position with God. Three scriptural references are usually cited in relation to adoption: -

- “Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God” (John 1:12).
- “...having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will...” (Eph. 1:5).
- “ But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons” (Gal. 4:4-5).

John sees adoption as becoming children of God and understands it in the context of this relationship. Paul, on the other hand, sees adoption in terms of sonship or the attaining of full maturity. He saw the Old Testament believers as “minors” not in the full possession of sonship. He writes in Galatians 3:23-26 in the Old Testament covenant the law was the custodian of the believer until the coming of Christ. This custodianship was not true sonship or genuine adoption but merely a measure. In Christ, Paul considered the believer as attaining full maturity thus becoming the sons of God. Adoption has to do with our relationship with God and it is one of intimacy with the constant portrayal of God as our Father (Matt. 6:9; Rom. 8:15-16). Thiessen asserts that adoption should be considered as a threefold relationship based on time. Firstly, the act of adoption occurred in the wise councils of God in eternity past (Eph. 1:5). This suggests that before the entire process of creation came into existence the believer was predestined to a position of adoption. Secondly, adoption is a personal realization at the time of the believer’s acceptance of Christ, since the scripture expresses that adoption is realized through faith in Christ (Gal.3: 26; 4:6). All are considered as sons of God irrespective of race, creed or culture. Thirdly, we have sonship in part and will receive the full realization of sonship at the coming of Christ

(Rom. 8:23).³⁰² Adoption has benefits that include: - 1) God is now our Father and we are entitled to receive his fatherly care (Rom. 8:16-17). We are able to commune openly with God and make requests to him in prayer without barrier (Phil. 4:19). We are able to seek the guidance and wisdom of God in the daily affairs of this life (Luke 11:11-13). We are also subject to the discipline of God as our Father since we are his children. (Heb. 12:5-11 cf. Prov. 3:11-12). 2) We are recipients of the forgiveness of God in Christ and are called to demonstrate the same principle in our relationship with others (Eph. 4:32; Deut. 5:10; Ps. 103:4-8). 3) We have been reconciled with God and are no longer the enemy of God (Rom. 5:8,10). 4) We have perfect liberty as the children of God not to do as we wish but in submission to the will of God (Rom. 8:14-16). 5) We become members of the same family thus defining one another in a familial way (Rom. 1:13; 8:12; 1 Cor. 1:10; 6:8; James 1:2; Matt. 12:50; Rom. 16:1; Philem. 1:2).

4.6.2.3. Sanctification

The differences between justification and sanctification are summarized in the following table: -³⁰³

JUSTIFICATION	SANCTIFICATION
Legal standing	Internal condition
Once for all time	Continuous throughout life
Entirely God's work	We cooperate
Perfect in this life	Not perfect in this life
The same in all Christians	Greater in some than in others

Sanctification is the progressive work of God and man. It involves being set apart from sin and to God as manifest in the daily process of becoming holy and conforming to the image of Christ. It is an ongoing change in the life of the believer's daily walk with God. Neil Anderson states that sanctification is the process of the believer's becoming in behaviour what he already is in identity. This means that the

³⁰² Ibid., pp. 285-286.

³⁰³ Grudem, W. 1994. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House. p. 746.

believer has to now walk in Christ-likeness in daily conduct, character, actions and behaviour in line with his identity as a Christian.³⁰⁴ It is the work of the Holy Spirit in the application of salvation to the life of the believer. Sanctification is related to holiness or Christ likeness (Matt. 5:43-45; Mark 3:35; Eph. 4:1). It is in this sense that sanctification refers to being set apart. The believer is set apart to God as Peter writes “but you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light...” (1 Pet. 2:9). It is important to note that whilst sanctification is progressive it begins at the same point as conversion [through repentance and faith] and justification. Paul when speaking about sanctification uses the Greek word *hagioi* as in the case of 1 Corinthians 1:2, “To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus.” *Hagioi* is the equivalent of the Hebrew *qados*, which is rendered as “to cut off or to separate.”³⁰⁵ Unlike justification, which is instantaneous, sanctification is progressive. It something that takes place over the lifetime of the believer and is a quantifiable concept. In other words, different believers may be at differing levels of sanctification depending on their daily choices that affect character, actions, attitudes and behaviour. Sanctification is a part of the subjective nature of salvation, meaning that it is dependent on how willing or committed the believer is to submit to the process of becoming holy or set apart to God. Whilst the believer may submit to God, sanctification is not achieved in any way by the ability of the human person. It is a supernatural act of God through the Holy Spirit and can only be accomplished by him (1 Thess. 5:23; Eph. 5:26; Titus 2:14). It does not reach saturation point in any believer’s life since it is a progressive work that begins from the time of conversion until death (Phil. 1:6). The purpose of sanctification is to accomplish the work that was initiated by regeneration i.e. to complete or perfect the new birth or new creation identity in Christ. The idea of conforming to the image of Christ does not imply an external resemblance per se, but taking on the very nature or character of Christ (Rom. 8:29). Pauline theology emphasizes that sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:4-27). The believer’s part in sanctification is to

³⁰⁴ Anderson, Neil, T. 1993. *Victory over Darkness*. Vereeniging: Christian Art Publishers. pp. 71ff.

³⁰⁵ Brown, Francis et al. 1955. *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*. New York: Oxford University Press. p. 871.

actively respond to the progressive work of the Holy Spirit. Discipleship requires the practice of the spirituality that the believer is called to grow in. Sanctification is therefore an action in progression. There are three areas that have been identified in the process of sanctification. The first area is termed positional or initial sanctification. This refers to a change of position of the believer upon conversion. This is immediate, since the believer is now regarded as a saint (1 Cor. 1:2; Eph. 1:1; Col. 1:2). The believer grows *in* sanctification rather than *into* sanctification. He is now already in Christ and set apart to him (Col. 2:10; 2 Cor. 5:17). The second area is termed progressive sanctification, as mentioned above, it continues throughout the life of the believer. This is achieved through what may be termed 'practical holiness'. This is the yielding of the believer to God by choosing not to allow sin to reign in his life (Rom. 6:12-18). The more the believer practically yields his life to God through the cultivation of a righteousness conscience, which must be displayed in word, deed, thought and behaviour, the more he increases or progresses in the knowledge of Christ. This implies conforming to his image through the working of the Holy Spirit. The third area is termed complete or final sanctification. This is the culmination of sanctification which will be realized either at death (Heb. 12:23) or at the coming of the Lord (1 Thee. 3:13; Heb. 9:28; 1 John 3:2). It is important to note that sinless perfection is not possible in this life since we have been saved from the power of sin and not the presence of sin. This is future related, when the eschatological fulfillment of scripture has taken place and the presence of sin has been completely removed. This is evident in that most persons in both the Old and New Testaments, were able to fellowship with God on an intimate level, but were not sinless i.e. Moses, Joshua, Peter, Paul, Abraham.³⁰⁶

4.6.2.4. **Glorification**

This may be defined as the final part of the redemptive plan of God. This will occur at the coming of Christ when the bodies of all believers of all time, both the living and the dead (whose bodies will be raised up at that time reunited with their souls), will

³⁰⁶ Thiessen, H.C. 1979. *Lectures in Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing Company. pp. 287-297.

be changed into perfect resurrection bodies like that of Christ. This is a work accomplished by Christ himself.³⁰⁷ It is the final removal of sin and its' effects on all creation. Paul states in Romans 8:29-30, "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He called; whom He called, these He also justified; and those whom He justified, these He also glorified." The Hebrew word for glory is *kabod*, which refers to the splendor, magnificence, awesomeness or greatness of the very nature of God. The Greek word is *doxa*, which has a similar connotation of the brightness, magnificence and fame of the person of God. The New Testament describes Jesus as the personification of glory of God i.e. the person of God (John 17:1-5; 1:14). The Old Testament contains scriptural support for the concept of glorification. We may infer from the New Testament passage of John 11, which records the death, and resurrection of Lazarus, that the Jewish people had an expectation of glorification. When Jesus had arrived at the tomb of Lazarus four days after his death, the possibility of immediate resurrection was deemed impossible. However, Martha's response to Jesus' statement indicates that she had an expectation of a future resurrection "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day" (John 11:23-24). Direct references Old Testament references include: - Job's expectation of the future resurrection, "I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes – I, and not another" (Job 19:25-26); the declaration of the prophet Daniel, "many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Dan. 12:2); and the words of Isaiah, "Your dead shall live, their bodies shall rise" (Isa. 26:19).

The New Testament also contains explicit references to glorification, which is expressed in the resurrection of the dead: - "So also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, than at his coming those who belong

³⁰⁷ Grudem, W. 1994. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House. p. 828.

to Christ" (1 Cor. 15:22-23); "For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep" (1 Thess. 4:16); "The hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come forth, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment" (John 5:28-29) and "He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through the spirit which dwells in you" (Rom. 8:11). Thus, glorification is the realization of an eschatological goal. It is the fulfillment and completion of the redemptive work of Christ. Very often, this future eschatological goal serves as the motivation for present sufferings (Rom. 8:18). The future judgment of the believer ensures that he will attain the finality of his already justified status in Christ (Matt 25:31-46). Glorification accomplishes for the believer the following: - 1) He will attain full moral and spiritual perfection (Col. 1:22; Eph. 1:4; Jude 24). This implies the complete removal of sin and its consequences. 2) He will attain fullness of knowledge in that he will be in the immediate presence of God. He will possess full comprehension of God with an increasing knowledge of God. Paul indicates that in this present state we see in part and thus have an imperfect knowledge of God (1 Cor. 13:12; 1 John 3:2). 3) Apart from the spiritual and moral changes in the believer at the time of glorification, the physical body will also be changed (Phil 3:20-21; 2 Cor. 5:1-5; 1 Cor. 15:38-50). Based on these texts, one may draw a comparison between our present physical bodies that are in decay with our future resurrected body that will be sinless.³⁰⁸

PRESENT BODY	GLORIFIED BODY
Perishable, subject to disease and death	Incorruptible, immune to disease and decay
Sown in dishonour	Will be glorious
Weak and frail	Powerful and eternal
Physical	Spiritual

³⁰⁸ Erickson, M.J. 2000. *Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Publishing. pp. 1008 – 1013.

The process of glorification will be an instantaneous occurrence at the coming of Christ. Following the glorification of the believer will be the promised redemption of all Creation (Rom. 8:18-25).

4.7. Conclusion

We have discussed in some detail, the doctrine of salvation and its varying facets. The gospel of Christ has both present and future liberation in its work in the believer. We have a dual responsibility for the present and for the future. The present context requires socio-praxis, in which the gospel of Christ that has transformed the lives of Christians manifests in a concern for social justice, the overcoming of inequality, and oppression. It negates an isolationist approach of the church to the problems of society. Our concern for the present will invariably affect the future. The present is the enabling gift of God for the fulfillment of his divine purpose in preparation for the future (2 Cor. 6:2). The Christian is part of the community of the redeemed that needs to help greater humanity discover true freedom in Christ. The heart of the gospel message is the love of God in Christ for all humanity and even all of creation. This love is manifest in the person and work of Christ that is appropriated in salvation. To receive salvation is to experience the insurmountable depths of a gracious savior who willingly gave all for all humanity to be restored in open fellowship with God as Father. The gospel of Christ transforms the present life by giving to the individual, purpose and meaning. The words of John Suggit offer an apt concluding comment at this juncture,

“As the redeemed people of God, Christians become at the same time the redeeming people of God, helping others to find the freedom which God intends them to have. They cannot add anything to the decisive work of God in Christ, but they can make this relevant and give others the hope to enable them to strive for the freedom which God wills for them.”³⁰⁹

³⁰⁹ John Suggit, “Redemption: Freedom Regained” in *Doing Theology in Context: South African Perspectives*. John De Gruchy & C. Villa-Vicencio (eds.) 1994. New York: Orbis Books. pp. 121-122.

Chapter Five: A New Creation in Christ

5. Introduction

In the previous chapter, we examined the doctrine of salvation as the focal point of defining a new creation in Christ. We established that the fall of humanity was a direct result of sin. God's provision for humanity's need was in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. Salvation is that doctrine which pertains to the application of the redemptive work of Christ, to the life of an individual that has chosen to accept it. Our discussion included an outline of the referential points of salvation i.e. it is related to God, to humanity and to Christ. Sin is a violation of the law of God, thus a violation of his person. Humanity earned the penalty for sin in death and could no longer experience open communion with God. The incarnation showed Christ as the second Adam or the representative of humanity. He became the propitiation, reconciling God and man in open communion. The dynamics of God's plan of redemption is evident throughout scripture. In the Old Testament there are numerous types and shadows of redemption echoing the coming of the Redeemer himself. The New Testament is explicit in its reference to salvation in Christ. The models of redemption required discussion of the sacrificial, vicarious, satisfaction and new creation models. We then proceeded to discuss the early and contemporary views of salvation, each positing its own conceptions of salvation. Predestination required the delineation of the definition, the theories and the biblical view in terms of its relationship to salvation. Finally, we looked at the nature of salvation and how it is applied to the life of a believer. This entailed a look at the subjective aspects of salvation i.e. that which relates to the believer and the objective aspects i.e. that which relates to God.

5.1. True Humanity in Christ

This chapter will integrate the foci of the previous chapters. At this juncture, it is necessary to construct a paradigm for establishing what is meant by the dissertation title, 'a new creation in creation.' To understand a new creation theology as it were, requires a composite structuring of interrelated doctrines, since no doctrine can be

understood vacuously. Humanity was not created in an abstract or theoretical world and neither were they placed in isolation from creation. Instead, they were very much a part of the created order and were endowed with specific function or purpose. They interacted with a living world and were accorded the responsibility as its stewards. This required a consideration of the facets of the doctrine of creation, in order to ascertain humanity's placement in creation, their purpose and how sin affected creation. This added to the doctrine of humanity in highlighting, the biblical emphasis on humanity as the special creation of God. God created man in his image and this image is an intrinsic and indispensable part of man's uniqueness and existence. The constitutional nature of humanity lies in its conditional unity of the whole person. Man is a unity of the physical, the psychological and the spiritual, all of which are purposed to enable him in fulfilling the intentions of the Creator. The doctrine of sin clarified how sin affected the conditional unity of man i.e. the physical, the psychological and the spiritual dimensions. It further demonstrated the domino effect on creation. This precarious position in which humanity found themselves in, required the intervention of God through the incarnation of Christ. Salvation is the free gift of God in Christ, in dealing with the problem of sin and the consequences thereof. This free gift requires that a human being appropriate salvation in Jesus Christ, through acceptance of him in faith and repentance. This background establishes a contextual understanding of a new creation in Christ.

The definitive text for our discussion is Paul's statement in 2 Corinthians 5:17 "If any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come." Paul's statement incorporates two elements of salvation. "If any one is in Christ" is suggestive of the subjective nature of salvation, thus involving the believer's conversion through repentance and faith. The objective nature of salvation is suggested in the next part of the statement "...he is a new creation." It is accomplished through the redemptive work of God in Christ. The resident implication of the reference 'a new creation in Christ', is the inauguration of a new humanity that has begun in Christ. The old presupposes the new in Paul's thinking. The indication would be the dismantling or passing on of the old and the commencement of the new.

The old would possibly refer to the unregenerate sinful nature of humanity stemming from the fall. The person and the work of Christ, which are interdependent since one informs the other, serves as the means through which the unregenerate sinful nature of humanity is dealt with. The old nature is not reformed nor indeed can be, therefore the positing of a completely new nature is required. As discussed in previous chapters, humanity's relationship with God was negatively affected because of sin. To define sin as only affecting humanity's relationship with God would be to adopt a narrow and limited view of the full implication of the consequences of sin. Sin affected human nature as well as the created order. Both are intrinsically connected with each other and this connection is ultimately sustained and informed by God. Paul's statement can be interpreted in a much broader context, but should proceed from the central idea located in this verse. The focal point of a new creation is the redemption of humanity through complete transformation in, and through Christ. It is immediate, progressive and final, in an eschatological sense. Arguably it can also be read as a "re-creation in Christ", comparable to original humanity in the Edenic state. God restores *true humanity in humanity*, since the original nature was affected by the fall. A new creation is thus the commencement of a true humanity that has been established in Christ. He is the locus or the point of realization, through which God establishes a new creation. Moyer V. Hubbard, in his definitive study on the new creation theme in Paul's letters and thoughts, offers an individualistic definition. Hubbard considers this thematic focus of a new creation, as not entirely distinctive to the New Testament. He indicates that such thematic expressions are to be found in early Jewish literature, particularly that of the Apocryphal writings as in the book of Jubilees. The Old Testament prophetic books contain allusions to a promised redemption, which would manifest in new creation (Isaiah 40-55). Hubbard argues for the support of H.J. Holtzmann's interpretation of Paul's statement of a new creation. The implicit understanding being of an individualistic renewal, or that which relates to the individual, based on the experience of Paul's Damascus encounter. He asserts that Paul's statement should not be interpreted as new creation in a cosmic dimension.³¹⁰ However, an indirect result of the establishment of true humanity as a

³¹⁰ Hubbard, V. Moyer. 2002. *New Creation in Paul's Letters and Thoughts*. Cambridge: CUP.

new creation, perhaps even a direct result, would be the effect on all of creation or the cosmos. Whilst Paul's phrase in 2 Corinthians 5:17 must be understood contextually, it cannot be understood in an isolationist perspective. Based on the argument that Christ came as the second Adam (Rom. 5:14- 15; 1 Cor. 15:20-24; 45-48), he represents humanity whilst simultaneously being God incarnate, accomplishing the redemptive plan of God. The second Adam is an appellation of Christ since he is a precedent of a new humanity. The locus of the first Adam was Eden, thus in creation. The locus of the incarnation was the earth, thus in creation. The locus of a new creation is an eschatological expectation since a new creation is immediate, yet still to be realized. This is expressed in John's declaration, "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth...There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away. He who was seated on the throne said: Behold, I am making everything new" (Rev. 21:1-5). A new humanity is still located in creation. Whilst the believer is a new creation by virtue of his conversion, this identity is progressive since it is not yet a total manifestation. The antecedent of the realization of this eschatological expectation is the renewal of creation. Paul indicates that creation is under bondage and awaits redemption (Rom. 8:19). This redemption is a part of the work of Christ, which he initiates it thorough the believer [new humanity]. To limit a new creation to an anthropological context would be to denude it of its richer meaning. What does one mean by 'true humanity'? As intimated to earlier, it is the pre-fall state of humanity. This may be expressed in the following comments regarding true humanity,

"For the type of human nature that each of us possesses is not pure human nature. The true humanity created by God has in our case been corrupted and spoiled. There have been only three pure human beings: Adam and Eve (before the fall), and Jesus. All the rest of us are but broken, corrupted versions of humanity. Jesus is not only as human as we are; he is more human. Our humanity is not a standard by which we are to measure his. His humanity, true and unadulterated, is the standard by which we are to be measured."³¹¹

³¹¹ Erickson, M.J. 2000. *Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing. p. 737.

The incarnation of Christ required that he take on the attributes of humanity, but did not involve the losing of his divine attributes. The unity of the person of Christ rests on the union of both the divine nature and the human nature. Both natures did not merge to form a *tertium quid* or a third nature, but functioned in a combined unipersonality. He is a singular person simultaneously possessing both the divine nature and human nature, which are not in contradiction with each other but function as a unique whole. One nature was not subservient to the other, neither did either nature require alteration. The incarnation testifies to the actuality of the divine and human natures, coexisting in singular function and purpose, in one person.³¹² He functioned as God-man or divinity-humanity. True humanity or human nature to express it in this sense, should not be perceived as evil or subservient to the spiritual dimension. Our understanding of human nature has proceeded from an existential approach. The knowledge that we possess of what it means to be human has been inductive and leads to the flawed conclusion that all humanity is inherently evil. This does not constitute true humanity as God intended it to be. This is supported in the incarnation since God took on human nature and human form (not in likeness but in actuality). This posits the inherent goodness of true humanity that God demonstrated in Christ Jesus. The human nature that Jesus exhibited is the new creation demonstrated for the old unregenerate sinful humanity. It is the ultimate state that we would eventually reach in glorification. To return to Paul's statement one would be inclined to agree with the textual meaning of the verse. It refers to the passing away of the old, unregenerate humanity with its sinful desires and appetites. It is the introduction of a new nature that is regenerated, with new desires.

5.2. New Birth as the starting point for a New Creation

The starting point of this new humanity begins at salvation, when the believer accepts the Lord and is regenerated through the work of the Holy Spirit. It conveys the idea of new birth, which is a difficult concept to understand.³¹³ Since one proceeds from a natural understanding, to use Nicodemus' question, "How can a man be born again

³¹² Barth, Karl. 1960. *The Humanity of God*. Richmond: John Knox Publishing. pp. 46-47.

³¹³ Erickson, M.J. "The New Birth Today," *Christianity Today*, August 16, 1974. pp. 8-10.

when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" the possibility that a person can be born again carries an absurdity with it. The deeper implication of Jesus' statement in John 3:7 "you must be born again" speaks of a new birth in a spiritual context. The Greek *anōthen* is rendered as "born again." It signifies both *denuo* (again) *desuper* (from above), which should be taken as "you must be born anew or again from above". The understanding is *ab initio* or from the beginning since to be born again presupposes a first birth.³¹⁴ The first birth suggests, that the natural state of man is insufficient to enable him to enter into a meaningful relationship with God. Jesus pointed out "no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again" (John 3:3). The nature of the first birth was affected by sin, shaping it into a corrupt depraved nature. To be born from above suggests, that one is to be born into a completely new nature or to be born again. The nature of the kingdom of God is such that it requires a new spiritual birth to gain entry. Should one apply the idea of a new birth in a physical sense the obvious point would be that it is something completely new. It requires that a process of conception take place ensuring the fertilization of the sperm and ovum. The gestation period produces the growth of a fetus and eventually a fully developed human baby. The biological process of new birth can take place only when the entire conception process is complete i.e. from fertilization to complete development. At this point, the baby is ready to be born. It is interesting that such an analogy would be akin to a spiritual birth process. Whilst the metaphor of biological birth is useful not all facets of the conception process are necessarily relevant or symbolically applicable. Should one attempt to infer from this analogy the application to humanity, the old nature cannot be reformed but the conception of a completely new nature is required. The conception process can be said to begin at conversion in faith and repentance. The fertilization process that is instantaneous would be paralleled by regeneration, which is the new birth experience. The growth process is initiated and progresses through both the subjective and objective aspects of salvation. One may argue different placements of the aspects of the subjective and objective nature of salvation in terms of paralleling it with the

³¹⁴ Henry, Matthew. 1997. "The gospel of John" in *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Bible*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers.

aspects of the biological birth process. Perhaps the analogy is not entirely objective in explaining how the new birth occurs in an individual, but it serves as a simplistic example in conveying the inherent idea of a new birth. The nature of new birth cannot be succinctly expressed since it is compared to an invisible phenomena i.e. the wind. The Greek *pneuma* is used for 'wind' which is the same word used for spirit. The results of a new birth are observable in terms of its effects. Jesus explained new birth using the expression "...unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." Three interpretations have been offered in explanation of this expression of "water and the Spirit". Firstly, water could refer to the washing of God's word (1 Pet. 1:23; Eph. 5:25; James 1:18), which is said to initiate new birth. This would prove a logical interpretation, since the word of God is the gospel in a verbalized form. A person would have to first gain an understanding of salvation [the word] before appropriating it. Secondly, it could refer to literal water thereby indicating the necessity of baptism. This proves implausible since the bible does not indicate that baptism is a prerequisite for salvation. It is not supported by the full testimony of scripture on the doctrine of salvation. Thirdly, it could refer to the Holy Spirit as the agent of regeneration (John 7:38-39). This interpretation encounters some difficulty since it would appear that Jesus mentioned, "Spirit" twice, if water is taken to mean "Spirit." Some argue that the conjunction 'and' as used in "water *and* Spirit" can easily be translated as "*even*." The text could read as "unless one is born of water, even the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." This is supported by the expression "born of the Spirit" that follows in verses 6 and 8.³¹⁵ Clearly, both the first and last interpretations would prove logical and either/or would apply since both the word and the Spirit are interrelated in the work of salvation. The premise behind Jesus' statement is that physical birth, even if a person were reborn physically ("...enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"), would not correct the sin nature. This is expressed in verse 6 "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." The new birth is required since the descendents of Adam "that which is born of flesh is flesh" possess a corrupt nature. A

³¹⁵ MacDonald, William. 1995. "The Gospel of John," in *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

spiritual birth takes place at salvation and the believer receives a spiritual nature “... that which is born of Spirit is spirit.” The new birth is a reversal of the old sinful nature not by addition but by transformation. Inherent to regeneration is new life, which is brought on by the crucifying of the flesh or putting to death the old nature (Gal. 5:24-25; 2:20; 6:14; Rom. 6:1-11). When the crucifying of the old nature occurs then regeneration produces a new creation that is made alive in the Spirit. A new creation is not merely the introduction of a new nature but it is also the counterforce to sinfulness of the old nature. The new birth is the starting point for a new creation since it initiates a new life in Christ, whilst restoring humanity back to God’s original purpose and destiny. Whilst new birth is an instantaneous supernatural act of God that initiates a new humanity, it is merely the starting point, “being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus” (Phil. 1:6).

5.3. The Idea of Newness

The thematic view of newness is reflective of the new life that the believer possesses in Christ. In continuance of our definitive text, the latter part of 2 Corinthians 5:17 states “... the old has passed away, behold the new has come.” This phrase deserves consideration since inherent to a new creation is the idea of ‘newness.’ The Greek word for new in this context is *kainos* and is rendered as “unused, fresh, novel. It means new to form or quality, rather than new in reference to time.”³¹⁶ In context then, newness refers to a new form and/or quality in relation to the believer that is *in Christ*. This idea is implicit in all of God’s dealing with humanity since the fall. It carries with it a distinctively eschatological perspective. In the Old Testament dispensation God communicated with his people that he would bring them into newness. For example: -

- God indicated that he would do a new thing. The prophets anticipated this divine act as a means of God’s deliverance (Isa. 43:19; Jer. 31:21).

³¹⁶ Strong’s Concordance #2537 in *The Spirit Filled Life Bible*. Hayford, J. 1991. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers. p. 1758.

- God would introduce a new covenant through his redemptive plan with his people (Jer. 31:31ff; Ezek. 34:25; 37:27).
- He would give a new heart and a new spirit to his people (Ezek. 11:19; 18:31; 36:26).
- He would give them a new name (Isa. 62:2).
- He would give them a new song (Ps. 96:1).
- He would create a new heaven and a new earth (Isa. 65:17).³¹⁷

The same is true of the New Testament idea of ‘newness’, but reaches sufficient clarity as to how this would be achieved. God accomplishes all things through salvation in achieving a new creation. He progressively revealed his plan of salvation throughout human history. He revealed Christ as the mediator of a new dispensation in covenant with him (1 Cor. 11:25). The eschatological character of a new creation is the central theme of the book of Revelation. Newness carries with it the anticipation of the full revelation of God’s plan of salvation.³¹⁸ It is evident in the following texts:-

- A new creation in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17).
- The creation of a new heaven and a new earth (Rev. 21:1; 2 Pet. 3:13).
- A new city (Rev. 21:2; 3:12).
- New wine at the eschatological banquet (Mk. 14:25).
- A new name for the redeemed (Rev. 2:17; 3:12)
- A new song of redemption (Rev. 5:9; 14:3)
- The greatest indication of newness is found in God’s declaration to all creation, “Then He who sat on the throne said, “Behold I make all things new” (Rev. 21:5).

What does Paul understand by a new creation in Christ? It is an eschatological statement, but is connected specifically with Christ. It does not refer to a change in the physical world, whilst this would eventually take place. Neither does it refer to

³¹⁷ Ladd, G.E. 1974. *A Theology of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing p. 479.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 480.

duration of time since the Greek does not imply this; it cannot be a passing on of one age of human civilization and the beginning of a new one. Instead, it is primarily related to human existence in that the old age of sin has come to an end and the age of new humanity has begun. It is the breaking in or the dawning of a new age into the company of the old one. Whilst the new age has begun in Christ and the old age has passed away, it has commenced in principle but has not yet reached consummation. This means that the old age of sinfulness still exists whilst a new age in Christ has begun. Those who are in Christ are no longer held sway under the influence of the old sinful nature but now live in the newness of salvation. The old age will pass away in totality at the fulfillment of the parousia. Important to this aspect is the language that Paul uses, "old things are passed away. Behold all things become new." The aorist tense used in this phrase, indicates a definite breaking away from the old life at the time of salvation. The indication that all things become new should be read as "behold, new things have come to be." Paul then shifts from the aorist to the perfect tense, which is deliberate in his stressing of the results that the believer experiences when he is in union with Christ (Eph. 4:24; Rev. 21:4-5; cf. Isa. 43:18-19; 65:17).³¹⁹ Paul's rabbinic influence would have acquainted him with the Old Testament prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah. Paul's conversion to Christianity forced Paul to reinterpret his understanding of the Messiah and his experience with Christ convinced him that Jesus was the promised Messiah. This understanding of the Old Testament allowed him to define the nature of promised redemption in a new light. Whilst he did not abandon his Jewish thinking, it still meant a departure from Judaism. The Judaic idea centered on the coming of the Messiah as belonging to the future, as it meant his coming would commence a Messianic reign, overthrowing existing powers. This has been explained by some, in reference to the development of the prophetic hope that emerged in Israel, during the time of the Babylonian exile. There have been disagreements as to the actual origin and meaning of the prophecies of hope in lieu of the restoration of Israel.³²⁰ Notwithstanding these aspects it is clear

³¹⁹ Falwell, Jerry (Exec. ed.) 1997. "2 Corinthians" in *King James Version Bible Commentary*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

³²⁰ Clements, R.E. 1978. *Old Testament Theology: A Fresh Approach*. London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott Publishing. pp. 140,146,150.

from the forms of prophetic writings of the Old Testament that there was a messianic expectation. This can be attributed to the fall of Davidic dynasty, in the division of the two kingdoms from the fall of the northern kingdom in 722 B.C. and the destruction of the southern kingdom in 538 B.C.³²¹ There was a constant expectation that there would be the restoration of Israel as a united nation, under the rulership of a king from a restored Davidic line (Amos 9:11-12; Hos. 2:5; Isa. 9:2-7; 11:1-9; 32:1; Jer. 33:19-26; Ezek. 37:24-28). The Jewish understanding of Messiah stems from the Hebrew *mashiach*, referring to 'an anointed person.' The symbolism is suggestive of a king or ruler who was anointed with oil in the Old Testament period, signifying a divine appointment to an office. The covenant that God had made with David served as the basis for such an expectation of a king (2 Sam. 7:1-17). Despite the numerous kings that succeeded David, the prophets whilst greeting each king with optimism, focused on the initiation of the dawn of a new era with increasing expectation. The disillusionment of the people with the kings of the Davidic dynasty, the periods of captivity and exile, added to this frustration of a messianic hope (Isa. 9:6-7; Micah 5:2-5; Jer. 23:5-6; Ps. 89:1-4; 132:10-12). The belief that arose was of God's divine intervention in history in the restoration of his people. This developed the idea of a new day that would eventually greet God's people, in which the physical world and the corrupt social and political structures would be renewed.³²² The expectation was for the Messiah to come and overthrow the existing order i.e. the Roman Empire and take rulership. It was contradictory for the Jewish person for a claim to messiahship whilst Caesar, the ruler of the empire was still in power. Paul understood that all things new have been inaugurated with the Kingdom of Christ, which had already come. It is also an eschatological Kingdom that is yet to be consummated. He anticipated the future consummation based on the present realities that he had experienced i.e. the coming of Christ as the Messiah, the resurrection of Christ and the coming of the Holy Spirit. These are also future events that would complete the fullness of the new age that has begun.

³²¹ Boone, Jerome. 2000. *Old Testament Survey*. Cleveland, Tennessee: Lee University Publications. pp. 11-12.

³²² Drane, John. 1986. *Old Testament Faith*. England: Lion Publishing. pp. 154 -155.

He anticipated that at the end of all things, there would be an eschatological consummation in which the Kingdom of God would be established. The idea of newness is expressed in light of this. There is a tension or conflict between the old and the new, not that they are equal counterparts, rather the triumph of the kingdom of God has come to all creation. The new age in Christ has begun, yet there is recognition by the Apostle that the conflicts of the old are still in existence. He sees it in light of what is present and what is yet to come. For example, he sees the old age characterized by evil, the existence and influence of the demonic powers opposing the kingdom of God and the weaknesses of the physical human body subject to decay and sickness (Gal. 1:4; Eph. 6:18; Rom. 8:35; Phil. 2:26). This is in contrast to the character of the new age.³²³

Humanity has been offered an opportunity of redemption from the present evil. Christ is the means through which deliverance is gained from the sinful nature and entrance into covenantal fellowship with God (Gal. 1:4). A new creation is synonymous with a new covenant that God initiates in Christ. It has already come into existence and promises transformation to those who choose to enter into it (Rom. 12:2). Paul expresses this idea in Ephesians 2:10, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." Ladd maintains that the chief concern of Paul's new creation theology is the beginning of a new man. This is in obvious contrast with the old man. For Ladd, a new creation is not merely a new morality that comes in; neither is it a gradual or progressive renewal of a new character that sets in. It is "...that while believers live in the old age, because they are in Christ they belong to the new age with its new creation (indicative), and they are to live a life that is expressive of the new existence (imperative)."³²⁴ The Christian is called to live in character what he already is in nature. Character is the external expression of the inner nature of the new man (Eph. 2:15; Col. 3:9-10).

³²³ Ladd, G.E. 1974. *A Theology of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing. pp. 369-373.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 480.

The Bible Believer's Commentary relates a new creation with the idea of reconciliation in stating,

“By the death of the Lord Jesus on the cross, God annulled in grace the distance which sin had brought in between Himself and man, in order that all things might, through Christ, be presented agreeably to himself. Believers are already reconciled, through Christ's death, to be presented holy, unblamable, and unreprouvable (a new creation).”³²⁵

5.4. The “New Man” in the person of Jesus Christ

Pannenberg draws on Pauline Christology, stating that Paul saw Jesus as an eschatological form of a new humanity. This is in contrast to the old man, the first Adam or ‘Adamic humanity.’ The second Adam unlike the first, fulfills the plan of God through obedience to him, thus overcoming where the other had failed. Christ is considered as the author of a new humanity. The indication of 1 Corinthians 15:49 “And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man”; and 2 Corinthians 3:18, “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord”, bear reference to a Christological humanity. Adamic humanity is granted a fresh new opportunity of redemption from sin, through Christ Jesus. These scriptural references speak of bearing the image of the Lord (heavenly man) since he is the *eschatos Adam*. Christ is the original of a new humanity that has been created anew in the image of God accessible through salvation. This explains the reference to bearing the image of the Lord. The mediation of a new humanity is stressed in Paul's thinking since he contrasts the entry of sin through the first Adam (Rom. 5:12). Adam's act of sinfulness brought all of humanity into a corrupt depraved nature. The transmission of this sinful nature from one (Adam) to all (successive descendents), is the point of Paul's reasoning in Romans chapter five. Similarly, Christ bears the original of a new humanity Paul is emphatic in stating that participation in the image of Christ brings

³²⁵ MacDonald, William. 1995. “2 Corinthians,” in *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

the many (sinful humanity) into the one (Jesus Christ), transforming humanity into a new creation. The actualization of the new man would take place in an ecclesiological sense. The church is the agency of proclaiming the gospel of Christ. In effect, it presents opportunities to all humanity, to participate in a new humanity through the acceptance of Christ.³²⁶ The overemphasis on the humanity of Christ leads to the tendency of minimizing his deity. Friedrich Schleiermacher adopted this view, in defining what he understood by Christ's role as the second Adam. He saw the work of Christ as the Redeemer in relation to the community of the redeemed. In order to experience freedom from bondage one has to be incorporated into this community as only the Redeemer may impart such redemption. He expressed the concept of God consciousness as the dominant influence that comes to bear on the community of the redeemed. It is this influence that defines a new life. For Schleiermacher Paul's concept of a new creation meant that Christ is the author of a new humanity in light of his human personality. He saw Christ's work of Redeemer as an expression of his human particularity. In this particularity, he saw the sinless perfection of Christ as defining his uniqueness and individuality. This same ability can now be imparted to the community of the redeemed. The problem with Schleiermacher's theory is that it diminishes the deity of Christ and overemphasizes a singularity as the basis of redemption. His thoughts on Christ as the initiator of a new humanity are no doubt valuable in developing a holistic picture of a new creation. However, the uniqueness of Christ does not lie in his humanity per se, but in his deity as well. The work of redemption was accomplished by the unipersonality of the God-man or the Deity-humanity, Jesus Christ. To emphasize one over the other is to deny the biblical doctrine of the incarnation of Christ as God in the flesh (John 1).³²⁷

5.5. Pauline Theology

With the preamble of a new creation understanding, an overview of the central assertions of Pauline theology would enhance his derivation of a Christological soteriology. It would be useful to commence with a cursory glance of his background

³²⁶ Pannenberg, W. 1994. *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing Company. pp. 297, 304.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 306-308.

and thinking before specifically examining some aspects of Pauline Christology and Soteriology.

5.5.1. The Background of Paul's Life

The background of Paul enables clarity in regarding his thoughts and the core of his theology. The letters of Paul are a major source of knowledge in accounting for the spread of Christianity beyond Jerusalem. This geographical and cultural spread of the gospel, testifies to the profound influence of Jesus Christ. It is testament to the life of a first century prophet that was executed centuries earlier, because of what the Jewish community saw as libelous claims, to be the promised Messiah.³²⁸ The greatest interpretations of the person and work of Christ are offered by Paul. His thoughts enabled the formulation of doctrinal frameworks from which Christ could be understood. Based on the statistical analysis of the New Testament writings one cannot escape the impression of the number of epistles that bear the name of the Apostle. It is argued that of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament, Paul has written thirteen. There are no doubt questions of authorship regarding some of these books, based on the ambiguity of evidence i.e. 2 Thessalonians, Colossians, Ephesians, Titus and 1 & 2 Timothy, Hebrews. The assertion here is that some of these letters bearing his name could have been developed in continuance of his thoughts. It remains uncertain as to Paul's authorship.³²⁹ Whilst these assertions may be tested to determine whether they hold true or not, the inference is sufficient at this point. It draws attention to the profound influence that he had in primitive Christianity. What is significant about the life of Paul, is that our knowledge of him as one of the writers of the New Testament, is enhanced by the scope of his writings in terms of his missionary journeys. The distinctiveness of his writings is vital to the 'temporal center of the New Testament'. It establishes a coherent pattern of thinking that characterized primitive Christianity.³³⁰ The significance of Paul's teachings on Christ is evident in the Christ faith or the Easter event of the primitive church. His

³²⁸ Kee, Howard Clark. 1983. *Understanding the New Testament*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Publishing. p. 210.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 211.

³³⁰ Kimmel, W.G. 1973. *Theology of the New Testament*. London: SCM Press. p. 137.

proclamation was decisive in the reshaping of the message of the resurrected and crucified Christ. He provides an account in his first epistle to the Corinthians (15:3-8) of the encounter that all people, who had bore witness to the resurrected Christ, experienced. He lists the names of these persons that are known to him in support of the fact of the resurrection of Christ. He considered this as an attestation to the validity of his belief in Christ and advocated the necessity of proclaiming this message (15:11-12). It is significant that Paul proclaims the resurrection of Christ since it was the transforming element of his own life. He saw a vision of the resurrected Christ on the road to Damascus and for him this authenticated his *preaching of Christ* (1 Cor. 15:9-10; Gal. 1:15-16). He considered himself a witness in the same light as the Apostles and those who had seen the resurrected one.³³¹ He was born Saul of Tarsus in A.D. 10 in the Hellenistic city of Tarsus of Cilicia. His background had stake in three worlds i.e. Jewish, Hellenistic and Christian. Despite this, his childhood was strongly influenced by a Jewish upbringing of which he was notably proud (Phil. 3:5; Rom. 9:3; 11:1). As a Jew, he claimed to have maintained strict observance of the Law and upheld the pharisaical traditions with religious zeal. We are informed by Acts 22:3 that he was “brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, educated according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers.” His strict observance of the Law can be attributed to his interpretation of the Old Testament, which places him in the sphere of Rabbinic Judaism. Thus, he saw the Law as the ultimate standard. His Jewish background would have developed in him a strong monotheistic belief in the God of the Old Testament (Gal. 3:20; Rom. 3:20), the rejection of pagan religion, worship and immorality (Col. 2:8; 1 Cor. 10:14, 21; Rom. 1:21).³³² Even after conversion he strongly asserted his Jewish background “If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: circumcised on the eight day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, A Hebrew of Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee...” (Phil. 3:4-5). His Jewish worldview is often evident in his writings since he draws on his knowledge of the Old Testament to

³³¹ Ibid., pp. 97-98.

³³² Ladd, G.E. 1974. *A Theology of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing. pp. 360, 363.

support his understanding of Christ (1 Cor. 9:20).³³³ Paul was also a resident in the Graeco-Roman world. His familiarity with the Greek philosophies and Hellenistic culture of the day, augured well for his preaching of the gospel, in a contextual framework. This is further reflected in his versatility with the Greek language, particularly the form used in the cities, and his blending in of styles of writing used by the Stoic diatribes. In his writings, he used words that would have been familiar with Greek philosophy, like *me kathékonta* (the unfitting, Rom.1: 28). Paul as a Christian was defined by his conversion experience on the Damascus road. His experience converted his thinking from persecutor of the Christian faith to proclaimer of the gospel of Christ. Some scholars like J. Klausner and A. Deismann have asserted, that Paul's Damascus experience could be attributed to an epileptic seizure or a type of psychological trauma, catalysed by inner conflict (Rom. 7). This is clearly refuted by Paul's own testimony conveyed in his writings, which indicate no psychological trauma or epileptic fit. He clearly had a divine encounter and was fully aware of what had happened.³³⁴

5.5.2. The Background of Paul's Thinking

There is no contention that Paul was one of the most influential thinkers of his day. His theological considerations have shaped the primitive church's understanding of the person and work of Christ. As indicated earlier, his background has influence from the Jewish, Hellenistic and Christian contexts. This richness of cultural diversity served to enrich his thinking, but it proves difficult to assess as to how these diversities influenced him. At conversion, he did not abandon his previous religious concepts but allowed them to be reshaped through his encounter with Christ. The uniqueness of Paul's thinking is defined by the integration of his theology with the congregations that he ministered to. Paul was a passionate missionary with ardent zeal in the spreading of the gospel through his journeys. Whilst the argument that the spread of Christianity in places like Syria, Egypt and Rome amongst varying parts of the Roman Empire occurred independently of Paul, he was a definite missionary of

³³³Barclay, William. 1958. *The Mind of St. Paul*. Great Britain: William Collins Sons & Co. pp. 11-13.

³³⁴Ladd, G.E. 1974. *A Theology of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing. pp. 360-361.

primitive Christianity. His sole purpose in these missionary journeys was to take the gospel to the gentiles and in some cases the Jews. He is considered the first missionary to preach the gospel and establish churches in Asia Minor, Macedonia and Greece. These Christian communities that he had established received his continued attention either through personal visits or through letters that he sent to them. Although Paul was a theologian he was not theological in his approach. He did not write in a systematized way or organize his material into coherent doctrines. Any approach to Paul's writings would require cognizance of this fact. His theology was expressed through his function as a missionary. His writings were shaped by the problems of these Christian communities and are discussions on the issues that they encountered. He writes into the context of these communities and takes for granted that his readers were fully aware of what he addressed them on.³³⁵ It is difficult to ascertain a complete theological treatise of Paul's theology, since he wrote situationally. His correspondence with the churches carried a deep sense of passion and the underlying conviction of the centrality of the person and work of Christ. The desired expectation of the Apostle was for maturity in the faith and the application of salvation by the believers. A survey of his writings indicates a plethora of ideas on varying issues. For example, the Epistle to the Romans is an exposition of: - 1) the righteousness of God in Christ; 2) The sinfulness of humanity; 3) The free gift of salvation through the justification of the believer by faith in Christ; 4) The relationship between God and Israel; 5) The redeeming work of Christ's death; and 5) the practical applications of salvation. He presents an ordered theological development of the fundamental truths that are centered in the redemptive plan of God. He progressively unfolds the nature and the necessity of Christ's coming through his letter. Should one compare this with the epistle to the Ephesians, the emphasis is completely different. In this letter, he discusses the revelation of the church as the body of Christ and as the instrument of God, in combating evil forces. He relates salvation to the fullness of Christ manifest through the church on the earth (1:15-23). He uses the medium of these letters to exhort, encourage, correct and bring

³³⁵ Kummel, W.G. 1973. *Theology of the New Testament*. London: SCM Press. pp. 137-140.

clarity and understanding to these Christian communities. Based on these letters, one is able to construct the main aspects of Paul's thinking which may be summed up in the following aspects, which permeate his writings: - ³³⁶

- 1) Paul's sense of a Divine Call: Clearly, the Damascus experience was a transforming event in the life of Paul. It is this experience that gives him an unshakable conviction of a divine calling (Rom. 1:1-6; 1 Corin. 9:19). His proclamation and theology was guided by the constant awareness of an encounter with the risen Christ. He was always aware of this divine call and treated it as a commissioning from God. The continuity between the resurrected Christ and the faith of the early church was constant in his writings. He considered himself a recipient of the grace of God.
- 2) Paul's belief in his Apostolic Authority: He expresses with extreme boldness the elements of the gospel, despite not personally meeting some of the believers of these churches. Paul stated that his divine call served as the basis of his apostolic authority. The letters contain a compelling conviction of having heard from God, and he instructs the converts, correct the dissidents, refutes heresies and encourages the persecuted, in light of this revelation. He is careful to mention when he is sharing his own opinion and when he expresses the commands of the Lord (1 Cor. 7:6, 10, 12; 2 Cor. 11:17). He writes under the inspiration of this authority.
- 3) Paul's deep love for the converts: His missionary journeys produced converts to the faith. The necessity to help these converts mature in the faith was taken seriously by the Apostle. It was motivated by a deep love, which he expressed in his concern for their welfare. This is evident in the epistles to the Philippian and Corinthian Christians. Despite the challenges to his authority in the Corinthian Church he still demonstrated a concern for them.
- 4) Paul's convictions: The central motif of his ministry was the conviction that he had of Jesus Christ. He saw the redemptive plan of God unfold in human history through the person and work of Christ. The death and resurrection of Christ is the

³³⁶ Guthrie, Donald. 1970. *New Testament Introduction*. England: Inter-Varsity Press. pp. 386-391.

constant theme in his writings as the culmination of the divine plan of God. For Paul, the essence of his personhood was grounded in Christ. He makes repeated reference to the centrality of Christ in his proclamation, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me..." (Gal. 2:20).

5.5.3. Pauline Christology

Pauline Christology centers on Christ as the norm for faith and practice in Christianity. Paul saw Christ as the foundation of his preaching and as the source of motivation for ministry (1 Cor. 3:11; 2 Cor. 4:5). The Christ event is focal point of human history and the means of the salvation of humanity. Paul's messianic interpretation departed from the conventional Jewish thinking of a dominant ruler. He redefined the understanding of the Messiah in the person of Christ showing his sufferings, humiliation and death as the true essence of the anointed one from God. Christ is the fulfillment of the Old Testament Messiah, in his offices of prophet, priest and king. Paul prefers the use of the title 'Christ Jesus', and considered him as the sent one with the task of announcing the coming of the kingdom of God. God in Christ reconciles fallen humanity to him, actively intervening in human history with the dawn of salvation. The Holy Spirit is the agency, through which the work of Christ is actualized in the life of the believer. Paul employs numerous Christological concepts to posit his proclamation of Christ, ranging from Christ as the pre-existent Son of God, the Lord (*kurios*), the head of all things and as the representative of man. Relevant to our discussion would be the title of Christ as the representative of man. In this regard, he elucidates the means through which Christ has become our representative. He mentions Christ as the second Adam (1 Cor. 15:45), the first born of all creation (Col. 1:15) and the image of God (2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15). The implicit idea conveyed in each category is his function in representing humanity before God. He describes Christ as the corporate personality through use of formulae such as 'in Christ' (2 Cor. 5:17), 'with Christ' (Rom. 6:3). This aspect will be discussed in our consideration of union with Christ. Although Paul discussed different theological aspects in his epistles such as marriage, sexuality, slavery (1 Cor. 7:1- 40; 1 Thess. 4:1-8), social relationships (1 Tim. 4-6) and so on; the relationship between

Christology and theology were interconnected so closely, that Paul always directed his admonitions or advice in these situations, to the person of Christ.³³⁷

5.5.3.1. Christ as the Second Adam

The second Adam is the reference to Christ as the one whom, through his representation of humanity, inaugurates a new creation. Christ is the first of a new humanity (1 Cor. 15:45ff) in contrast with the first Adam. His resurrection is the starting point of a new dispensation for humanity. Paul contrasts the first Adam, typifying the old age associated with the corrupt sinful nature, with the second Adam, that introduces the new age of redemption. He states in Romans 5:12 “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death spread through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all man sinned...” His use of the Greek “*houtos*” for the phrase “and thus”, should be rendered as “*so, thus in this way, that is through Adam’s sin*” sin spread to all men. *Hemarton* is the aorist indicative verb used in the context of the historical narrative of this verse. It is an implication of a completed past action i.e. something happened in the past [Adam sinned] and is therefore a completed action [all humanity sinned]. Clearly the understanding is not that all humanity sinned in the past since it would prove a contradictory statement to those who have yet to be born [at the time of Paul’s writing].³³⁸ The understanding is that Adam’s sin although it occurred in the past, is considered by God as an action committed by all humanity. This implies that all humanity sinned. Essential to Pauline theology, is how the second Adam is able to bring humanity into the experience of a new life. This requires an understanding of progenitorship. The first Adam was the progenitor of the human race. His actions brought all of humanity into the position of sinfulness.

³³⁷ Du Toit, A.B. (Ed.) 1996. *Guide to the New Testament: Volume V: The Pauline Letters: Introduction and Theology*. Halfway House: Orion Publishers. pp. 201-219.

³³⁸ Grudem, W. 1994. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House. p. 494.

Similarly, Christ is the new progenitor of the human race and is thus able through his obedience to bring all human beings into a new creation.³³⁹

5.5.3.2. Christ as the Image of God

In this imagery, Paul sees Christ as the full and complete revelation of God (2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15). Christ is the image of God, the visible representation of God that has come in revelation of him (Heb. 10:1). He is the revelation of the glory of God through his person and work. This metaphor is understood in light of Adam's creation in the image of God (Gen. 1:26). The uniqueness of Adam's relationship to God sets him apart as God's representative in stewardship over creation (Gen. 1:28). Image implies that God created Adam as a representative of him. Adam possesses an intellectual ability, moral purity, creativity and a spiritual nature. The fall distorted this image in man and affected his person. He lost moral purity. His character and nature has become sinful, his intellectual ability has been corrupted i.e. selfishness and falsity and the inability to reflect the character of God i.e. holiness, purity. In Christ the image of God has been fully restored in man (Col. 3:10; 2 Cor. 3:18).³⁴⁰

5.5.3.3. Christ as the First Born of all Creation

Two aspects are inherent in Paul's use of the imagery of Christ as the first-born of all creation. The first aspect refers to Christ as the first-born in relation to creation. Paul writes in Colossians 1:15-16 "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in Heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible... all things were created through Him and for Him." *Prototokos* is the Greek word for 'first-born' in the context of this verse. It is rendered as "the one who occupies the first place in the whole of creation."³⁴¹ It refers to the pre-existent Christ and not to Christ being created as the first in the order of creation. The idea is the unique position or central role that he occupies in relationship to creation. He is the authoritative head or the Lord over creation. Paul in verse 16 shows Christ

³³⁹ Du Toit, A.B. (Ed.) 1996. *Guide to the New Testament: Volume V: The Pauline Letters: Introduction and Theology*. Halfway House: Orion Publishers. p. 216.

³⁴⁰ Grudem, W., *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, pp. 442-445.

³⁴¹ Du Toit, A.B., *Guide to the New Testament: Volume V*, p. 214.

as the mediator, the one through whom all things were created "...all things were created through Him and for Him." God accomplishes the work of creation through Christ and creation consists or holds together in him. The second aspect refers to Christ as the first-born in relation to the resurrection from the dead. In the same passage of scripture we find Paul's statement "And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence" (Col. 1:18). The centrality of the death and resurrection of Christ formed a vital part of Paul's preaching. It is this chief concern that he expresses when he refers to Christ as the first-born from the dead. Paul's understanding is that Christ's resurrection from the dead sets him apart as the first and the origin of resurrection from the dead. In effect, it establishes a pattern and guarantee for the future resurrection from the dead. Christ as the first-born of all creation sets him as the beginning of a new creation, the first of that which is to follow. He is representing all of humanity by virtue of his death and resurrection and makes possible the experience of new life in him.³⁴²

5.5.4. Pauline Soteriology

Paul does not treat soteriology as a separate subject in his epistles but considers it in relation to Christology. His soteriological perspective is part of his composite approach in his situational responses to the various congregations that he ministered to. Salvation has been accomplished through Christ and his redemptive work. This is the basis from which Paul proceeds. The Christ event is the breaking forth of a new age into human history and it is a divine act of God. The redemptive work of Christ is seen as the work of God. Paul considered God as the initiator of salvation in sending forth his son to liberate humanity from the bondage of sin (Rom. 1:3; 3:25; 8:3; 8:32; Gal. 4:4; 1 Cor. 1:30). The Apostle is careful to indicate that the redemptive plan was not the passive fate that Christ merely accepted; instead, he indicates that it was an act of surrender and choice that Christ made (Gal. 2: 20; 1 Thess. 5:10; 2 Cor. 5:5). Paul did not distinguish as separate the acts of God and the work of Christ. He saw it as a unified work. God worked through Christ who willingly responded by offering his

³⁴² Ibid., pp. 213-215.

life as a sacrifice. In chapter one, our discussion of creation asked the question why God created humanity? The biblical affirmation indicated, that it occurred in the sovereignty of God, in expression of his divine love and mercy. He was under no compulsion or obligation to create humanity or even the entire cosmos. The same understanding may be applied to the question, why did God choose to redeem humanity? Again, it was an act of the sovereignty of God in his deep love and mercy, as a benevolent Creator (Rom. 9:11, 16; 1 Cor. 2:7). He adopts a functional identity in that the same attributes that Paul accords to God, he accords to Christ (Rom. 3:24; 5:2, 8, 15-21). Paul draws a sharp contrast between the sinful condition of humanity and the love of God as the motive of salvation (Rom. 5:6-10, 20). Paul expresses humanity's need of salvation by drawing attention to the consequences of sin. The need for salvation is located in man's sinful nature evident in: - 1) his ungodliness (Rom. 5:6), 2) his sinful state making him a slave to sin (Rom. 3:9, 23), 3) becoming enemies of God (Rom. 5:10), 4) the inability to help himself in fulfilling the conditions of the law (Rom. 5:6, 8:3), 5) earning the penalty of sin which is death (Rom. 5:12-7:25). It is with this understanding that Paul demonstrates humanity's need of salvation and its provision in Christ Jesus. He stresses that salvation is not culturally, racially or socially confined but is based on the requirement of accepting Christ Jesus in faith (Rom. 1:17; 3:22). The need for salvation is universal since sin has affected all humanity (Rom. 3:22ff, 2 Cor. 5:19). As discussed in chapter four, salvation is categorically understood in terms of its subjectivity and objectivity. The subjective aspects of salvation relate to a personal appropriating and response by the individual in accepting the work of Christ. It is progressive in nature since it is the realization of what has already been accomplished in and through Christ. Objective salvation is the finished work of Christ that has been accomplished by him. Paul writes in these categories, what Christ has accomplished for us and what our response should be.³⁴³

³⁴³ Ibid., pp. 242-246.

5.5.4.1. The Objective Nature of Salvation

The use of the *huper* or '*for us*' motif in Pauline soteriology is intended to amplify the nature of the atonement of Christ. In this respect, he employs the death motif of Christ's work. It is understood in the sense that, Christ died *for us* or *in our place* or *on our behalf* (1 Cor. 15:3-5; Rom. 5:8; 14:15; 1 Cor. 8:11; 2 Cor. 5:14). This presents the vicarious model of understanding Christ as the ultimate sacrifice in atonement for sin, against the Old Testament sacrificial system. He uses the delivery motif in expressing, both the role of God in sending forth Christ, and Christ willingly offering up himself (Rom. 4:25; 8:32; Gal. 1:4; 2:20; 2 Cor. 8:9). In the delivery motif, Christ is the one who delivered himself up to pay the penalty of sin and to reverse the effects of the fall, thus liberating all humanity. It conveys the idea of a substitutionary sacrifice. Although Paul never spoke directly of Christ's death as a sacrificial act *per se*, instead spoke of it in covenantal terms. He draws on the Old Testament sacrificial concepts of atonement, the paschal lamb, and the sin offering in explaining the nature of Christ's atoning work (1 Cor 5:7). He saw God in Christ as the one making the sacrifice for the atonement of sins, as well as, the one who accepts the offering (1 Cor. 11:24; 15:3). Christ's death was the beginning of a new covenant that has enabled a renewal of fellowship in reconciling man and God. Christ's death is understood as a ransom from the enslaving power of the law. Humanity violated the law of God by sinning (1 Cor. 6:20; 7:23; Gal. 3:13; 4:5). In this understanding man is bought back, implying a change of ownership, and now belongs to God. The nature of his relationship with God is of a parent-child type (Gal. 4:7). Humanity is a new creation in his freedom to worship God, freedom from the bondage of sin and the law and enslaving powers (1 Cor. 2:6, 8; 15:24; 6:20; Gal. 4:3,9). Paul understood enslaving powers as referring to the supernatural powers that humanity was in bondage or subjection to, resulting from his alienation from God (Gal. 1:5; 4:3,9; Rom. 8:38; 1 Cor. 2:6,8; 15:24). What is not made explicitly clear, are the nature of these powers. The context of Galatians 4:3 suggests two interpretations "Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of this world." The Greek phrase used in this verse is *stoicheia tou kosmou*, which could mean that humanity is subject to or ruled by supernatural powers, outside of himself. The

second interpretation could suggest that man is ruled by elemental principles to which he has become enslaved. The phrase "...when we were slaves..." is a universal inclusion of both Jew and non-Jew alike. In addition to the above definition of enslaving powers, sin is considered the principle thing to which humanity is bound. Humanity is controlled by and enslaved to sin (Rom. 5:12, 21; 6:6, 17, 20; 20:14; 7:23). The consequence of slavery to sin is death (Rom. 6:22-23). The nature of humanity's liberation from enslavement to these powers occurred through Christ's ransom (Gal. 4:5). To this end he writes in Romans 8:1, "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus...for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death." The context of law as used in these verses refers to the system of control, whilst "law of the Spirit of life" is not a reference to the written moral law of the Old Testament commandments. It refers to a new system of operation, accomplished through the Spirit of life or the Holy Spirit, in the life of the believer. The power of the old law of sin and death is broken and replaced by the law of the Spirit of life. Christ Jesus is the point of location in which humanity is liberated from sin and set apart to God. Christ's death is understood as the restoration of man's relationship with God. Here the thesis is of the righteousness of God in Christ. Righteousness can be understood as both an event and as an abstraction. As an event, it refers to righteousness as an act of God in relation to the unrighteous or sinful condition of man (Rom. 3:19-21). Sin is the causal factor in the separation of man and God. He is no longer in right standing or right relationship with God. Righteousness is therefore that act which God performs out of his mercy and love in restoring man to a right condition to ensure a right relationship with him. This work of righteousness is accomplished through the death of Christ. It cannot be earned on meritorious grounds, as it is a free gift of God (Rom. 3:21). It is the work of God in Christ *for* and *on behalf* of humanity. This free gift can be appropriated through faith in Christ. It brings humanity into the experience of the righteousness of God through right relationship with him. This is Paul's chief concern; one must be in right relationship with God. A new creation thought is echoed in this, it is a new relationship with God defined by being at peace with him (Rom. 5:21). It is the experience of the believer in the grace of God in Christ. It is the

transforming power of the Holy Spirit in liberation from sin. It is the adoptive relationship of parent-child and the ultimate promise of eternal life. The proclamation of the gospel is in one form, a verbal declaration of the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus.³⁴⁴

5.5.4.2. The Subjective Nature of Salvation

This relates to the believer's personal appropriation of and his responsibility to the work of salvation. Here Paul deals with several interrelated aspects that involve the believer. He posits a comparison with the death of Christ. He considers the believer as dead with Christ since Christ is seen as the second Adam or representative of all humanity. This implies that humanity shares in the death of Christ in the following aspects: - 1) the believer is dead to sin, just as Christ died to sin. 2) He nullified the power of sin over him, in effect, over humanity (Rom. 6:6, 11, Gal. 5:24). 3) The resurrection of Christ meant that sin and death had no power over him, thus sin and death has no power over the believer (Rom. 6:9; Gal. 6:14). Paul considers the expression of dying with Christ as formulated in the process of baptism i.e. the believer's union with Christ through faith. The significance of Christ's death and his complete work of atonement, together with his resurrection and ascension, are applicable to the believer. The believer now owes his allegiance to Christ since there has been a change of ownership (Rom. 7:4). Paul saw himself as a slave of Christ and devoted himself totally to him. He often expresses this as the believer belonging to Christ or under the grace of God or a slave to righteousness. The believer is free from sin to serve God in totality. An essential component of Pauline soteriology is the work of the Holy Spirit. He uses the expression 'in the Spirit' in Romans 8:9, to convey the role of the Spirit in the believer's life, enabling him to be led or governed by the Spirit (Rom. 8:9-11). Paul perceived that salvation as the work of Christ is actualized in the believer through the Holy Spirit. Paul saw the role of the Holy Spirit as of vital importance in salvation. As before with the functional identity of God and Christ, so is it with Christ and the Holy Spirit. He makes reference to the Holy Spirit as the 'Spirit of Christ' (Rom. 8:9; Phlp. 1:19), thus linking the work of Christ with

³⁴⁴ Ibid., pp. 246-255.

the work of the Spirit. The Spirit is given to the believer for victorious living, edification and service. To this end, Paul speaks of the gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:12; 6:11; Gal. 3:2; 4:6). The believer is empowered to live as a new creation through the Spirit's power, since he indwells the believer. The Spirit is the pledge or guarantee of eternal life that has begun in Christ. He helps in the progressive transformation of the believer, in living a new life that has begun in Christ. Paul's soteriological understanding is conveyed as an indicative-imperative dialectic. Salvation is a present reality whilst still being future orientated. Although the old dispensation exists the new has come. It is a contradiction of natures and realities. On one hand, Paul saw the old dispensation of sinfulness still very much a part of the present world yet he also saw a new age that began in Christ. This new life was an overwhelming reality for Paul and despite the sufferings of the present he remained convinced of what awaited him in future. The indicative nature of salvation is that what has already taken place in the present reality. This refers to conversion through repentance and faith, regeneration and sanctification through the Spirit's power. The believer has come into the experience of these aspects of salvation but has not been removed from the presence of sin. The believer is in danger of falling back into the ways of his former nature (1 Cor. 10:12), however, because he is now saved and belongs to Christ, the imperative of salvation must rule out the possibility of engaging in sin (Rom. 8:12). The imperative is the need to manifest in the present life, what already has been accomplished in Christ. Whilst the believer is a new creation, he must choose to live his life in line with this nature, since the full realization of this work is still an eschatological reality. It is a source of motivation for the believer to remain consistently committed to God. Salvation is therefore the beginning of a new life (a present reality) and an expected end to sin (eschatological consummation). This is the pinnacle of Pauline soteriology that the very essence of salvation lies in the promised return of Christ, at which point, a convergence of the present and future realities will take place. It will be the final dissipation of the old age and the full manifestation of the new age in Christ that has already begun. This eschatological expectation brings with it a warning of judgment (1 Thess. 5:9). The believer is guaranteed freedom from judgment reserved for those outside of Christ, whilst still

being accountable for his actions, from the point of salvation (1 Cor. 3:13; 2 Cor. 5:10). It is at the point of the final consummation, that an end will be brought to sin and death. The promise to every believer, is to be in the presence of the Lord forever (1 Cor. 15:42). Glorification will become a reality when the mortal body of the believer becomes immortal. This is the context by which Paul understood a new creation in Christ – all things have become new.³⁴⁵

5.6. Union with Christ

A new creation in Christ is best understood by Paul's concept of the believer's union with Christ. It is this aspect that we now turn our attention to. There are varying definitions that have been suggested in defining what exactly is meant by union with Christ. John Murray ventured to explain it as an inclusive term that embraces the whole of salvation. He considered it as the central component of truth within soteriology, in both its definition and application. He asserted that union with Christ has its origin in God the Father and will reach fruition, at the time of glorification in Christ.³⁴⁶ He accordingly writes,

“Union with Christ has its source in the election of God the Father before the foundation of the world and has its fruition in the glorification of the sons of God. The perspective of God's people is not narrow; it is broad and it is long. It is not confined to time and space; it has the expanse of eternity. Its orbit has two foci, one the electing love of God the Father in the counsels of eternity; the other glorification with Christ in the manifestation of his glory. The former has no beginning, the latter has no end...”³⁴⁷

H.R. Mackintosh agreed with Murray's view, stating that union with Christ refers to an inclusive term that the Apostles used to describe salvation. Albert Schweitzer contended that union with Christ, “...is the source of everything connected with

³⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 256-262.

³⁴⁶ Murray, John. 1955. *Redemption – Accomplished and Applied*. Grand Rapids: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing. pp. 161, 201,205.

³⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 164.

redemption.”³⁴⁸ Lewis Benedict Smedes defined this union as, the essential building blocks or that which holds together, true Christian living.³⁴⁹ Grudem offers the following statement in definition, “Union with Christ is a phrase used to summarize several different relationships between believers and Christ, through which Christians receive every benefit of salvation. These relationships include the fact that we are in Christ, Christ is in us, we are like Christ, and we are with Christ.”³⁵⁰ Union with Christ embodies the idea of the believer’s oneness with Christ. It is often expressed as being ‘in’ Christ or Christ ‘in’ us. This union with Christ is considered an inclusive concept since it is functional of the Trinity. The believer is in union with Christ and as such is in union with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Thus union with Christ is a two-fold application i.e. Christ in and/or with the believer and the believer in and/or with Christ. Consider some of the following references: -

a) Christ in and/or the believer

- “And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness” (Rom. 8:10).
- “...that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love...” (Eph. 3:17).
- “You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4).
- “To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27).
- “I am with you always, to the close of the age” (Matt. 28:20).
- “Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matt. 18:20).

³⁴⁸ Schweitzer, Albert. 1931. *The Mysticism of Paul*, (trans.) William Montgomery. Grand Rapids: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing. p. 124.

³⁴⁹ Smedes, L.B. 1970. *All Things Made New: A Theology of Man’s Union with Christ*. Grand Rapids: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing. p.7.

³⁵⁰ Grudem, W. 1994. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing. p. 840.

b) *The believer in and/or Christ*

- “We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we have heard of your faith in Christ” (Col. 1:3-4).
- “For as in Adam, so in Christ all will be made alive” (1 Cor. 15:22).
- “... And the dead in Christ will rise first” (1 Thess. 4:16).
- “I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. For in him you have been enriched in every way...” (1 Cor. 1:4-5).
- “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Cor. 5:17).
- “He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit” (John 15:5).
- “I have been crucified with Christ, it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me” (Gal. 2:20).
- “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (Eph. 2:10).
- “You were buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead” (Col. 2:12).
- Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly places with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For He chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight” (Eph. 1:3-4).

Apart from the overt references to the union with Christ in the use of the ‘in Christ’ phrase, other metaphors or images are used. For example the intimacy or closeness of the believer’s union with Christ is expressed in: - 1) Christ as the head and the church as his body (Eph. 1:22-23; 4:15-16). 2) The church as the bride and Christ as the bridegroom (Eph. 5:22-25; Rev. 19:7). 3) Christ as the foundation or rock and the believer as the labourers or builders upon this foundation (1 Cor. 3:11-15). This union is suggestive of the impartation of divine strength or power to the believer from Christ (Phil. 1:21; 4:13). Johannine theology contains a similar understanding of the believer’s relationship with Christ as a union. For example, the communion imagery wherein the believer is encouraged to partake of the body and blood of Christ in the possession of eternal life (John 6:53-54); the relationship between the sheep and the

shepherd, the sheep “know” (*ginoskousi*) the voice of the Shepherd (John 10:14-15); the relationship of the vine and the branches or abiding in Christ (John 15:4). In all of the above examples an intimate union is implied between Christ and the believer. In all these examples a response or action is required on the believer’s part.³⁵¹

5.6.1. The “in Christ” formula

The ‘in Christ’ (*en Christo*) formula or phrase is one of the notable elements of Pauline theology. Similar phrases include ‘in Christ Jesus’ (*en Christo Iesou*) and ‘in the Lord’ (*en to kyrio*). Scholars over the preceding centuries have engaged in constant debate as to the exact nature of Paul’s understanding in usage of this phrase. Gustav Adolf Deismann (1886 –1937) conducted a notable study on the theological significance of the ‘in Christ’ phrase. Deismann asserted that this phrase occurred in the Pauline epistles 164 times, which was challenged by H.R. Mackintosh stating that it occurred 240 times. This disparity in the number of times this phrase occurs proves questionable, however, one may agree that its frequency suggests an important soteriological implication. J.L. Garret explains the theological nature of the phrase by advocating six reasons in support: - 1) It is an expression used by Paul to convey God’s past, present and future work in Christ. 2) It is an expression of Christian attitudes and actions. 3) It was used in the Pauline Epistles to minister, encourage and appeal to the readers. 4) It can be understood in relation to Paul’s fellow believers and workers. 5) Paul used it to express the singular unity that all believers together constitute. The reference would therefore relate to the church as the body of Christ. 6) It was used in reference to family life.³⁵² Deismann maintained that Paul was the inventor or originator of this phrase. J.K.S. Reid, J.S. Stewart and C.H. Anderson Scott all shared the similar critique, that whilst this phrase is frequently used in the Pauline Epistles, it is not unique to the Apostle. Reid argued that this phrase ‘in Christ’ (the preposition *en*) is unique to Paul in its syntactical usage but a synonymous phrase ‘with Christ’ (the preposition *meta*) is frequent in the Synoptic

³⁵¹ Garret, James Leo. 1996. *Systematic Theology: Biblical, Historical and Evangelical*. Grand Rapids: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing Company. pp. 332-334.

³⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 331.

Gospels.³⁵³ Deismann advocated a mystical approach to understanding Paul's use of 'in Christ.' He cited 2 Corinthians 3:17 "Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" as an indication of the relationship between Christ and the Spirit. He used the term "Spirit-Christ" in explanation of the mystical union that the believer enters into the experience of. The "Spirit-Christ" is ethereal in nature, possessing no earthy or material body. It is divine effulgence that constitutes the "Spirit-Christ", which is the new environment of the believer. This union of the believer and Christ is analogous in comparison to air; as we exist in the air and the air is in us, so to the believer is in Christ and Christ is in the believer.³⁵⁴ Deismann explained the phrase 'in Christ', as a referring to the mystical union or fellowship between the believer and Christ. This view has been accepted in its basic meaning. Johannes Weiss shared a similar view to Deismann, using a "Christ-mysticism" approach. Weiss held to an immaterial understanding of this union stating that it is comparable to a "formless, impersonal, all-penetrating being."³⁵⁵ Other scholars differed with Deismann's mystical approach, suggesting alternative views. C.A.A. Scott asserted to this union, as the locus of a type of dwelling place or habitation for the believer, whilst considering the union of Christ and the church as a viable tenet.³⁵⁶ William Morgan argued against a singular meaning as Deismann had postulated. He believed that the phrase has a plurality or elasticity of meaning.³⁵⁷ As indicated above, a similar phrase is "with Christ" as the compound Greek verb prefix 'syn' conveys. The idea of this compound verb prefix implies communal or shared action. At times, it can also function as a preposition.

³⁵³ Reid, J.K.S. (trans.) 1963. *Our Life in Christ*, Library of History and Doctrine. Philadelphia: Westminster Press. pp. 15-16.

³⁵⁴ Deismann, Adolf. 1926. *Paul: A Study in Social and Religious History*. 2nd ed. New York: Harper Publishing. p. 142.

³⁵⁵ Weiss, Johannes. 1937. *The History of Primitive Christian Thought*. Vol. II. New York: Wilson – Erickson Inc. pp. 463-464, 405.

³⁵⁶ Garret, J.L., *Systematic Theology: Biblical, Historical and Evangelical*, p. 332.

³⁵⁷ Morgan, William. 1917. *The Religion and Theology of Paul*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark. pp. 117-119.

The following texts indicate this: -

- “I have been crucified with (*Christo synestauromai*) Christ” (Gal. 2:20)
- “Therefore, if you died with (*apethanete syn Christo*) Christ from the basic principles of the world...” (Col. 2:20)
- “But God, who is rich mercy... even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with (*synezoopoiesen to Christo*) Christ...” (Eph. 2:4-5).

What then, is the central meaning of this phrase? The central idea is an intimate relationship or closeness in fellowship that the believer consciously has with Christ, through active engagement. Paul indicates the closeness that the believer has with Christ in: - the experience of his divine love (Rom. 8:39); the experience of righteousness, peace and joy in the Spirit’s power, as a part of a new life in Christ (Rom. 14:17); the impartation of peace (Phil. 4:7) and the nature of true contentment in Christ (Phil. 4:13). Scholars have argued that the understanding should not be interpreted in a narrow sense, but should be broadly inclusive, since many texts assert to a collective union. This collective union is understood in the sense of Christ and the church (Gal. 1:22); the ministers, labourers or workers are said to exercise their ministry in Christ (1 Cor. 4:15); the body of Christ (Rom. 12:5); all believers are seen as one in Christ (Gal. 3:28). Another train of thought emphasizes the objective nature of this union, that is, the redemptive work of Christ cannot be attributed to any human being. This falls outside of an attempt to classify union with Christ as mystical or even ecclesiological. In other words, it is a divine act of God based on his sovereignty. Scripture testifies to this divine act that God wrought in Christ Jesus: - 1) we are chosen by God in Christ (Eph. 1:4). 2) We are reconciled with God through Christ (1 Cor. 5:19). 3) We are justified in Christ (Gal. 2:17). 4) We have been granted open access to God as our Father (Eph. 2:12). 5) We have forgiveness of sins through Him (Eph. 4:32). We find the new creation concept evident in this phrase that Paul uses. It is an attempt by the Apostle to compare and contrast two differing ages i.e. the old and the new. Inherent to the old age is the first Adam defined by sinfulness with the end of humanity’s demise being death. Christ defines the new age by bringing the believer into righteousness and eternal life (1 Cor. 15:22; Rom. 5:12ff).

The 'in Christ' phrase is considered as a description of the position that the believer occupies in the salvation history situation or the *heilsgeschichtlich*, which is enabled by the union with Christ. Paul saw the believer in union with Christ through his death and resurrection and is brought into the experience of Christ's work. The believer's union with Christ is eschatological in nature since the new age has begun. It is progressively moving toward the eschatological consummation of the believer's union with Christ.³⁵⁸ Our definitive statement that Paul used in his second epistle to the Corinthians "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new", must be read in light of this context. A new creation is a part of a new aeon that has begun in and through the person and work of Christ. The necessity of a person being 'in Christ' is the operative condition for transitioning into a new life. To be 'in Christ' commences with conversion through repentance and faith. It progresses through regeneration as the work of the Holy Spirit; it is actualized in the believer through sanctification and perseverance. This suggests that the believer is already in union with Christ because of his acceptance, but he must now appropriate the results, by daily submission to Christ. It will reach finality at the coming of Christ, in glorification. To be 'in Christ' necessitates that the believer understand and accept, that whilst the old has passed away, it has not yet been removed. He exists in a spiritual paradox, since he is a new creation in nature but has to manifest his new identity in his daily behaviour or conduct. He exists as a new creation symbolic of a new age in the midst of an old aeon. He is able to see the effect of the old age on those outside of Christ as compared to those who are in Christ. This should become a source of motivation for the proclamation of the gospel to enable others to enter into the new life that begins in Christ.

5.6.2. Inadequate Models of the Union with Christ

We have already established what being 'in Christ' means. We now consider some of the models that have developed in an attempt to explain what the nature of this union

³⁵⁸ Ladd, G.E. 1974. *A Theology of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing. pp. 481-483.

could be. Each model posits an emphasis of specific aspects, but fall short of offering a balanced view. As such, they can be deemed as inadequate in explaining, what union with Christ means.

5.6.2.1. The Metaphysical Model

The metaphysical model explains union as the human being sharing in the divine essence of God. To put it differently, the human being cannot exist apart from the divine and has no real existence. This view is not restricted to the believer only, but all humanity is said to experience this union. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin states that Christ is in union with all humanity because of creation and not redemption.³⁵⁹ Christ is therefore one with us, whilst also living in us. This is akin to the immanence of God in creation i.e. a pantheistic notion. It is clearly contrary to the biblical standpoint that union with Christ is applicable to the believer only (Rom. 10:9-10).

5.6.2.2. The Mystical Model

This model purports to a mystical or absorption understanding in which the believer is completely absorbed into Christ so as to lose his identity. It suggests the nature of this union being so intense the individual loses complete awareness or consciousness of self. He is possessed or taken over by Christ who now lives through him. The believer is yielded to Christ as his instrument of use in body, soul and spirit. The mystical absorptive model was a belief of traditional Christianity, with Augustine of Hippo, Gregory the Great and Bernard of Clairvaux, holding to such a view.³⁶⁰ John Eckhart (c. 1260-1328) offered a definition of union of God as the abandonment and renunciation of self. He added that the union must be sought with the Godhead and not with God. Related to the mystical model is a similar approach termed 'deification', which in some sense refers to the believer or disciple as divine. This was based on the textual reference of 2 Peter 1:4, that we have become partakers of the divine nature. This approach was termed salvific deification.³⁶¹ The problem with

³⁵⁹ De Chardin, P.T. 1959. *The Phenomenon of Man*. New York: Harper Publishing. pp. 296-297.

³⁶⁰ Garret, James Leo. 1995. *Systematic Theology: Biblical, Historical and Evangelical*. Grand Rapids: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing Company. pp. 335-336.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 336.

this view is its removal of the element of choice in union with Christ. The believer is able to enter into this union by choice and is given the responsibility in the subjective aspects of salvation. To state that Christ totally absorbs the believer into this union removes both choice and personal responsibility. The individual merely becomes a puppet in the hands of Christ. This is contradictory to Paul's thinking in Romans 5 that sin came in by Adam's choice and it is by Christ's choice that humanity is restored. It also suggests that the believer is just a passive recipient in the salvation process. This is at odds with scriptures like Acts 1:8 and John 14:12, that assert the active involvement of a disciple of Christ. The disciple must choose to respond to Christ in fulfilling his commandments. Anything otherwise, does not lend itself to true worship or service.

5.6.2.3. The Psychological Model

This model sees union as a relationship of intimacy between two friends or individuals. It implies a shared closeness and intimacy. This shared intimacy creates a psychological bond between both persons. It results in a commitment to the same goals or ideals. It is referred to as a sympathetic oneness.³⁶² Christ exercises influence over the believer through instruction, as a teacher with a student. Here the union is based on emotion or closeness. The problem herein, is the associative type of understanding that it suggests of the union with Christ. It is much more than mere friendship and is not a loose arrangement. It transcends emotion and implies a change of nature. It is a life-to-life impartation that occurs in this union with both Christ and the disciple being actively involved (John 14:23).

5.6.2.4. The Sacramental Model

Roman Catholic theology asserts to the central role of the sacraments or the Eucharist, in the believer's union with Christ. It is understood in a literal sense. Thomas Aquinas developed this teaching adding that the sacraments are a form of ecclesiastical unity, which occurs from being one in Christ. This model draws on the teachings of John 6:52-58, Matthew 26:26-28, Luke 22:19-20 and Mark 14:22-24, in

³⁶² Lewis, C.S. 1960. *The Four Loves*. New York: Harcourt Brace. pp. 96-97.

which the disciple is encouraged to eat of the flesh (body) and drink of the blood of Christ in becoming one with him.³⁶³ This is symbolized in the sacraments. The essential thought of the sacramental model proves useful, since Christ admonishes it. It is to be shared in, as a form of union with him, as the above scriptural references would indicate. However, the problem lies in taking this view literally and viewing it as the central component of this union. The sacraments are intended to encourage and strengthen faith in Christ. It is the means to an end i.e. fellowship with Christ. It is a part of the composite whole of salvation in lieu of the ordinances of the church. The other problem that arises is that the one who administers the sacraments is not taken into account. It would contradict the high priestly role of Christ as the one true mediator of a new covenant (Heb. 9:23-10:25).

5.6.2.5. D.M. Baillie's Paradoxical Model

Donald M. Baillie developed a theology that emphasized the work of God in Christ as reconciling the world to himself. Baillie's work entitled 'God was in Christ' examined this view, using as a central text 2 Corinthians 5:18-19, "Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that *God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself*, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation." Baillie's emphasis rested on God in Christ, as opposed to Christ as God, involved in the work of reconciliation. He explains the need for a paradox of the incarnation of Christ, since any attempt to understand its workings renders it useless or valueless. It is then relegated to a mysterious occurrence. To remove the paradoxical element is to eliminate the very nature of the incarnation. He added that the incarnation should not be isolated from the paradox of the Christian faith. This is the essential connection. He cites the need for a theology of relevance and not one that is mysterious or irrational. The only way that one may understand God or engage in relationship with him is through the adoption of a paradoxical faith. It is a type of antinomy, which is the admittance of truth in two contradictory and logically

³⁶³ Garret, James Leo. 1996. *Systematic Theology: Biblical, Historical and Evangelical*. Grand Rapids: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing Company. pp. 334-335.

incompatible terms. It is however, ontologically necessary to aide in developing an understanding of God. In other words, it acknowledges the incarnation as a mystery, which cannot be logically explained, yet is appropriated and made practically relevant to the believer. God cannot be understood objectively, since he defies human explanation. The problem, according to Baillie, is that theology attempts to objectify God by ascribing human ideas and thoughts in order to explain God. He terms this an 'I-It' type of relationship. The only way to maintain an objective approach to God without becoming illogical is by virtue of a paradox.³⁶⁴ To this end Baillie asserts the necessity of this approach to the incarnation by stating,

"The reason why the element of paradox comes into all religious thought and statement is because God cannot be comprehended in any human words or in any of the categories of our finite thought. God can be known only in a direct personal relationship, an 'I-and-Thou' intercourse, in which He addresses us and we respond to Him. As it has sometimes been put, God cannot legitimately be 'objectified.'... yet we cannot know God by studying Him as an object, of which we can speak in the third person, in an 'I-It' relationship, from a spectator attitude."³⁶⁵

With this understanding, he proceeds to introduce what he termed 'the central paradox' or 'the paradox of grace' as constituting the core or heart of the Christian faith. He cited Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 15:10, "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me", as an example of the paradox of grace. Baillie believed that God acts and lives through us, when we are most dependent on him and that the divine always precedes the human. By this he meant that any act of goodness on the part of a human being must be attributed to God since goodness is in the nature of God. Thus good actions on the part of the human being are only because of God's grace that has enabled them to do so. When a

³⁶⁴ Baillie, D.M. 1961. *God was in Christ: An Essay on Incarnation and Atonement*. London: Faber & Faber Limited. pp. 106-108.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

Christian is able to accomplish a good thing, he should acknowledge that it was not he, but God working through him. Paul's popular statement in Galatians 2:20 that he was crucified with Christ and that it is no longer he who lives but Christ in him, is taken as support of this argument as a form of union with Christ. Baillie relates this to the union with Christ, by stating that God chose human nature uniting it with his divine life, in order to personalize human existence, which in turn makes clear his very nature. The incarnation is thus an example of a perfect union between God and man. Understanding this union, unlocks the possibilities of deeper Christian living. Baillie considers Christ in terms of his humanity as "the man in whom God was incarnate surpassing all other men in refusing to claim anything for Himself independently and ascribing all goodness to God."³⁶⁶ The man, Christ by virtue of his incarnation also sought to draw other men through himself into union with God. In summary then, the basis of Baillie's argument is that God was in Christ reconciling the world, the emphasis being God's inner working in the man, Christ to accomplish his good work. Similarly, the paradox of grace suggests that in the same way Christ is in man, uniting humanity with God. Any accomplishment or virtue of goodness in the believer is only because the divine grace of God, that has enabled it to be possible. Baillie's model shares similar reasoning as the mystical union model; Christ indwells the believer working through him and in him accomplishing every good work. In terms of Baillie's model the union of the believer and Christ lies in the internal working of God's power in the believer just as God worked in Christ in reconciling the world. There are several problems with Baillie's model. Firstly, it diminishes the deity of Christ whilst emphasizing the incarnation in humanity. Secondly, it is contradictory to the scriptural account of the preexistence of Christ (John 1:18: 8:58), and to the fullness of God dwelling in Jesus bodily (Col. 2:9). Thirdly, it denies the constitutional unity of Christ i.e. both divine and human natures in one person. Fourthly, it mystifies the nature of the relationship between Christ and the believer, as merely the indwelling power of God. In the same vein, it also reduces the incarnation of Christ to merely an indwelling of God's presence. Fifthly, should we accede to Baillie's view that it was God working in Christ reconciling the world to himself, it

³⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 117.

would imply that Christ's redemptive work was not an act of choice on his part. He was simply used by God indwelling him to accomplish redemption. This is clearly a contradiction to the general teaching of scripture on the incarnation. Lastly, the very essence of a new creation in Christ underpins the new life that the believer has entered into and he chooses to serve God by manifesting good works. Good works follows faith. To argue that the believer is unable to do any good thing based on his own choice, limits the work of salvation. It would mean that although salvation has been accomplished in Christ, the believer is not empowered by the Spirit of God to live as a new creation, as an act of choice.

5.6.3. The Significance of Union with Christ

There are several things that can be noted concerning the significance of the believer's union with Christ. Firstly, it is a union with Christ, the crucified and risen Lord. The redemptive work of Christ enables us to enter into a restored relationship with God. Based on this we are accounted as righteous before God (Rom. 8:1). Thus to be in Christ is to be in a judicial union with him. This implies that God accounts the righteousness of Christ to the believer and views both the believer and Christ as essentially one. Secondly, this union is actuated through the person and work of the Holy Spirit. For example, "You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you" (Rom. 8:9-11). Paul uses the titles 'Spirit', 'Spirit of God' and 'Spirit of Christ or Christ' interchangeably. His intention is simply, to indicate the supernatural working of the Spirit who dwells in the believer, is the bond in the union with Christ.³⁶⁷ The Spirit is the vital link in the transformation process in the life of the believer. He empowers, guides, comforts and teaches the believer (John 14). Thirdly, it is a union

³⁶⁷ Murray, John. 1955. *Redemption – Accomplished and Applied*. Grand Rapids: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing. p. 166.

with God the Father, since Jesus affirmed that to see and know him is to see and know the Father (John 1:18; 14:9; Eph. 1:3-6). Fourthly, an analogous understanding of the union with Christ is the relationship between husband and wife. The biblical affirmation is that the two (husband and wife) shall become one flesh (union) although they are two separate individuals. Oneness implies closeness, intimacy, a common understanding and love for one another in this collective unity. Fifthly, union with Christ releases life and/or strength to the believer (Phil. 4:13; Gal 2:20). Christ draws on the example of the vine and the branches (John 15:4). He referred to himself as the True Vine and to the believer as the branches. The analogy is a natural one in the life of the vine being transmitted to the branches through the flow of sap and nutrients. This enables the branches to remain alive and to become productive. Similarly, the believer is in union with Christ and receives life from Christ. He is strengthened to live, face and overcome the challenges of life and to be productive. Sixthly, union with Christ means that the believer will experience suffering in this life (Mark 10:39; John 15:20; Phil. 3:8-10; 1 Pet. 4:13). Christ encouraged his disciples with this notion of suffering by indicating their identification with him in suffering. He added that suffering is intended to build character in revealing the glory of God. This end result of suffering is the triumphant reign of the believer with Christ (2 Tim. 2:12; Luke 22:30).³⁶⁸

5.7. Conclusion

This chapter examined the concept of a new creation in Christ. We established that in Christ a new humanity has begun. Christ is the initiator of a new age, and of new life that the believer is able to enter into the experience of, at the moment of salvation. The old aeon still remains but no longer has power over those in Christ. The new nature is initial, progressive and final. It has begun and must be daily actualized in the disciple's life, through the application of the subjective aspects of salvation. A new creation is a new type of humanity characteristic of the inauguration of a kingdom lifestyle (Matt. 6:33) whose principles, ethics and very nature are antithetical to the

³⁶⁸ Erickson, M.J. 2000. *Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Publishing. pp. 965-966.

old sinful age. It is the restoration of true humanity, as Adam existed in the pre-fall state. Paul understood a new creation as referring to an individual disciple of Christ that has experienced transformation. Judith A. Stevens considered the new creation reference in three underlying components that constitute a profile of a new creation personhood.³⁶⁹ The first component is the initial change that has occurred in a new believer in Christ. This change is necessary, for the new believer to proceed further in attaining the other two components for full personhood. Paul's address of a new creation is considered as a message to an audience of believers that have already experienced a personal change, through their acceptance of Christ. It was a radical change for the believer's acceptance of Christ, as the only means of redemption (Rom. 5-8). It meant an abandonment of all previously held religious notions of attaining salvation or approaching the divine. To accept Christ meant a dogmatic adherence, in a positive sense, to the full profession of faith in him. The component of initial change, according to Paul, would have already brought about a fundamental change to the very nature of the person. The individual would now adopt a completely different ethical, moral and spiritual paradigm for living. This change is something occurring at the core identity level of personhood. This transformation of personhood can be described as a '*kairos event*'.³⁷⁰ It is an individual's encounter, with the risen Christ in his death and resurrection, which brings internal change to the fundamental structure of personhood or human nature. This is in my estimate, in line with Paul's thinking that a new creation begins at the time of salvation. This *kairos event* alters the consciousness of the believer, so that he should no longer identify with his past habits or former sinful lifestyle. He is now called to walk in the Spirit (Rom. 7:4-6) in a positive sense, to become a productive believer. In a negative sense, he is called to completely abandon the former sinful nature, evident in one's lifestyle (1 Cor. 6:9-11). What then were Paul's specific intentions, as well as his overall

³⁶⁹ Judith A. Stevens. "Paul and the New Creation", in Paul's Construction of Soma and Selfhood: A Feminist Critique. Ph.D Dissertation, New Testament. New York: Union Theological Seminary. [Http://gbgm-umc.org/umw/corinthians/newcreation.stm](http://gbgm-umc.org/umw/corinthians/newcreation.stm)

³⁷⁰ A *kairos event* is a term I prefer to use to denote a radical transformation, which takes place in a believer's life. It occurs at the time of conversion, special calling and even the defining moments of the progressive Christian walk. The Greek word *kairos* in its more simplistic sense suggests an opportune, definitive moment, a time for proper response and proper action. As used in this context, it is a transforming moment at the time of conversion in relating to a new creation.

intention, in his reference to a new life in Christ? Clearly, it was not to convert them as the nature of his expressions and remarks in his epistles, particularly to the *Corinthians, Romans and the Galatians*, indicate that they already were converted. Instead, it was to steer them toward a new life that has already begun in Christ.

It required effort in manifesting this new nature and living accordingly, in character, action and word. Paul achieves this purpose by his use of positive and negative addresses, in explaining what it truly meant to be 'in Christ' and what it did not mean (1 Cor. 6:9-11; Gal. 5:16-26; Rom. 7:4-6).³⁷¹

The second component is that which relates to the character of the believer. In other words, what are the types of virtues or characteristics that a believer should exhibit, as a new creation? Robin Scroggs³⁷², Hans Deter Betz³⁷³ amongst others, pointed out that common to Paul's day was the influence of Greek and Roman philosophy. These philosophies employed lists of ethics, morals or virtues that were to be pursued in attaining true personhood, as well as those vices or evils to be avoided. This differed amongst the various schools of philosophy that emphasized some virtues over others. Paul indicates the type of virtues that a believer should exhibit and the vices to be avoided in *Galatians 5:16-26*. He parallels this with *1 Corinthians 13*. Paul referred to these virtues as 'fruit of the Spirit', which suggests that it is a divine empowerment by the Spirit of God. The believer, by virtue of his union with Christ in salvation, receives the Holy Spirit who enables him to live a life in sync with his new nature in Christ. The Holy Spirit is the empowering agency of these fruit or virtues, in development of the character of a person. Paul understood character as that which developed in the furnace of affliction, trials and sufferings. This produced and tested the character of a believer, thus the fruit of the Spirit, comes only from the Spirit. This means the fruit have to be developed or realized in the believer. This is accomplished by his cooperation, in choosing to walk in line with and submit to, the

³⁷¹ Judith A. Stevens. "Paul and the New Creation", in *Paul's Construction of Soma and Selfhood: A Feminist Critique*. Ph.D Dissertation, New Testament. New York: Union Theological Seminary. [Http://gbgm-unc.org/umw/corinthians/newcreation.stm](http://gbgm-unc.org/umw/corinthians/newcreation.stm)

³⁷² Scroggs, Robin. 1977. *Paul For a New Day*. Philadelphia: Fortress. p. 66.

³⁷³ Betz, Hans Deter. 1979. *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letters to the Churches in Galatia*. p. 281.

Spirit's guidance (Gal. 5:25). This negates the view, that the fruit of the Spirit is not an instantaneous occurrence in the believer, at the time of conversion. Paul lists nine fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23 as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. The component of character in the disciple must exhibit these fruit whilst avoiding the vices that Paul lists in Galatians 5:16-21. A new creation is progressively realized in the believer thorough the exhibiting of these fruit by the Spirit's power. The unifying element or abiding force of all these virtues, argues Paul in 1 Corinthians 13, is love. Paul in his writings emphasizes the unfathomable depths of the love of Christ (2 Cor. 5:14, 20). The believer is called to express this love with others irrespective of their response or attitude. A new creation in Christ means that the person is now both transformed and empowered by the love of Christ to live a new life in Christ.³⁷⁴

The third component places the believer within a community of similar persons that have encountered the risen Christ. The community of the redeemed is the communal social and relational kingdom life that governs all believers. It places emphasis on how they relate to God, to one another and to the world at large. The believer, who is now changed at conversion, progressively develops in character, the fruit of the Spirit. He is poised to relate from this basis to the above-mentioned relational terms (1 Cor.12: 12-26; Rom. 12:4-5). Paul drew on the analogy of the human body to express the unity of the body of Christ or the community of Christ (1 Cor. 12:27; Rom. 12:5). He expresses unity in diversity of function as in the human body so to he admonishing an adoption of this understanding, by the Corinthian believers. All persons are equally important contributing in whatever capacity they are enabled to do so, to the unity of the body of Christ. Thus, individuals that have been redeemed and begin their lives as a new creation in Christ are called to display this new lifestyle in their character. Collectively, they form a new creation community. They are called to exercise this new life, as individuals in community and community in individuals. This sets the platform for the ultimate expression of a new creation, which is the fulfillment of the *missio Dei* or the gospel proclamation.

³⁷⁴ Ibid.,

The aim of which, is to bring others into the encounter with the crucified and risen Christ (Matt. 28:18-20). Lewis Smedes comments aptly describe the essence of a new creation in Christ. He states, "Christ communicates Himself in a way that changes us without diminishing us, transforms us without deifying us, Christianizes us without making us Christs."³⁷⁵

³⁷⁵ Smedes, L. 1970. *All Things Made New: A Theology of Man's Union with Christ*. Grand Rapids: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing Company. p. 188.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

6. Introduction

A new creation in Christ has been the subject of our discussion in this dissertation. We now consider retrospectively the key elements of our discussion, before proceeding to the concluding aspects of this dissertation. The title “A New creation in Christ” served as the paradigm for developing an investigation into the fundamental aspects of the doctrines of creation, humanity, sin and salvation. This involved an evaluation of the differing theological views and delineations within these doctrines. It is against this background that we were able to delve into a discussion of the Pauline concept of a new creation in Christ. Fundamental to this dissertation is the necessity of a holistic perspective on the biblical creation account of humanity. We surmise from the Genesis account that humanity was created in the image of God, thus a special creation of God, with a definite purpose of fellowship with God and stewardship over creation. Sin disrupted the continuum of humanity’s fellowship with God and negatively impacted all of creation. The fall of humanity placed them in separation from God and in possession of a sinful nature. Central to this was the act of the first Adam, the progenitor of the human race, who by his sinful deed effectively brought all of humanity into the experience of the burden of sin. Paul’s statement in his second epistle to the Corinthians “If any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come” (5:17) defines the dawn of the redemption of humanity. It captures in a single statement the entire scope of God’s eternal plan of redemption- the Christ event, the breaking forth into human history of a new beginning for a hopeless situation. It conveys the full extent of the person and work of Jesus Christ, the incarnate God-man who willingly offered himself in achieving both reconciliation and restoration of humanity with God. A new creation is therefore a new humanity that has begun in Christ, a return to the pre-fall state that Adam possessed. This new creation is by no means limited to humanity but is connected to all of creation. The condition of entrance into a new life requires that a person enter into union with Christ, to be ‘in Christ’ is to accept salvation as the means of redemption for self and restoration with God. This encompasses the

subjective and objective aspects of salvation as discussed in chapter four. Paul's statement is implicit in its conveyance of a new life that the believer enters into upon conversion. Whilst the new has begun, it is not a passive involvement by merely accepting salvation. It requires an active engagement to progressively realize in this present life, what has already been accomplished in Christ. A new creation is the acceptance of the objective work of Christ i.e. that which could not have been accomplished with any human effort, except by the personal intervention of a gracious and loving Creator. This includes regeneration, union with Christ, justification, and adoption. It is the active participation of the believer in salvation beginning with repentance and faith, the continuance thereof in sanctification and perseverance. Paul is explicit in his reference to "... old has passed away, behold, the new has come", the implication is a new aeon or order has already come in Christ. It has surpassed the old, effectively replacing it, by removing the penalty of sin. It is a new life typifying the kingdom of God, wherein the dynamic rule of God is established in and through the lives of its subjects. There is an eschatological dimension to this new age, in that sin still exists even though the new has come. Captured in this understanding is the promised final deliverance of all creation from the decay of sin, replacing it with the new age that has come; however, the difference will be the full manifestation of this new life with a complete expression of the kingdom of God. A tension exists between the old age of sin and the coming of a new age in Christ, as both are realities in this present world. To convey this in a simplistic sense would be to consider the position of a person either in the old or the new age. To use Paul's words, those in Christ are become new, the old has passed away, no longer having power over them. Sin is still a reality to the new creation but its power has been nullified. Dietrich Phillip, a sixteenth century Anabaptist writer, understood salvation in Christ as expressed in a new birth. His comments were specifically addressed at countering water baptism as a form of regeneration or new birth. They prove useful in succinctly capturing the essence of a new creation concept, akin to a new birth understanding.

In this regard, Dietrich Phillip states,

“ This rebirth does not take place outwardly, but in the understanding (*Verstant*), mind (*Sin*), and the heart of man. It is in the understanding and the mind that man learns to know the eternal love and gracious God in Christ Jesus...Here is an entirely new man, a new heart, mind, and feeling (*Ghemoet*), a child of God, and an heir of the Kingdom of Heaven covenanted (*verbonden*) with God, born anew of God, strengthened by his power and ready for everlasting life...³⁷⁶

We shall now proceed with a brief summary of the central tenets of each chapter.

6.1. Summary of Chapters

6.1.1. Chapter One

This introductory chapter commenced with an exegetical approach to Psalm 8. It proved an apt starting point for the analysis of the significance of humanity. God made humanity and accorded to them the function of stewardship over creation. The dissertation scope was explorative of humanity in original creation, in contrast with fallen humanity and ultimately, restored humanity i.e. a new creation in Christ. The Psalmist succinctly captured the finiteness of humanity in comparison to the omnipotence of God, yet the essence of the Psalm focuses on God's bestowal of special grace upon humanity as his special creation. The biblical worldview of human nature and destiny are given credence in humanity created in the image of God. An overview of the doctrine of creation had its starting point in the traditional views of Irenaeus, Thomas Aquinas, the sixteenth century Reformers and the Newtonian worldview. The biblical views indicated in both the Old and New Testaments, define creation as a free act of God whereby in his own free will, brought the visible and invisible world into existence without the use of any preexisting materials. The nature of creation lies in the assertion of God's sovereignty in bestowing existence upon all creation. Creation and providence indicate that God did not create all things and then

³⁷⁶ Garret, James Leo. 1995. *Systematic Theology: Biblical, Historical and Evangelical*. Vol. 2. Grand Rapids: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing Company. p. 282.

abandon it. The relationship between God and creation can be construed as operational in a dualistic timeframe i.e. he created all things at a point in space and time; yet is personally involved in its continued sustenance. A survey of the Old Testament aided a conceptual understanding of the nature of creation. This survey included the Pentateuch, the Prophets and the Wisdom literature. The New Testament worldview of creation was expressed in the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles. The purpose of creation was defined in comparing the concepts of immediate and mediate creation. Immediate creation occurred *ex nihilo* or 'out of nothing' i.e. God brought the worlds into existence without the use of pre-existing materials for his own glory and purpose. This was compared to the pantheistic *ex Deo* or 'out of God' and the materialist *ex materia* or 'out of pre-existing material' views. Mediate creation redefines the *ex nihilo* view suggesting that God created out of pre-existing materials, simply re-forming or re-fashioning creation. For example, God could have created certain things in immediate creation such as the sun, seeds of plant life, waters etc. He later creates in a mediate sense by: - introducing alternate light apart from the sun, by commanding the earth to bring forth vegetation, and the bringing forth of living creatures. This same understanding would be applicable to the creation of man. The next area was the significance of creation resting in the sovereignty, freedom and goodness of God. This was followed by the consideration of creation as the work of the triune God and the contrary views on origins. Contemporary issues of creation looked at the astrophysical theories, evolutionary theories and creation science. The crisis of creation engaged with the effect of sin on the created order as evidence of a crisis of unsustainability i.e. diminishing capacity of the earth to continually sustain life in accordance with its natural resources. The development of this crisis was examined under its problems, causes and results. We concluded this chapter by considering the development of new creation ecology, the need to exercise responsibility, as restored stewards in Christ, taking care of the earth. The basis of this chapter is the understanding that God created humanity with a purpose and placed them within the context of creation. They were called to exercise responsibility over creation. The entrance of sin corrupted both humanity and creation. Humanity was created and placed in creation – a living dynamic. In Christ,

restoration of humanity has begun, whilst restoration of creation is awaiting future consummation.

6.1.2. Chapter Two

This chapter proceeded with dialogue on the doctrine of humanity beginning with the context of a covenantal partnership between God and man. This suggests that human beings are created in the image of God to live in covenant partnership with him. The search for self-understanding invariably brings to forefront, the question of identity. In other words, 'Who I am?' and 'Why am I here?' or 'What is the meaning of life?' These are essential core identity questions that humanity has asked itself in order to arrive at possible answers. This quest can only be answered within the parameters of a relationship with God. In other words, to know oneself requires knowing God. The entrance of sin affected human nature and destiny. To understand human nature is to understand the image of God, since the incarnation of Christ is testament to God taking on human form and human nature. It is essential to draw attention to the fact that our understanding of what constitutes human nature is gained from observation of oneself and other human beings. This is at best, a poor reflection of what God originally intended true humanity to be. The humanity of Christ is expressed in his incarnation, the necessity of which was to redeem mankind from the curse of sin. Christ came as the second Adam, a representative of humanity enabling him to identify with fallen man. The humanity of Christ demonstrates the nearness of God i.e. a personal Creator interested in fellowshiping with his creation. The incarnation nullifies the idea that God is far removed and unreachable. It proves he is immanent and reachable in and through Christ Jesus. The necessity of this doctrine is vital in understanding other related doctrines. It highlights the condition of fallen man and the consequential challenges of sin facing us today. A study of humanity enables greater effectiveness in understanding oneself and reaching out through the gospel to others. Theories of human nature examined a broad range of perspectives. This ranged from theories of humanity as a machine, as an animal, as a sexual being, as an economic being, as a pawn of the universe, as a free being and finally, as a social being. The biblical basis of humanity lay in the assertion of the specific intents and purposes of

God, as in his creation of man. Humanity is not a product of random occurrences in the universe but the result of God's intended plan. The origin of humanity introduced the reader to the scope of the debate in the various disciplines of the natural and behavioural sciences, as well as the theological perspective. The evolutionary hypothesis presented the basic arguments of the theory of evolution. The biblical record is abundant in references to the uniqueness of the creation of man. The image of God in humanity informs us where we have come from and who we essentially are. Humanity created in the image of God asserts that we have been made in the likeness of God with the intention of representing him. After the fall, man still possesses the image of God but not in the same capacity as before. Whilst we may still have the ability to represent God, sin distorts the true measure of this representation. Theories regarding the image of God in humanity included the substantive, relational and functional views. The original character of man is understood in terms of his moral, social and mental attributes. The unity and constitution of man considered the constitutional unity of man in terms of the immaterial and material elements. Differing views on the constitution of man were the dichotomous and trichotomous views and the theory of monism.

6.1.3. Chapter Three

The doctrine of sin was the focus of this chapter. The background to the fall of man was the starting point in defining the concept of sin. From our enumerations of the doctrine of humanity one may surmise the consequences of Adam's actions and the effect on the entire human race. The perpetuation of sin through the natural generations proceeding from Adam has negatively impacted all of humanity. This makes any study of sin vitally important in understanding how humanity has been affected by it, what the consequences are and how the person and work of Christ has effectively dealt with the problem of sin. Sin is a violation of the law of God. To consider the full implication of this statement required an overview of the law of God in two senses i.e. the elemental law and positive enactment. The definition of sin was further explicated in the biblical and theological explanations. Many differ as to what constitutes the nature of sin. Philosophical theories venture to offer the solutions of

differing theorists. The scriptural view of sin highlighted the character of sin and its effects on the sinner's relationship with God. Further considerations of sin included that of Pelagius, Roman Catholicism and theological categorizations. The source of sin discussed its origin in lieu of theories that developed in this regard i.e. the animal nature, anxiety of finiteness, existential estrangement, economic struggle, individualism and competitiveness, Jewish conceptions, agnosticism, semipelagianism and genetic transmission. The biblical position referred to the origin of sin in the fall of Lucifer and in the act of man's disobedience. The next area of this doctrine was the results of sin. The effect of sin on the sinner's relationship with God included divine disfavour, guilt, punishment and death. The results of sin affecting the sinner were enslavement, flight from reality, denial of sin, self-deceit, insensitivity, self-centeredness and restlessness. The effect of sin on other human beings was competition, the inability to empathize, rejection of authority and the inability to love. The magnitude of sin explored the extent of sin and its intensiveness. The last aspect of discussion under this doctrine was the social dimension of sin. It asked the question, how sin affects a collective society? The biblical view of sin made reference to the concepts of the world system, powers and corporate personality. Three elements were highlighted in dealing with the social dimension of sin i.e. regeneration, reform and revolution. The conclusion of this chapter explored the nature of temptation and its effect on man.

6.1.4. Chapter Four

This chapter introduced the doctrine of salvation, which considers the application of the redemptive work of Christ to the life of a believer. The new creation concept is best understood, as the new species or type of humanity that God inaugurated through Christ, as the means of restoring fellowship and purpose to fallen humanity. Salvation is the redemptive work wrought for all humanity but appropriated by those who choose to accept Christ. The referential points of salvation are threefold i.e. that which relates to God, to the human being and to the person and work of Christ. The promised redemption of God is highlighted by the messianic prophecies recorded in the Old Testament. The salvation plan of God is found in various typologies or

shadows of Christ and his redemptive work in human persons, events, offices and institutions. The New Testament is explicit in its references to God's plan of salvation. One may understand redemption simply as the ransom paid in exchange for the freedom of one in bondage. It is the initiative of God, based on his love to redeem all creation to himself, as an act of his sovereignty as Creator. He was under no compulsion or obligation to do so rather it was an act of divine love. We then proceeded to consider the models of redemption, which are complementary rather than individualistic. These included the sacrificial, vicarious, satisfaction and the new creation models, all of which posited an explanation of the nature of Christ's redemptive work. The early views of salvation presented were those of Irenaeus, Gregory of Nyssa, Anselm, Athanasius, Abelard, Augustine, Luther and Calvin. Contemporary views of salvation are an attempt by liberation theologians to contextualize salvation in response to social issues of their day. It becomes the approach of a situational soteriology. This included liberation, existential, secular, Roman Catholic and Evangelical theologies. The next area of consideration was controversial doctrine of predestination. Predestination refers to God's sovereign choice exercised over humanity, as to which persons are purposed for eternal life or eternal death. The historical development and differing views of this doctrine were delineated under the topic of predestination. Salvation is the application of the work of Christ to the life of a person. The concluding elements of the doctrine of salvation were the subjective and objective aspects. These aspects explained the processes involved in a believer's life from the time of conversion to its eventual consummation in glorification.

6.1.5. Chapter Five

Chapter five integrated the elements of the previous chapters offering a paradigm for developing a new creation theology. The doctrines of creation, humanity, sin and salvation are interrelated, as they form a composite picture of God's redemption of fallen humanity through Christ. The definitive text for our discussion was Paul's statement in 2 Corinthians 5:17 "If any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come." The definitive point of a new creation

in Christ is to consider the results of his redemptive work. Firstly, it is the establishment of a true humanity or a re-creation of humanity in an original pre-fall state. This inauguration of a new humanity that has begun in Christ, presupposes the passing away of the old unregenerate sinful nature stemming from the fall. It is the commencement of a new nature of righteousness and transformation into the image of Christ. God restores *true humanity in humanity* since the original nature was affected by the fall. He is the locus or the point of realization through which God establishes a new creation. Secondly, new birth or regeneration is the starting point for a new creation. It is a reversal of the old sinful nature not by addition but by transformation. *Inherent to regeneration is new life, which is brought on by the crucifying of the flesh or putting to death the old nature.* A new creation is not merely the introduction of a new nature, but it is also the counterforce to sinfulness of the old nature. Thirdly, the idea of newness is a pervading theme in both the Old and New Testaments. God accomplishes all things through salvation in achieving a new creation. Christ is the mediator of a new covenant. A cursory discussion of Pauline theology warranted an overview of Paul's thinking and background as a source of influence in his writings. Pauline Christology considered the representative function of Christ as the second Adam, the image of God and the first born of all creation. Pauline Soteriology highlighted the subjective and objective nature of salvation. Union with Christ was the next element of discussion. It embodies the idea of the believer's oneness with Christ and is often expressed as being 'in' Christ or Christ 'in' us. This involves two aspects i.e. Christ in and/or with the believer and the believer in and/or with Christ. There are accompanying metaphors that Paul uses in defining what he meant by being in Christ. The 'in Christ' (*en Christo*) formula or phrase is one of the notable elements of Pauline theology, which was discussed in relative detail. Scholars have offered different theories on the exact meaning of this phrase. Adolf Deismann advocated a mystical approach to understanding Paul's use of 'in Christ.' He used the term "Spirit-Christ" in explanation of the mystical union that the believer enters into the experience of. The "Spirit-Christ" is ethereal in nature, possessing no earthy or material body. It is divine effulgence that constitutes the "Spirit-Christ" which is the new environment of the believer. However, our review of this phrase asserted the

central idea of this phrase as an intimate relationship or closeness in fellowship that the believer consciously has with Christ, through active engagement. We considered the inadequate models of union with Christ i.e. the metaphysical, mystical, psychological, sacramental and D.M. Baillie's paradoxical models. These models posited an emphasis of specific aspects, but fall short of offering a balanced view. The significance of union with Christ lies in the believer's identification with Christ in his crucifixion and resurrection. The redemptive work of Christ enables us to enter into a restored relationship with God. This union is actuated through the person and work of the Holy Spirit. It is a union with God the Father, since Jesus affirmed that to see and know him is to see and know the Father. One may use an analogous understanding of the union with Christ in the relationship between husband and wife. Oneness implies closeness, intimacy, a common understanding and love for one another in this collective unity. Union with Christ releases life and/or strength to the believer. In conclusion, three underlying components that constitute a profile of a new creation personhood were considered.

6.2. A New Creation approach to Suffering

The issue under consideration before turning to a new creation model for praxis, is that of God and suffering humanity. This issue highlights the fragility of human life and the effect of sin in the world in which we live in. We examined in chapter one, in some length, the crisis of unsustainability and the effects on the physical world that forms the environment for the social interaction and existence of humanity. The main issues highlighted the post-fall fragility and decay of both, the created world and all the creatures therein. The Genesis account indicates that the central role accorded in creation is to the human being i.e. communion with God, stewardship over the earth and relationship with one another. How does one convey a new creation theology in a world of suffering? The nature of this consideration limits us to the issue of suffering and relates it to the focus of this dissertation. At this point we are unable to pursue in detail, the theological permutations governing the aspects of evil and how God relates or responds to it, except perhaps in the current context. The reality of sin transcends the abstract into a concrete realization when tragedy, death, sickness, disaster or a

similar distressing situation confronts the individual.³⁷⁷ The nature of such is not biased but confronts the believer and unbeliever in the same way. Theologians have argued the basic assertions of explaining evil and related factors. David Hume narrows his understanding to three factors in his statement, "Is [God] willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then he is impotent. Is he able but not willing? Then he is malevolent. Is he both able and willing? Whence then is evil?"³⁷⁸ J.L. Mackie adds to this understanding "In its simplest form the problem is this: God is omnipotent; God is wholly good; yet evil exists. There seems to be some form of contradiction between these three propositions, so that if any two of them were true the third would be false."³⁷⁹ This proves a difficult issue to deal with since it is the test of the truth of Christian theism and challenges the essence of the Christian faith.³⁸⁰ Sin produced suffering. To state it in the converse, suffering is the result of far reaching consequences of sin from the fall of humanity. Suffering is the manifestation of the nature of sin not to be understood in an academic sense or in an abstract framework. It is instead, a reality that pervades the life of the inhabitants of this planet. The nature of suffering, one may argue, is relative since all people experience different degrees and forms of suffering. It is further complicated by the great divide that exists between the spatial locations of the inhabitants of this planet, in what would be termed the north-south, developed-developing or first-third world nations. One could argue the degrees of intensity of suffering that exists in these socio-economic and socio-political geographical locations. Why does one experience suffering? The answer to this question can be posited from a variety of fields i.e. philosophical, sociological, psychological and so forth. The answer is apparent in the depravity of the sinful human nature where exploitation, greed and the like, perpetuate a cycle of oppression, poverty and disregard for the sanctity of life. This is by no means common to a race or culture, but is in the experience of all in this world. The explanations offered in attempting to understand why these things are, come no closer

³⁷⁷ For the purposes of the discussion in this thematic outline the words 'sin' and 'evil' will be used interchangeably.

³⁷⁸ Hume, David. *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, part X. 8-9.

³⁷⁹ Mackie, J.L., "Evil and Omnipotence," in *The Philosophy of Religion*, 1971. (Ed.) Basil Mitchell. London: Oxford University Press. p. 92.

³⁸⁰ Erickson, M.J. 1991. *The Word Became Flesh*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Publishing. p. 601.

in satisfying the answer to the question. Our discussion requires that we consider a theological perspective with regard to suffering. When the sin is factored into the equation of this life, the meaning of suffering takes on a different perspective. The ultimate conclusion to suffering is death. It brings with it finality, yet it also adds a sense of suffering to those who experience it indirectly. The one that has died comes to finality in the cessation of one's earthly life. Scripture links death with sin or as a penalty of it. Some of these references include "As in Adam all die" (1 Cor. 15:22), "...through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin" (Rom. 5:12), "...the wages of sin is death..." (Rom. 6:23). It is therefore clear, physical death is a part of sin (Gen. 3:19; Job 5:18; 2 Tim. 1:10). That physical illness is a consequence of sin is also established in scripture (Gen. 2:17, Job 1-2, John 9:3, 2 Cor. 12:7). It does not imply that all sickness or disease that afflicts a person can be attributed to his/her personal sin(s), to do so would be accepting a rather narrow view of the nature of suffering. Sin corrupted man on a physical, psychological or mental and spiritual level. An inference of this corruption would be the decay of all of these areas of the constitution of man. Death is threefold, as some theologians understand it. Firstly, there is physical death i.e. the separation between the body (material) and soul/spirit (immaterial). Secondly, there is spiritual death i.e. the separation of the soul from God. Thirdly, there is eternal death i.e. the eternal separation of the soul from God.³⁸¹ Death is inevitable. Suffering continues in the present reality of those who survive the one who has died. The understanding of suffering is not limited to death. Suffering ends in it. This does not relegate passivity in accepting the status quo and simply plead submission to the inevitable. A new creation theology contradicts the very acceptance of such. The biblical tradition holds two basic affirmations regarding the human condition. The first affirmation is that suffering is a reality and is the existential lot accorded to fallen humanity. The second affirmation, which may be considered as the more important of the two, is that suffering is not the end of the human condition. Suffering should therefore not become a preoccupation, but instead the promised redemption in God's word should. As mentioned above, there is great

³⁸¹ Thiessen, H.C. 1979. *Lectures in Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing. pp. 183, 194 -195.

difficulty in maintaining both these affirmations, particularly in the face of suffering.³⁸² Erickson considers the best approach to the problem of suffering and/or evil is through an incarnational Christology. He cites two reasons in support. The first being, Christ's coming as the means in dealing with the origin and presence of evil. This is evident in Romans 8:18-39, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ... For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (vv. 35, 38, 39). The second reason is an experiential one, since the experience of suffering and evil are a challenge to the Christian faith. The believer is fully aware of being a new creation and the accompanying promises to those who are in Christ. However, this does not negate the fact that he will experience suffering. It is this very experience of it that challenges faith in a real empirical sense, in the face of suffering.³⁸³ Let me illustrate this point with Nicholas Wolterstorff's account on his personal experience of suffering through the death of his son, from his work *Lament for a Son*,

"I have been daily grateful for the friend who remarked that grief isolates. He did not mean only that I, grieving, am isolated from you, happy. He meant also that *shared* grief isolates the sharers from each other. Though united in that we are grieving, we grieve differently. As each death has its own character, so too each grief over a death has its own character—its own escape. The dynamics of each person's sorrow must be allowed to work in themselves out without judgment. I may find it strange that you should be tearful today but dry-eyed yesterday when my tears were yesterday. But my sorrow is not your sorrow. There's something more: I must struggle so hard to regain life that I cannot reach out to you. Nor you to me. ***The one not grieving must touch us both.***³⁸⁴ It's when people are happy that they say, "Let's get together."³⁸⁵

³⁸² Hall, Douglas John. 1986. *God & Human Suffering: An Exercise in the Theology of the Cross*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House. pp. 19-20.

³⁸³ Erickson, M.J. 1991. *The Word Became Flesh*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Publishing. pp. 603-604.

³⁸⁴ Italics and bold print added for emphasis.

³⁸⁵ Wolterstorff, N. 1987. *Lament for a Son*. Grand Rapids: WmB. Eerdmans Publishing.

Wolterstorff admitted that to attempt to understand why God allowed such a thing to occur, is the same as trying to understand why all suffering occurs. He aligns himself with Job's resolve – to endure. Wolterstorff saw the biblical accounts as speaking more about sin than suffering and no answers are given in explanation of the 'why' of suffering. He explains that some suffering may be attributed to the result of sin i.e. war, poverty in the midst of abundance, hurtful words etc. Still other forms of suffering may be accorded to correction or chastisement. However, he asserts that not all suffering is in this way nor indeed can be understood in this way. The remainder of suffering, the inexplicable experiences of this life escape understanding.³⁸⁶ He explains suffering as,

“Suffering is down at the center of things, deep down where the meaning is. Suffering is the meaning of our world. For Love is the meaning. And Love suffers. The tears of God are the meaning of history. But mystery remains. Why isn't Love-*without*-suffering the meaning of things? Why is *suffering*-Love the meaning? Why does God endure his suffering? Why does he not at once relive his agony by reliving ours?”³⁸⁷

In this matter, there are considerable theological explanations offered. Richard Rice ventures to explain suffering in terms of the free-will element. He notes the consideration of why God would create a world in which the possibility of suffering existed, in the answer of discovering the essence of highest values. He considers freedom as presupposing the highest values of love, compassion, mercy, kindness etc. In other words, God cannot create a world in which these highest values exist without first according freedom, which presupposes such. Rice saw the creation of a free moral agent as a risk, in the possibility of their fall from which evil began. This places the responsibility of evil on the shoulders of the created and not the Creator.³⁸⁸ Whilst this may explain suffering as a result of war, oppression etc it falls short in adequately reasoning indirect suffering i.e. children born with deformities, rare diseases etc. One cannot simply add that a person deserves such suffering, nor does it help ease the pain

³⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 74.

³⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 90.

³⁸⁸ Rice, R., “The Mystery of Suffering,” *Update 2* (Oct. 1986): 3.

of it.³⁸⁹ Earl Shelp and Ron Sunderland use a New Testament context for understanding human suffering. They refer to the New Testament worldview of suffering as a part of this life and should be responded to with patience and endurance. One may deal with suffering by focusing on the transitory nature of this life and hold on to life in Christ. They cite three levels of defining suffering. The first refers to suffering as a result of afflictions of the early believers that were imprisoned because of their faith in Christ i.e. Paul, Stephen, Peter. Secondly, suffering as a result of oppression of one by the other, whether singular or collective. This includes the oppression of the weak, poor and downtrodden by the wealthier, stronger groups in society. Thirdly, suffering as a result of pain, disease and the like. They add that Jesus' ministry of healing should be seen in light of the third level of suffering and is the occasion for demonstrating compassion.³⁹⁰ The problem with these three levels is the difficulty of distinguishing between suffering as a result of one's faith in Christ and suffering as a part of this life. What then is a new creation response to suffering? Jurgen Moltmann's approach proves useful in answering this question. He saw the theology of the cross as central to the Christian faith and not just a part of it.³⁹¹ The Hebraic understanding of God lies in his personal identification with humanity. The Old Testament records the progressive encounters of God with his people in a way that transcended creation. The faith of the nation of Israel was pivoted on a God who was orientated in his divine love for his creation. His covenant with Israel conveyed his full identification with his people. He is often identified in scripture as a God of generations and of his people "... The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob..." (Ex. 3:16). There is a continuity of this line of thought into the New Testament, where God literally transcends creation and becomes flesh. It is the incarnation of Christ that brings God into a place of personal identification with a suffering humanity.³⁹² Hall argues that overemphasis on the divinity of Christ ignores the centrality of the message of the incarnation. It is a message of God's full participation in the life of this world. It is a confession of 'Emmanuel' that God is

³⁸⁹ Hauerwas, Stanley. 1990. *Naming the Silences*. Edinburgh: T & T. Clark. pp. 67ff.

³⁹⁰ Shelp, E & Sunderland, R. 1982. *AIDS and the Church*. Philadelphia: Westminster. p. 56.

³⁹¹ Moltmann, Jürgen. 1973. *The Crucified God*. London: SCM press. p. 72.

³⁹² Hall, Douglas John. 1986. *God & Human Suffering: An Exercise in the Theology of the Cross*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House. p. 108.

with us. In other words, "God has entered effectively and without reserve into the life of the world...the Johannine statement "...and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us..."³⁹³ The gospel narratives allude to the suffering of Christ, which he acknowledged (Matt. 16:21; Luke 9:22, 17:25; Mark 8:31; John 12:32-34) as an imperative of his mission. He was under no obligation to suffer, but chose to do so, based on his divine love. The loss of human freedom in the Garden of Eden, unfolds the bondage of sin throughout human history, producing suffering. It is the divine love of God that necessitated in the exercise of his sovereignty that he becomes flesh. The journey of God's personal identification with his creation began in Eden and culminates in Golgotha. The embodiment of human suffering is captured singularly in the cross. It is in and through the cross that a loving God engages with a suffering world and deals with sin. Christ does not deal with sin and suffering externally but internally i.e. from within the historical process. It means that history is not irredeemable but from within the occasion of sin Adam's sin a solution is presented. After the fall it is not a case of humanity ending in death and facing a hopeless situation. Instead God responds to the problem of sin by setting in motion his plan of redemption. Sin and suffering has entered the world and human history is decisively marked by it, not only in the biblical record but also in successive wars and calamities of humanity in the centuries following. Any study of history indicates oppression, violence, world wars, disease, poverty and similar conditions in the present experience of human beings. Despite this chaotic situation, God's plan of redemption from suffering and sin also begun. Faith looks beyond the chaos and finds perceived patterns of meaning in God's redemption in Christ. Faith is unable to explain why things are as they are but elicits a belief in the love of God who has personally responded to his creation. The new creation response to suffering perhaps cannot explain in a simplistic sense the complexities of suffering in light of sin, whilst this is the biblical approach to the origin thereof. It does allude to redemption as a conquest from within.³⁹⁴ As Hall puts it "History has the capacity for being changed from within; and for the Christian the incarnation is the seed of radical change, of the new.

³⁹³ Ibid., p. 109.

³⁹⁴ Ibid., pp. 110-111.

It introduces into the process of time a new future... a radical alternative: life instead of death. *Abundant* life.”³⁹⁵ The experience of a new life in Christ is the basis of an anticipatory hope that one holds onto in the presence of suffering. Though the pain of suffering may not be eased, as one would want it to, it redefines the meaning of pain and suffering. Jurgen Moltmann further explicates the incarnation as the means of understanding suffering, by linking the work of the triune God with the cross and the incarnation. He sees God in Christ as the work of the triune God. He states,

“To recognize God in the crucified Christ means to grasp the Trinitarian history of God, and to understand oneself and this whole world with Auschwitz and Viet Nam, with race-hatred and hunger, as existing in the history of God. God is not dead, death is in God. God suffers by us. He suffers with us. Suffering is in God... God does not ultimately reject, nor is he ultimately rejected, rejection is within God... When he brings his history to completion, his suffering will be transformed into joy, and thereby our suffering as well.”³⁹⁶

From Moltmann’s statements we surmise, that humanity is not alone in its suffering but God suffers with humanity and for humanity. It is a transformative approach to the perspective of suffering. It redefines the incarnation, not as a display of God’s omnipotence and glory, but one of love in his participation in the burden of suffering. A new creation approach to suffering takes it as the very thing that is despised and unwanted and turns it around as the means to redeem humanity. C.S. Song explains this use of suffering as a tool of redemption. He writes,

“To be human is to suffer, and God knows that. That is why God suffers too. Suffering is where God and human beings meet. It is the one place where all persons- kings, priests, paupers, and prostitutes – recognize themselves as frail and transient human beings in need of God’s saving love. Suffering brings us closer to God and God closer to us...”³⁹⁷

³⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 111.

³⁹⁶ “The Crucified God,” in *Theology Today* 31 (1974): 18.

³⁹⁷ C.S. Song. 1982. *The Compassionate God*. Mary Knoll, New York: Orbis Publishing. p. 115.

Finally, we may articulate three pertinent responses from a new creation theology in light of our discussions above. Firstly, suffering is transformative of the believer in Christ. It takes on a new meaning for the sufferer. It is a meaning of deliverance, compassion and participation. Christ's suffering becomes the means of deliverance for ours. Christ's suffering is fueled by his love and compassion for our redemption. He participated in human suffering through his incarnation and he still shares in our present sufferings as the second Adam, our great high priest (Heb. 2:17). To be in Christ is to respond to the gospel message that highlights the seriousness of the human condition. To accept Christ is to confront one's sinful condition and enter into a new life. As mentioned in chapter five, the old age of sin still exists but the new age has begun. Suffering is a part of this old age but the new has come. In other words, being a new creation in Christ does not exempt the believer from suffering. Scripture affirms that suffering is a part of the earthly life. Jesus illustrates this in his sermon on the mount by referring to the conditions governing this life i.e. worry, temptations, anxiousness etc. (Matt. 6:5, 19, 27, 34; 7:1). He redirects the attention of the believer to God. Suffering redefines the present circumstances in terms of the future whilst acknowledging that one still lives in a world under the decay of sin. It fortifies the believer to endure and it becomes a matter of praxis of faith in Christ. It is therefore transformative of the believer. Secondly, suffering becomes participative of the church in the gospel proclamation. This will be explored under the new creation model for praxis to be discussed hereafter. The gospel message is one of hope while it is authenticated by the sufferings of Christ. It is in the faith and experience of those who have encountered the risen Lord. This community of redeemed individuals becomes the community of the redeemed, those who are created anew in Christ. This proclamation moves from being construed as an ideological religious system, to one of the personalized participation of God in a world of pain. It is God breaking through into human history through the Christ-event. The metaphysical creeds of the early church cannot answer the problems of the day. With this in mind, the church's stance as a dispenser of adherence to theological doctrine as the basis of faith must change, in order to confront the issues of the day. The challenges of this post-modern world cannot be met with a soteriological proclamation that ignores the dynamics of the

human condition in the locus of this world. What is required is the adoption of the early church's participation in the sufferings of Christ. The witness of the early church demonstrated belief in a God who became flesh, one who identified with fallen humanity.³⁹⁸ The early church participated in the sufferings of Christ as incorporation into the image of Christ i.e. the means of being conformed to the image of the Christ (Rom. 8:29). This meant that they participated through sharing in the redemptive work of Christ by being in union with him. The church is called to become an agent of participation in the sufferings of Christ, through a proclamation of his redemptive work. This proclamation penetrates the core of the human condition, not just a message of salvation but also a demonstrated love for the suffering, the afflicted, the exploited as well as the wealthy, the educated, the elite. It is to all ends of the spectrum of humanity. The church remains in this world as a testimony to the love of God in Christ. Although Christ has completed the redemptive work on the cross, God is still involved in this world. The church proclaims the reality of the crucified Christ. It is the voice of God in the midst of a world of suffering. Nicholas Lash writes,

“ The doctrine of redemption articulates the form of Christian hope, but that hope has to be enacted – in individual and social existence, in marriage, technology, art and politics – in the struggle for the true resolution of the conflict between existence and being.”³⁹⁹

In Lash's thinking, the Christ event may be completed but it is not yet ended. The church is the continuation of the complete work of Christ in the manifest proclamation of it. The church participates in the sufferings of Christ by ministering into a context of suffering. Thirdly, suffering is anticipatory of the future redemption in Christ. Paul echoes this belief clearly when he wrote, “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which

³⁹⁸ Hall, Douglas John. 1986. *God & Human Suffering: An Exercise in the Theology of the Cross*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House. pp. 123-134.

³⁹⁹ Lash, Nicholas. 1982. *A Matter of Hope: A Theologian's Reflections on the Thought of Karl Marx*. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press. p. 193.

shall be revealed in us...because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God” (Rom. 8:18-21). The hope of deliverance from the futility and corruption of sin, awaits the believer. It is the earnest expectation of the final redemption, when suffering will cease and all creation will be delivered from the enslavement to sin. It is the realization of the process of all things that have become new.

6.3. A New Creation Approach: A Cyclic Model for Praxis

We have now come to the end of our exploration of what is meant by a new creation in Christ. The application of the theoretical inferences made in this dissertation, are important for developing a new creation approach for a cyclic model for praxis. The broad spectrum of doctrines discussed, each particularizing the core elements of its constituent biblical and theoretical aspects, must be drawn together in a collective dynamic. As we have discovered, the underlying premise of a new creation in Christ, is linked to what has been accomplished through Christ’s work of redemption. In essence, the core proposition of this dissertation is threefold, in enumerating a new creation approach. It is a work *for us*, a work *in us* and must ultimately lead, to a work *through us*. Firstly, we have been brought into the newness of life through Christ’s redemptive work *for us* (*huper*). We have noted that in Pauline theology, salvation was considered the central motif of Christ’s death. This is intimated in the scriptural references of Christ taking our place by becoming sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21); the new covenant expressed in the Lord’s supper – his body broken for us (1 Cor. 11:24); becoming a substitutionary sacrifice or the sin offering in making propitiation for our sins (Exod. 12; 1 Cor. 5:7; Isa. 53:1; Heb. 10:1-4). The Greek preposition *huper* suggests that Christ died for our benefit or on our behalf (John 8:46; Heb. 4:15; 1 Pet. 2:22). Secondly, we have been reconciled with God by receiving a new nature through Christ’s work *in us* (Gal. 2:20; Rom. 8:10; 2 Cor. 13:5; Rev 3:20). The reciprocal of this is our being *in Christ*. We have considered the nature of union with Christ and what it essentially means to be *in* Christ. Christ has become our representative and has introduced to the believer four dimensions of relationship: - 1) We have died and been raised with Christ; 2) We have new life in Christ; 3) All our

actions can be done in Christ; 4) All believers together, are one body in Christ.⁴⁰⁰ Christ's work *in us* is instantaneous at conversion. We are regenerated and possess a new nature through a new birth. He has imparted a new spiritual life to us. Christ's work is also progressive in discipleship, in which we are called to live in line with our new nature. Thirdly, it is a work *through us*. This should not be construed as the believer being the passive recipient whilst Christ actively works through him. This would be similar to the absorptive or mystical view of union with Christ. It should be viewed as a responsive partnership, in which the believer responds out of his relationship with Christ and yields himself for active service. The church as the body of Christ is the vehicle of ministry to those within the church (1 Cor. 12:26) and to those outside it (Matt. 28:18-20). This understanding is also the motivation for all other relationships of the believer i.e. Christ's love for us is the ultimate example (Eph. 5:25; 1 Cor. 11:1; 1 John 2:6). Christ's work *through us* advocates that just as we have experienced new life in Him, we are to respond to others in need inviting them into the experience of this new life. It further suggests that, we are called to respond not only on a spiritual level, but in a social one as well. The enactment of these relational principles accomplishes for the believer in the community of the church, maturity in Christ (Eph. 4:13,15). It edifies and builds up the church (1 Pet. 2:4-5) and it achieves the great commission of Christ in ministering to the lost (Matt. 28:18-20). Based on this understanding, a cyclic model for praxis in context is recommended. A cyclic model is necessary for a continual perpetuation of the threefold relational principles above. This ensures relevance, growth, maturity and constant development. It avoids stagnancy, degeneration and immaturity setting in the individual believer and the church. It must be in context, i.e. the believer in/and the church, cannot isolate itself from the context of the world in which it exists. Rather, the admonition of scripture is to be the "salt" and the "light" in context (Matt. 5:13-16). An analogical method of understanding how this cyclic model works would be to consider the hydrologic or water cycle in nature. The water cycle is the collection, purification and distribution of the earth's fixed water supply.

⁴⁰⁰ Grudem, W. 1994. *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House. p. 842.

The processes involved in this cycle are: - 1) Evaporation: the conversion of water into water vapour; 2) Condensation: the conversion of water vapour into water droplets; 3) Precipitation: the return of these water droplets in the form of dew, rain, sleet, hail and snow to ground, seas, lakes, rivers etc. The water cycle is powered by solar energy and gravity since it facilitates evaporation.⁴⁰¹ Water is essential for the functioning of the planet's ecosystems and is a vital part of human existence. Any interruption in the water cycle causes a disruption in the production of water through this process. Evaporation leads to condensation, which leads to precipitation. This returns to the point of origin in evaporation. Thus a cycle exists for the continued collection, purification and distribution of the earth's water supply. Similarly, a new creation cyclic model is essential for what may be termed the 'Personhood', 'Community' and 'development of discipleship.' Personhood refers to the core identity and new spiritual life that the believer in Christ now enters. It commences with the conversion of the person, which occurs through repentance and faith. He experiences a new birth through regeneration, justification, and sanctification. Community involves the placement of the new believer in a shared union with other persons that have entered into this new spiritual life. It is the church that becomes the community of the redeemed and motivates through training, equipping and development of the believer. This creates the ground for spiritual development and growth. The transformed disciple of Christ, through the church can now begin the process over, through evangelistic proclamation. The Holy Spirit empowers each stage of this cycle. Personhood creates community, community transforms the believer, and the transformed believer moves toward discipleship and actively engages in the proclamation of this gospel. The process becomes continuous and ensures a dynamic cultivation of others being made new in Christ. This is a suggested methodology for the cyclic model, for praxis proceeding from a new creation basis. I shall briefly outline the dynamics of each component of this cycle.

⁴⁰¹ Miller, G. Tyler, Jr. 1994. *Living in the Environment: Principles, Connections, and Solutions*. Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company. p.100.

6.3.1. Personhood

Personhood infers an understanding of the core or true identity. Humanity created in the image of God and as the special creation of God, has a spiritual, moral and social likeness. Identity is based on the interaction and composite conditional unity of these elements. The search for meaning in life is the search for identity. Very often, externalities are used as the basis of judgment for what defines a person. Maurice Wagner makes reference to false identity equations that people often use to define themselves. It is rooted in external appearance, the success of accomplishments and status or recognition. Wagner explains,

“Try as we might by our appearance, performance or social status to find self-verification for a sense of being somebody, we always come short of satisfaction. Whatever pinnacle of self-identity we achieve soon crumbles under the pressure of hostile rejection or criticism, introspection or guilt, fear or anxiety. We cannot do anything to qualify for the by-product of being loved unconditionally and voluntarily.”⁴⁰²

Christ redefines a marred identity, one influenced and distorted by the sinful nature. He creates a new identity that is rooted in him. This identity is the basis of a new personhood. Neil T. Anderson considers the new identity created in Christ as one of **the individual in Christ equals wholeness**. He compares humanity’s original identity before and after the fall, contrasting it with a new identity in Christ.⁴⁰³

6.3.1.1. Humanity before the fall

Anderson interpreted Genesis 2:7, the creation of man, as consisting of an outer self i.e. a physical self that relates to the world through the five senses; and an inner self i.e. spirit/soul as in the image of God. This consists of the mind (thinking), emotions

⁴⁰² Wagner, Maurice. 1975. *The Sensation of Being Somebody*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House. p. 163.

⁴⁰³ Anderson, N.T. 1990. *Victory over the Darkness*. Vereeniging: Christian Art Publishers. p. 21.

(feeling) and will (choosing). The total identity of the human being was expressed in five inter-related components: -⁴⁰⁴

a) Physically Alive

It is expressed in the *bios* or the union of the physical self with the immaterial self. A person is physically alive because he is in union with his immaterial self i.e. mind, emotions, will. When a person dies physically, *bios* ends and the immaterial self returns to God (2 Cor. 5:8). In light of this, true identity cannot be based on just the physical or external self.

b) Spiritually Alive

God created Adam with the capacity for spiritual life. It is characterized in the New Testament by *zoe* i.e. the spiritual self is in union with God. Adam was therefore physically and spiritually alive, able to share in open fellowship with God.

c) Significance

Identity is also related to significance since God created Adam with a significant purpose. He accorded to Adam the ability to exercise stewardship or rulership over the earth (Gen. 1:26-27).

d) Safety and Security

God in the garden met all of Adam's physical and spiritual needs. God provided food for their physical needs in the plants, seeds and herbs (Gen. 1:29). He provided spiritually, through his immediate and constant presence in the garden.

e) Belonging

Adam and Eve were created by God to share in close communion with each other and thereby, experience belonging (Gen. 2:18). The highest expression of belonging that humanity experienced was in their communion with God as their Creator.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., pp. 22-28.

6.3.1.2. Humanity after the fall

The effects of sin on humanity and creation were drastic, bearing negative consequences. It affected the individual human being, the human community and all of creation. Their identity was now distorted.⁴⁰⁵

a) Spiritual Death

Sin severed humanity's relationship with God preventing their original union from continuing. They experienced spiritual death, which set in motion the process of physical death. The physical body entered a state of decay and corruption. The *zoe* or spiritual union was destroyed. Humanity was separated from God. Just as physical life was inherited from Adam and Eve, spiritual death and sin were also inherited by the successive generations (Rom. 5:12; Eph. 2:1; 1 Cor. 15:21-22).

b) Lost Knowledge of God

The effect of the fall distorted humanity's true spiritual perception of God. This is seen in Genesis 3:7-8 when both Adam and Eve tried to hide from God after sinning. Prior to the fall, Adam and Eve's knowledge of God was relational i.e. they knew God personally in relationship and this informed their knowledge of him. Sin caused a separation in Adam and Eve's relationship with God, relationally based knowledge was no longer possible (Eph. 4:18).

c) Dominant Negative Emotions

The emotional state of the human being now became corrupted by dominant negative emotions. We read in Genesis 3:7-10 and 4:5-7, of the first reference to dominant negative emotions after the fall i.e. fear, shame, guilt, depression and anger. Adam and Eve experienced these emotions after sinning i.e. they hid from God because they were fearful, shameful and guilty. The incident of Cain and Abel reflects Cain's attitude of anger and depression.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid., pp. 29-35.

c) Too many Choices

The will of mankind was also affected. God had created Adam and Eve with choice but in a sinless state. They had a myriad of good choices to make and only one wrong choice i.e. not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:16-17). The one bad choice negatively affected all their choices thereafter. Humanity now has to discern between good and bad choices. Even a good choice can have selfish or evil motives.

d) Attributes were replaced by needs

God had created humanity with attributes of significance, safety, security and belonging. These attributes were now replaced by needs since they became a lack. This meant that belonging or acceptance was replaced by rejection. The absence of relationship with God removed a sense of belonging to God. Strife now became a part of all relationships. Innocence or purity was replaced by guilt and shame. Human beings therefore have insecurity and self-worth problems. The identity of a person becomes a problem in an identity crisis with a constant search for ways and means of asserting or developing self-image. Significance and authority was replaced by weakness and helplessness. Hence the need for self-control, dominance and strength becomes the focus of human behaviour.

6.3.1.3. A New Personhood in Christ

Christ as our representative comes as the second Adam. By his choice he restores true personhood and identity in him. The believer moves from these negative influences as outlined above, to a new life in Christ. At the core of a new personhood is the initiation of a new identity in Christ. The basis of this identity is an unending dependence on God. Christ demonstrated complete dependence on God during his incarnation. He restores humanity to open fellowship with God demonstrating the need to depend on God (Matt. 4:4). The introduction of a new spiritual life is imparted through a new birth of the believer. Jesus makes frequent references that he came to grant *zoe* or spiritual life to humanity (John 1:4; 6:48; 11:25; 14:6). Being in Christ enables the believer to be in possession of a new spiritual life, i.e. we are

brought into union with Christ. The spiritual transformation begins at new birth (John 3:36). As mentioned above, we gain a new identity in Christ, which governs the character and lifestyle of the believer (2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:10; 1 Pet. 2:9; 1 John 3:1-2). Consider the some of the following identity statements affirming personhood in Christ. The believer in Christ is considered: ⁴⁰⁶

- The salt of the earth (Matt. 5:13).
- The light of the world (Matt. 5:14).
- A child of God (John 1:12).
- A part of the true vine, a channel of Christ's life (John 15:1,5).
- Justified, completely forgiven and made righteous (Rom. 5:1).
- Free from condemnation (Rom. 8:1).
- A recipient of the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 2:16).
- Made alive together with Christ (Eph. 2:5).
- Buried, raised and made alive with Christ (Col. 2:10).
- Made complete in Christ (Col. 2:10).
- Indwelt by Christ (Col.1: 27).
- Redeemed and forgiven (Col. 1:14).
- A new creation (2 Cor. 5:17).
- One of God's living stones, being built up in Christ as a spiritual house (1 Pet. 2:5).
- A member of Christ's body (1 Cor. 12:27; Eph. 5:30).
- Hidden with Christ in God (Col. 3:3).
- A member of a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession (1 Pet. 2:9,10).
- God's workmanship – born anew in Christ (Eph. 2:10).
- Reconciled to God and am a minister of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18-19).
- Predestined – determined by God to be adopted as God's son (Eph. 1:5).
- Established, anointed and sealed by God in Christ, and have the Holy Spirit as a pledge guaranteeing the inheritance to come (2 Cor. 1:21; Eph. 1:1-14).

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid., pp. 39-47.

6.3.2. Community

The church plays a vitally important role in the development of the new convert, in aiding maturity in spirituality. It is the agency of connectedness in Christ of fellow believers one with another. P.T. Forsyth remarked that Christ's work on the cross was to "redeem us from all wickedness...to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good."⁴⁰⁷ Ecclesiology is concerned with the study of the doctrine of the church. The church by definition is the community of redeemed individuals that have become true believers in Christ. There are no less than eighty images in scripture concerning the church. The multiplicity of these images conveys the uniqueness of defining the church, as not fitting into just one particular mode or image. The Old Testament contains allusions to the church as a community of God's people in the nation of Israel. They were considered as the people of God in covenant with him, called apart to God (Isa. 63:8-9). The New Testament clearly defines the church in relationship to Christ. The Greek *ekklessizo* means, "to summon an assembly" and its noun *ekklesia* from the cognate verb refers to "assembly or church."⁴⁰⁸ Christ is the originator and builder of the church (Matt. 16:18; 18:17). Paul describes the church as the 'body of Christ' with Christ as the 'head of the body' and the members of the church as the constituent parts of the body as in the physical human body (1 Cor. 12:12-13; Eph. 1:22). The church is also referred to as the 'bride of Christ' (Eph. 5:22-32). Both these images convey a close relationship between Christ and his church, one of intimacy and union. The image that conveys the church, as a community is resident in the understanding of *koinonia*. This is common to the book of Acts wherein the church is perceived as a fellowship or community of believers rooted in the activity of the Holy Spirit as the work of Christ in establishing a unified body. It is important to note that the early Christians considered themselves as a community of believers that share fellowship 'in Christ', 'in the Holy Spirit' and with one another (Acts 2:42; 2 Cor. 13:13).⁴⁰⁹ *Koinonia* expresses the church as a community. It refers to intimate fellowship that comes only through being in Christ

⁴⁰⁷ Forsyth, P.T. 1910. *The Work of Christ*. Hodder & Stoughton. p. 5.

⁴⁰⁸ Grudem, W. 1994. *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House.

⁴⁰⁹ De Gruchy, John "Christian Community" in *Doing Theology in Context: South African perspectives*. De Gruchy, J & Villa-Vicencio, C. (Eds.). 1994. South Africa: David Phillip Publishers. pp.125-127.

that is shared within and by the community of fellow believers. It can also be expressed as the 'fullest possible partnership and fellowship with God and with others.'⁴¹⁰ This exemplifies the church as a community, not only as a spiritual entity, but also as a social entity i.e. socially engaged. We read in the Acts of the Apostles of the early believers sharing their possessions and having all things in common (2:44-45). The early church shared life together as a community of Christ in which all persons were equal and had collective unity in the Spirit. The church is called to represent Christ on the earth and to be a counter-culture to society (Rom. 12:1-2). It is called to demonstrate and reflect kingdom values and principles underpinned by the love of Christ in his transformative work on the cross. It is a new creation in Christ, a community of the redeemed, of those in possession of a new life in God. The purpose of the church is understood as the uniting of people with Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit, which must manifest in prayer and action. This points to the fullness of fellowship or communion with God, humanity and all of creation.⁴¹¹ The church is called by God to be his representation on the earth in a social context. The challenge that has often confronted the church has been it's leaning to either one of two extremes. The first extreme has been the church as a theological reality, it's ecclesiological structures and self-understanding as the kingdom of God on the earth has isolated it from social structures of the present world. The second extreme has been to regard the church purely as a social institution i.e. involvement in the political and social structures of society. What is required is a balanced response of the church operating from its true identity as the community of Christ, in reaching out and pragmatically ministering into the social structures, a participation in the *Missio Dei*. The church does not initiate proclamation in the *Missio Dei* but participates in it, since the mission originates in the will of God that all humanity be redeemed (John 3:16).⁴¹²

⁴¹⁰ Blackby, H.T. & King, C.V. 1990. *Knowing and Doing the Will of God*. Tennessee: Lifeway Press. p. 193.

⁴¹¹ Kinnamon, Michael (Ed.) *Signs of the Spirit*, Official Report of the Seventh Assembly (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1991), p. 172.

⁴¹² ⁴¹² De Gruchy, John "Christian Community" in *Doing Theology in Context: South African perspectives*. De Gruchy, J & Villa-Vicencio, C. (Eds.). 1994. South Africa: David Phillip Publishers. pp.131-133.

6.3.2.1. Secular Challenges to the Church

There have been numerous secular challenges to the relevance of the ministry and impact of the church as a community. In the context of our use of the word 'church', it should be taken as reference to the universal church, incorporative of the church of a locality i.e. the body of Christ. Tantamount to the secular challenges to the church at large, has been the quest for transcendence. It is the search for the true or ultimate reality beyond the material universe. It challenges secularism in terms of its inability to satisfy the quest for meaning in life. Some of the challenges to the church have included the following:⁴¹³ - 1) the recent collapse of Euro-Marxism with particular relation to Marxism as an ideological challenge to faith in God or religion. Communism has fallen short of satisfying or fulfilling the quest for meaning in life amongst the proletariat.⁴¹⁴ 2) The desert of western materialism indicates the unsatisfactory nature of capitalism in the search for identity. Theodore Roszak eloquently captures the essence of this challenge by referring to 'a psychic claustrophobia within the scientific worldview' that chokes the human spirit.⁴¹⁵ He argues against the narrow approach of the scientific worldview that has done more harm to the human spirit than help it, through its reductionism of the universe, life, creation etc to a rationalization. In other words, it is the attempt to confine reality to a laboratory.

3) The epidemic of abuse is symptomatic of a means to deal with the complexities of life, an escapist approach from problems and a desire to attain the experience of higher consciousness. This problem is evident in substance abuse i.e. drugs, alcoholism and other forms of abuse, i.e. sexual, violence. People try to deal with life issues through confrontation with it, ignoring it or escaping it. The latest trend has been a surge in adrenalin rushing sporting events i.e. bungee jumping, white water rafting, sky diving, para sailing. These are all attempts to satisfy an inner quest. 4) The proliferation of religious cults i.e. an increased interest in eastern mysticism, the new age movements and other similar groupings. There is an indication that the current avenues of society are inadequate in fully satisfying the spiritual needs of

⁴¹³ Stott, John. 1992. *The Contemporary Christian*. Illinois: Intervarsity Press. pp. 222-233.

⁴¹⁴ Beeson, Trevor. 1974. *Discretion and Valour*. Collins Publishing. p. 24.

⁴¹⁵ Roszak, Theodore. 1973. *Where the Wastelands Ends*. Anchor Publishing. p. 66.

people. 5) The techno-centric culture that has developed in solving human problems on a variety of levels. It has created a global village and an information based society. It has resulted in a type of de-humanization of individuals, since there is a lack of the essential elements of what it means to be human, i.e. the impersonal nature of technology. This technocratic society has destroyed the community of humanity. This has manifested in an absence of compassion, love, breakup of the family, despair, violence and crime, poverty and other social ills.

6.3.2.2. The Nature of the Church as a Community

In response to the above secular challenges to the church, the church must maintain its true identity as a new community of Jesus Christ. It is an alternative and different community from the society at large. It is not in competition with it, but has been called to challenge those in it, by the standards, values, ethics and principles of the kingdom of God through Jesus Christ. Stephen Neill describes the nature of the church as,

“Within the fellowship of those who are bound together by personal loyalty to Jesus Christ, the relationship of love reaches an intimacy and intensity unknown elsewhere. Friendship between the friends of Jesus of Nazareth is unlike any other friendship. This ought to be normal experience within the Christian community...That in existing Christian congregations it is so rare is a measure of the failure of the church as a whole to live up to the purpose of its Founder for it. Where it is experienced, especially across the barriers of race, nationality and language, it is one of the most convincing evidences of the continuing activity of Jesus among men.”⁴¹⁶

The church must have a two-fold approach to its community identity. The first requires an edification approach. This should emphasize a clear conversion of the individual, a sound biblical and/or theological understanding and equipping in the word of God; a well disciplined personal life of the believer and the priority of relationships. This first part involves the church focusing internally in the equipping, training and development of the new believer in Christ. It is an invitation to and a

⁴¹⁶ Neill, S.C. 1955. *Christian Faith Today*. Pelican. p. 174.

welcoming of the person into the membership in community. Edification requires a well-rounded approach in the personal, emotional and spiritual life of the person. It must encourage education in the elementary principles of the Christian faith, by providing a forum for positive interaction. The daily program of the church must not become too taxing or burdensome on the individual, but must enable him to also devote time to personal commitments of work and family. The second approach is an evangelistic one. This is focusing externally, in demonstrating a socio-political and compassionate response to the needs of people in the localized community, in which the church is located. The structures of the church must be able to demonstrate its message of healing and restoration in Christ. Stott cites four conditions that the church must first meet before accomplishing its specific goals.⁴¹⁷

These include: -

- 1) The church must understand itself: This means that the theology of the church must be balanced between its identity and vocation.
- 2) The church must organize itself: The structures of the church must be able to reflect its theology and its identity. Most often, the church has adopted structures that are hierarchical, impersonal and rigid. This becomes preventative of encouraging a community development. This rigidity has often differentiated between clergy and laity, in effect relegating the work of the church as a community of Christ to a few select persons.
- 3) The church must express itself: The message of the church must be clearly articulated in its mission and destiny. The key element of the message of the church is in its proclamation of the gospel of Christ, the sharing of the good news.
- 4) The church must be itself: The life of the church is expressed as the living embodiment of the person and work of Jesus Christ. It is a microcosm of the greater kingdom of God and is reflective of what the community of God should be like.

⁴¹⁷ Stott, John. 1992. *The Contemporary Christian*. Illinois: Intervarsity Press. pp. 222-233.

This second stage of our cyclic model is internally and externally focused i.e. on the development of the believer and in the evangelistic proclamation of the gospel. The church as a community is a community of love for others regardless of race, culture, and creed. It is the continuance of the cause of Jesus Christ in the salvation of the lost, in bringing them into the experience of a new creation in Christ. The following practical programs are recommended in the development of the new believer in community and encouraging his involvement, as well as, meeting the needs of the community at large: -

- New believers classes to educate these individuals in the principles of the faith.
- Family fellowships to create a social environment for relationship building with members of the church and new families i.e. sports, recreation, retreats, team building.
- Community Development projects for the church to build community in the community. This requires a needs analysis of the local areas surrounding the specific local church and creating projects in addressing such needs. An ongoing social welfare focus to meet the problems of poverty, illiteracy, unemployment and the like.
- Helping People in crisis through specialized counseling, social work and intervention strategies in dealing with specific problems i.e. domestic violence, substance abuse, the AIDS epidemic and health related issues. This is achievable through the church linking up with welfare; medical and crisis care organizations in order to offer personalized and specialized help.
- Departmentally orientated ministries aimed at different groupings i.e. youth, children, men, women, divorced persons, single parents, those with disabilities, senior citizens or the elderly etc.
- Bible study programs that follow ongoing interaction with the word of God aimed at equipping the believer in the faith.
- Conflict resolution strategies based on the Matthew 18 principle aimed at helping individuals within the church resolve inter-personal conflicts.

- Regular evaluation through a feedback loop (questionnaires, suggestion boxes, congregational suggestions, leadership input). This determines the effectiveness of various programs, considering where adjustments can be made or even scrapping existing ones and replacing them.

6.3.3. Discipleship

One might be inclined to argue that discipleship precedes community, therefore in light of the cyclic model; personhood should result in discipleship and then in community. However, in my assessment, community creates and motivates discipleship rather than the other way around. A new believer enters into transformed living and is now part of a community that shares in a participative fellowship in Christ. Discipleship is a radical commitment to Christ, in an individual and collective sense. As an individual, the believer has entered into a mature understanding of his relationship with Christ. It is informed by his growth that is demonstrated in character, conduct and commitment. Collectively, it is a group of committed individuals that have been profoundly challenged by the crucified and risen Lord and actively engage in the *Missio Dei* (Matt. 28:18-20). This must be distinguished from a group of new believers or a believer *per se*. In the general understanding of the term 'believer' it is a reference to the profession and confession of faith in something or someone. A believer in Christ is that individual who professes faith in Christ, through an initial and continual confession of his Lordship. One might understand a believer in this sense, however, I consider it necessary to distinguish between those who have accepted Christ but have never committed themselves to a disciplined lifestyle exemplifying this belief. A disciple is one who has accepted Christ, but has progressed from an initial conversion experience to mature spiritual growth, in lifestyle and commitment. In light of this, a disciple is different from a believer. The internal task of the church is to aid in the development of an individual from a believer to a disciple. Its disciples strengthen the church's task of the external focus on missions and evangelism. The New Testament understanding of a 'disciple' or 'disciples' as used in Matthew 10:1, is translated from the Greek word *mathetes*. The verse reads, "And when he had called His twelve **disciples** to Him, He gave them

power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease.” It is derived from the verb *manthano*, which means ‘*to learn*’, its root, *math* means ‘*thought with effort put forth*.’ Its composite meaning is one who learns or is a learner and one who follows, both the teacher and the teaching.⁴¹⁸ Discipleship can be defined by John Stott’s ‘double-identity’ concept. He uses the term ‘double-identity’ to refer to the church as composed of persons who have been called out of the world to worship God. This is the first identity. He adds, the second identity is that they are to be sent back into the world in order to serve as witnesses to Christ and in serving those in need.⁴¹⁹ This is illustrative of our model, as it depends on those who have been saved, then brought into community of the church and prepared to go back into the world as witnesses.

6.3.3.1. True Spirituality as the basis of Discipleship

Spirituality has developed as a concept in reaction to a formal religiousness that has pervaded the Christian faith. Its connotation is the renewal of passion, vitality and the intrinsic presence and awareness of the divine presence of God. It becomes the motivation for personal holiness and outward service, as a transformed person in Christ. It is the inner attitudes, dispositions of the heart as manifested in their beliefs and practices that proceeds from a consciousness of being in Christ. The Latin word *spiritualitas* as used by the early Latin Fathers in North Africa, designated ‘all activities of the Christian life as moved and inspired by the Holy Spirit, in contrast to the natural life of man.’⁴²⁰ Its parallel is found in the Apostles’ ‘*kata pneuma*’ or ‘life according to the Spirit.’⁴²¹ The actual meaning of spirituality has changed over the course of time. It was first used as a concept in the fifth century during the period of the fall of Rome, characterized by social upheaval. It was given attention by the Desert Fathers in their practice of asceticism. This created a monastic or religious approach to spirituality. During the reformation period, it took on the meaning of the

⁴¹⁸ Strong’s Concordance #3101 in *The Spirit Filled Life Bible*. Hayford, J. 1991. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers. p. 1421.

⁴¹⁹ Stott, John. 1992. *The Contemporary Christian*. Illinois: Intervarsity Press. pp. 243.

⁴²⁰ James M. Houston, ‘Spiritual life today: An appropriate spirituality in for a post-modern world’ in “*The Gospel in the Modern World*” (eds.) Eden, Martyn & Wells, David, F. 1991. Illinois: Intervarsity Press. p. 180.

⁴²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

call to a life of spirituality and a practical expression of faith by all Christians. During the seventeenth century, an emphasis on spirituality in the laity developed, as in the example of Madam Guyon. Roman Catholic 'spirituality' was understood as the *status perfectionis acquirendae* or the state of moving toward Christian perfection. The attainment of this state of perfection was considered achievable, through an institutional religiousness i.e. monasteries, convents; and through the invocation of vows such as poverty, chastity and obedience. The problem herein is the perception that spirituality is achievable through these religious practices, albeit in isolation, from the world at large. True spirituality as the basis of discipleship, is the practice of a living faith in Christ. It cannot be isolated and removed from the daily life of a person but must become the basis of how he lives his life. It is the praxis of a new nature of righteousness in Christ, which must resonate through the individual's whole person. It becomes an outward practicality of an inward faith in Christ. Acts of devotion, good deeds and even outward piousness must not be construed as evidence of spirituality. Jesus Christ often rebuked the Pharisees for a false spirituality, one not grounded in a true relationship with God. True spirituality cannot only be internal lacking expression; neither can it only be external lacking an inward basis of faith in the knowledge of Christ. It must be a mutual networking of both these elements. It is understood as a double movement, of dying with Christ in a life of the cross. It transcends the purposes of this world. Simultaneously, it is a life geared towards a transformation of this world by faith.⁴²² Discipleship becomes a life that expresses faith, hope and love as the basis of proclaiming the gospel of Christ. Inherent to this proclamation is the crucified and risen Christ, whose presence is demonstrated by his breaking forth into human history and is made visible through his followers or disciples in the community of the church. The disciple demonstrates the message of Christ verbally, in character and conduct. The challenge of the post-modern world places upon the disciple a need for a practical spirituality that proceeds from a sound theological understanding of the Christian faith.

⁴²² Gannon, Thomas, M. & Traub, George, W. 1969. *The Desert and the City*. Loyola University Press. p. 290.

Post-modernism has rejected the basic tenets of modernism: - 1) the progress of science and technology. 2) The inherent goodness of knowledge, autonomous individualism (violence, breakdown in the family structure, crime, insecurity). 3) Narcissistic hedonism as evident in the sexual revolution i.e. AIDS, sexual violence, drug addiction, alcoholism etc. 4) The absoluteness of moral relativism.⁴²³

Postmodernism emphasizes: - 1) a deconstructionist approach to reality, asserting that the traditional worldviews can no longer be held. It should be redefined or reinterpreted on different grounds. 2) A radical pluralism as opposed to universal truths. It becomes more of a pragmatic view of truth based on a subjective imaginative interpretation.⁴²⁴ The basis of discipleship must be faith in Christ. This belief in him must become the framework of operation, for engaging in and with the challenges of this age. One should make no apologies for ones' faith in Christ, nor compete with the technocratic spirit of this postmodern period. Knowledge of God and knowledge of oneself must proceed from this fiduciary framework. Knowledge of God is attained through a progressive engagement in spirituality, in taking individual responsibility and collectively, within the church as a community. This informs knowledge of oneself in reference to God. To be a disciple of Christ is to live as true humanity, challenging the old aeon of sinfulness. It is to invite others into the experience of it.

6.3.3.2. A Methodology of Discipleship

Discipleship requires a methodological expressiveness. This means that there are certain essentials that must be maintained for effectiveness as a disciple and the involvement within the community for proclaiming the gospel of Christ. These include the following: - 1) a personal devotional life. 2) Continued diligent study of the word of God. 3) Prioritization of time to family life, personal health and recreation. 4) Development of fellowship with other believers in developing accountability and responsibility to God through one another. It embodies *koinonia* or intimacy of fellowship that forms a support circle for the disciple, in helping him

⁴²³ Erickson, M.J. 2000. *Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Publishing. pp. 165-166.

⁴²⁴ Ibid., pp. 166-168.

deal with challenges that arise. 5) A clear call to engage in a specific approach to evangelism thorough the church. 6) Mentorship of new converts into discipleship through mentorship programs. 7) An organized and structured way of reaching out to the lost. 8) The development of financial, human and other necessary resources for effective ministry. 9) A contextual approach to ministry, by locating the message in the socio-political, cultural and economic spheres. 10) The use of current technological media in the proclamation of the gospel. 11) Clear and unambiguous communication to the hearers. 12) Conducting a needs analysis of the environment or place in which ministry is take occur. 13) Structured follow up with new converts with personal care. Michael Cassidy summarizes the key elements of the gospel message in the following outline: ⁴²⁵

1. One Event:

The Jesus Event – his life, crucifixion, resurrection and return (Acts 8:35).

2. Two offers:

- The forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38)
- The gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38)

3. Three Demands: The Kingdom of God is present (Mark 1:15) and one must: -

- Repent (Mk. 1:15)
- Believe (Mk. 1:15)
- Follow (John 1:43)

4. Four Relationships:

- With God (Eph. 2:4-6)
- With oneself (Matt. 22:39)
- With the church (Acts 2:47)
- With the world (Mk. 16:15).

Incorporating Cassidy's key elements of what the basic gospel message should contain, the following suggestions can be employed in designing strategies for

⁴²⁵ Michael Cassidy, 'The Search for ministry effectiveness in the modern world' in *"The Gospel in the Modern World"* (eds.) Eden, Martyn & Wells, David, F. 1991. Illinois: Intervarsity Press. p. 250.

evangelism. It should be noted that in all of these suggestions all responses will not necessarily, be positive. The disciple should remain focused and allow the individual(s) the freedom to make their own choices. Whilst persistence is always an endearing quality, it must not result in compulsion or an overbearing approach. All persons should be encouraged and spoken to, even if their response is negative. These methods are applicable, to the individual disciple as well as the collective discipleship base that, forms the community of the church. These include: -

- **Friendship evangelism:** This requires developing friendship with people in family, work and neighbourhood circles. The sharing of the gospel is not an immediate occurrence, but is shared gradually over time, as confidence and trust develops.
- **Cell evangelism:** This is generally done through a small circle of believers in a more personal, comfortable settings i.e. homes of people. An unbelieving person is invited over time to cell meetings, which is aimed at introducing the basics of the faith to them. Specific programs are recommended to aid this process. Creativity and sensitivity are important.
- **Church evangelism:** This is a seeker-sensitive or unbeliever sensitive service designed for ministry to larger audiences. It must avoid the use of theological concepts that can cause confusion, boredom or lack of interest. All items in the service must be designed with the unbeliever in mind. Such persons must receive a personal invitation and should be attended to by those who have extended the invitation.
- **Media evangelism:** This involves an innovative use of media and technology. Websites, movies, television broadcasting, books and other literature can be used to convey the gospel.
- **Specific evangelism:** This is orientated toward specific age groups and specific problems. This would include youth, children, men, women as well as the terminally ill, orphans, widows, the disabled, single parents and other related issues.

In conclusion, a new creation approach proves vital, in understanding and responding to the person and work of Christ. This work *for us*, and *in us*, must ultimately lead, to a work *through us*. This is possible through a cyclic model for praxis through Personhood, which creates community. The community transforms the believer, and the transformed believer moves toward discipleship and actively engages in the proclamation of this gospel. It is a continuous process and ensures that the lost are saved and brought into the experience of becoming a new creation in Christ.

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