THE ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN ACTUALIZATION, DENIAL, EMPOWERMENT, RENEWAL AND CONSUMMATION OF THE HUMAN SELF

by

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submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF THEOLOGY

in the subject

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

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JUNE 2007
Student Number: 446-131-2

I declare that THE ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN ACTUALIZATION, DENIAL, EMPOWERMENT, RENEWAL AND CONSUMMATION OF THE HUMAN SELF is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

JUNE 2007

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Barnabas Sundrum Baliah
SUMMARY

The content of this dissertation delineates the crucial and incisive role of the Holy Spirit in terms of God's grand and majestic acts of creation, that is the creation of the multiversity of universes, redemption that is the cross, the exemplar of Christ in self-denial, reconciliation and restoration, and his resurrection, that is self-empowerment, self-renewal and self-fulfilment observed within the context of God, being human and the physical organic environment as it interacts with the human acts of personal and social responsibility observed within the context of a five dimensional approach of self-actualization, self-denial, self-empowerment, self-renewal and self-fulfilment, ingested into ones identity, internalised and witnessed as meaningful daily praxis, seen through the prism of the cross and the resurrection. A didactic method has been followed to engender insights into and conviction regarding the relevance of the subject for our present day and a hortatory method to exhort to an obedient response and to urge an appropriate action.

KEY TERMS.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My specific thanks and grateful acknowledgement in connection with this dissertation are to three persons. Professor E. van Niekerk who has given me his wise counsel and judgement in the shaping of this dissertation, and I am indebted to him for his generous investment in my work. I am also indebted to my daughter Rebecca Deneuve Baliah who assisted in the typing of the material. Most importantly, Yahweh, the God of Moses and Abraham who manifests Himself through the Holy Spirit, operating within the sense-making context of God, being human and the physical organic environment, has been the source and mainspring of help, joy, comfort and inspiration from pre-production to finished product. He has truly been my Provider, Healer, Protector and Hero. I have learnt much from all who have written on the subject. In effect I have stood on the shoulders of many. I thank you all. Lastly, my appreciation to UNISA for allowing me to take on such a project.

This dissertation is dedicated to my late grandmother Luchamee John
Table of Contents

Chapter 1
The interconnection and difference of God, humanity and the world

1.1 Introduction..................................................................................................................1
1.2 The role of the Holy Spirit and the grand acts of God.................................................3
1.2.1 The self as hidden in Christ...................................................................................9
1.2.2 Self as ontological presence..................................................................................12
1.2.3 Image of God........................................................................................................13
1.3 Stating of the problem..............................................................................................16
1.4 Sense making approaches in three ways or methodology in three ways..................17
1.4.1 Practical sense making with regard to actualization, denial, empowerment, renewal
    and consummation in daily life..................................................................................18
1.4.2 Fivesome awareness of human experience.........................................................20
1.4.2.1 Aspect of creation..........................................................................................20
1.4.2.2 The constant sin problem..............................................................................22
1.4.2.3 Salvation/Redemption/Reconciliation.............................................................23
1.4.2.4 The Spirit’s work of Renewal and Renovation..............................................26
1.4.2.5 The Consummation and Fulfilling of All Things...........................................29
1.4.3 Theoretical sense making approach....................................................................32
1.4.4 Textual Sense Making Approach.........................................................................33
1.4.4.1 Fundamentalist mirroring approach...............................................................34
1.4.4.2 Interpretation Paradigm................................................................................35
1.4.4.3 New development of the consensible negotiation paradigm............................37
1.5 Conclusion...............................................................................................................39
1.6 Overview of the dissertation....................................................................................40

Chapter 2
The mystery of the connectedness and difference between God the Spirit and
human beings and nature.

2.1 Introduction...............................................................................................................45
2.2 The correlation between the works of God the Spirit and
    the works of human beings and natural events and processes..................................46
2.2.1 Who the Holy Spirit is and is not........................................................................46
2.2.2 Who human beings are and are not....................................................................51
2.3 Various expressions of the mysterious interconnectedness and otherness..................56
2.3.1 A relationship of opposition between God’s Spirit and humanity/nature..............56
Chapter 3
The correlation and difference between actualization, denial, empowerment, renewal and consummation

3.1 Introduction.................................................................................71
3.2 Differentiation and Integration in a universe or multiversity.........................................................74
3.3 God as Spirit's work in human actualization, denial, empowerment, renewal and consummation..........................................................................................................................75
3.4 The fivesome cluster of active dimensions......................................................................................78
3.4.1 Self-actualization..................................................................................79
3.4.1.1 The Theology of self-actualization based on recognizing the element of mystery........80
3.4.1.2 Theology of self-actualization is salvific and thus Christological.................................81
3.4.1.3 The Theology of self-actualization identifies freedom as a bedrock principle..............82
3.4.1.4 The Spirit of Love is the dynamic renewing and sustaining quality in the theology of self-actualization..........................................................................................................................84
3.4.1.5 Self-actualization is based on wholeness and fulfilment of being.........................................84
3.4.2 Self-denial......................................................................................85
3.4.2.1 Elements of self-denial.................................................................................87
3.4.2.2 What self-denial is not..................................................................................89
3.4.2.3 What is self-denial......................................................................................90
3.4.2.4 Its necessity in overcoming the world as demanded by God:
   What is it to overcome the World?......................................................................................92
3.4.2.5 Who overcomes the world and on what principle is this result effected?.................................93
3.4.2.6 How is this overcoming of the world achieved?...............................................................94
3.4.2.7 The relevance and the significance of the Cross...............................................................95
3.4.2.8 The principle of self-love: What it is not and what it is....................................................101
3.5.3 Self-empowerment........................................................................106
3.5.3.1 Who has the right to receive this empowerment?...............................................................113
3.5.3.2 The relevance and significance of the resurrection: What it is not and what it is.............115
3.5.3.3 Crucifixion and Resurrection.......................................................................................122
Chapter 4
Differentiation and Integration in a Universe or Multiverse
4.1 Introduction..............................................................130
4.2 The Human Component...............................................131
4.3 Individual and community........................................136
4.3 Although differentiated, integration is the final result in terms of the universe........142
4.4 The benefits of unity within diversity.............................143
4.5 God’s Original Plan....................................................144

Chapter 5
Summary and Conclusion
5.1 Introduction..................................................................147
5.2 The five dimensional cluster achieves the best practical ends in concurrence with
   God’s wisdom................................................................149
5.3 Sin as the most expensive thing in the universe...............150
5.4 Effects of actualization, denial, empowerment and renewal for individuality and
   community ......................................................................151
5.5 Full Gospel, half Gospel or quarter Gospel........................152
5.6 Fatal Attraction............................................................154
5.7 Critical Evaluation.......................................................156
5.8 Conclusion....................................................................159

Bibliography.......................................................................163
Chapter 1

The interconnection and difference of God, humanity and the world

1.1 Introduction

In the theological and ecclesiastic world the 20th century could for the greater part be designated as a Jesus-centric or Christ-centric era. The knock on effect was that the role and the work of the Spirit of God have been one-sidedly portrayed in many churches and their theologies. The Holy Spirit in whose era we live is still portrayed in many people’s reflected patterns of faith experience and their doctrines which sprouted from their experience as an appendix to the life and work of Jesus Christ. In this appendix role, the Spirit was linked up with human beings as the embracing processor of the divine ‘indwelling’ of Jesus in human beings. The Spirit was proclaimed as the spiritual enlightenment of Christ the Saviour of humankind by others.

According to Andrew Murray (1964: 227-228), Christ becomes to us all that Christ made Him to be, that the Holy Spirit can flow from him and do His blessed work of leading us back to know Him better and to believe in Him more completely. He further says “the Spirit is given to reveal Christ and every revelation of Christ gives the Spirit room to dwell and work within us”. In many mainline churches and their theologies, the work of the Holy Spirit was seen as the carrier of the Word of God in a double sense: on the one hand as the carrier of the incarnated Jesus, the Christ as the Word of God, and on the other as the carrier of the ‘inscripturated’ Word of God, the Bible.

In 1906 in Los Angeles in Azusa street a new century of the Spirit seemed to be announced in which it seemed as if the hindmost God, the Holy Spirit had been propelled to take up the real work of the Spirit of Pentecost, the Spirit of the Third Testament in which the Spirit is on the one hand the real powerhouse of the Kingdom of God in the totality of universes, and on the other hand the real God of small things involved and engaged in the smallest snippets of experience of a human being’s every day life. Renewed emphases on different views of the Baptism of the Spirit were the order of the day.

The Azusa street phenomenon under the pacesetter Frank Bartleman (1980:25) set new trends for the function of the Holy Spirit within the Church context and without. This resurgence
confronted the church with the greatest responsibility it had, had for centuries. This rediscovery of the Holy Spirit realized the greatest need in the modern church, and powerfully emphasised the linkage of the Spirit and human experience.

It seemed that the emphasis on the Spirit as the pneumacentric access point of churches and peoples’ experience of faith ran out of steam early in the 20th century and was replaced by a strong Jesus-centric and Christ-centric emphasis. The role of Karl Barth (1975:115-116) should not be underestimated in the extreme tendency to see Jesus Christ as the exclusive middle of history and reality. Against the Jesus-centric tendency a small band of persons in various churches rowed against the stream. Though the early Pentecostals of the 20th century operated with a strong supernatural and natural dualism they were on the right track. It was from the 30ties to the 60ties of the past century that two Dutchmen O Noordmans, especially in his 1934 work Herschepping and AA van Ruler in a compilation work of many of his essays Calvinist trinitarianism and theocentric politics: essays towards a public theology, 1989, largely overcame the supernatural/natural double barrel operating scheme of early Pentecostalism by emphasising the relationship between God’s grand act of renewal through the Spirit and God’s grand act of creation.

At the end of the 20th century both in the official Pentecostal churches as well as outside people emerged who advocated that the Spirit of God in the broadest sense through the direct life giving work of the Spirit embraces every atom and molecule in the physical-chemical world, every cell and organism in the biotic-organic world, every emotion and feeling, every snippet of thought and faith experience and every love action left out of many a theologian’s reflections on faith. Sin and evil have derailed human beings and the whole of creation in a radical sense. In what sense we do not always know.

However, through the life giving work of the Spirit that is actually taking place not supernatural but ‘intra-natural’ - from within God’s creation where the Spirit is everywhere at work - the Spirit makes us aware that we are created human beings within a very broad and wide creation where we are through sin on courses that are damaging to God, ourselves as human beings and the physical-organic environmental universes, the Spirit simultaneously enacts the cross as the restorative power and the resurrection as the liberative power of Jesus Christ in our lives and the act of the Spirit in Pentecost in one’s life is simultaneously the affirmation and en route setting of the power of Pentecost as the power of the renewal process of ourselves on our way to the end and the consummation of times.
1.2 The role of the Holy Spirit and the grand acts of God

In this dissertation I want to discuss and investigate the role of the Holy Spirit in actualization, denial, empowerment, renewal and consummation of the human self interconnected to the great works of God in creation, reconciliation, renewal and consummation as attested by in the Bible. Thus, I want to describe the synergy, concomitance, coterminous and correspondence between God’s works of Creation, Reconciliation/Redemption in Christ, Renewal/Renovation through the Spirit, and God’s Consumption and fulfilling of the whole process in the creation and establishment of the new heaven and the new earth which are correspondingly expressed and engaged as process in a five some awareness of experience of human beings as being created, as continuously falling into sin, as being saved/redeemed/reconciled, as being under renovation and renewal through the Holy Spirit and as being encapsulated in the consummation and fulfilling of all things in the new heaven and new earth through the awareness of the irruption of fragments and moments of from the future into human beings’ present lives.

God’s first great act of creation can be seen as creatively empowering a world in process with its own integrity and autonomy. The Bible in Genesis chapter 2 confirms that it was the image of the Spirit as the breath of God that breathed life into the dust of the earth and it became a living being. This can be perceived in everything that creeps, crawls, jumps, hops, swims and flies. Biblical tradition attests to this. The word spirit expresses God’s creative, prophetic or renewing presence to the people of Israel or the world at large. The Hebrew word ruach can mean wind, breath or spirit. God breathed into Adam in Gen 2 7. Job (12: 10) says the breath of the Almighty gives me life. As is evident in Ezekiel (37: 1-14) experience of the dry bones, the breath or Spirit of God is therefore understood as the creative and life giving presence of God. In other words, things exist only because God’s Spirit dwells in all things and holds them in being. The New Testament community understood this Spirit that breathed life into creatures in Genesis as the selfsame Spirit that overshadowed Mary at the conception of Jesus (Matt 1: 18, Luke 1: 35), who anointed Jesus at his baptism (Mark 1:10) and who was poured out on the Christian community at Pentecost (Acts 2: 4). Thus we find the early Christians identified the Spirit as the life giver, and with Jesus’ death and resurrection, the life giving Spirit was poured on all believers. Therefore Paul perceives the Spirit as the Creator and life giver.

We find the patristic writers also concurring with this view. McGrath (2003: 329-334) quotes
the Church Fathers, from Irenaeus who believed that God created with the Word and the Spirit which represented His both hands. He sees the three in creation, as the Father plans and gives commands, the Son performs and creates, and the Spirit nourishes and increases. For Athanasius, the Trinity acted in one undivided act of creation. Creation is from the source of all through the Word and the Spirit. Basil develops this and associates the Spirit’s work with life giving, completing and sanctifying. Ambrose sees the Spirit as the Creator of the whole universe, as the one who brings beauty and grace to creation and who enables it to exist at every moment.

Expressed differently, He sustains the process of ongoing creation. Therefore to summarise God’s great act in creation, we see God the Spirit breathing life into a universe of creatures, which is expressed in symbols like wind, fire, and streams of living water. The Spirit’s life giving power embraces not only living things, but the whole of the universe that sustains life. We further said, that the breath or Spirit of God acted together at creation, and that the Spirit of God is the source of the new in an emergent universe. This can be seen in the history of the evolution of the universe. The creator Spirit enables and empowers the new to occur. The Holy Spirit is the divine principle within, drawing creation towards an open future. We further saw God as communion and creation as a relationship between each creature and the divine community. Thomas Aquinas (1990: 238) describes creation as a relationship between each creature and the Creator, as the principle by which the creature exists.

Thus we find that the Spirit is the communion bringer, the indwelling creative presence that relates each entity with the divine community. As J Taylor (1998:5) has put it, the Holy Spirit is that unceasing, dynamic communicator and go-between operating upon every element and process of the material universe, the immanent and anonymous presence of God. We find the creator Spirit in each creature embracing each in love. As Basil points out, God the Spirit watches over every creature, lovingly providing for each (McGrath 2003:335). In other words, the Spirit is present in love with each creature as a faithful companion, and midwife to the new creation, groaning with the groaning creatures in the birthing of the new. We further contend that it is through this indwelling Spirit, creatures of the universe are brought into communion with one another. The Spirit of God then, not only embraces individuals, but enables them to exist in an interrelated world of creatures, bringing them into the ambit of divine love and completion in Him.

Therefore the work of the creator Spirit does not only embrace ongoing creation but also the
works of grace that is reconciliation, restoration, empowerment, renewal and fulfilment as witnessed in the cross and the resurrection. We therefore proceed to the next great act of God and that is the salvation and redemption of the human race as witnessed in the incarnation, the cross and the resurrection, as it relates to the transformation of human existence.

We find the selfsame Spirit once again through renewal of all things, preparing the vessel to put an end to sin and rebellion and reuniting God with humankind in the atonement via the cross, and, preparing the way for the final great act of God, in the fulfilment or consummation of all things. Therefore the strength to overcome the sinful self is provided by the power of the Holy Spirit. Mahan (no year: 2-3) argues that the Holy Spirit plays a pivotal role in putting off the old person with his deeds and putting on the new creation created after the image of Christ.

In performing this work of supererogation the Holy Spirit renews the individual and sets the person on course to realize his/her destiny in God’s Kingdom, as Paul insists in (Eph. 4:24, Col. 3:10, 2 Cor. 7:18). This is accomplished through the resurrection power impacted initially at Pentecost and thereafter upon all the followers of Jesus Christ. John in (John 15:7) puts it differently and asserts that the eschatological promise impinges itself on all humans as they wait in the Spirit for the return of Christ. Thus we see the depth of the Spirit’s work in self actualization, self denial, self empowerment, self renewal and fulfilment as seen through the optical lens of creation, the fall, salvation, Pentecost and the final consummation of all things.

God’s grace and salvation imparted through the Spirit is yet another great act of God. We find the Spirit once again playing a pivotal role in birthing the Christ child. Mary was with child conceived of the Holy Spirit (Matt.1:20). The meaning and purpose of the Spirit’s work is expressed in God’s self giving to the world in Jesus Christ as recorded by John in (John 3:16). Therefore Christ and the Spirit are radically interrelated. It is the Spirit of God who brings about the incarnation. God’s saving grace present throughout human history in the Spirit has always been the grace of Christ. This saving grace is present and active in the Spirit as symbolised and realised in Jesus’ life, death and resurrection. In the cross, grace finds historical expression.

Thus we find the creator Spirit who fills the universe is primordial, the Sanctifier, the bringer of grace. First, the heavens are torn apart symbolizing a new era of communion between
heaven and earth. Second, the Spirit descends like a dove on Jesus, possibly referring to the 
hovering of the Spirit over the waters of creation. Immediately after baptism the Spirit drives 
Jesus into the wilderness. Matthew (1: 20) records Jesus as conceived of the Holy Spirit, 
while Luke (1: 35) speaks about Him being anointed with the Holy Spirit. Therefore the life 
giving, grace bearing Spirit is now poured upon Jesus of Nazareth so that He might be the 
wisdom of God, in the midst of creation ushering in healing and liberation to fallen humanity.

Thus the history of the Spirit is clearly perceived in the story of Jesus, his conception, 
baptism, temptation, death on the cross, resurrection and exaltation and sending of the Spirit. 
Thus we see the great act of God as the Spirit transforms the negativity of the cross into a 
restorative event of liberation, in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Thus the Holy Spirit 
is with Jesus in His suffering and death, transforming suffering into redemptive love, bringing 
life out of death. Therefore through the anointing of the Spirit the humanity of Jesus is 
transformed and He is called the Son of God (Luke 1: 24.) Through the outpouring of the 
same Spirit in grace, we are regenerated and transformed and called the adoptive children of 
God (Rom 8: 15) with all the rights and privileges of children of the Father. Thus we see the 
Spirit of God inspiring Jesus in new and transforming ways in the different stages of his life, 
ministry, death, resurrection and glorification.

The anointing of the Spirit establishes His identity and mission. Filled with the Spirit, He 
pours forth the same Spirit upon the community of disciples constituting the Church in Acts 
(2). Thus the great act of God as witnessed in Pentecost is our next concern. God the Holy 
Spirit acts as Director of missions in empowering the early Christians. Jesus himself informs 
the disciples that they will receive power to enable them to witness and live holy lives. Paul 
addresses the latter in which he shows the necessity of the presence of the Holy Spirit in a 
person’s life in order for that person to be a Christian, when he insists that they that have not 
the Spirit of Christ are none of His, while Luke chapter 8 in the former addresses, emphasises 
the empowerment to witness.

In this great act of God, He clothes the disciples with power from on high. God empowers His 
children for a special mission. Therefore in the infancy narrative, John the Baptist, Jesus and 
the disciples are part of the same Kingdom movement functioning with the same Spirit of the 
Kingdom. Thus we find Peter, Paul and the other disciples, inspired to bear testimony of the 
cross and the resurrection at various places and in different instances, the Samaritan 
The presence of the gifts of the Spirit, especially foreign tongues confirms the global aspect of the message and the comprehensiveness of the mission. Thus we see the aspect of being filled with the Holy Spirit a proper, well ordered evangelism complete with accommodation for those who were from foreign lands.

Therefore God's great act of salvaging humanity as seen in the incarnation, cross and resurrection needed a vehicle to disseminate this message to the whole wide world. Thus God provides this vehicle in Pentecost as the Holy Spirit continues His work of reconciliation, restoration, empowerment, renewal, and fulfilling of the believers with the tools needed for the great enterprise of evangelizing the world with the good news by word and deed, reminiscent of Jesus in Isaiah 61 where He exclaims, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.....". Thus the vessels are prepared by the Holy Spirit as He was poured out at Pentecost to carry this message of life and hope to a lost and sinning world. We reiterate that the Holy Spirit who empowers the evolving universe who in grace is present to all human beings, who anointed Jesus, is now poured out on the community of disciples in the Pentecost experience constituting them as the Church of Jesus Christ. Christ is our exemplar, says Mahan (no year :5) teaching us not only what we should do, but how to do and become all that is required of us.

Thus we see God's great acts interrelated and interconnected to the great acts of humanity. The Spirit's creation of human beings was for a specific purpose. Human beings were created with the immense capacity for self-realization within the broad sphere of creation. However, created as free moral agents they were bestowed with the power of choice. Created morally and physically perfect, the first human beings possessed integrity derived from conformity to the laws of being, morally and physically they were set on the road to self-realization.

Lonergan (1972:105) clarifies the correlation between actualization, self-denial, empowerment, renewal and fulfilment. He distinguishes between the true self and the false self. The true self exists in a drive for self-transcendence, whereas the false self or the sinful self fails to achieve self-transcendence. This asserts Lonergan, is expressed in the way in which the individual experiences self-love. Loving oneself as an object invariably leads to selfishness, whereas loving oneself as subject takes place only by loving others. This latter type of loving is innately beneficial for the individual concerned and constitutes the authentication of the human's capacity for self-actualization. In Matthew16:24 Jesus makes it crystal clear that anyone who seeks the office of His disciple or follower must discard,
abandon and renounce self and take up the cross and follow Him.

In other words, self-denial is a prerequisite for active participation in His life and His Kingdom. The self, however, that Jesus is referring to must be understood to avoid confusion. This self is the sinful self or false self as object and not the true or renewed self as subject. In other words, it is ego-centric self-interest that is the obstacle, hindrance and stumbling block to self-transcending the love of self and others. Every self, therefore has a fundamental desire for self-transcendence, that is, the desire for relationship with reality, in a human and divine context. In Lonergan’s (1972:109) view, self-transcendence requires a self that is independent, possessing cognitive and affective powers necessary to move beyond itself in realistic knowing, responsible and intelligent decision-making and generous loving. The self, constituted by consciousness, is rooted in a loving full reality of the whole person, which includes an understanding of the body and a firm grasp of the emotions. The drive for self-transcendence, described by Lonergan, is a truly radical drive that heuristically unifies the self in its dynamism and fully integrates it in its self-actualization. However, this is achieved through the power of the Holy Spirit as it empowers the true or renewed self.

The Holy Spirit serves as the driving force in rooting self-transcendence in images that trigger intelligent questioning and spontaneous empathy that sparks interpersonal love. As the drive for self-transcendence progresses, the empirically conscious self becomes successfully the intelligent, rational and responsible self, that is, the existentially conscious self. Lonergan (1972:249) says that the “self’s capacity for self-transcendence meets joyful fulfillment when religious conversion transforms the existential subject into a subject of love, a subject held, grasped, possessed, owned through a total and other worldly love”. The self-transcendence of such otherworldly love constitutes the fullness of authentic or genuine self-actualization. In this regard Lonergan and Rahner concur, claiming that freedom is the transcendental trait within the human person, the exercise of which brings about self-actualization. However one must not lose sight of the fact that the process is mediated by the Holy Spirit.

According to A.H. Almaas (1988:10) an American religious psychologist, most philosophical systems point to a life of selflessness and surrender to a higher spiritual reality. An individual who is controlled by the Spirit considers that a higher spiritual reality, governed by spiritual values, is the true and proper centre of human life, consequently personal life is in relationship to a higher reality. Therefore, Christianity considers the human being as individual self who needs to live a life of surrender to God’s will through the power of the Holy Spirit. This life,
in which egotism has no place, is characterized by selflessness and virtue, the reward for which will come in life after death. Mystical Christianity conceives of God as the ultimate ground and being of person. Oneness of the individual in God indicates that the existence of the personal self is not the ultimate but proximate goal. The stress here lies in the concept of self-as-spirit, and salvation as the realization of this oneness with God. (Almaas 1988:12)

1.2.1 The self as hidden in Christ?:

There are those who live a life obedient to the divine commands, while others strive and aspire to find a spiritual link with a higher reality, while others still, seek a mystical union with God. Merton (1968:140) perceives it this way, the individual being “born in sin” has a false or sinful self, and is alienated from the inner, true self, which is related to the notion ‘Image of God’. Merton makes a paradigmatic distinction between the true and the false self. The false or sinful self he describes as the illusion of egocentric desires that claims an existence outside the will and love of God. The true self, he maintains, is hidden with Christ in God. The true self is hidden and needs to be found. He says that true prayer takes place through the centre of the true self, which he defines as the soul, or the self before God. The centre of our being Merton (1968:142) describes as a “point of nothingness which is untouched by sin and illusion, a point of pure truth, a spark which belongs entirely to God, which is never at our disposal, from which God disposes of our lives, which is inaccessible to the fantasies of our mind or the brutalities of our will”

Merton (1972:7-8) also argues that the true self emerges in contemplation, where the individual is stripped of the false self, which he equates with the Likeness of God and the Image of God. Therefore sin alienates the human person from the true self and for this reason Merton urges people to find their true selves, which are hidden with Christ in God. Therefore he asserts that it is the function of the Christian to find the real self, which is in fact finding God. Merton (1976:30) believes that “unless we discover this deep self, which is hidden with Christ in God, we will never know ourselves as persons, nor will we know God, because it is by the door of the deep self that we enter into the spiritual knowledge of God. Therefore to reiterate, union with God takes place through the “true self “empowered by the Holy Spirit whereas the false or sinful self serves as the greatest obstacle towards such union.

Merton (1961:129) continues to affirm that “If I find God I will find myself and if I find my true self I will find God.” The false self is described as ego, self, while the true self is
perceived as the transcendent self (Merton 1976a:86). The false self is characterized by superficial consciousness, as opposed to the deep transcendent self that awakens in contemplation (Merton 1961:7). According to Merton (1976:86), the true self is not easy to find, precisely because it is hidden in obscurity and nothingness, and is in some way identical with God. This true self does not surface easily as it is weighed down by the egocentric desires of the external self, and is in constant opposition to the false self. Merton (1972:38) maintains that the true self, the inner self, must be drawn from the bottom of the sea and rescued from confusion, the trivial and the sordid. The true self emerges on its own terms of pure consciousness in contemplation. He regards love as the substance of the true self. This love which goes out to find a new centre, is the opposite of self-love (Merton 1972:60).

Dawney (1993:847) asserts that the true self is conscious, but conscious as a "no self" because it is lost in God, where it discovers its true identity. It is by means of a contemplatively oriented process of self-transcendence that the individual is capable of withdrawing from the humanly constructed false or sinful self-as-object and originating the true self-as-subject. It is here that the non-objectified-conscious subjectivity God may be experienced as subject. For Merton (1961:29) this contemplative movement into the true self and God the Holy Spirit is often individuated through the selfless love of others. God is found in others and the truth of life is the law transcending the self. A person “cannot enter the deepest centre of himself/herself and pass through that centre into God, unless he/she is able to pass entirely out of himself/herself and empty himself/herself to other people in the purity of selfless love.” (Merton 1961:29). Put differently, the true or renewed self empowered by the Holy Spirit is intricately related to God, the source of the renewed self, as well as with the true selves of others.

However, it would appear that Merton is in touch with the idea, but he does not go far enough to understand the all important aspect of the cross and the resurrection in the equation. The false self as he calls it must be brought under the subjection of the Holy Spirit who puts to death the evil propensities of the sinful self by means of the cross. The crucified sinful self is abased and the new self is resurrected by the power of the resurrection. Thus the Holy Spirit empowers the new self in regaining the image of God and begins the work of recreating the image of Christ within the individual. Therefore, Merton has a point when he talks of self-emptying, for this is exactly what the Holy Spirit does as He commences work within the individual. Paul in (Col. 3: 8-10) therefore uses the imagery of clothes to convey this transition. He talks about putting off the sinful self with all its lust and passions and putting on
the new self created after the image of Christ and destined for good works. In short this process involves the true self covenanted with the false self. Therefore the true or new self is at the level of the innermost being of the person.

Mary O' Driscoll (1981: 6) in a shrewd study on the spirituality of St. Catherine of Siena (1347-1380) advocates an intriguing and intuitively daring insight into the self by equating it with God. She insists that the self and God are two aspects of the same mystery. She started this journey by asking the question: Who am I? This search for personal meaning and self-knowledge is not only a contemporary quest, but also one that appears throughout the ages. Mary O'Driscol (1994:2) has observed that the question of selfhood was a haunting and terrifying prospect for Catherine, nevertheless since mystical self-knowledge is tantamount to knowledge of God and Self, to obtain knowledge of the self was in fact to obtain knowledge of God.

Therefore Christian mystics, such as Eckhart, Ruusbroec and Catherine of Genoa, promote the concept of the transcendental mystical self, the self that is experienced in prayerful union with God the Holy Spirit. They go so far as to identify their individual selves with the Self of God. Catherine of Genoa could assert: “My me is God, nor do I recognize any other me except my God Himself and My being is God, not by some simple preparation, but by a true transformation of being” (Wiseman1990:233). These statements constitute a claim of the personal identity of the self with that of God. Jan van Ruusbroec (1995:146) claims that in true contemplation the person” is to be God with God, without intermediary or any element of otherness”

For Ruusbroec, however, the experience of contemplative love is characterized by a union so intimate that there seems to be no longer any distinction between the self and God.

However, Rahner (1975:122-132) seems to be closer to the truth as he argues that this is a fundamental experience of self and of God. The knowledge of God and the knowledge of self are obtained from this basic experience of the self as transcendental. He says “the original and ultimate experience of God constitutes the enabling condition of, and an intrinsic element in, the experience of self in such a way that without this experience of God no experience of the self is possible”.

Therefore at this point, Dupre (1981:124) makes the assertion that it is important for the Christian that the self is understood to be the point of contact with the divine, whereas
Foreman (1998:216) claims that the transformation of the self and the mystical experience are in fact alternative descriptions of the same phenomenon. The individuals call to mystery is found in the spirit of transcendence which is common to every person. This transcending spirit is open to the grace of a Supreme Being, who expresses Himself through the Holy Spirit, whose will is that all people are to experience salvation that is full self-actualization.

1.2.2 Self as ontological presence

Almaas (1996:13) perceives the self as an actual ontological presence. "This implies that the self is a living organism that constitutes a field of perception and action. Fundamentally, it is a field of consciousness and of awareness capable of experience and self-reflection. This consciousness, the self, has a fundamental existence, an ontological mode of being. For Almaas (1996:14) the self is thus understood as an alive, conscious presence, and its most striking features, are malleability, sensitivity, intelligence and dynamism. The self is perceived as an actual and real ontological presence, not simply a product of the body. Both the mind and feelings form part of the self. Apart from the mental, emotional and physical realms, a very important aspect of the self is that it has access to the realm of Being. This means that the self can experience directly, its own presence as existence. In other words the self is not merely a construct but an actual ontological presence, a presenting of Being, which has the capacity for self-awareness. The self is thus considered as a flowing, dynamic presence, an organism that consists of mind, feeling and body with an open-ended potential for experience.

Therefore Almaas (1996:16) believes there exists in every self an inherent drive towards truth, an inherent desire to feel fulfilled, real and free. Though not many people are able to pursue this desire effectively, nevertheless the impetus toward the actualization of the self is present in all of us. Whether or not we are directly aware of it, it begins with the first stirring of consciousness and continues throughout life. He is of the opinion that this impetus spontaneously emerges in consciousness as an important task for the psychologically and spiritually maturing human being. As maturity grows into wisdom in an optimally developing person, this task in fact gains precedence over other tasks in life, progressing to becoming the centre that orientates, supports and gives meaning to life, and ultimately encompassing all of ones experience.

From the above it is abundantly clear that an understanding of the self in its totality is vital for
self-actualization. The self is thus understood as the soul or a living centre of awareness which can experience itself in, and identify with many dimensions of experience, from physical reality to the fundamental presence of Being (Almaas 1996:36). However, a biblical and theological exploration of the human self, created in the image of God, and of Jesus who is the foundation and symbol of the Self, and the Holy Spirit who restores and empowers the self to realize its destiny in the Universe will clarify the issues raised.

1.2.3 Image of God

Paul emphasizes in Col.3:10 that one must put on the new self, implying that the image of God which has become tarnished by sin, must be restored and recreated once more in the Likeness and Image of God through the Holy Spirit. Gen.1:26-28 confirms this originally created Image but does not elaborate what is meant by this term. Therefore Niebuhr (1955:3) argues “This assertion of the divine element in human nature was, however, not explicated except by implication.” However, the Image of God no doubt refers to God-Self, and both man and woman share the Divine Image. The full meaning of humanity is therefore realized in both man and woman, both of whom are needed to reflect the Image of God (Dufour-Leon 1967:288)

However, to derive a clear understanding of how the self works on a practical level we find some interesting observations made by a Christian psycho-analyst, E, Barker, from which we can predicate the role of the Holy Spirit as it permeates the elements of actualization, denial and empowerment, renewal and fulfillment. Barker (1964:29) advocates three selves within the human personality. Firstly, we have the central self. This is the self, the individual is born with, the self of everyday life that looks out on life and takes action and enters into relationships. Secondly, we have the hungry self.

This self is constantly at war with the central self, and insists on gratifying the primitive pleasures. It is the hungry self that gets out of hand in a loss of temper or a cruel act of revenge. Finally, we have the condemning self which is judgmental. It insists whether an individual is worthless and wicked or not and plunges the individual into orgies of guilt feelings. It can also be seen as the voice of God castigating the urges of the hungry self. Together with the hungry self they form the underground world of the emotions constantly sabotaging the intentions of the central self. To illustrate their relationship, the central self plans on rising early to study at 4 o clock. The alarm goes off at 4 am the central self is ready
to respond, but the hungry self seeks a little more indulgence and prevents the central self from responding. However, the individual awakes and realizes that a hour has gone by and he is late. He is then full of self-accusation and remorse. This is the condemning self coming into action. Barker further proposes that the integration of the central and hungry selves is supplemented by the reaching out to the ideal self which is the sum of the person’s intelligent moral and spiritual yearnings and aspirations.

In this regard, Tournier (1962:123) in his celebrated work Guilt and Grace beautifully illustrates this point. Within this scenario the integrated trinity of selves, that is, the incorporation of the central, hungry and the ideal selves make up the personality and directs attention to the God within the individual, that is, to his experience of the Holy Spirit. In this blessed contact, the condemning self has no real part. It makes itself felt but is immediately cast off as spurious. However, when the central, hungry and ideal selves are charged by contact with the God within, who is the Holy Spirit, there you have the enlightened conscience working in a human integrated personality, with all the heavenly powers available to him/her.

According to the primitive conscience, Peter the Apostle was forbidden to associate with, or to visit anyone of another nation. But Peter manages to break through the prejudice and taboo of the condemning self in relation to his invitation from Cornelius and it is his enlightened conscience, that is the union of the central self, the hungry self, and the ideal self that speaks when Peter exclaims“ God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean.” Thus the enlightened conscience is the activity of the central self, unified with the hungry self, motivated by the ideal self.

Barker (1964:112-113) quotes Dewar on the ideal-self in which he says that the “undeniable fact that man inherits certain innate tendencies to action and unlearned reactions apart altogether from what experience teaches him. Beneath the level of fully conscious behavior, there lie deep springs of action, and once these are tapped man has access to immense resources of physical energy.” Barker comments that there is no doubt of this. Once energy is diverted from the condemning self and the central self is free to contact the ideal self, inspiration and power are available to man that makes him realize he has somehow penetrated a fourth dimension of experience.

Once direction and attitude are positive and free from the harassing of the primitive
conscience, the central self becomes increasingly aware of this inspirational activity. It is like "a well of water springing up unto eternal life." It is fair to claim," continues Dewar," that these so called springs of action are simply another name for the power of the Holy Spirit, the Life-giver." There would appear to be a two-way traffic whereby a person's yearnings and hopes rise, through the central self to meet and fuse with the activities of the God-mind or Holy Spirit through whom we come to "a right judgment in all things."

In view of what has been said above, to the extent a human is removed from the primitive conscience, to that extent is he/she is free to experience contact between the central self in concert with the hungry and ideal selves and the motivations of the Holy Spirit. Secondly, It is not when this poor self grows less and less that he/she thus becomes conscious of the Holy Spirit's activity, but as all the judgment, reason and discrimination of the central self are mobilized in a consciousness of his/her own dignity and worth as an individual that the way is opened for the real self or true or renewed self to receive the guidance, challenge and power of the Holy Spirit.

In other words, the Holy Spirit can only be operative in human beings, if there is this two-way traffic. This means employing every power of unified central self that the ideal self may be informed by the Holy Spirit. To illustrate this with a familiar story of the vicar, who upon visiting a new member who moved into the neighbourhood was captivated by the garden. He noticed how the wilderness of builder's rubble had been transformed into a garden of exquisite taste. Speaking to the man of the house, he commented "It is wonderful what man can do in co-operation with God "The gardener on hearing this said," you should have seen this place when God had it to Himself.

"The moral of the story is that God will not do it all Himself, whether in the case of gardens or our minds. He co-operates through His Spirit with an individual's whole personality. Equally so, God needs the fullness of the human's personality, his imagination, his feeling, and his will, that His work may be accomplished. It is in co-operation of the human being in his full dignity with the energies of the Holy Spirit that the divine hope is brought into the realm of accomplishment. Said another way, I am Gods child, My life is His life, my wisdom is His wisdom, my strength is His strength, So is God working in me and through me, for joy and happiness to all.

Thus we perceive the critical and sensitive role of the Holy Spirit in putting off the sinful or
false self and the putting on of the true, real, or renewed self and together with the individual reaching self-actualization through union with God so that the individual’s divine destiny can be realized through the working of the Holy Spirit. In other words, Christians have been made partakers and sharers of the Holy Spirit. The Greek word *metochous* which means real sharers is used in Heb.3:1 where the recipients are said to be “partakers of the heavenly calling, or “partakers of Christ”

We find the Holy Spirit is involved in the renewing of the self, and this accomplishment in the individual seems to be a phase of his progressive work of sanctification. Paul taught that the new self is constantly being renewed daily until it attains fullness of knowledge after the image of its Creator. Col.3:10) He further says that the inner man is being renewed day by day, in (2 Cor 4:16) the present tense of the command “be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”(Rom.12:2). It also suggests that the work of renewal is still going on in order to complete the good work of Christ already begun in us (Phil.1:16). Paul likewise stated that we are being transformed into the very image or likeness of the Lord by the Spirit of the Lord (2 Cor 3:18).

1.3 Stating of the problem

The basic problem and basic statement and thrust of this dissertation is that of a ‘both...and’ and not an ‘either...or’ relationship between the coherent, otherness and ongoing process – the Bible attests to - of the foursome ongoing process of God as Creator,( Human beings and their falling into sin), God as Redeemer and Re conciliator in Christ, God the Holy Spirit as the Renewer and Renovator of all things and God the Consummator and fulfiller of the process through the new and fulfilment of creation and establishment of the new heaven and the new earth in which human beings are involved and engaged in the experience of a fivesome experience of human beings as being created by God, as have fallen into sin, as being redeemed and liberated to the Kingdom of God in the cross and the resurrection and as being under constant renovation and renewal through the Spirit of God encapsulated in the approaching new heaven and new earth that is provisionally but real erupting in human beings lives from the future.

The importance of the coherence between each work, the otherness of each work and the ongoing character of God’s works demonstrates itself in the Evangelization of people, pastoral situations and the helping profession of faith counselling in interactive encounters
with people. In Evangelisation and in the processes of hunting, gathering and building of a community of faith and a church as well as in faith counselling people in this day and age should be guided interactively with faith clues, cues and hues in becoming a wholesome person with a *fivesome awareness*, namely an awareness of his/her *creatureliness*, an awareness of his/her *sinful tendencies* of doing damage to God, oneself as being created by God and all other creatures of God, an awareness of the *salvific and reconciliatory* power of the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ and an awareness of the *renovating and renewal* power of the Spirit of Pentecost which is carrying and guiding the process of the fivesome awareness in our minds, our experiences and our living into afterlife towards the *consummation of all things* in the new heaven and the new earth of which we experience anticipatory fragments and moments of meaning and significance already in our current life.

We carry the foursome awareness which with the addition of sin is actually a fivesome awareness with us in our pilgrimage through life. It is within its depth and width experienced within the ambiance of the Kingdom (Reign) of God that is there from the beginning of time as big as God’s created six billion universes - according to modern physics - and as small as the smallest particle in matter – detected by modern physics (Hawking 1988) as wide as our life worlds and as deep as the human heart in ongoing experience of a foursome awareness in every field of our experience, that is in believing, loving, justice, socializing, imagining, thinking, feeling, speaking, physical and evolving processes, training, empowering, etc. The foursome awareness embraces every part of our lives and all four of the dimensions of awareness are created, activated and carried by the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit even in the most material, bodily and thing-like part of our lives because we are living in the era of the Spirit of God before the end times.

In this dissertation the emphasis is totally on the works, acts and doings of human beings following the great works of God. Our emphasis is on the Holy Spirit in the embracing, guiding and pulling to the future of a human being. To go further requires a methodology which I would like to propose in the next sub-section.

1.4 Sense making approaches in three ways or methodology in three ways

One’s sense making approach should be described in three ways: practical, theoretical and textual approaches

1.4.1 Practical sense making with regard to actualization, denial,
empowerment, renewal and consummation in daily life.

Many books on theological and faith reflection as well as many Evangelization, pastoral and faith counseling’s approaches are one-sidedly engaged in the coherence, otherness and ongoing process of God’s works by accessing and emphasizing only one of God’s grand works. The experiential engagement and involvement with the ongoing process of God’s works is reductionistically accessed and opened up through either a Creation-centric, Hamartia-centric (=Sin-centric), Christo-centric, Pneuma-centric, Eschata-centric (=End-centred), Biblio-centric (=Bible-centred) or Ecclesio-centric (=church-centred) avenue. The basic point and thesis of this dissertation can be captured therein that one should not work and operate with a reductionist one-sided avenue for accessing the ongoing grand works of God.

We are intrinsically interconnected and involved as human beings in everyone of the ongoing works of God that span and stretch over life and eternity in a compressed and summarized way in our daily lives by way of the foursome awareness of being created human beings by God, sinning beings through ourselves and redeemed/reconciled and human beings under renovation and renewal through God. This may somewhat sound still abstract like high and mighty doctrines and dogmas of which divine and theological truth must be adhered and attested to, but what is very concrete and practical is when the coherence, otherness and ongoing practicality and realness of God’s works are experienced as a life-giving, life-sustaining and life-embracing energies, as sense providing, hope and meaning inducing and the real bringer of snippets of the future of the new heaven and the new earth into our daily experience and lives.

The basic point and the thrust of this dissertation is that of a ‘both...and’ and not an ‘either...or’ relationship between human beings and their experience of God as Creator, their own falling into sin, God as Reconciliator in Christ, God the Holy Spirit as the Renewer and Renovator of all things unto afterlife and the creation of the new heaven and the new earth – the whole ongoing process of God’s works is attested in the Biblical texts and attested in the foursome and inclusive experiential awareness of God’s works in our daily experience by the Holy Spirit.

Let me repeat what I have said earlier: The Holy Spirit or God as Spirit is embracing every atom and molecule in the physical-chemical world, every cell and organism in the biotic world, every emotion and feeling, every thought and belief, every love action, etc. Sin and
evil, however, derailed human beings and the whole of creation in a serious sense, although in what sense we do not always know. However through the inclusive process of the works of God, God is actually working 'intra-natural' - from within God's creation where the Spirit is everywhere at work - the Spirit makes us aware that we are created human beings within a very broad and wide creation where we are through sin on a course that is damaging to God, ourselves as human beings and the physical-organic environmental universes, simultaneously the Spirit makes us aware of the power of the cross and the resurrection of Jesus, the Christ, the cross as the restorative and redemptive power and the resurrection as the liberation and life giving power of new life in the broad and deep realm of the Kingdom of God which is furthermore enacted in our lives through the grand work and power of the Spirit of God in Pentecost which we experience daily and in every area of our lives as the renewal and renovation work of the Spirit in our experience.

It seems that for many church people and theologians who work in the tradition of the Reformation of the 16th century the experience and awareness for life of the coherence, otherness and ongoing process of God's works of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment are stuck between the covers of the Bible, in the handbooks of the doctrines and dogmas of their churches and their theologies as well as stuck in the minds of church bureaucrats, leaders and resident theologians.

One needs the fivesome awareness in ones daily life, as the new day dawns as one awakes in the morning a new day has dawned with unlimited opportunities and endless possibilities to live the resurrected life. One must take stock before God in ones quiet time in which there is a mutual exchange of love between God and the individual through the Holy Spirit and a reaffirmation that together there is nothing that cannot be done, in other words all things are possible. At this point the individual needs to crucify the sinful self as Christ was crucified on the cross. One appropriates the benefits of the cross as God's great reconciliatory act for humans who were lost in sin and degradation. As one puts off self one puts on the new self, empowered by the Holy Spirit acquired through the benefits of the resurrection where one arises in newness of life.

This great act of God through the Holy Spirit empowers the individual to self-realization and at the same time one receives an infilling of the Holy Spirit to meet the demands and challenges of the day in eager anticipation for the new heaven and the new earth. As one rises from ones knees one has had the fivesome experience needed to face the vicissitudes of life
for that specific day. It is this fivesome experience that must become a daily occurrence of ones everyday life. It should make sense from a practical standpoint to every individual who wants to impact his corner of the world. Thus we find this constant interaction and interrelation on a daily basis of God’s great acts of reconciliation as embodied in creation, the cross and resurrection and human acts as embodied in actualization, denial, empowerment, renewal and consummation experiences. The chief role player in this process is God the Holy Spirit working individually in each human being causing him to reflect the Glory and Kingdom of God in daily life related experiences.

True to our experience as Christians we are acutely aware of the fivesome process which is part of our awareness of our creatureliness, our ongoing sin problem, daily reconciliation to God through the prism of the cross, and the aspect of renewal through the efficient means of the Holy Spirit which ultimately results in being reconciled to God in the consummation when God is all in all. Thus, further exploration is necessary to gain a more comprehensive and concrete understanding of this fivesome awareness, with the focus and spotlight on the works of God observed from a human standpoint. The first point of entry in this fivesome awareness is the aspect of creation.

1.4.2 Fivesome awareness of human experience

1.4.2.1. Aspect of creation

The Genesis creation account informs us that human beings were created in the image of God, with God the Holy Spirit imparting the breath of life making the human a living being, created in His pristine beauty and similitude and given authority and dominance over the earth, animals, fish, birds and every creeping thing. He was created to see God, asserts Anselm (1962 : 49) Being created in God’s image, as the Reformers understood it, possessing the spiritual and moral attributes or it can be seen as propensities with regard to creativity, imagination, awareness to beauty and so forth and so on.

However, the afore-named attributes possessed by humankind became tainted and tarnished resulting in a divisive and rebellious self-seeking, self-centred, and selfish spirit, intensely opposed to God and His Kingdom. This is the mainspring and fountain of the Curse that was pronounced on human and non-human creation. This is explicated in Gen. 3-4 which relates
to the eating of the forbidden fruit and the execution of judgement upon human beings and their posterity. This subversive and overt act brought deep sorrow and sadness to God and challenged His wisdom in creating the human species as evident in (Gen. 3: 4-13, 4: 6, 6: 6). However, despite human physical and moral depravity, God in His infinite love sought to reinstate and reintegrate humankind by devising and evolving a plan of rescue and restoration. God’s loving kindness can be observed in His great Acts and His provision of an escape route to reconcile humanity to Himself. This is evident in the rescue of Noah and His family and the Noahic covenant which assured His ongoing care and blessing.

God’s preoccupation with the human race is evident in His love, mercy and empathy towards them. As God, the Father He has willed it so, to be with, and to be actively engaged on behalf of His people. He does everything in consultation with His Will (John 17). Therefore the saga of our first parents is no fairytale, or folklore story, but reality. Its historical credibility in terms of the sin issue is rooted in the indisputable fact that humans have been sinning since time immemorial, up to the present time. This process of falling into sin is reiterated, re-enacted, and replicated in different formats and venues. In other words, deliberate and wilful sinning goes on unabated on the planet reflecting humanity’s intense opposition to God and His purposes, and more especially His Kingdom. It is therefore clear that sin disorientates, alienates and separates human beings from God, but God’s strategy through His Spirit to restore through reconciliation is evident in the restorative work of the cross of Christ, and the liberating work of the resurrection, which is carried to another level by the Holy Spirit after His departure.

The mysterious work of the Spirit in the impartation of life to human beings is evident in the imparting of life by the risen Christ which brings newness. Thus in dying and rising Christ imparts life which the Holy Spirit bonds and cements in mystical union with the life of the believer (John 17:13). This eternal and everlasting life is symbolic of newness which the Holy Spirit generates, and represents the acme of human experience. Therefore life is just not mere existence, but involves a transformed awareness within the individual, a counter perception of the world, self and neighbour, and an authorization by the Holy Spirit which compels the individual to bring more and more of life under the new governance of this world-transforming, promise-keeping, covenant-making, justice-commanding God. The Christian’s exemplar is Jesus Christ made alive through the Holy Spirit to maintain that integral, vital and organic relationship between God and His people in living reality. However, the sin problem has always dogged his footsteps, which we explore under the next head.
1.4.2.2 The constant sin problem

Human beings are therefore perceived as living out their sinful careers in the state of alienation and separation from God. The law of God was dishonoured by the disobedience of human beings. Anselm (1962: 50) observes that humankind lost the blessed-ness for which they were made, and found the misery for which they were not made. The commission and omission of sin on a daily basis leaves him guilty before a righteous and indignant God, violation of loving one's neighbour, which Finney (1979: 12) calls the utmost dishonour, a disowning, disobeying and a despising of the law, translates itself into selfishness, self-seeking and a covetous spirit that is supremely self-centred. This has also resulted in estrangement of humans from fellow humans through malice, prejudice, violence and hatred.

Scripture uses the metaphor of Christ being the vine and Christians being the branches, to illustrate the important reality that our lives are hid in Christ. He, through the Holy Spirit, infuses and animates the believer with spiritual life, signifying, apart from Him there is no life, says Paul (2 Cor. 5:17, Rom. 6:3-11). Despite technological advances in virtually every field of human endeavour, the sin question remains and rears its ugly head economically, socially, and politically. Economically, we refer to the disparity between haves and the have not's. Socially, we speak of unjust social policy and practice, and politically, we talk of exploitation and oppression within public institutions.

Moral and physical depravity runs deep which makes the necessity of a Saviour indispensable, as one cannot save oneself. The law however must be executed at the expense of the well-being of the whole race, or God must submit to suffer the worst results of disrespect to His law. In the case of God's government it has been deemed advisable to provide a substitute. The power of the Holy Spirit is sorely needed to renew and renovate the mind and create a clean heart (1 John 5:7-8). Within this context God's plan of salvation and redemption became mandatory to salvage humanity from persisting in their self-destructive lifestyles, while simultaneously honouring His law. The subjective motive in the mind of God for this great gift was love, love to the world. Therefore John (3:16) reminds us that God so loved the world that He gave His Son, His Son so loved the world that He gave His life, that humanity might have a right to the tree of life. John (15:13-14) points out that greater love hath no individual than that, where one lays one's life for one's friends. In this great act He took pains to provide for the interests of the Universe, and uphold the sacredness of His law,
hence redemption became a reality.

1.4.2.3 Salvation/Redemption/Reconciliation

This sinful state adverted to above, is total alienation and separation from God, and presupposes an intense, prejudiced inclination towards God and all that He stands for. In short, it implies rebellion towards God. Augustine (1990:358) believed humanity to be universally affected by sin as a consequence of the fall. This committal to self-gratification as the end of their being, is moral depravity, the fountain of sin within them, by which flow by a natural law all their sinful ways. It is this committed voluntary state that needs a radical change. God is infinitely benevolent and human beings supremely selfish, so that they are radically opposed to one another. Aquinas (1990:454) argues that there is an enormous gulf between humanity and God. Their committal to the gratification of their appetites and propensities is known in Scripture as the carnal mind or the minding of the flesh, which is enmity against God. This enmity then, is voluntary and must be overcome by the Word of God, made effectual by the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

We find therefore, that God’s plan of salvation is adapted to this end. Human beings must be convicted of their enmity, a task assigned to and undertaken by the Holy Spirit. In view of the fact that they do not know God, and consequently they are often ignorant of the opposition of their hearts to Him. For Paul insists, ‘by the law is the knowledge of sin’, inferring that by the law the human being gets his first true idea of sin. By the law, he first learns that God is perfectly benevolent, and infinitely opposed to all selfishness. The Holy Spirit therefore arrays this law in all its majesty against the selfishness and enmity of the human being. This law carries irresistible conviction of its righteousness, and no moral agent can doubt it. All human beings know that they have sinned, but not all are convicted of the guilt and just desert of sin. Therefore without this they cannot appreciate or understand the gospel plan of salvation.

One cannot intelligently and heartily ask or accept a pardon until one sees and feels the fact and justice of one’s condemnation. It is absurd to suppose that a careless, unconverted human being can intelligently and thankfully accept the gospel offer of pardon until he/she accepts the righteousness of God in his/her condemnation. Conversion to Christ is an intelligent change, hence the conviction of deserved punishment, must precede the acceptance of mercy. Therefore we find in the redemption act, the Holy Spirit takes the spirituality of the law and
unsparingly applies it to the conscience until the human beings self-righteousness is annihilated, and he/she stands speechless and self-condemned before a holy God. It is therefore imperative that all the essential links of truth be supplied.

Therefore the law through the agency of the Holy Spirit does the work of annihilating self-righteousness and shuts the human up to the acceptance of mercy. It is at this point that God the Holy Spirit offers reconciliation through the atonement as a fact revealed, and Christ becomes the individual’s sin offering. McGrath (2003:449) quotes Augustine in saying that, God assists individuals by healing, enlightening, strengthening and continually working within the individual in order to restore him/her. This reveals that God has accepted the death of Christ as a substitute for the human being’s death, and this is received upon the testimony of God. Already crushed into contrition by the convicting power of the law as applied by the Holy Spirit, the revelation of the love of God manifested in the death of Christ begets godly sorrow where the human envisions God as holy and glorious and himself/herself a sinful being.

It is no accident therefore that the dispensation of law preceded the dispensation of grace, and therefore in accordance with established mental laws, the law prepares the way for the Gospel. Thus Regeneration, as presented in Scripture, is a voluntary change of the ultimate preference of the soul, produced by the spiritual illumination of the Holy Spirit, and is completely the work of the Spirit. The human being experiences this saving faith which is the heart’s trust in Christ that works by love because it purifies the heart and overcomes the world. Therefore in the salvation or redemption process the human being is assured that God has given him eternal life and this life is in His Son and ‘Christ is made unto him wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption’, in other words, his whole salvation and sanctification is in Christ. This conviction and conversion the Holy Spirit instils and entrenches within the individual.

Therefore the individual is in active participation and partnership in the life and Sonship of Christ, through the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:1-7). In short, heirs and co-heirs together with Christ, as Paul in his epistles insist. Therefore this salvation which is inaugurated and administered by God, and brought to fruition by Christ’s death on the cross is outworked in the lives of individuals by the Holy Spirit. Thus we find God in His infinite love and mercy reached down to sinful human beings with the purpose of redeeming, reconciling, restoring and empowering fallen humanity. As human beings cannot save themselves, God’s great act of redemption is
realised through the death of Christ on the cross, through which union, human beings become a new creation showing forth the praises of Him who has called them out from darkness into His marvellous light, a task executed by the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus the old person is buried with all his/her sinful deeds, which we call self-denial, and the new person is raised to newness of life, which we call self renewal and self empowerment, through the resurrection power of the Holy Spirit as exemplified in Christ, which Paul demonstrates in Gal. 2: 20 and continues in 2 Cor. 3: 18 and Eph. 4: 22-24.

Therefore Paul argues for the case of translation in (Eph. 2:6) and affirms that just as Christ was resurrected and is now ascended, so will the believers be, seated in heavenly places with Christ Jesus. This new life in Christ will finally be made perfect when we see God face to face. It is through fellowship with God and a constant assimilating of Scripture that ones knowledge and insight increases, as reflected in Phil. 1:9.

Paul further refers to the aspect of renewal and rebirth in 2 Cor. 8: 14 and confirms that this is achieved through the work of the Holy Spirit. It is this new birth that has forged an everlasting bond between Christ and human beings. This birth from above presupposes humans as relational beings capable of maintaining a relationship with the supernatural. John calls it a special friendship where one lays down ones life for ones friend. The individual therefore, upon conversion receives a fresh influx of supernatural power, in which God and His Son eventuate in the Holy Spirit and dwell within him/her. This filial relationship between God and His children is made possible by the Holy Spirit so that the believer can call God, Father.

Therefore divine enablement through the Holy Spirit allows participation in the knowledge where the Son recognises the Father as reflected in Jesus’ words as He denounced the cities in which His miracles were performed.

Further, the love between the Father and the Son towards humanity, who obey God’s commandments in loving one another and in loving God, is clearly visible. Finney (1979: 16) comments, on the part of Christ, considered as Mediator, that this love was fraternal, “He is not ashamed to call them brethren.” He further comments that it is impossible to conceive of God as being selfish, since His love embraces all creatures and all interests according to their real value. Thus the believers in this context become citizens of the Kingdom of God as taught in Jesus’ parable of the vine and the branches. Therefore this new life in Christ fosters a deep love towards fellow believers and towards unconverted sinners. This enlightens the
understanding, evident in (Luke 24: 45) in which Jesus opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. This is further evidenced in the Emmaus episode where the believers were made bold even to the point of death, even in the face of persecution and suffering.

Thus the Holy Spirit accomplishes this work in the believer as he/she yields to His prompting. It is the works of the Holy Spirit then to reprove and correct the individual in his/her walk making him/her aware of the loathsomeness of sin and its pernicious tendencies. It is the Holy Spirit then that infuses the written Word and empowers the individual as he/she speaks the Word of life, so that the self-righteous and self-seeking spirit of human beings can be subdued, and conviction and conversion can occur. God the Holy Spirit therefore continues the ongoing work of restoration, reconstruction and empowerment in the lives of individuals thereby seeking to reinstate the image of God within them, as Paul outlines in (Rom 8 : 5-11). The task is assigned to the Holy Spirit to implement the monumental work of renewal, renovation and empowerment.

1.4.2.4 The Spirit’s work of Renewal and Renovation

Having accomplished and established the work of reconciliation through the cross of Christ, the Spirit embarks upon completing the radical change wrought in the heart of the individual, by empowering, and renewing the individual with resurrection power. The heart, according to biblical psychology refers to the organ of decision-making that determines the life-view of the individual. Thus the moral sinful propensities undergo a dramatic change as it responds in faith to God and His purposes.

Therefore the spiritual human being is now able through the illumination of the Holy Spirit to understand the infallible truth of the Word. With conversion as the entry point, the Spirit nurtures, incorporates and develops the spiritual human through a steady stream of spiritual knowledge and insight to reflect the reign of God in a lost and sinning world.

Therefore the renewal and renovation task assigned to the Holy Spirit is ongoing and progressive, until the self is definitively fulfilled (consummated) in the new heaven and in the new earth. Although the process of transformation has begun, the power of death is resilient and persistent and therefore the triumph of God procured through the cross and the resurrection must be re-enacted, reiterated and repeated over and over again. However, this does not preclude the tussle between the new self and the sinful self spoken of by Paul in...
Romans. I shall have more to say about this later on, but that is for later on.

As more and more of the individual’s life is surrendered in humble submission to the Spirit, the spiritual gains prominence and dominance, as the parable of the yeast taught by Jesus in the Gospels signify. Therefore the individual gets a foretaste of heaven as he/she is led by the Spirit into doxology, which is, worshipping, praising and giving thanks to God, living the life of angels in a world of corruption. The Spirit respects free will and does not impose Himself on the individual, as Cuthbert F (1939:145) argues, “Gods will waits upon our human will for the effectiveness of His redeeming grace within us, just as His creative will waits upon our human will for the realisation of His divine purpose in our creation.”

Human beings were indeed created by a pure act of God’s own will, and by a pure act of His redeeming love has the life of our redemption been willed by Him’. Therefore the method of renewal and renovation is a progressive one where the individual experiences moments or fragments breaking into their lives. Therefore having Christ in one’s life through the power of the Holy Spirit is an experience akin to heaven, and it is this presence that gives the individual a glimpse of the glory of God breaking in from the future. Thus the Holy Spirit sheds abroad the love of God in the individual’s life which gives him/her the inner poise and strength to overcome temptations, and to count all but dung when viewed with the glory to be revealed (Rom 8:18).

Through the process of Redemption as procured by Christ on the cross the believers are able to practice the virtues of faith, hope and love. In (1 Peter 1:14) Peter admonishes individuals to uphold the moral standards of a holy God and endeavour to be holy as He is holy. Therefore indicative of the new life in Christ, is partnership in His sufferings, renouncing all selfishness and worldliness so that he/she may aspire to the glory of this new life. Thus the Christ life can be seen in overcoming evil with good and in conveying life wherever one goes, just as Christ did whilst on earth. This the Holy Spirit accomplishes through the process of redemption where sin is overcome, which is in line with Paul’s argument in (Rom. 7: 14-25).

Therefore conforming to Christ is constantly reiterated and repeated in the New Testament showing the integration of their minds and their social responsibility which is achieved through the Holy Spirit, for as we suffer with Christ we shall also be glorified with Him. Therefore Regeneration as the word implies is transformed consciousness inaugurated by the redemptive work of Christ on the cross and the forgiveness of sins by the Father and the
washing of regeneration by the Holy Spirit.

It is important at this point to note that it is the power in the blood of Christ that cleanses the individual from sin. According to John it is available 24/7 so to speak, as sinning takes place on an ongoing basis, it is the blood that regenerates and redeems the believer throughout his life. This resembles the replacement of cells in the human blood that takes place on a continuous basis as cells regenerate themselves.

However, the Holy Spirit is the Person that effects radical, total and dramatic transformation within the individual and acts as the agency of recreation, recreating the image of Christ within the soul. Paul reiterates this movement in Galatians when he speaks of him no longer living but Christ is alive in him. Thus, it is the Holy Spirit that sanctifies the human body and prepares it as a temple so He may dwell therein. Therefore the Holy Spirit is continually developing the new nature and discarding the old, helping the individual to renounce or put off the works of the flesh or sinful self and to put on the renewed self, furnished unto good works in the Spirit. Paul beautifully exemplifies this in (Eph. 4; 22-24.) where he outlines the works of darkness and contrasts it with the works of love which belong to the children of light.

Thus the Holy Spirit who proceeds from God the Father and God the Son, convicts and reproves the world of sin, righteousness and judgement and prepares the believer for the coming glory. This translates itself in the things of this world growing strangely dim in the believer's life and the spiritual being highlighted and accentuated. Therefore the new life within the believer is nurtured and raised by the Holy Spirit so as to reach spiritual maturity by constantly transforming attitudes, thoughts and actions. This cultivates the fruit of the Spirit which in turn promotes synergy among believers, so that each one helps one and no one is in need. Paul reflects this idea in his second letter to the Corinthians (4:17) for the simple reason it portrays love in action.

Thus the work of grace begun in the life of the believer by the Holy Spirit is an ongoing process in which renewal and renovation feature prominently. The individual experiences on a daily basis the strength, guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit needed to live this overcoming, Christ-centred life. Moreover the individual receives the different gifts imparted by the Holy Spirit to accomplish the work of redemption, reconciliation and empowerment in the world, and to show forth the praises of Him who has called them out of darkness into His
marvellous light. Therefore his affections, his reason and will, are no more set on earthly things but on spiritual things that concern God’s Kingdom and His glory. It is the Holy Spirit that empowers, inspires and mobilises him into active service as a member of the covenant-community of God, seeking the lost no matter what the cost. Therefore, Paul assures the believers that as many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the children of God and as such have the unique privilege of attending to the Fathers business, until He comes, when all things will be fulfilled or consummated. (Rom 8: 21)

1.4.2.5 The Consummation and Fulfiling of All Things

God reveals creationally in creation, redemptively and reconciliatorily in the cross and the resurrection, renovatingly and renew ally through the Spirit of Pentecost, and consummatingly, in the new heaven and the new earth experiencing fragments and snippets of the future breaking into our daily lives of the new heaven and the new earth. This new earth and new heaven happened in anticipation and as precursor in the resurrection of Jesus.

Both human and non-human creation groan together for deliverance from the curse brought about by sin, disobedience and rebellion. The Holy Spirit however, comforts and consoles, encourages and uplifts in the sure hope of the day of the Lord, when all creation will be restored, renewed and renovated to reflect the new heaven and the new earth. This hope and promise energises the believer to wait in the Spirit for the Lord’s return, as Paul affirms, this mortal will put on immortality and this corruptible will put on incorruption. MacArthur (1991:462) puts it in this way, “They love God, hate sin, and have holy longings for obedience to the Word. But while on earth they are kept in bondage by their mortal bodies, which are still corrupted by sin and its consequences. Christians are holy seeds as it were, encased in an unholy shell, incarcerated in a prison of flesh and subjected to its weakness and imperfections, we therefore eagerly await an event that is divinely guaranteed but is yet to transpire – the redemption of the body.”

Paul encourages the believers, that the Spirit bears witness with their spirit that they are the children of God. This concurs with John who exclaims, in perhaps one of the most radical texts in the Bible when he says, “To as many as received Him, to them gave He the power to become the children of God. Further, this inner witness is also confirmed by Peter who calls believers a holy nation, a royal priesthood and a chosen people (1 Peter 2: 9). John
corroborates this in his vision of the believers during the millennium reign reflected in the book of Revelation. Paul further delineates the headship of Christ in his letter to the Colossians, emphasising that Christ is the alpha and the omega, first fruit of the dead and that He occupies first place in everything. This is the Spirit’s message, for God reveals Himself through His Spirit who enlightens and instructs the mind in all things pertaining to life. This self-same Spirit produces the hope and joy in the midst of trials and tribulations nurturing the promise that the glory that is to come is far greater in comparison to the temporary suffering experienced at the present time, as Paul taught the Corinthian Church.

In Romans he anticipates the glorious day when creation itself will be liberated from bondage and decay and brought into the freedom of the children of God. Like Paul, believers wait in eager anticipation for that great and notable day when creation will experience a total and radical transformation and believers themselves will be glorified. He reiterates this exaltation in Thessalonians, signifying that the believer’s glorification is the purpose for redemption, where Paul asserts, the believer will share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Christian (2003:172) puts it this way, “eternal life and fellowship with Christ are already present in the believer. The full realisation of this life and fellowship comes at the return of Christ, which precedes the ultimate resurrection of the believer.”

One of the main tasks assigned to the Holy Spirit is, His missional endeavours, fulfilling the Great commission declared by Jesus and entrusted to His faithful disciples and to the covenant-community of faith. Thus His exercise of mercy resembles His actions during the time of Noah where grace and mercy preceded the flood. For salvation is offered to all and sundry, for God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. Therefore Jesus emphasised this principle in (John. 3:3-5) that the pre-requisite to eternal life was being born of water and the Spirit, thus making water and spirit baptism integral and definitive to the believer’s life.

The Holy Spirit then is freely given to all believers to work the works of God in a world reeling and rocking from trouble, confusion, and bewilderment. The Spirit therefore through the instrumentality of believers convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgement, and prepares the way of the Lord. Paul in speaking to the Church at Thessalonica, (2 Thess 2: 13) affirms that the sanctifying work of the Spirit was a mark of selection by God from the beginning. Thus the Father and the Son come fused in the Holy Spirit who works vigorously to promote salvation, renewal and empowerment. Thus we see, before the worlds were
framed, God sealed the destiny of human beings, and during their sinful carrier Christ died for them, and broke the chains of bondage and set them free, while the Holy Spirit sanctifies, empowers and envisions them for active service to God, in this world and in the worlds to come.

The entire mission from start to finish is accomplished by God the Holy Spirit, for it was the Spirit of God that brooded over the waters as a hen over its chicks, and it was the Spirit that animated Adam and he became a living soul, and it was the Spirit that raised the dead Jesus which signified Gods triumph over the resilience of death, and it was the Spirit that infused the 120 on the day of Pentecost, and finally believers wait in the Spirit for the Lord’s return. Presently, the task of the Spirit is, among other things, conviction of sin in the believers, guidance in truth, teaching and leading them to repentance, and most importantly, preparing and empowering them for active service in God’s Kingdom and for His glory.

Scripture teaches that they that have not the Spirit of Christ are none of His (Rom 8:9). Conversely, they that have the Spirit of Christ belong to Him. This transforming power of the Holy Spirit allows the believer to experience a foretaste of what it is like to enter into eternity and therefore represents a fragment from the future breaking into the present, in the life of the believer.

God the Holy Spirit strives with individuals, aiding them to live this new life in Christ through faith and obedience. This offer is extended to all and sundry, or to whosoever will, until He comes and renews heaven and earth. However, the patience and mercy of God must not be misconstrued for slackness, as it is His desire that all should come to repentance. Therefore a negative choice on the part of individuals will have catastrophic consequences resulting in death and damnation.

Believers are nurtured and incorporated as children of God into the covenant-community by the Holy Spirit on a daily basis. It is the resurrection power of the Holy Spirit that keeps hope alive in the believer and preserves him until the day when the triumph over death will be consummated, when the dead in Christ shall rise first, and those alive will be caught up to meet Him in the air, and so we will be with the Lord.

Paul’s concept of death in 1 Corinthians 15 involves a separation from the earthly life to the heavenly one, and he therefore calls it a gain, and longs to be absent from the body and to be
present with the Lord, and exclaims that this unstable, depraved, perishable, frail, withering and corrupt tabernacle of body must be dissolved, in order that it may hereafter be restored to a more durable, perfect, incorruptible and heavenly glory. Paul’s perception of life and death corresponds to the Lord’s reply in Luke 23:43 as He addressed the thief on the adjoining cross, “I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise”. Jesus further accentuates this with the narrative of the rich man and the beggar Lazarus. Even the martyr Stephen, in Acts 7: 59, while being stoned cries out, “Lord Jesus receive my spirit”.

Although in bondage to time and mortality, the true believers who represent the Church, non-human creation and the natural environment have this promise and hope that we shall be like Him, when mortal puts on immortality. Mascall quotes a Russian theologian Bulgakov to illustrate this point, “The glorified state inherent in the body of the risen Christ, will be communicated to the whole of creation, a new heaven and a new earth will appear, a transfigured earth, resurrected with Christ and His humanity”. Mascall comments, “Thus the resurrection of the body is not only the resurrection of the mystical body, it is also the resurrection of the world” (148)” (Hooke S H, 1976:117) That is the hope that all believers have, being transformed, they have this overwhelming desire of oneness in Christ wrought by the power of the Holy Spirit, and is available to all who will believe.

1.4.3 Theoretical sense making approach

God, humanity and the physical-organic environment have a common heritage, in other words they are inseparably bound together. What affects one directly affects all indirectly. All are in a process of inter relation that reflects a common garment of destiny. God is communion, and therefore demands and desires community from humanity. Human beings are created in community. They interact within the physical habitation we call the world, created and sustained by God the Spirit for the benefit and well-being of humanity.

The central aspect of the dissertation is to show how humanity can live in peaceful coexistence with its Creator and creation, so as to achieve the goal and ultimate destiny of its existence, and to further illustrate that this state of being can only be achieved through the universal regeneration by the Holy Spirit, as filtered through actualization, denial, empowerment and renewal of the human self. This further focuses on the role of the Holy Spirit in consummating all things to the glory of God. Therefore God, humanity and the physical organic cosmic world cannot in any sense be disconnected from each other.
As a theorist of faith I operate with the interconnectedness and otherness of God, human beings and the physical-organic environmental universe as my basic pattern of pointers or indicators. The role and involvement of the Holy Spirit can be clearly traced to every activity within this interconnectedness of God, humanity and the world. This interrelatedness of God, humanity and the world is God’s purpose for creation, first realised in Christ and ultimately on the new earth. My understanding therefore is that God, people and the environment are interrelated and ought to live in fellowship with one another.

Therefore my theological affirmations are derived from God’s revelation in His acts of creation, reconciliation in the cross and the resurrection, renewal through the Spirit and the process of fulfilment directed to the new heaven and the new earth. Mysteriously these acts of God through the power of the Holy Spirit have an impact on the correlation that is the connection and difference of God, humanity and the physical environment. In other words, I am working in my thinking from functional categories, that is, what God did in and through Jesus via the Holy Spirit, to theological, ontological, and speculative categories, that is, how this should be understood in terms of who Jesus is, as seen within the context of the Holy Spirit, why it all came about and how the Holy Spirit helps the individual to make sense of what it means for everyday living. Thus the Holy Spirit enmeshes this interconnectedness of God, humanity and the physical organic environment. Therefore John 16:12-13 has Jesus saying, “I have much to say to you, more than you can bear, but when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on His own, He will speak only what He hears, and He will tell you what is yet to come.” Thus under the guidance of the same Spirit who inspired the Biblical writings there has been a progressive illumination throughout the nineteen centuries of the meaning and significance of God’s definitive activity in Christ Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit. It is vital therefore at this point to evaluate the textual sense making orientation which plays a critical role in the interpretation of biblical texts.

1.4.4 Textual Sense Making Approach

The Judaeo-Christian Bible of which the Canon formation had been concluded in the fourth century AD starts with a rendering of the beginning of all things in Genesis with God’s creation of the heavens, the earth and everything therein, and ends with the book of Revelation which present us with a complicated portrayal of the events at the end of the whole
process that started with creation in the beginning. But - and this ‘but’ is the million dollar catchword for thousands of Christians – the conclusion of the Canon of the Bible in 387 AD through which we have the composition of the process of the great works and acts of God of creation, the great work of human beings of falling into sin, the cross and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the permeating and outpouring, the affirmation and vindication of all of God’s works in the events and acts of Pentecost and the moving and awaiting for the end of time of which a partial description is given in the book of Revelation, is mainly not to be experienced as historical events in the same way as human beings act out and make their history.

Two broad approaches seem to have emerged from the varied and diversified experiences of people influenced in some or other way by the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century, namely a ‘mirroring’ approach of the Bible as the Word(s) of God and an ‘interpretation’ approach of the Bible as the Word of God. Both approaches emerged in the 17th century within Reformed and Lutheran Orthodoxy. In the diversified global world of our age the two broad approaches on many an occasion are locking horns and are opposing each other vehemently. In this sense although I take these opposing views serious my intention is to go beyond the mirroring approach and the interpretation approach through what one can call a consensible negotiation approach with the text of the Bible.

1.4.4.1 Fundamentalist mirroring approach

It is of vital importance to understand the problematic interpretation of fundamentalist as a backdrop to the consensible negotiation process of interpretation. It would appear that there are three characteristics that identify fundamentalists.

Firstly, there is a heavy emphasis on the infallibility or inerrancy of the Bible. They deny that it contains any form of error, historical, geographical or otherwise. Secondly, there is a strong opposition to all modern theology and to the methods, results and implications of modern critical biblical scholarship, and historical criticism. Thirdly, they assert the conviction that anyone who does not share their convictions is not a true Christian; hence they evince a highly exclusive and militant attitude. Fundamentalists often make radical pronouncements which may appeal to the pious, but does not tally with Biblical facts. A typical fundamentalist statement is, “every book, every chapter, every word, every syllable and every letter is the direct utterance of the most high”. This view places all Scriptural pronouncements as if every part of the Bible were true in exactly the same way. It’s clear however, that the chapter in
which Job curses the day of his birth (Job 3:1-19) and the many occasions where he rebels against God cannot be called the direct utterance of the most high in the same way as John 3:16. However, in this regard König (1975:119) evaluates such a stance and comments, “Sweeping statements about the real problems of the Bible do not advance God’s cause on earth, but creates the impression that the Bible cannot stand up to critical scientific enquiry”.

Fundamentalists further exercise that one must bow before the Bible as the infallible Word of God with child like simplicity. This precludes the human element in the Bible, e.g. did Peter hear the cock crow once or twice? or what exactly was the inscription on the cross? Thus it is preferable to admit that the Bible is not some magical book which fell from heaven, that it’s all too human on various levels like the difference between the synoptic gospels and between Kings and Chronicles. Fundamentalists are not prepared to recognise the human form in which it pleased God to give us his Word. In other words, they do not except the Bible as it presents itself. Therefore under the next head I will take a brief look at the interpretation paradigm.

1.4.4.2 Interpretation paradigm

Looking at the interpretation paradigm briefly, we find the allegorical method quite popular. This method involves the application of a spiritual meaning to a biblical story or theme which clearly differs from the text’s historical meaning. The Alexandrian church in the second and third century, its exponents Clement and Origin advanced and developed this principle. In this method, firstly the apparent meaning is replaced by another. The Bible speaks of God repenting of his decision but this is interpreted as God not doing so. Two coins are interpreted as two sacraments, baptism and Eucharist. Oil is interpreted as the Holy Spirit and the fig tree as the people of Israel. Thus we conclude that this is an arbitrary method which in the long run does not impress one with its credibility. There are no grounds for assigning something a given meaning where the literal meaning or the text is discounted. It also shows people are not satisfied with the meaning of the Bible.

The next method is the typological approach. This was an extremely important method which the apostles used to explain the Gospel. They saw a correspondence between God’s acts in Israel and the salvific work of Jesus, prophecy and fulfilment which were the two essential elements in the relationship between Israel and Christ. In this method two things are connected by means of an analogy. First, there is the type, then there is the anti-type. The
New Testament anti-type is always greater than the type. Thus we see in the synoptic gospels that Jesus is greater than Jonah, Solomon and David. One should be careful, for typology can easily slip into allegorical exegesis, and restrict ourselves to the treasure of typology in the New Testament.

Yet another method is the historical literal method. Here, the Bible is assumed to be historically correct. Genesis 3 tells us that a serpent approached Eve and spoke to her, therefore there was a speaking serpent. The Bible is historically correct. The historical distance between the then and the now is played down. Historical literalists still hold that Moses wrote the first five books of the Old Testament, and that Isaiah wrote the entire book of Isaiah. When one investigates the way the New Testament quotes the Old Testament we find the New Testament author’s rarely quoted the Old Testament accurately. The mere fact that the New Testament authors quote mostly from the Septuagint casts doubt on the principle of consistently interpreting literally.

A further not so popular method is the historical critical approach. This method is much more serious in its approach to history. This method does not simply accept that something happened just as described. Luke, for instance, did not alter the details of the story related by Mark. Different versions of what Jesus said are compared to establish his actual words. Historical critical scholars believed that different authors may have contributed to a book of even to a single chapter over a long period. To cite just one example, if Genesis chapter 14-16 is read literally the information gleaned will be God created the sun, moon and stars, but according to the historical critical interpretation this is a relatively new addition to the Bible, possibly during the exile in a situation in which celestial bodies were thought to be God’s, a belief that threatened Israel’s faith in the Lord as Creator. In order to emphasise the Lord’s majesty and superiority over the Babylonian gods, the sun, moon and the stars are called lights since the sun was referred to as a God.

However, there are many problems associated with this method of interpretation. This method pays scant attention to what the Bible means today. All attention is directed to what it meant to the people of those times. Thus we have seen the fundamentalists mirroring approach which entails mimicking and imitating texts and theories weak and inconclusive. Having explored the merits and demerits of the interpretation paradigm ones finds a new development taking place in the 20 century where scientists realise that they are not just discovering but simultaneously constructing. This is called the consensible negotiation approach to
interpretation.

1.4.4.3 New development of the consensible negotiation paradigm

This fusion of texts and horizons maintains Van Niekerk (105/2007:93-105), takes place in the consensible negotiation approach to interpretation which involves interaction between the readers sense making orientation and that of the sense making view embodied in the biblical texts.

This is where the text is treated theologically or historically from outside the sense making embodiment of the text without his sense making orientation. I subscribe to this approach for the simple reason that the sense making view and experience in a text or theory is dealt on the same level of ones sense making viewpoint and experience. Van Niekerk expresses it as an interchange and exchange between two sense making views and experiences and fuses both into a co-promise. In other words, the same Spirit that infused the gospel writers and compilers in their God-life-and-world view, infuses us in this day and age so that a successful negotiation of a specific text for our situation and circumstance is possible, provided it is done in a spirit filled way. To quote Van Niekerk on this issue, he says we can negotiate with the Bible, as people who do not have less of the Holy Spirit as the gospel writers and compilers of biblical texts thousands of years ago (103/2007:22ff).

Therefore one needs to use the consensible negotiation approach in one’s exegesis so as to hear Scripture talk in one’s specific context, situation and circumstance. Thus Biblical texts were not simply formed and fixed by some once for all divine disclosure or by some nameable human author, they were shaped by and for repeated use in the community, especially for worship, but in many other contexts as well. I therefore argue that the decisive clues for interpretation of texts are found in the drama and dynamic transaction of the biblical text itself. In other words, the Biblical text is not a handbook for morality or doctrine or for historical record for that matter, but the text is the articulation of imaginative models of reality in which the texts continue to be alive and invitational because they refuse to stay back there, but always insist upon being present tense and contemporary. To cite an example, it is always the case that new circumstances of reading permit us to see what we have not seen in the text before. Take the ecological crisis where the Bible does tackle the issues of a contaminated and ruined creation.
This signifies that the Spirit always confronts and challenges us afresh in our faithful reading and interpreting in each new time, place and circumstance. For example, in Deuteronomy 24: 1-5 Moses instructs Israel concerning marriages torn apart by infidelity, which cannot be restored, even if both parties want to get together again. However, in Jeremiah 3 God's own voice indicates a readiness to disregard that Torah teaching for the sake of restored marriage to Israel. In short, God finds this teaching problematic. It is self-evident that new circumstances of reading permit us to see what we have not seen in the text before. To interpret responsibly then, requires an engagement of imagination, more so historical imagination. In other words, imagination is fundamental to the interpretive process, as said earlier; biblical texts are imaginative models of reality and demands good faith extrapolation. Interpretation then is not repeating or reiterating the text, but the manoeuvre of the text beyond itself in fresh ways, which means being conveyed from this century to the ancient world of transposing those voices into today's voice.

To illustrate, we make links and draw comparisons, between Luther's retaliation of the indulgence system with Paul's justification by faith alone belief. To cite another instance, Isaiah 65 concurs with Martin Luther King's dream of a new earth, or God's command to work the earth and maintain it in Genesis, with ecological and environmental issues of abuse through chemical misuse today, or still further construing Lev.25 to mean the cancellation and abandonment of third world debts with an implied evaluation and critique of global capitalism, or finally the purity code of Lev18 and its relation to homosexual behaviour in our present century. These are gigantic leaps, but we do them all the time, and never stop doing it, making the text relevant, pertinent and compelling for our time, place and circumstance.

Barth (1957: 28-50) himself saw the immense importance of imagination when he wrote, 'a man without imagination is more of an invalid than one who lacks a leg'. In short, imagination is the vehicle for interpretation, and a gift of the Spirit. Therefore, there must be a consensile negotiation of texts, as no interpretation of Scripture is unaffected by the passions, convictions and perceptions of the interpreter. Therefore biblical interpretation done with imagination willing to risk ideological distortion, open to the inspiring Holy Spirit is urgently needed today. It is urgent because our society is tempted to reduce the human project to commodity, the making of money, reduction of persons to objects. Our discernment of our life-world causes us to hear and discern the voice of the text differently. Biblical texts have the capacity to generate real newness, to call into being that which does not exist. Said another way, it has the power to articulate newness. Longenecker (1984: 15) advocates that
there must be the direct action of the Holy Spirit in the particular circumstances confronted.

Thus texts are originary, because of the Spirit like a wind, blows through its pages who gives it the capacity to generate newness, in other words, to call into existence that which does not exist. Therefore the text and the community are directly connected, community forms the text, and the text evokes the community. Communities of faithful individuals interpret the text and are authorised by it to stand against oppression and refuse marginality in the name of justice and liberation. Therefore Longenecker (1984:18) affirms that the prescriptive principles stemming from the texts are meant to be applied to specific situations by the direction and enablement of the Holy Spirit being motivated and conditioned by love.

The power of the Spirit functions within the text to permit communities to discern, imagine and appropriate life differently, as it is mediated, remembered and hoped in the text. Such communities are found in third world countries like ourselves where the dominant value structures preclude justice, legitimise marginality, and invite docility and a passive acceptance of the status quo. Within such a context the text acts as an impetus to new life through the assertion of one's dignity, rights, worth and power.

Therefore consensible negotiation of the text allows one to perceive the text as revelatory in the sense that it discloses a new way of living in the world, which was not previously known, and was prohibited by the structures of coercion and domination. In short, it is the offer of an alternative reality of governance, by that I mean Yahweh's governance. The text imagines and envisions a new world, and provides through the Holy Spirit the power, courage, freedom and energy towards this world. Further, through the Spirit it powers one's faith to live lives of courage, suffering and sacrifice.

Put another way, God the Holy Spirit is always creating, redeeming, empowering, and consummating a better life for all. Therefore the New Testament writers proclaimed the message of new life in Christ and began to work out the implications of that Gospel for the situations they encountered, and appropriately for their day, and pointing the way to a fuller understanding and more adequate application in later times.

1.5 Conclusion

We as Christians ought to attempt to recapture the principles of the Gospel in their
declarations that have ramifications for us today, and endeavour to follow the path that they, the first century Church, marked out for the application of the Gospel principles, seeking to carry out their work in fuller and more significant ways, applying to specific situations by the direction and enablement of the Holy Spirit, being always motivated and conditioned by love. Put differently, The Spirit does not only regenerate but He also gives guidance as to how the principles of Christ should be applied in given situations and empowers the Christian to put these directives into effect. Therefore in the chapter that follows, we need to explore the mystery of the connectedness and the difference between God the Spirit, being human and the physical organic environment.

1.6 Overview of the dissertation

In chapter 1 we discussed the interconnectedness of God, humanity and the world. In this we covered the role and work of the Holy Spirit and the wide embrace of the Holy Spirit in His life giving work and how He enacts the cross as the restorative power and the resurrection as the liberating power of Jesus Christ in our lives, and how the Spirit through Pentecost renews and prepares for the consummation of all things. The main thrust of this chapter is to spell out the purpose for the dissertation and the role of the holy spirit in actualization, denial empowerment, renewal and consummation, and how God's great acts of creation, reconciliation, redemption in Christ, renewal and renovation through the Holy spirit and the consummation and fulfilment of all processes of creation and the establishment of the new heaven and the new earth and how this interacts with the new person. Further in chapter one we stated our basic problem investigating the fivesome process of God as creator redeemer, and reconciler in Christ, God the Holy Spirit as the renovator of all things fulfilling the process through the creation of the new heavens and the new earth. We also investigated the relationship between God, humanity and the world. We also investigated how self-actualization, self-denial, self-empowerment, self-renewal and self-fulfilment/consummation are related to each other by way of creation, the cross, resurrection, Pentecost and the future fulfilment.

In chapter 2 we discussed Gods great acts of creation, the cross and the resurrection, renewal through Pentecost and fulfilment (consummation) at the end of time, in correlation with a fivesome awareness of in our daily lives of actualisation, denial of sin, empowerment, renewal and fulfilment (consummation) through the Holy Spirit. We further discussed the Spirit's role in creation, in creating human beings furnishing them with all faculties, corporate
and individual and preparing their habitation on earth, endowing it with all good things to meet their needs and wants. The first act of disobedience, we refer to as the fall, however, temporarily derailed the process. God through the Spirit pulls it back on course with the idea of the incarnation. God Himself came down in Christ, conceived of the Holy Spirit, born to die for the sins of humanity.

The cross, bridges the gulf between God, humanity and the natural world. Reconciliation and redemption is offered. God through the Spirit reaches down to human beings in the cross, and through the resurrection provides new hope for humanity. Human appropriation of these avenues created by the Holy Spirit through self denial, empowerment, self renewal and fulfilment, he is able to pursue his God given destiny. In dying one is given life,. In humility one is exalted, through different operations involving a putting off of the sinful self and a putting on of the renewed self after the image of Christ. Actualization, denial, empowerment, renewal, and fulfilment (consummation) though differentiated are so correlated that one process follows another by a law of necessity. The correlation of these functions are mediated and initiated by the Holy Spirit which leads the human into close proximity with the designs and purposes of God, so as to fulfil its destiny.

Thirdly, differentiation can be seen in all living processes on our planet. The earth abounds with diversity in all shapes and forms. Non human creation is a kaleidoscope of rich diversity reflecting the glory of its Creator. However, a delicate fragile unity can be seen throughout. The ecosystems, the food chain all reflect unity in diversity. They all declare interdependence and interconnection while at the same time maintain substantive existences. This can be seen in humanity as individuality, which is a hallmark of all human life. No two humans are similar in every way, yet all life is interrelated. Though differentiated yet integrated. This is also a striking feature of the universe itself.

In chapter 3 we discussed the Spirit's work in actualization, denial, empowerment, renewal and consummation, making linkages to the active fivesome dimensions, their similarities and differences. We said that these dimensions are inextricably linked to one another, though substantive and independent, there is considerable overlapping. While emphasis is placed on each one, for the purpose of this project, the others play a supporting role. We said actualizing self is a gift from God to every human being where his/her potential can be realized through the enablement of the Holy Spirit, so that the individual can achieve wholeness of being.
In self-denial we discussed the absolute imperativeness for the false self to be negated and the true self resurrected, as it were. This process is largely the work of the Holy Spirit in putting off the old self and putting on the new. The Holy Spirit then renews and empowers the new self to actualize itself in promoting God’s Kingdom and His Glory. We further said that the Holy Spirit enables the new self to overcome the world through the prism of the cross and the resurrection, giving the recipient a new identity, redefining his/her status and giving them an alternative perception of the world, self and neighbour, and He authorises the individual to live differently in the world.

This we said entailed loving oneself, and we distinguished between selfish love and selfless love, the latter being mandatory to a healthy relationship with one’s neighbour. We further discussed the role of the Holy Spirit in empowerment, providing the power to live a holy, Christ-centred life. We emphasised the relevance of the cross and the resurrection in the ongoing process of self-actualization within the individual and without to his fellow humans, destined for self-consummation in the new heaven and the new earth. We finally concluded that the future is breaking in now among the weak and the powerless, as they wait in the Spirit for the Lord’s return.

We discussed the dimension of fulfilment (self-consummation) and how the Holy Spirit prepares the vessel by discarding the false or old self by actualizing the new or true self, through renewal and empowerment, on its destination to (self-consummation) fulfilment. The Holy Spirit keeps the triumph of God in Jesus Christ alive in the individual as He seeks to bring more of life under the rule of this covenant-making, promise-keeping God.

In chapter 4 we discussed the simplicity and the complexity of the human species, though differentiated yet integrated. Though similar in many ways, one’s diversity is more amazing, and to a certain extent inscrutable. We said diversity was the hallmark of creation, as evidenced in non-human creation, and in the entire creation, but this diversity works within a broad framework of integration where a comprehensive and coherent whole can be perceived.

I further argued that God respects individuality, that is He regards humanity as unique, very precious and not to be exchanged for another, and that it is through the individual that the community is realized. The individual can say that it is for his/her sake the world was created, and there is a task that only the individual can carry out, a task so great that its fulfilment may epitomize the meaning of all humanity. Therefore individuality means responsibility, and I
further said that community decisions rests on individual guarantors. However, the individual's responsibility implies accountability to God, and the individual's standing before God. Thus the Holy Spirit promotes and sustains individuality, but true independence rests in communion with God and one's fellow human. Therefore the covenant community is the ultimate reality of the individual. He was created for community, and therefore life is never private or individualistic, but always communal.

I further asserted that although differentiation is evidenced in all creation, integration is the ultimate intentionality of the Universe in terms of God's purposes. I emphasised the interconnectedness of God, humanity and the physical organic environment, and that all things work together for the good of God and universal being as the ultimate end of existence. I further explored the benefits of this unity within this fragile diversity. I insisted that this unity and harmony exposed the individual to hurts, that is crucifixions, as he/her interacts with others, and to surprises of new life conveyed to others, in other words, resurrections, signifying that all life is inter-related, and what affects one directly affects all indirectly.

Lastly, I reflected on God's purpose in creating the Universe or Multiverse and concluded that it was never God's intention to be alone, but to have humankind as His partner, and for humanity to love Him and enjoy Him forever. Therefore, throughout history Yahweh is on pilgrimage with His people, and is actively engaged with and for His people. I therefore stressed that it was God's vision that an egalitarian community of justice, peace and righteousness is finally inaugurated, and He desires His people to be a social experiment, in a world in love with death so that through the Holy Spirit He can foster newness, He can bring new life.

In chapter 5 I made several concluding remarks among which were, God's original intentionality in creating human and non-human creation, the temporary derailment in terms of the fall, and humanity's subsequent reinstatement in terms of the cross and resurrection. I also reflected on God's great acts, as mediated through the Holy Spirit, of creation, redemption and fulfilment (consummation) and humanity's corresponding acts of self-denial, self-actualization, self-renewal, self-empowerment and finally self-consummation (fulfilment). I also delineated the major role of the Holy Spirit in keeping the process on track, as it were, between God and humankind.

I demonstrated how the five dimensional approach was the best method to achieve the best
ends in terms of God's great plan for human and non human creation. I further intimated that regardless of sin being the most thing in the universe, God's love through His Spirit is greater, as evidenced in the Spirit's work in the incarnation, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the linkage in the Spirit's task within the human, denying or discarding the false self, and renewing, empowering and actualizing the true self to take its rightful place within the covenant community.

I mentioned that God requires an abandoning of the former life, that is, other hopes, other fears, other loyalties, and other pay-offs that has shaped our lives in false and distorting ways, and an embracing of Yahweh as the single, uncompromising Sovereignty, in the person of the Holy Spirit, who one must serve in all sincerity and faithfulness. I argued that this represented the full Gospel, where the Holy Spirit was given His rightful place, as opposed to a half-baked Gospel, subordinating the Holy Spirit to a lesser role.

I further concluded that the doctrine of God's Spirit permeates Scripture, and it is the Spirit that breathes new life into Scripture, making it alive, accessible and relevant to all generations. It is the Spirit that is re-creating, renovating, empowering and bringing to fulfilment all creation, especially humanity in abandoning the false self, and renewing, empowering and actualizing the true self, through the restorative action of the cross, and the liberating action of the resurrection, on its destination to the fulfilment or final consummation of all things in the new heaven and the new earth. However the inscrutability of the correspondence or closeness and the otherness of God the Spirit, being human and the physical environment need explication, which I attempt in the next chapter.
Chapter 2

The mystery of the connectedness and difference between God the Spirit and human beings and nature

2.1 Introduction

The discussion of the Holy Spirit’s work in us as human beings and in the physical-organic environment confronts us with one the biggest mysteries we can ever imagine about the relationship between Gods acts and human acts and between processes and events of nature. We see God’s grand acts interrelated and interconnected to the multiple acts of human beings and natural events and processes. However in history many ways of describing the mystery were suggested.

In this dissertation the investigation and discussion circles around the notions of actualization, denial, empowerment, renewal and fulfilment (consummation) within the ambit of a five some awareness and experience of our creatureliness, sinfulness, reconciliation, renewal and our fulfilment (consummation) as intrinsic part of the foursome grand acts of God of creation, reconciliation, renewal and consumption. The access point and linkage between our five some awareness and God’s foursome acts is the Spirit of God’s renewal and renovation of everything, the Spirit of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit in which era we live as well as awaiting our future consummation and fulfilment. Through the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit a five some awareness in human experience - as being created, as prone of falling into sin, as being saved/redeemed/ reconciled, as being under constant renovation and renewal through the Holy Spirit and as being taken up in the future directed consummation and fulfilling of all things in the new heaven and new earth - are encapsulated and connected to the grand acts of God’s acts of Creation, Reconciliation/Redemption in Christ, Renewal/Renovation through the Spirit, and God’s Consummation and fulfilling of the whole process of creation and the establishment of the new heaven and the new earth.

In every field, mode and dimension of experience such as believing, thinking, feeling, speaking, socializing, loving, proportioning justness, physicality, biotical evolvement and imagining the five-some awareness each in its own way is experienced. In each field of experience the connectivity and otherness of God, being human and the physical-organic natural environment is experienced. The notions of actualization, denial, empowerment, renewal and fulfilment are built into connectivity and otherness of God, being human and the
physical organic environment Furthermore, the notions of actualization, denial, empowerment, renewal and fulfilment within the ambit of the connectivity and otherness of God, being human and the physical-organic environment is taken up in this dissertation within our awareness of our creatureliness, our sinfulness, our reconciliation, our renewal and our future-directed fulfilment (consummation) that follow and are intrinsically connected to God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and consummation.

In this chapter I probe and explore the depth of the Holy Spirit's work in human self-actualization, self-denial, self-empowerment, self-renewal and self-fulfilment in correlation to the grand acts of God in creation, salvation (cross and resurrection), Pentecost and the future consummation of all things. One of the biggest mysterious contributions of human beings revolves around the notions of sin and evil. Fundamentalists would easily point to the portrayal of falling into sin in the first chapters of the book of Genesis as if the description there is a historical explanatory rendition of how sin and evil came into the world. Total liberal approaches totally discard of the idea of sin as contrary to good human nature. In my view I concur with the Dutch theologian of Reformed origin GC Berkouwer (1971:2) in his great book Sin (De Zonde) sin and evil that the question unde malum? (=from where evil?) is a mystery and is not to be solved. It is vital at this point to draw a correlation between the works of God the Spirit and the works of human beings, natural events and processes.

2.2 The correlation between the works of God the Spirit and the works of human beings and natural events and processes.

The problem concerning the correlation between God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and consummation and human beings' acts of actualisation, denial, empowerment, renewal and consummative experience is our next field of exploration. Since our primary focus and main emphasis is the role of the Holy Spirit in actualization, denial, empowerment and consummation. It's therefore crucial to our investigation that we establish who the Holy Spirit is and who the Holy Spirit is not.

2.2.1 Who the Holy Spirit is not and who the Holy Spirit is

Who the Holy Spirit is not

Firstly, the Holy Spirit is not a mere attribute of God. Secondly, neither is He a mere divine
operation or influence as supposed by some. Thirdly, He is not a subordinate being within the
Godhead relegated to an inferior position in the Holy Trinity.

Who the Holy Spirit is

He is truly God. The names of God are attributed to the Holy Spirit. The attributes of God are
also ascribed to Him in Scripture. What is intended by the personality of the Holy Spirit is the
fact that He is a moral agent distinct from the Father and the Son, though not separate in the
substratum of His existence. In both Hebrew and Greek the two principle languages, the basic
meaning of the terms for spirit is ruach and pneuma signifying breath, strong breathing
through the nostrils. Therefore God’s ruach or pneuma is the expression of His personality,
the very living presence of God Himself. The Spirit is God manifesting Himself as
transcendentally glorious and yet at the same time wonderfully and mysteriously immanent,
present with us. We further maintain that the Holy Spirit is a divine person, as the attributes of
a personal agent are ascribed to Him. Riggs (1949: 53) argues that the Holy Spirit is very
God, and is evidenced not only by His identification with God in the baptismal formula and
apostolic benediction, but also in His possession of Godlike attributes.

He is the eternal Spirit. (Hebrews 9:4). He is omnipresent (Psalm 137:7 -10). He is omniscient
(1 Cor 2:10.) He is omnipotent (Luke 1: 37). Divine works are ascribed to him. He shared in
the creation of the world and creates new creatures in Christ. He raised Christ from the dead
and proceeds from the Father and from Christ which proves His deity. On the question of his
function in the Godhead, The first thing that must be expected in dealing with the Holy Spirit
is that He will uncover and condemn sin in the individual. This is His major ministry.

Robinson (1964: 27) asserts that the difference between death and life, the secret of vitality
was that wind of God which in its Old Testament name, cannot be distinguished from the
Spirit of God. The sooner the vitality of the new experience wanes the sooner does the greater
imaginability of things material re-assert itself against things spiritual.

Therefore the Christian experience with which we are concerned postulates the reality of the
human spirit and the divine and their continued real coexistence, as the necessary condition of
fellowship. McGrath (2003:18) contends that this is three fold relating to the areas of
revelation, salvation and Christian life. We shall have occasion to discuss this in more detail
later.
The movement of the Spirit of God over the waters, the Spirit's role in creation is described by the Hebrew word *merahepet*, denoting continuous action, described as the flight of an eagle over her nest. His role in creation can be seen in the metaphor of a hen brooding over her chicks, as the Spirit hovers over the germs of life incubating and giving birth to them. Another metaphor can be the mother dove brooding over her nest and cherishing her young. Simpson (1941: 46) puts it this way, the mother dove of eternal love and peace began to build her nest and she rested not until out of that scene of wreck she had evolved a bright and happy world and a smiling paradise with its human family and its pure and heavenly happiness and hope. He maintains the figure of the dove is suggestive of peace.

Thus the Holy Spirit is the messenger of peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. Wherever the Holy Spirit reigns there is peace. Edwards (2004: 58) further contends this can be seen in the formation of the nuclei of the primordial hydrogen and helium, the first atoms, the birth of the galaxies and stars. The development of our solar system around the young sun, the origin of life with the marvellous DNA molecule, the evolution of multi-cellular creatures, the flowering of life and the emergence of human beings with their highly developed brains. Thus humanity’s pristine state, morally and physically perfect as God breathes into them the breath of life can be perceived. Thus we understand the Spirit’s pivotal role in animating dead matter and giving it personality. With the introduction of sin, however, humanity lost its first estate resulting in physical and moral depravity of the race. “Non-human creation” also suffers the consequences, clearly visible in the environmental crises that challenge us today. The next major manoeuvre of the Spirit can be seen in the Christmas narrative.

The Holy Spirit intervenes and prepares Mary for the Christ child whose name means ‘anointed’ and who shall save His people from their sins. Thus the self same Spirit impregnates Mary and the incarnation becomes a reality. Thus the Holy Spirit plays a major role in conforming humanity to the image of God. God, through His Spirit restores humanity to their first estate and establishes a living relationship between Christ and the believers. The Spirit’s preparatory work within, continues as creation itself groans for restoration. Thus the Holy Spirit in self denial or putting away of the sinful self empowers and renews fallen humanity. Possibly the most triumphant of all of the ministries of the Holy Spirit as He comes to us in Christ is to bring a mighty baptism of power. Jesus said, all power is given unto Me in Heaven and in earth (Matt 28:18). Paul declared Christ to be the very power of God. (1Cor.1: 24).
The outstanding characteristic of the baptism in the Holy Spirit as promised by Christ is that it would be an enduement of power from on high (Luke 24: 49). Thus the cross puts to death the old person with all his sins and the resurrection raises the new person to newness of life. This is accomplished by the Holy Spirit as the agency of recreation and renewal in the individual’s life. We find the self same Spirit descending during Pentecost and indwelling human beings, empowering, renewing and preparing them for service in the Kingdom. The new person is now restored by means of the cross and liberated by means of the resurrection, which is solely accomplished by the Spirit. Human beings can now achieve “Self realization” through daily empowerment and renewal by the enablement of the Holy Spirit, to realize their destiny of promoting God’s Kingdom and His Glory. Thus we see the Creator Spirit restoring human lost esteem by discarding or putting off the sinful self and putting on the new self-created after the image of God.

The Creator Spirit empowers and renews human beings in their journey to “self actualization”. This can be seen at creation, with the Antediluvians, Joseph and Bezaleel, Moses, Joshua, the seventy elders, the Judges, Saul, David and the Prophets. In what follows we shall explore the role of the Spirit within the fivesome experience of actualization, denial, empowerment, renewal and fulfilment. However, the Spirit’s role extends to the entire universe where a new Heaven and a new earth is prepared and beyond. Eschatologically, in the consummating and fulfilling sense, the Spirit is busy with positioning humanity for its future role within God’s Kingdom throughout the universe, adorning it and presenting it as a bride to the bridegroom. The Holy Spirit begins with the process of conversion, for it is the Holy Spirit who takes the initiative and brings conviction to the sinning heart of human beings. No person can say Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Spirit (1Cor 12:3). Confessing with the mouth is the human being’s first step towards salvation. He yields to the conviction of the Spirit and by the Holy Spirit he calls Jesus, Lord.

The Spirit’s ultimate destiny can be perceived as the earth and the entire universe reflect the glory and beauty of God for all time. As the breath of the Almighty gave life to human beings, and began the old world, so the breath of the Mighty Saviour gave life to His ministers and began the new world. God’s plan for creation finally becomes a reality through the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit. However, the Holy Spirit accomplishes this monumental task through the cross and the resurrection. For it is through the cross that one dies to the sinful self and it is through the resurrection that one is empowered, and the true or renewed self is able to pursue self-actualization, and realize its destiny in God’s comprehensive plan
for the universe, for all eternity.

Focusing on the Cross we find that it is the most startling fact in history, the most deeply moving story in the world. For Anselm (2003: 60) Christ’s death was a satisfaction of God’s honour in view of the fact that human beings cannot render a compensation for sin. Barker (1964:151) quotes Origen who believed that the death of Christ was the price by which the God of love purchased men, and Abelard who supposed that Christ’s death was an expression of God’s love for the elect. Aquinas (1990:378) combined all these theories in his formulation. Barker (1964:153) argues that Paul overemphasized the cross at the expense of the resurrection. He argues that “the atonement has long been the centre of Christian teaching as it was in the mind of Paul. The cross has assumed a place in Christian thought that has tended to get out of proportion and become morbid in character.”

My own view is that I do not believe Jesus meant the cross to be the dead centre of faith. For Jesus the centre of the whole reconciliation process was not the Cross but the resurrection, for did He not say, in John 16 “For the moment you are sad at heart, but I shall see you again and then you will be joyful, and no one shall rob you of your joy”. Having said this one cannot underplay the significance of the Cross, for it represents and symbolizes, depicts and typifies the death of the sinful or false self, as in Christ we all die, referring specifically to the Cross, so in Christ all are made alive with the point of reference being the resurrection. Therefore one is commanded to die to self and live to Christ, the old life fades away the new has come.

As was said earlier the resurrection marks the focal point in the work of Jesus, Son of Man, and Son of God. Prior to this came the ministry, the passion and the cross. Afterwards came the resurrection, ascension and Pentecost, that remarkable expression of the Holy Spirit that gave such enthusiasm and cohesion to the followers of “The Way”. The resurrection, then, is the fulcrum of history, a token of love’s victory and the evidence of things not seen, and the first step of Jesus’ triumphant entry into Glory. Jesus knew that a re-appearance on the human stage would give new and startling evidence of the activity of the Holy Spirit, the God who is part of our very selves because He is in us.

Jesus rose from the dead with Holy Ghost power to give His disciples such evidence of the power of faith that they would go forward to fulfil His desire (John 14:12). So the cross, resurrection and Pentecost were vindications of Jesus’ message concerning the reign of God. God will not rule by Himself, and, of course, when human beings try to rule on their own
disaster falls on their unaided endeavours. But when God and human beings rule together through the Holy Spirit, then you find the new age has dawned and the Kingdom is upon us. Therefore our next inquiry is to ascertain who human beings are and who human beings are not.

2.2.2 Who human beings are and are not

Traditional aspects and functions of human beings are still viewed by many modern people as soul and body and spirit/soul and body. These designations have a long history and are to be placed within God-life-and-world views of Greek and Roman antiquity. In this dissertation I do not approach the idea of the experience of equilibrium and differentiation with a dualist (twosome) view of an immortal soul/mortal body which could be viewed as the majority approach of religious people globally or a trichotomy (threesome) of spirit/immortal soul/mortal body which is still highly fashionable in a number of present day religious groupings. In terms of a present day Christian sense making view the immortal soul/mortal body dualism or is foreign to the Bible and nonsensical from a perspective of the resurrection of Jesus which is God’s greatest tool for the continuation of our existence through life into afterlife and not an inbuilt immortal soul which lingers on through life into eternity. Concerning the ancient threesome of entities in a human being the so called entities of spirit and soul are set in dualist way in opposition to ones mortal body.

In any philosophical reflection of wisdom the discussion about the number of human fields, modes, dimensions and aspects should always stay wide open. I am however strongly suggesting in addition to not following the ancient essentialist views of soul/body, or spirit/soul/body one should not follow the major approach of modern churches and theologians since the Reformation of the 16th century whereby faith and belief is embraced as the outstanding super-elected and semi-divine/semi-human field of experience that comprehends and embraces all the other fields of experience of a human beings. The sense making view of fideism (Latin=fides-faith) or pietism, firstly, makes faith and belief half-(semi-) divine and half-human while other fields of experience are just human and natural. The fact that other fields of experience are also created by God makes no impression on the eager and avid followers of the fideist and pietistic view. According to this view God added faith in the time of reconciliation as an extra and super field to the other fields of human experience. Proceeding from this root assumption, fideism and pietism simply continue secondly with a faith act of colonisation of all the other fields of human experience thereby
demanding from the other fields to allow faith as their extra and super addition which embraces them from beginning to end with the sole purpose of giving them more meaningful and sensible insight into the nucleus, heart and nature of each of them as fields of human experience (Van Niekerk TL 103/2007: 5-15).

In the traditional sense a topic on well-being, equilibrium and differentiation would be treated within the perimeters of the complexes of either soul and body, or mind/spirit/soul/body in different equations. Various attempts to arrive at wholesome and holistic views with the traditional notions of mind/spirit/soul/body had been undertaken in history. In the Judaeo-Christian world the ancient essentialist substances were in many instances read into the Bible. Many people in the present world view the ancient essentialist substances such as immortal soul and mortal body as having a truly Biblical character. The Biblical as well as traditional African God-life-and-world views are emphasising the wholesomeness of human beings. In the Old and New Testament texts each of the terms such as soul, body, spirit, heart and mind are generally contextually used in two senses: firstly, as designating a human being in his/her totality and wholeness in the sense of a human being is his/her soul, is his/her body, is his/her spirit, is his/her heart or is his/her mind. Secondly, these terms in other textual contexts are used as partial designations of human beings in the sense of a human being has a soul, has a body, has a spirit, has a heart or mind. In very few instances of the Judaeo-Christian Bible traces are found where soul, body, spirit, heart, etc are used in an essentialist and substantialist sense together and simultaneously in the same textual and contextual setting. One of the few places where soul and body are used in the same context is Matthew 10:28. One has however to go to great lengths to read Greek or Roman essentialist entities or substances into the text (Van Niekerk 103/2007: 41-43).

The approach in this thesis is that of the late or postmodern non-reductionist approach of differentiated human beings who comprise of a multiplicity of fields, modes, dimension and aspects of experience. We follow mainly the views of E van Niekerk (103/2007:41) who describes a human being as being in a simultaneous sense a uni-, bi- and multi-being.

☐ A human being is firstly a singular and irreplaceable being who is connected to God and physical-organic nature but who is simultaneously radically different from God and physical-organic nature.

☐ Secondly, a human being comprises of bicameral duality of left and right hemispheres. The bicameral left and right hemispheres are expressive of many dualities, tool pairs
and dual organs of the human ‘bodily’ existence such as two ears, two eyes, two arms, two legs, two kidneys, etc. Some of the dual organs can operate oppositional, others only complementary, others dialectically or one irrupting into the other as well as continuous serialising of the one after the other in fields, modes, dimensions and aspects of human experience.

Thirdly, each human being comprises of a multiplicity of fields, capacities, faculties, modes or dimensions of experience. The multiplicity or multiplex of fields and capacities of experience, interconnected to the physical-organic environments and God, express themselves through, in and as processes of acts, operations and doings of human beings of which the leading emphasis and focus continuously change episodic and contextually to another leading emphasis and focus. Each one of the following fields, modes, dimensions and aspects of experience may be emphasised as the leading emphasis which draws others along for an episode and for a demarcated setting of experience (Van Niekerk 103/2007: 44).

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<th>loving expressions</th>
<th>love proportioning justness laws</th>
<th>Economising needs capacities</th>
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<td>empowering + power</td>
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Each of these fields of experience according to Van Niekerk (103/2007 40ff) is encapsulated and intersected by the ancient distinctions of ‘mind and matter’, ‘spirit and physical nature’ or ‘spirit/soul and body’. In traditional dualist and modernist dual views of human beings, half of the fields, modes, dimensions and facets of experience belong to the ‘matter and physical nature or body part’ and half to the ‘mind or spiritual and soul part’ of a human being.
In the view presented here ‘mind and matter’ or ‘soul/spirit and body’ cut through every field of experience of a human being. In this regard Van Niekerk (103/2007:91-93) asserts that faith, belief and trust, thus the so called spiritual and soul facets of traditional views do not have a higher and more important embracing position than thinking, feelings, producing, loving, speaking, physical-chemicalising energy, entitising, coordinating experience.

Van Niekerk (103/2007:12) asserts that “faith, belief or trust is not more important than thinking, feeling, producing, loving, speaking, etc. Faith and belief experience is not more religious or divine than other fields of human experience and is not a religious dimension beyond any comparison. In fact, in my view there is no special religious dimension, because God is directly involved in every field of experience as the Spirit of God or the Holy Spirit. One could compare this with the engine of a motor car: every field of experience has its own spark plug, the nucleus or core of the field of experience where the Spirit of God is continually sparking and fusing, connecting God, being human and the physical-organic environment in each pattern of experience in an intra-natural way. The idea of a religious dimension amongst various human dimensions of experience in our lives creates the impression that God hovers outside non-religious ‘ordinary’ human dimensions, and is allowed to enter our lives only through a so-called religious and supernatural faith dimension. According to this scheme of things God is supposedly playing a role through the dimension of supernatural religious faith in other fields and modes of our creaturely existence but does not form part of them intrinsically and to begin with. God is directly involved and intranaturally active in every field, mode and dimension of experience and is not supernaturally intervening - through religious faith - where God is in any case already at work.”

One of the problematic modern attempts of approaching human beings as multi-dimensional beings is to be found in a four structure view of human beings which is still has its orientation in the traditional mind and matter, or soul/spirit and body approach. According to this problematic view of Rens(2006:24-25) the temporary existence of human being on earth manifests itself in a coherence of four structures which have been combined by God in a wonderful way as a human totality:

1. The most basic structure of the human body is the physical-chemical which indicates the muscles, skeleton, tissue, blood, hair, body processes etc. this structure forms the basis of human’s temporary existence on earth.

2. The next structure is the biotic, which indicates life. The physical-chemical structure is a subordinate to the biotic.

3. Human being also has a psychological structure because he/she can feel and
respond. The psychological structure guides the biotic and physical-chemical structures.

4. The highest and most complex structure of human is the behavioural structure, which directs all three lower order structures. The behavioural structure has three functions, namely to know, to will and to imagine. Through knowledge humankind comes to know how and what things are. His imagination enables him/her to transcend what he/she knows, to formulate new possibilities, to change existing issues, such as to create culture from nature within his/her human limits. By directing his/her will a human being can organize his/her actions according to norms.

The problem with this view is that in terms of the old distinction between mind (soul/spirit) and matter (body), the first three structures namely the physical-chemical, biotic and psychological structures are matter-like and bodily structures and the fourth structure, the behavioural structure is the mind and soul/spirit structure. Though this view operates with the understanding that the wholeness and wholesomeness of a person in his or her self-actualization, self-denial, self-empowerment, self-renewal and self-fulfilment is thereby maintained, this view although an improvement on the centuries old dualism of mind (soul) and matter (body) actually brings us not really further regarding the wholesomeness of the fivesome human acts described in this dissertation than the dualistic remedies of the ancient philosophers.

In this dissertation we start to unlock aspects of a modern Covenantal Christian approach towards human beings in society in the general sense with the whole open-ended list of human fields of experience. However, the focus is particularly directed on the field of faith in its application of the self-actualization, self-denial, self-empowerment, self-renewal and self-fulfilment of human beings through the Holy Spirit. Though the fivesome acts-structure plays a role in each field of experience through the workings of the Holy Spirit this dissertation is mainly emphasising the faith side of human beings in relation to the physical-organic environment and God in the onset of a modern Covenantal Christian approach. In this regard the interconnectedness and otherness of God’s Holy Spirit, human beings and the physical environment is viewed mainly from a perspective of faith.

2.3 Various expressions of the mysterious interconnectedness and otherness

In short there are six tendencies or avenues in which the mystery between the
interconnectedness and otherness of God’s Holy Spirit and human beings and the physical-organic environment are expressed. We commence with the opposition between God’s Spirit and humanity.

2.3.1 A relationship of opposition between God’s Spirit and humanity/nature

The modern-industrial-scientific notion of apprehending life is diagrammatically opposed to God and His Kingdom and His covenant community on earth. The slogan ‘knowledge is power’ has re-described life and placed it within the context of acquisitiveness with regard to accumulating knowledge so has to control and predict the world, so that the threats and dangers that hang menacingly above our heads are averted.

This further includes the perception of a scheme of performance-based incentives that determine the quality of our lives. In other words ‘Good people prosper, and evil people suffer’, or in present-day language, an individual, and all that he does, is valued according to his usefulness. Thus life is controlled by an arrangement of effectiveness and pay-offs, whether in the church, at home or in the marketplace. Therefore relations assume a quid pro quo profile of one hand washing the other, so to speak. Such a perception of reality gives prominence and places importance on competence and achieving, on being successful and getting ahead. Therefore the community comprises individuals getting what they deserve.

This translates itself into the have’s getting more while the have not’s getting less or nothing. Such a scheme excludes the poor from sharing in the riches of society and destroys those who are left out, however, it finally destroys even those who benefit, for no one can succeed enough, being too driven and ultimately alienated. This is the perception of reality that shapes our institutions and is extremely resistant to the Good News of God for it discards and renounces the virtue of graciousness. In view of the fact that everything has to be earned, renders grace superfluous. Therefore we find such a perception of reality at variance with the Bible, however many are deeply into it when we least know it.

Thus we find the Bible providing us with an altered perception of the world, self and neighbour and an authorization by the Holy Spirit, to live differently in the world. This further involves a new identity, a redefining of ones status, a new understanding of one’s self, and a new way of relating to the world. It offers us a radical, subversive and uncompromising
challenge to the ordinary ways of self-understanding. We are invited to participate in this ongoing pilgrimage secured by the covenanting God who is also on pilgrimage in history. This revolutionary way of understanding life makes one vulnerable to hurts, seen within the context of crucifixions but also the surprises of new life which can be viewed as resurrections in our day-to-day lives. In other words, the crucifixion of Jesus makes available an exemplar for all the hurtful solidarity practised with the poor and the powerless, which involves a denial of the false self. Similarly, the resurrection of Jesus, like every life-giving act of God, provides a model for the surprises of new life happening among us, perceived as the realization, empowerment, renewal, and consummation of the true self. The surprise of resurrection involves the emergence of new life in individuals, institutions, and in social policy and practice. This allows us to enfold our brothers and sisters in the understanding that their experience is important and their lives are part of our own. In other words, God is with us in all our circumstances of life, in the hurting and healing of historical existence.

Thus against a modern-industrial-scientific view of reality, the Bible affirms that we live in a world in which healing mysteries, namely resurrections surge among us. Where no hope seems likely, God does His healing work. Lives are re-described and reoriented where there is empathy for the poor and where institutions take actions towards injustice. We are not called to be successful or secure but only faithful, knowing that God will sustain and uphold us with His right hand as He promised.

Thus we are called into a covenantal-historical view of life which defines existence in terms of vocation, in the sense of being called by our Covenant Partner to live in ways consistent with this relationship. We live not just because we happen to exist, but because the One who has called the world into covenant with Him is the same One who calls us to a relationship of responsibility. In other words, it is life lived according to God who empties Himself in the life of Jesus, as witnessed in the incarnation and resurrection, and it behoves us to empty ourselves for the sake of healing, caring, and bringing newness, in other words the self empowered, and renewed by the Holy Spirit.

Since God makes Himself vulnerable in caring for His people, so we are called to make ourselves vulnerable for our brothers and sisters. This understanding informs us that life is sterile and powerless when lived in isolation, but it is filled with power to suffer in solidarity with the hurting ones so that they may be reconciled and rehabilitated. The call of God then is to embrace the passion and suffering, to care for the weak which God Himself does all
through Biblical history. Thus one finds this avenue fraught with error and this philosophy fundamentally false.

2.3.2 A complementary relationship between God’s Spirit and humanity/nature

20th century post-modern theologians postulated a philosophy of neo-Deism which demonstrates in its application a complementary relationship between God’s Spirit and humanity/nature. Deism in its older 18th century form is an example of the complementary relationship between God and humanity. Deists admit the existence of God, but deny His providential and moral government, the immortality of the soul the distinction between virtue and vice, and nearly all the doctrines of natural religion. They maintain that God is a Spirit and that human beings are either wholly material or, at least shut up to the necessity of receiving all their ideas from sensation, and that as God is neither visible nor tangible as he cannot approach our minds through the medium of our senses, he therefore has no means of communicating directly with our minds, and that therefore a direct revelation, were it necessary is impossible.

They further object that there are so many pretended revelations from God, and they differ so fundamentally in their character, that it is the safest and most reasonable course to reject them all as unworthy of credit. In addition they maintain that a revelation is unnecessary, and that the powers of the human mind are such, and the light of nature so abundant, as to render any farther revelation of the character and the will of God wholly unnecessary.

Regarding the Bible objections are raised that the different books of the Bible are not well authenticated, and the Bible contains precepts unjust and unworthy of God, for example, the command to the Israelites utterly to exterminate their enemies, men, women and children. From their perspective of exclusively emphasising human reason they contend that the Bible contains doctrines contrary to reason, and that it is a work of priest craft and imposition and they further hold that the ‘doctrine of atonement’ is utterly incredible, and morally impossible that God should condescend to do for humanity what the Scriptures represent him as doing in the work of the atonement. (Finney 1976: 20).

They represent God as having created the universe without any end, and as using no means to bring about any beneficial result. They deny his moral attributes, benevolence, justice, mercy,
truth and holiness, for which of these is consistent with the creation of such a universe as this, and afterwards refusing to care for it.

To the above philosophy I comment, basing my argument on Finney’s *Heart of Truth* lectures, Finney (1976: 57-67).

Firstly, it is true we receive our ideas of sensible objects from sensation, but it is not true that we can have no idea of spiritual beings except through sensation. The very fact that God is a Spirit and not a material being, gives Him as the Holy Spirit direct access to our minds without either the formality or the difficulty of approaching our minds through our senses.

Secondly, counterfeits imply true coin. Among all the pretended revelations from God, there is not one except our Bible whose claims are of any serious consideration. The very fact that so many pretended revelations have been made and received by great portions of humanity shows how universally humankind have felt the necessity of divine revelation and how important it is that a true one should be made.

Thirdly, as a matter of fact, the preservation of the integrity of the text of our Bible when all the circumstances are taken into account can be justly considered as one of the wonders of the world.

Fourthly, the utter absence of proof is wholly incredible if in fact the Bible is the production of priest craft. By what priest or priests was it written/At what time/In what country/In what language/For what purpose/It is next to impossible that there should be no evidence either historical or traditional of such a fact, if indeed such a fact ever existed.

Fifthly, the Bible contains no doctrine contrary to reason, but only as might reasonably be expected, above reason.

Sixthly, if God is not love it is freely admitted that the doctrine of the atonement is utterly incredible but if He is love, as the Bible and all his works affirm, the doctrine of atonement is just what might be expected of such a being under the circumstances, and therefore one of the most reasonable doctrines in the world. This is evident in His grand acts carried out by the Holy Spirit of creation, redemption and His future act of fulfilment (consummation.). Thus His great acts are interconnected and intertwined to the acts of human beings.

Redemption promises liberation from the false self, a putting off of the old man, as it were,
and a total embrace of the new. The new self is therefore empowered and renewed by the Holy Spirit to realize its destiny in the blueprint of Yahweh, who creates, redeems and consummates all creation.

2.3.3 Dialectical see-saw relationship between God’s Spirit and humanity/nature

In what sense is God hidden and in what sense God reveals God self. H. Berkhof (1966:36) maintains that God’s hiddenness is a result of the distinction between Creator and creature, exacerbated by human sin. Certain theologians accentuate the difference between God and humanity so heavily that it almost becomes problematic for God to reveal Himself at all. One can develop this notion further in terms of anthropomorphism and the incarnation. Since it is assumed that God is totally unlike us, it must be very difficult for him to reveal Himself. The same idea is applied to the incarnation. When God wanted to reveal Himself fully and wholly, He became human in Jesus of Nazareth.

Thus He was once again bound to human beings and human nature, with all the problems it entailed for one who, being totally different from us, to demonstrate His true nature in this form was only with the greatest difficulty, if at all. There are certain advantages to such an approach, notably that it preserves us from over-familiarity with God. For we may well forget that He is God, the great and holy Creator, infinitely more and greater than us, and that people who knew Him well were often diffident and knelt before Him too afraid to see Him.

But there is another side to the matter. Let us proceed from the premise of the covenant. God made people in order to live in fellowship with them. In (Gen 2:3) He is portrayed as visiting them. In (Gen.1.) human beings are created in God’s likeness and image. It seems in these cases we are presented not with difference and remoteness from God, but rather with correspondence and closeness. Calling us his image suggests at the very least that there is some analogy between us and him. If human beings are his images, and if Jesus is a human being, would it have not been appropriate for God to reveal Himself in this person. It would indeed have been difficult for God to reveal Himself in an animal or an inanimate object.

The Psalmist (18: 2; 28:1; 71:3) calls God a rock and the Prophet Hosea (5:14;11:10;13:7) calls him a lion, but the knowledge we gain about God from such images is extremely limited. The rock tells us about his strength and steadfastness, and the lion about his wrath. But neither
of these images, nor any others from the realm of animals and objects, teaches us that God is faithful, that He loves sinners and wants to help those in need. The life of Jesus, on the other hand, teaches us these things only too well. If we view revelation from the angle of this close covenantal relationship between God and humanity, and especially in terms of human beings as His image, then it seems neither problematic nor inappropriate for God to have revealed Himself in Jesus. On the contrary, it seems right and proper.

The above is an interesting example of what is known as the dialectic method, sometimes associated with the early theology of Karl Barth. It means viewing a matter from two sides, since one cannot see the whole truth from a single vantage point. The one viewpoint is that God is exalted and sublime, totally different and hidden from us. But this is a one-sided point of view and not the whole truth. The other view is that God is close to us, that we were created in his image and likeness and that he can therefore disclose his whole being in the person, Jesus. These two contrary views have to be brought together, and it is only thus that we get the full picture. This is the dialectic method.

Let us reflect a little more on God’s hiddenness. The second viewpoint mentioned above assumed that God can readily and clearly reveal himself in Jesus because Jesus was the perfect human being created in God’s image. What we fail to consider is that God’s revelation in Jesus shook Jewish religious society like an earthquake, and that even the religious leaders of that time did not accept Jesus as God’s revelation. Religious leaders were angered by Jesus’ association with sinners, the sick and the poor. They could not recognise this as an attribute of God. They were not the first to have experienced this problem. The Old Testament proclaimed this characteristic of God very emphatically. Psalms 72 maintains that the king should pay special attention to the needy, because he is God’s representative among the people. Yet one king after another failed to heed this injunction. This was why Prophets like Jeremiah, Isaiah and Amos were so outspoken in their criticism of social justice. The reason the religious leaders did not recognise God in Jesus was His concern for and with those in need. The kings of Israel found it so difficult to emulate the Lord’s attitude of favouring the poor and the oppressed, and this was because of their sin. This blindness or ignorance, if you will, is justifiably ascribed to the sin in them.

This point must be stressed. What really hides God from us, and what makes it difficult for him to reveal himself to us, is our sinfulness. He admonishes in Isaiah 59: 2 “Your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God...” Our sinfulness makes us different from
God, totally different. Consequently Jesus was experienced as a most peculiar person. As a human being He was no longer at home with humankind, people had to be recreated and reborn to accord with Him. This means we have difficulty recognising God’s revelation. God not only has to reveal Himself, He has to help us understand that revelation, through His work which is usually called illumination by the Holy Spirit.

One is immediately struck by the universal necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit, that is, the new birth or a dying to the old self as symbolized in the cross and a living of the new self renewed and energised and on course towards self-realization and self-consummation powered by the resurrection. Admittedly, there is a penumbra surrounding God, however, His revelation, through His covenant with humanity clearly exemplifies the fact that He is with and for His people, as recorded in the Exodus narrative and the Babylonian captivity.

2.3.4 God irrupts through revelation into humanity/nature

The Swiss Evangelical Reformed theologian Barth advocated two cardinal propositions which are well known, namely, without God we cannot reach God and it is grace to receive grace that is we do not deserve to receive grace (1957a: 43ff). However, Barth’s reaction was even more radical. Not only did he reject any knowledge gained from general revelation, he rejected general revelation per se. He agreed God acts in nature and history, but God does not reveal himself in those works. His works in nature and history are not manifest, not even to those who already know Jesus Christ. In fact, when we, on the strength of our knowledge of Jesus Christ, see something of God in nature or in history, it is not objectively there but we actually read it into nature. Nothing of God is objectively revealed in nature.

So far we have discussed Barth’s view on revelation fairly formally, how God revealed Himself, or rather how He did not reveal Himself. We need to comment on the content of revelation as seen by Barth.

God revealed himself exclusively in Christ (Barth 1975:11-120). The bible recounts events, that is history and it is in this history that God revealed himself, not in the written pages of the Bible. One could therefore say that God did not reveal himself in, say, the written pages of Matthew’s gospel, but in the life of Jesus Christ. The Bible is not itself revelation, but reliable testimony to his revelation. Only in a derivative sense could one call the Bible the revelation of God, in the sense Barth calls it one of the forms of the Word of God, but in an actual sense
Jesus alone is God's revelation (1975:88-120). He alone is able to say, "He who has seen me has seen the Father". This we cannot say of the Bible. The fact that God revealed himself only in Jesus also means that the history of Israel before Christ as recorded in the Old Testament is not in actual fact the revelation of God. This history is the precursor that points to the revelation, to the extent that in Jesus Christ the apostles encountered God himself. Barth was widely criticised for his view that the history of Israel is not truly the revelation of God. However he believed Christ's uniqueness cannot be put on a par with Israel's history. Granted, God had acted in that history and had made God self known in the Exodus, the prophets and the exile of Israel. The return and so forth, but Christ is quite simply more and different. He alone is in a radical sense God's revelation. In him God himself appeared, became visible. In Jesus God duplicated Himself, so to speak, something we cannot say of the history of Israel.

We now have to come to grips with the content of God's revelation. His revelation is Jesus. Jesus is, both human and divine, together, and united hence the importance Barth attaches to the doctrine of the two natures of Christ. Jesus Christ was God and a human being, truly God and at the same time truly and fully human. In fact, Jesus was the revelation, not only of God but also of humanity. In Christ we learn not only who God is, but also who we as human beings are (1956: 49-60).

Who then is God, according to the Biblical witness of Jesus? In Jesus, God and humanity are linked in one person. God thus reveals Himself as linked to humanity and by the same token, reveals humanity as linked to God. God is the God of human beings and humanity is God's. Viewed thus, it is not surprising that Barth's theology is sometimes called a theology of the covenant. God and human beings are interrelated as the divine and the human natures of Jesus Christ are. Possibly this is a fundamental reason why Barth insisted so emphatically that Jesus alone was the revelation of God. Here we come to know Him, clearly and unmistakably, as the God of humanity, covenanted to us and involved in our history, on our side, our Saviour. Only thus do we learn to interpret the Old Testament, especially the central covenant formula, 'I shall be your God, and you shall be my people'. The radical and fervent meaning of this statement only becomes clear in Jesus Christ.

However Barth underplays the role and function of the Holy Spirit who is primordial, involved in creation, the incarnation, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the renewal through the Spirit Self and also in the process of fulfilment and consummation to the end of things. Thus the Spirit can be perceived in every leaf, plant, tree, in every creeping thing for
He is the essence of all life, human and non-human creation.

For Barth it is true that the greatest revelation was the incarnation, but God has always been revealing Himself through the Holy Spirit in creation, the cross and the reconciliation, in the Spirit’s renewing acts and finally the fulfilment and consummation of all processes of creation. Therefore God the Holy Spirit’s great acts of creation, redemption and consummation are interconnected to the human acts of salvation, abandoning the false self, asserting the true self, through renewal and empowerment, realizing its innate potential and finally consummating the self in God’s perfect scheme of things in the universe for all eternity. Therefore the absence of the Holy Spirit as a major player in history in Barth’s theology and philosophy is highly problematic.

2.3.5 God annuls humanity/nature or the latter in atheism annuls God

Under this head we shall explore Atheism which professes to hold no opinion as to the existence of God, alleging that the evidence in favour of and against the divine existence, are too nearly balanced to afford any rational ground of conviction either way. Hume and some others have taken this ground. Hume (1990:475) argues “We have no idea of the Supreme Being, but what we learn from reflection on our own faculties”. This school either maintains exclusively the existence of the material universe, or attempt to account for its existence upon principles that are consistent with the denial of the divine existence. They maintain that the universe is all matter, and that what we call mind is only the result of cerebral organization, in other words, that matter is, in some forms, intelligent, especially in the form of brain. They further maintain that the universe is all mind, and that what we call the universe is the fiction or creation of our minds. One example is Pantheism, a system that denies the existence of the true God, and maintains that the universe itself is God.

Atheism further contends that the belief of God and the universe is founded in the natural credulity of the human mind, and the facts demonstrate that God cannot exist. They further allege that they are conscious of freedom and this freedom is inconsistent with the immutability of God as the Governor of the world, therefore there can be no immutable God that governs the world. They contend that creation itself implies a change in God, and is therefore inconsistent with His immutability. They maintain that the physical imperfections of the universe are entirely inconsistent with the existence of those natural and moral attributes ascribed to God, and this together with the actual existence of so much sin or moral evil is
inconsistent with the existence of infinite goodness, infinite knowledge, or infinite power.

This school holds that there is insufficient evidence of design in the structure of the universe to warrant a rational belief in a designer, we can therefore have no conception of such being. They do not believe that God created the universe out of nothing (Ex nihilo nihil fit).

They further allege that they can conceive of the existence of the universe in its present state without a cause, as to conceive of God with a cause. Finally, they object and say that if the universe is a exquisitely constructed machine, the mind that could create it must be still more wonderful and exquisite in its structure, and that we may as well suppose the eternal self existence of the universe as to suppose the eternal self existence of a being who could create it.

First, with regard to the credulity of the mind, it is a notorious fact that men are not naturally credulous, but obstinately incredulous, in respect to those doctrines that rebuke their lusts. The existence of the true God is an idea big with terror to depraved man. The existence of God can be proved in several ways insists Aquinas. The foregoing is an explication of his thesis regarding the existence of God. Aquinas (1990: 12-13)

Second, Omniscience is the knowledge of all actual or possible events and things. This knowledge has eternally resided in the mind of God.

Third, to say that Gods immutability and our free agency are inconsistent with each other is bare assertion.

Fourth, creation implies no change in either God’s nature or character but only the exercise of his moral and natural attributes asserts Aquinas. If to this it be replied, that character is nothing else than the exercise of the natural attributes, and that before creation he had no moral character, and that the work of creation was the formation of moral character and therefore implied a change, it may be answered, that character consists in design or intention, and that God always designed or intended to create the universe and therefore creation implies no formation or change of character in him.

Fifth, that is perfect which is entirely suited to the end it was designed. The universe was made and is governed for the glory of God, in the promotion of virtue and happiness, and that
so far as we can see, it is the best possible manner suited to that end.

Sixth, Aquinas contends that infinite goodness, knowledge, and power imply that if a universe was made it would be the best that was naturally possible. Further, moral agency implies freedom and freedom implies the power to resist every degree of motive that can be brought to bear on mind. That it would have been possible to prevent sin under a moral government, or had it been possible that it would have been wise, so to alter the administration as wholly to exclude it is a gratuitous assumption and any argument founded upon such assumption is of no weight.

Seventh, Aquinas further argues that there are two ways in which design may be most strikingly manifested. One is where a single principle or law is so applied to produce the greatest number of beneficial results. The application of the law of gravitation is an instance of this kind. The other is, when a most complicated and laboured piece of mechanism is constructed for a single but highly important end. The human frame is an instance and illustration of this. This affords the highest possible evidence of design.

Eighth, the eternal existence of the matter of which the universe is formed, may be admitted without invalidating the proof of God’s existence, but that matter is not self existent appears from the fact that if it is eternal it must have eternally existed, either in an elementary state or in a state of combination. If in a state of combination and change its existence from eternity involves the doctrine of an infinite series, which is absurd.

Ninth, we cannot conceive of any event without a cause. Aquinas further argues “Therefore if there be no first cause among efficient causes, there will be no ultimate, nor any intermediate cause.” In other words, the universe we know is continually changing and that therefore it cannot by any possibility have been eternally self existent. We know the unorganized is the natural state of matter. This is proved by the fact that in all cases as soon as life is extinct the matter composing organized bodies returns to an unorganized state by the action of its inherent properties and laws.

Even though God’s existence cannot be conclusively proved, one can certainly show that it is more reasonable and believable, responsible and sensible to accept God’s existence than not to. If one studies God’s involvement in the history of Israel closely one reaches the conclusion that it is more reasonable and sensible to accept the existence of a super human power that
was intrinsically involved in that history than to regard it all a fiction or the result of their human abilities. In short it is in fact more reasonable to believe and believable to reason that God exists than not to believe. Israel was saved when completely powerless, unable to save them selves from destruction. Yet over the ages Israel recount the Exodus event. It is surely more believable and reasonable to accept God’s intrinsic involvement in this history, than to accept that a people would needlessly transmit a story that disgraces them.

Another difficulty of atheists is their demanding the testimony of sense in the affirmation, ‘Who has seen God?’ The objection is founded in a ridiculous ignorance or disregard of the first principles and laws of evidence, one of which is, that a proposition is to be supported by that kind or degree of evidence which the nature of the case admits. As God is a Spirit it is unreasonable and unbelievable to demand for His existence as a direct testimony of sense. As we infer the existence of human beings from the phenomena which they exhibit to our senses, so we infer the existence of God through the workings of the Spirit which He exhibits to our senses.

It is therefore through His Divine Spirit that He accomplishes all things. Atheism is a ridiculous credulity, to believe that all things or any thing comes by chance. Should a person believe that a watch chanced to grow upon a tree, would not this be an evidence and instance of ridiculous credulity? However we have the indirect testimony of sense for the existence of God, just as we have for the existence of humans. Who has at any time seen a human being? Our senses inform us of the existence of a body, but this which we see is certainly not the person, the thinking agent, but from the phenomena exhibited to our senses by this body, we naturally and necessarily infer the existence of the person or living agent within, for we cannot conceive that these bodily actions and motions should have no cause, and as they are similar to those of which we ourselves are conscious, our reason affirms that the tenant within is a person like ourselves.

To reiterate, as we infer the existence of the human from the phenomena which he exhibits to our senses, so we infer the existence of God from the phenomena which He exhibits to our senses, which can be seen in the mystery of the interconnectedness and the otherness of the threesome of God, being human and the physical-organic environment. Therefore in the next instance I will attempt to outline a wholesome approach to the interconnectedness and otherness of God, humanity and the physical organic environment.
2.3.6 A wholesome approach of the mystery of the interconnectedness and the otherness of the threesome of God, being human and the physical-organic environment

This view may be contrasted at vital points with the avenues we have already reviewed. Contrary to the opposition between God and humanity, people's experience of faith in history confirms that an individual's existence is not mainly in the ability to perceive, control and execute management structured on competence and success, it maintains the fact that to experience true life with God entails risky commitments, potent memories and compelling visions.

Also distinct and different from the complementary relationship between God and humanity which maintains that life is not just a personal matter but is a communal affair. It involves dialogue with a powerful other who endows mercy and commands accountability. In other words, we are dealing with a God who looks beyond our faults and takes our commitments seriously.

Also opposed to the dialectical see-saw relationship between God and humanity, it denies individuals can be exempted from reality, from grief and loss of death, genuine failures, and the collapse of institutions. It insists that meaning is located in hurts which heal and summon to repentance.

Distinct and different from atheism, which asserts that the universe is all mind and the belief of God and the Universe is founded in the natural credulity of the mind, we argue that God through the Holy Spirit is a present reality, His love perceived in His mercy and goodness surrounds us.

We therefore insist that the God of the Bible is real, and the Bible further informs us that we must live in faithful response to this covenant partner. We must embrace a different narrative identity, which involves an abandonment of other loyalties, and alternatives. It means embracing this faithful covenant partner who is God. Therefore the Bible presents us with a peculiar understanding of reality at loggerheads with other viewpoints.

God has called a special people who are heirs to His promise. This community, if you will, has professed and possessed obedience and loyalty. Thus it is this powerful memory that empowers this community which lives its life with history and vision. These memories can be
seen in the Exodus liberation, empowerment as witnessed in David, and the passionate caring-suffering evident in the crucifixion, liberating empowerment as evident in the resurrection and newness as in the continuing work of the Spirit.

This teaches us although there is a penumbra surrounding God; He is also with and for us. In other words, despite His otherness, He is interconnected with his creatures, and the physical-organic environment through His Holy Spirit. In turn, the memories that keep this community alive, helps them to draw power for living. It concerns liberation, empowerment, self-giving for others and new life or resurrection which we thought impossible.

It is this covenantal community that live towards and await the coming of a community of justice and righteousness. The future therefore is not a mirage but a promise where human worth is celebrated and value is given to human dignity. This is all possible through the promise-keeper, and covenant partner. Thus the individual and the physical-organic environment are in covenant with a God who cares and makes daring interventions to keep His promises.

The future is strangely historical that is the future is breaking in now, when it breaks in, it is among the powerless, despised and weak. Therefore this covenant partner has called the world into covenant with Himself, as attested by creation. He is the same one who calls us and faiths us to a relationship of responsibility and accountability. This, God does in emptying Himself as evidenced in the life of Jesus.

This exemplar, I submit provokes and compels individuals in the emptying of themselves for the sake of healing, caring and newness after the manner of God Himself. Life lived in isolation and aimlessness is devoid of power and resilience, but lived in covenantal community through the power of the Holy Spirit affords the individual a new way of perceiving reality which is very different from the usual forms of thought and speech. It requires of the individual a serious revamping of the way we think, speak, see and live. It draws us into another history which is at odds with the public history commonly embraced by the individual. It is a fresh perspective that concerns a vision of a new humanity in His new creation.

2.4 Conclusion
Having explored the correlation between the works of God the Spirit and the works of human beings including natural events and processes, and having confirmed the identity of the Holy Spirit within the Godhead we evaluated the various expressions between the interconnectedness and otherness of God, being human and nature. We demonstrated their flaws and weaknesses and definitively expressed our own viewpoint subsisting in a covenental historical reality as being within our frame of reference. It is imperative at this point to extrapolate on the correlation and difference between the fivesome active dimensions namely, actualization, denial, empowerment, renewal and consummation and expose their relevance for daily living within the context of God, being human and the physical organic environment.
Chapter 3

The correlation and difference between actualization, denial, empowerment, renewal and consummation

3.1 Introduction

It is imperative at this point to reflect briefly on the great acts of God as stated previously and the corresponding acts of humankind that arise from God's intervention, and decisive interaction in human history. God's blueprint involves all creative processes and events from the physical environment to the non-human and finally human creation as mediated through the work of the Holy Spirit. God's first great act was creating the universe through his Spirit proceeded by humankind created in a state of original integrity, morally and physically perfect in all faculties, given the liberty and freedom to self-actualization, to realise his eternal destiny within the broad framework of God's master plan. However, through an act of wilful and deliberate disobedience, humanity departed from the state of original integrity and conformity to the laws of being and became morally and physically depraved. This malconformation lapsed or fallen state, a departure from right or straight we refer to as the fall.

This engendered a selfish disposition designed to oppose and resist God's plan of peace, joy and righteousness and perpetrate rebellion, defiance, and sin, bringing a curse on all creation. This temporary derailment resulted in God choosing a nation namely Israel to reach all nations. However, this intervention backfired, as Israel failed Him over and over again. God then resolved to come to earth Himself in the person of Jesus Christ, conceived of the Holy Spirit with the express desire to reconcile and reclaim humanity thereby reinstating, re-enacting and re-inaugurating His original plan for the universe. The idea of the incarnation was for the purpose of the cross and the resurrection. Through the cross of Christ a bridge is erected for God's great act of redemption. Human beings are thus reconciled and restored to God through the cross of Christ made effectual by the Holy Spirit. The cross then, puts off the sinful or false self, or denies it's free reign and prepares the true self renewing and restoring it to its original integrity as before the fall. Therefore Christ's crucifixion serves as an exemplar for the crucifixion of the false self and the resurgence or resurrection of the true self as it relates to God's plan and purposes.

God's creation of humanity through the Spirit was for a specific purpose. Human beings were
created with an immense capacity for self-realization within the broad sphere of creation. However, created as a free moral agent he was bestowed with the power of choice, that is, the ability to choose or refuse in every case of moral obligation. Created morally and physically perfect the first humans possessed integrity derived from conformity to the laws of being, moral and physical. Human beings were set on the road to self-realization. We shall have more to say on this later; however, suffice it to say that this state of perfection was rudely and abruptly interrupted by humanity’s disobedience to law resulting in the fall from this pristine state and becoming morally and physically depraved. Hence sin entered the world with all its insidiousness, relentlessly seeking God’s defeat at every opportunity. Thus humanity’s self-realization in terms of God’s great plan and design was dealt a severe and savage blow. Human beings lost their first estate. However, God in His great love and mercy provided an escape route through reconciliation in the cross and resurrection and renewal through the Spirit en-route to the consummation of all things. Thus the cross symbolizes demise of the sinful self or self denial and a rebirth of the renewed self created after God’s image and Glory.

The work of the Holy Spirit in actualisation, denial, empowerment, renewal and consummation is perceived as five fold:

First, the Spirit’s primary and initial work is to create and to make us aware that we are creatures of God.

Second, the Spirit is the one that makes people aware of the damage they did and are still doing to God, themselves as human beings and the natural created world. It is against the backdrop of the threefold damage human beings are doing that sin and self-denial have to be viewed.

Third, in the way that the thrust of the dissertation is worked out and not as theological tradition has it, the Spirit’s work is not in the first place to redeem the individual from the fall by imparting salvation to the person. The Spirit applies the liberating suffering on the cross and the empowering resurrection in the life of a person as the full answer to him or her being created and having fallen into sin.

Fourth, the Holy Spirit indwells the individual so as to produce the fruit of the Spirit, indispensable as demonstration of the new lifestyle.

Fifth, the Holy Spirit is leading from the front that is guiding the individual from the future to be part of the fulfilment and consummation of the future new heaven and new earth.

In this fivesome sense the Holy Spirit possesses the individual with the express intention of imparting power to witness and to be the salt of the earth.
Therefore the Holy Spirit has the monumental task of not only making the individual aware of his creatureliness and continuing inclination to do damage to God the creator and his/her creatureliness but also regenerating, that is redeeming him/her from sin and offering him/her Salvation, which entails crucifying of the sinful self as seen in self denial, and empowering and renewing the true self to good works through the cross and resurrection of Christ Jesus, bearing the (new) fruit of the Spirit and embraced in a fulfilling life directed to the future consummation of all things. Now this includes active service in witnessing to the saving power of the five dimensions of the Gospel as affirmed and vindicated in the baptism of the Holy Spirit which was received at Pentecost. This commitment to service is carried forth by the Holy Spirit to the future, “Until the Lord comes,” When all things will be consummated. However, this work of reconstruction and reconciliation by the Holy Spirit also includes the physical- organic environment, as anticipated by Isaiah (55:12-13) where the Cyprus and the myrtles, lion and the lamb are mentioned, being heirs to the fathers estate, presupposes the care of the fathers estate, or else there is no point in being an heir if there is nothing to inherit. Therefore Ephesians 1:3-10 anticipates the utter unity of the entire creation in the presence of God.

Through the great act of resurrection initiated by the Holy Spirit, God empowers and renews human beings through the power of Pentecost to become co-workers in the Kingdom (Reign) of God that moves through creation and history till the end of things. The empowerment and renewal of human beings through the Holy Spirit is expressly undertaken to enable them in their life work to promote the Kingdom and Glory of God throughout this life and eternity. Through the resurrection, the new self is empowered through the Holy Spirit to pursue the great work of salvation on earth demonstrating the Kingdom of God through comprehensive witnessing. Thus the self is empowered and renewed by the Holy Spirit to fulfil the grand design of the Master builder. This work, the Holy Spirit procures and produces within the individual, until Christ comes, and all things are consummated. Thus the original intentionality of God reaches fruition, and paradise lost is finally regained.

The God who through his Spirit creates, redeems, empowers, renews and fulfils is evident in history. Thus the Spirit articulates newness by calling into being that which does not exist, Ex Creatio nihilo which is evident in the creation of the universe and all life forms. The God who through his Spirit creates the world in Love, redeems the world in suffering as epitomized in the cross, empowers the world as witnessed in the resurrection through the power of Pentecost and consummates the world in joyous well being. Therefore God’s great and awesome acts
are underpinned by His infinite love for all creation, culminating in His plan and will for the entire universe.

His faithful acts of love demand a response from His creatures, which involves an embrace of the world on His terms and according to His purposes. It is to this that we are invited as sojourners and finally citizens to come home on terms other than our own. However, this presumes a transformed consciousness, where the false self is exchanged for the true self, empowered, renewed and destined to share the life of God throughout eternity.

Thus the sinful or false self through denial undergoes a total and radical transformation, and the true self empowered by the Holy Spirit is renewed and put on the path of self realisation or actualisation, nurtured and matured by the Holy Spirit. In other words, a de-selfing and a re-selfing occur. The Holy Spirit thus marks the false self for destruction. The correlation can be mediated as the false self is stripped of its beggarly elements through conviction and conversion undertaken by Holy Spirit which in turn empowers and renews the true self, fitting it for right and proper service. Thus ‘Self denial’ precedes self-empowerment, and self-renewal and the new self pursues its “self determination” through guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit. It is so correlated that the process is sequential, the Holy Spirit determining the whole movement, from start to finish.

Although correlated one must understand that the manoeuvre is also differentiated. Conviction and conversion by the Holy Spirit result in a radical change and a complete restoration effected by the cross. The Holy Spirit provides the impetus needed for the new self by empowering and renewing it through the resurrection power of Pentecost. The new self now stands in direct contrast to the old self. The empowered self shifts into another level, as it were, one mandated with an alternative vision of reality, an altered perception of the world, self and neighbour. This it tenaciously pursues in its quest for “self actualisation” as it awaits the final consummation of God’s rule and purpose in the universe, so as to fulfil its destiny. As adverted to earlier, although integrated the process is also differentiated.

3.2 Differentiation and integration in a ‘universe’ or ‘multiversity’

Differentiation can be seen by all living processes on our planet. The earth abounds with diversity in all shapes and forms. Non-human creation is a kaleidoscope of rich diversity reflecting the glory of its Creator. However, a delicate and fragile unity can be perceived
throughout. The ecosystems, the food chain all reflect unity in diversity. They all declare interdependence and interconnection while at the same time maintaining substantive existences. This can be seen in humanity as individuality, a feature of all human life. No two human beings are similar in every way, yet all life is integrated, speaking on a human level. Though differentiated yet integrated. This is the imposing reality of human life itself.

God from the beginning reveals a deep love for human beings, a love that surpasses, surmounts and supersedes all other love, and He yearns to be their God, to love them and preserve them for eternity. His acts of love are evident in the incarnation where He came down Himself, reminiscent of the slave peasants in Egypt, where He heard their cries of anguish, saw their oppression and exploitation came down and delivered them, and makes a propitiation for sin. The cross resonates with this message, whereas in the Resurrection through the Holy Spirit He imparts life and that more abundantly. All His great acts are mediated through the Holy Spirit. Humanity is invited to share in this eternal life, this great love. God gave His best, humanity in positive response share in God’s life. Self-realization is restored through an act of self-denial on humanity’s part. He becomes a recipient of empowerment by the self same Spirit who legitimates his co-heir ship with Christ.

God’s acts are infinitely greater than human beings. The difference is amazing, as far as the Heaven is from the earth. God, being infinite, loves and performs on an infinite scale. Against this backdrop humanity’s acts are feeble and finite. Though both engage, one is immensely powerful where the other is weak and powerless. Therefore the Spirit’s task in actualization, denial, empowerment and consummation must be probed.

3.3 God as Spirit’s works in human actualization, denial, empowerment, renewal and consummation

It is of vital importance to define the concept self as a human phenomenon as it relates to actualization, denial, empowerment, renewal and fulfilment and how it interacts within the human psyche. What is meant by the self? Briefly, we generally mean one’s total personality, all that one is. In other words, the self is all that you are, the way you think, feel and behave, one’s attitudes, values and beliefs. The self has a unique identity and character and expresses itself in its motives and decisions. Self is the product of a specific culture, and socialization within a specific environment, but these are only the clothes worn by the self. Brueggemann (1999: 12) views the self not just as a unified integrity with a single identity but insists that
the “self is a conundrum of fears, hurts, and hopes that most often are in important ways unsettled, conflicted and under adjudication”. However these are powerful in shaping influence, but culture, environment and life experiences provide the raw materials by which the self chooses to come into being as a unique personality.

In other words an individual is what he is through family influence, status and position in society, culture, environment, and life experiences and one’s response to these factors. Lonergan (1972:105) differentiates between the true self and the false self. When he points out that the true self exists in a drive for self-transcendence, whereas the false self fails to achieve self-transcendence. This is expressed in the way in which the individual experiences self-love. Loving oneself as an object leads to selfishness, whereas loving oneself as subject happens only by loving others. This latter type of loving is inherently beneficial for the individual concerned and constitutes the authentication of the human’s capacity for self actualization.

Therefore the self that Jesus renounces is not the true self as subject, but the false self as object. Greenfield (1988:15-16) propounds his understanding of self through three aspects, namely, the cognitive, the affective, and the behavioural. The first aspect relates to reasoning and thinking, where information is gathered, analysed and classified and reflects ones rationality. The second legislates over ones emotions and feeling and those experienced on a daily basis, like joy and sorrow, anxiety and tranquillity and so forth, while the third pertains to decision making and focuses on intention and motive in forming value judgements.

Damasio (1999:172) advocates a triad understanding of the self. First, he talks about the core self. This can be seen in core consciousness. This attribute of self is a transient entity with the ability to re create itself ceaselessly for each and every object with which the brain interacts.

Second, he talks about the autobiographical self which depends on systematized memories of situations in which core consciousness was involved in the knowing of the most variant qualities of the person’s life. This encompasses a person’s reaction to conflict, likes and dislikes. It further grows continuously with life experiences but can be partly remodelled to reflect new experiences. Each reactivated memory operates as a something to be known and generates its own pulse of core consciousness, says Damasio (1999: 174).

Third, he talks about the proto self which is the pre-conscious biological self. It has no power
of perception and holds no knowledge whatsoever. Yet it is out of the proto self that the conscious core self emerges, and to which the autobiographical self is connected. These three types of self though distinct are interrelated to each other. Kelly (1977: 96) affirms in this regard that the self or spiritual self and the divine self are cemented together like fire and heat. They cannot be alienated from the true self. Merton (1961: 45) distinguishes between the true and false self. The false self he describes as the illusion of egocentric desires that claims an existence outside the will and love of God. The true self, he contends, is hidden with Christ in God. Merton further maintains that the true self and the person are alienated and at loggerheads with each other because of sin. The true self is constantly lost by habits of selfishness and our constant fights from reality.

He further concludes, if I find God I will find myself and if I find my true self I will find God, who is love and therefore the substance or the identity of the true self is love. Therefore the process of self-actualization does not destroy the ego, says Meckel and Moore (1992:282) commenting on Jung's opinion, but places it in a subordinate position in relation to the Self. The ego is no longer the centre of the personality; it is the self that unites all opposites. What is dissolved in the process of self actualization is the inflated, concrete ego, with its exclusive selfish purposes, and follows its own impulses. What really occurs in self actualization, says Sean Kelly (1993:108) is a paradigm shift in the sense that the self, which unites all opposites, is the centre rather than the ego. Self actualization then is not achieved by the loss of ones ego, but by surrendering it so that Christ can live within the individual. In other words, self actualization brings about such a self awareness of the psyche that the function of the ego is destroyed.

Forman (1998:133) asserts that the process of self actualization is not confined to a privileged few but is in conjunction with a more universal empathy. However, Maslow (1970:153- 180) points out that there is an essential connection between happiness and self actualization. He further describes the need for self actualization as a feeling of self fulfilment, or the realisation of ones potential. According to Maslow self -actualized persons are by definition gratified in their basic needs of belongingness, affection, respect and self esteem. In other words, they are more efficient in their perception of reality and are more comfortable with it. They accept other people in general and are spontaneous, simple natural and non defensive. They are problem centred rather than ego-centred. They are calm and serene, and enjoy being alone. They are flexible and autonomous, resisting enculturation, and they transcend the bounds of any culture. They continue to have a fresh appreciation of things. They experience
deep feelings for people and a genuine desire to help humankind. They have profound interpersonal relationships and are capable of fusion, greater love, and more perfect identification.

They have strong ethical, and definite moral standards and their interests are the broadest possible and they have a strong sense of identity. However he is quick to point out that just 10 reach this stage of self-actualization. The self divorced from God, from which reality is derived becomes meaningless and amounts to nothing.

Therefore being created in the image of God speaks of God Self being reflected in humanity, and which brings us to the conclusion that the person is not human unless he is in vital relationship with God. Therefore Boff (1978:113) asserts that the resurrection of Christ has overcome all impediments to self-actualization. The dying and rising of Christ has opened the way to self-actualization. However one needs to distinguish between a false and true self. The individual, born morally and physically depraved has a false self, which is hostile and fearful.

3.4 The fivesome cluster of active dimensions

The Holy Spirit undertakes the go-between work of supererogation as the access giver between all of God’s acts and human acts. The Spirit is the initiating, administrating and fulfilling mediator and correlator of God’s acts with the acts of human beings and the processes of the natural world. Intimately involved as ‘go-between’ between God and humanity the Spirit understands the deep things of God and human beings. Paul uses in 1 Cor 2 an interesting metaphor of correlation in which he starts of with the statement that the things that God wants human beings to know is revealed to us by the Spirit for the Spirit reaches the depths of everything, even the depths of God (v 10). Thereby the Spirit is set as the ‘go-between’ revealer of the deep things of the mind of God which is known to the Spirit and the deep things of a human mind that is only known to the particular human mind (v 11). Without exceeding a meaningful consensual compromise with the text one can assert that in terms of the thrust of the dissertation that the correlation concluded here is between “the deep things of God” as His grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and the fulfilment of all things in the new heaven and the new earth and the active fivesome dimensions of self-actualization, denial, empowerment, renewal and fulfilment through which human beings and the natural world are not only encapsulated in the grand acts of God but are actually following and co-working with God. The Spirit initiates and undergirds the awareness of the fivesome
dimensions of self-actualization, self-denial, self-empowerment, self-renewal and self-consummation or fulfilment as the intimate friend of God’s mind and a human being’s daily sense making experience.

3.4.1 Self-actualization

With the advent of the resurrection of Jesus through the Spirit we are raised to being new creatures that is set on the road to self-empowerment. But with self-actualization or self-creation we must start at the beginning of the ‘series’ of God’s acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment. In starting with self-actualization that corresponds with our so called ‘old’ creatureliness by God one is not dislocating self-actualization or self-creating of one’s life from self-denial that relates to our death with Christ on the cross and our self-empowerment through the resurrection. In addition one is not dislocating self-actualization from our self-renewal through the baptism with the Spirit. Finally, one is also not dislocating it from our pilgrimage of self-fulfilment in an eschatological consummating direction in which the new heaven and the new earth is the grand example of the fulfilment of all processes in creation. Therefore although the emphasis under this heading is self-actualization, the other four dimensions also participate in actualizing the self, like the multiple gears in an articulated vehicle, although a specific gear is selected the other gears play a supporting and subservient role. Granted, the dimensions can never truly be separated, but for purposes of sporadic analysis they can be identified and treated separately.

In self-creation or self-actualizing of one’s possibilities a human being in conjunction with the natural world is taken up, connected and set apart while following God the creator’s initial act of creation as well as God’s involvement in continuing creation through being responsible and accountable for self-actualization and self-creation of one’s road of life with its strong tones of uniqueness to it.

Therefore Paul in Gal.2:20 corresponds self-actualization with self-denial – ‘I am crucified with Christ’ and self-empowerment – ‘nevertheless I live, and the life I now live is the life of Christ who lives and reigns in me’. Self-actualization is opened up through the new awareness of the crucified and the resurrected Christ as being linked to the created body and life Paul lives through faith in the Son of God who has sacrificed Himself for Paul’s sake (v.21). Thus, the gateway to self-actualization is self-denial, self-empowerment, self-renewal and finally self-fulfilment (self-consummation.).
Therefore being-in-love with God as Creator is basic to self-actualization which is manifested in a deep-seated joy in an ambience and awareness of being created by God and being set on the road and pilgrimage towards self-fulfilment. The fullness and fulfilment is another of Paul’s (Col. 2:8) themes which in this dissertation is linked with the fulfilment and consummation of all processes of creation in the new heaven and the new earth. The fullness and fulfilment remains despite humiliation, failure, deprivation, pain, betrayal and desertion in many dimensions and areas of this life. The fullness of God that is the deep things of God brings about radical peace, love of neighbour and of the Kingdom of God on earth. Love is always relationship, the self that loves and is in relationship and reaches out to others. For self actualization to be authentic, it has to occur in freedom, and Rahner (1978:38) is very precise in the manner in which he defines this freedom.

3.4.1.1 The theology of self-actualization based on recognizing the element of mystery:

A theology of self-actualization acknowledges a human being as a mystery in its creatureliness. The human being as mystery is always in need of understanding and consequently a systematic study of ontology, or a study of being, provides the necessary assistance towards human insight into the mystery of being. It is therefore reasonable to argue that in a fresh effort to develop a theology of human self-actualization, the immense mass of valuable truths about the human person already discovered and systematized, cannot be ignored, explained away or denied.

The theology of self-actualization elicits from established concepts and principles of the various sciences, and in turn the theologian or philosopher infers supplementary concepts, principles and truths, flowing from former, logical and necessary conclusions. Since human self-actualization forms part of the reality of humanity and what transpires in the depths of human existence, the process intends to summon a person, not only before the mystery and truth of the individuals own being, but it also brings the individual into relationship with the inscrutable and incomprehensible mystery of God.

Rahner’s (1989:16) theology postulates that self-actualization occurs when the human and supernatural existential form a unity. His viewpoint advocates unity of reality and its original self-presence already present in the individual’s free self-actualisation. Rahner’s perception in terms of theological anthropology is that human persons are formed by the following
determinations: it is orientated towards incomprehensible mystery, transcendent, responsible and free, exists in the world and is social by nature. Considering Rahner's view that these determinations constitute the true personhood of the human being, this dissertation proposes that human self-actualization is not only fostered by these characteristics, but also accommodated and historically constituted by them.

It is assumed that a theology of self-actualization would operate from the basic assumption that the human person is a mystery through God's acts of creation has to be set on the road to self-actualization in relation to the mystery of God the Creator of everything. Rahner observes that theological self-actualization implies being gripped by mystery. By experiencing the individual being as mystery, humanity comes to realize that its own mystery and the mystery of God are organically and intrinsically connected. From this it can be concluded that a proposed theology of self-actualization has, as its point of departure, the mystery of both God and humanity which are intrinsically connected.

While the mystery element of both God and humanity is of vital significance in the drive towards self-actualization, the human person is not in a state of perfection, but constantly in need of redemption. Therefore self-actualization following ontologically God's act of creation takes into account the contribution that the incarnation of Christ, that is the cross and the resurrection made to a human being's self-actualization. In other words there are strong salvific and Christological components attached to self-creation or self-actualization of the self.

3.4.1.2 Theology of self-actualization is salvific and thus Christological:

Salvation is an innate part of a Christian understanding of self-actualization. In order to overcome fear, alienation and personal hostilities which are constant threats to life, humanity is constantly in search of lost harmony. In the Christian sphere salvational, self-actualization is a move from individualism to community, from dualism to wholeness, from individual to collective identity. In this way, self-actualization with its focus and essence on Christian principles, helps the individual, in his efforts to humanize humanity, to define himself as an individual, a process involving both self-actualization, as a universal characteristic, by maintaining the integrity of their lives in relation to one another and to Christ who is the bearer of humanity.
For the Christian, Jesus, who brought his humanity to full realization, that is, to the fullness of being, is an exemplar of human wholeness. The process of self-actualization for Christians is grounded and linked to the person of Christ as revealed by the Holy Spirit as the main dimension of the good news. Since Jesus is the meaning of human self-empowerment a Christians experience of and relationship with Christ through the Holy Spirit is fundamental to the dimension of self-actualization.

Musopole (1994:171) claims that human beings are best described as “humanly-divine and that Jesus as God incarnate was also “humanly-divine”. However the resurrection of Jesus reveals His full cosmic nature as being also “spiritually-divine”. Authentic humanity as manifested in Jesus is also divinity, and to be divinized in Christ is to be authentically humanized, that is the meaning of salvation or inheriting the reign of God. The Christian faith teaches and believes that authentic humanity is ultimately realized in the reign of God.

This dissertation holds that Christianity is an agent of humanization or salvation. To become self-actualized is to accept ones ethnic, cultural, and historical identity as a gift from God. The Gospel of Christ calls for a new humanity and a new life in Christ, initiated by the Holy Spirit. Self-actualization, a process of being by becoming, keeps the individual moving and growing towards full humanness. To achieve authentic humanity, the person in imitating Christ, grows into a mature and responsible human being. The very heart of Christian discipleship is living and growing towards the “whole measure of the fullness of Christ” that incorporates full humanness.

Christians believe that to be like Christ is to have reached the point of maturation which is accomplished by the Holy Spirit. The full reality of self-actualization which remains hidden becomes awareness when Jesus is encountered. The Gospel as the agent must play an intrinsic role with self-understanding in the process of self-actualization. Those who are committed to the self-realization of authentic humanness, endeavour to humanize cultures, societal structures, institutions and the world. Those who accept this responsibility and act on it are the ones who according to the Gospel, message truly inherit the earth and realize the reign of God.

3.4.1.3 The theology of self-actualization identifies freedom as a bedrock principle:
This research confirms that the attainment of human self-actualization occurs in, and is intrinsically related to the responsible use of freedom. Freedom as the basic principle of human action, understood in terms of transcendent self-determination, is realized in history, while freedom is realized in freedom. Freedom expresses individuality, fundamental to the realization of authentic humanity, in itself it does not mean license, but is a product of responsible love.

As Rahner (1969:123) observes, freedom is understood both as the taking possession of oneself, and being realized through the mediation of other free persons. As is evidenced by divine love and freedom, human beings are constituted and self-actualized by their relations to others. It can be concluded that self-actualization is relational and is essential for human wholeness, enabled in love and self-giving. The self as the principle of freedom attains self-actualization by being authentic to his or her being, and by letting conscience be the guide, through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit to a responsible and accountable use of freedom.

The Polish philosopher, Andrew Woznick (1979:34) acknowledges that conscience which summons the person to authentic selfhood is the key point of personal self-completion and transcendence. Because there are directions towards diminished as well as fuller humanity, a sound conscience is needed, empowered by the Holy Spirit for the correct use of freedom. This directedness is known at the deepest level of conscience where decisions are made and freedom utilized. Conscience, however, is more than a sum of decisions, although each choice has relevance.

The decisive role of the Holy Spirit can be seen as illuminating the conscience in its integrated and consistent thrust of the individual towards goodness, the dimension of character that decides for or against personal self-actualization. This is where the issue of fundamental option, the term given to the basic orientation of a person’s life, comes into play. This basic orientation is either for or against God, either to seek or to turn away from good. The daily choices and ways of being, repeated over a lifetime, develop a pattern that reveals the persons fundamental option, whether for or against self-actualization.

This validates Rahner’s (1969:144-151) anthropological insight that human beings possess a fundamental deep-rooted freedom which enables them to determine themselves as human persons. It is transcendental, rather than categorical freedom, which enables the individual to accept a loving relationship with God through the Holy Spirit and to reach self-actualization.
It is on the basis of transcendental freedom that one resolves one's fundamental option, which in turn determines personal self-actualization. The values and virtues that shape conscience are also significant in the self-actualization process. However, people are constituted with a fixed nature, which must be regulated by unchanging laws, but with an openness and fluidity, which empowers them to find new and fulfilling modes of existence. Although this may imply having to live with contradictions, nevertheless self-actualization transcends obvious distinctions and inconsistencies.

3.4.1.4 The Spirit of Love is the dynamic renewing and sustaining quality in the theology of self-actualization:

Love emerges as the pervasive quality that sustains self-actualization. Love, is the spontaneous affirmation of others, the union of the individual with others while preserving the individual self. It springs from the need to overcome separateness so that it will lead to oneness, without in the process eliminating individuality. It affirms the individuality of the self, and at the same time it unites the self with humanity and nature (Dewey1970:209). However it is important to note that spontaneity in relation to love does not imply slavish adherence to all feelings and emotions. The process towards human wholeness is an integrated one and involves the interplay of reason, emotion and reflection (Hogan1993:147). However, Duffy (1992:226) emphasizes that in human love both the lover and the beloved reach authentic self-actualization through inter-relationship. He reiterates Rahner’s statement that human love is the opening up and the ecstatic giving of oneself to the other. Love shapes and evaluates relations and gives dynamism to relationships, and constitutes the wholeness of being.

3.4.1.5 Self-actualization is based on the wholeness and fulfilment of being:

Self-actualization is the complete authentication of the fullness or wholeness of the essence of being. This encompasses aspects of the neuro-biological, psychological, philosophical, biblical-mystical and theological contributions towards an understanding of self-actualization. Almaal (1996:399-400) argues that self-actualization of the individual is an achievement it is not a given. However an achievement involves actualizing one's own potentialities in the process of becoming truly human through the enablement of the Holy Spirit. As each person is unique there can be no one, fixed pattern, although as earlier mentioned, there are directions
towards both fuller and diminished humanity.

At the deepest level of each individual, the natural voice of conscience perceives and provides the desired directedness. The truth of each person is a creative articulation in varying degrees of rightness of his/her individuality within the enduring reality of the self. However this achievement must be perceived within the context of a discarding of the false self and an embracing and enfolding of the new self. Therefore self-denial is imperative to the realization of ones true self.

3.4.2 Self-denial

Scripture teaches a most appropriate and an advanced and elaborate plan to regulate ones life. Self-denial as the term implies differentiates itself as a crucifying of self, a dying to self, the ‘old man’ fading away and a mortifying of the flesh. Simpson (1995:130) concurs in saying that the slaying power of the Spirit perceived as a sword is the symbol of death, and death is the deepest revelation of Christ's great salvation. The grave is forever the symbol of the gospel, and the cross means not only his death but ours also.

The sinful self is further defined as the sinful desires, personal and selfish consideration from which emanate the desire for wealth lust for power, favour of men, false ambition, hunger for human glory and worldly lusts. Every fragment and fibre of the natural life is evil. You may coax it, you may flatter it, and it will smile upon you, but someday, if you cross its will, it will spring upon you and strike you. Therefore Simpson (1995:123) contends the fiery sword must destroy every vestige of the old humanity before the new life can enter in and partake of that life giving tree which stands behind the glorious cherubim.

It is the work of the Holy Spirit, to put to death the life of self and sin. Only the flaming sword can smite to death the self- centred, self destroying life of the natural person. Now, each of us is a little I, and over every one of us there is a dot of self importance, self will, self confidence, self complacency, or something to which we cling and for which we contend, which just as surely reveals self life as if it were a mountain of real importance. This I is a rival of Jesus Christ, an enemy of the Holy Spirit, and of our peace and life. Therefore God has decreed its death and the Holy Spirit, with his flaming sword is waiting to destroy it, that we may be able to enter through the gates and come to the tree of life, says Simpson.
He concludes that there is one point that touches the heart, and that is the point God usually strikes, the dearest thing in our life, the decisive thing in our plans, the citadel of the will, the centre of the heart. In other words the Holy Spirit penetrates the inmost fibres of our being, consuming the old life, cleansing and quickening our entire being, and enduing us with power from on high. The key principle that Paul alludes to that is the duty of all Christians is laid out in Romans 12: 1-2. In other words, Paul emphasizes the very important consideration of being dedicated and consecrated to God, in short, we may think, speak, meditate or do anything only with a view to God’s Glory (1 Cor. 10: 31). In order then to regulate ones life one has to maintain control and discipline, which is instilled by the Holy Spirit, always aware that we are not our own but the Lord’s. In other words we are owned and belong exclusively to the Lord.

Calvin (1952: 3-20) comments on this state of being when he maintains that we are not our own therefore neither our reason nor our will should guide us in our thoughts and actions. This also precludes us from seeking what is fit and proper to the flesh or self. This frame of mind lets us forget ourselves and our own interests as far as possible. In other words, to God we should live or die, His wisdom should dominate our actions and every part of our existence should be directed to Him as our only legitimate goal. The transformation of our lives by the Holy Spirit which we shall enlarge upon later which Paul calls a renewal of the mind is the real beginning of life.

In other words, reason and faith are surrendered to the Holy Spirit and this means, as Paul says in Romans 12: 2, Eph 4: 23, Gal 2: 20 we no longer live for ourselves, but Christ lives and reigns within us in the person of the Holy Spirit. Said another way, still by denying ourselves we seek God’s Glory by devoting our attention to God and His commandments. Calvin, as quoted above, asserts in this regard that the denial of ourselves which Christ has so diligently commanded his disciples from the beginning, will at last dominate all the desires of our hearts. He goes further to emphasise that denial of ourselves will leave no room for pride, haughtiness, avarice, licentiousness, love of luxury, wantonness or any sin born from self love. Paul further instructs us in Titus 2 :11 -34 and declares that the grace of God is necessary to stimulate us and results in the successful removal of the two elements or obstacles to worship which is ungodliness and worldly lusts. Paul further reduces this to three classes which are essentially the elements of self-denial.
3.4.2.1 Elements of self-denial:

Sobriety is defined as chastity, temperance, and frugal use of temporary blessing and being patient under privation.

Righteousness, includes all the duties of justice, and that every man may receive his just dues and,

Godliness, that which separates us from the pollution of the world, and true holiness which unites us to God. Self-denial means true humility which further means respect for others, says Calvin. He further emphasizes the seeking of the good of other believers and that we should seek the good of every one, friend or foe. Calvin concludes that no one has rightly denied himself unless he has resigned himself to the Lord and is willing to leave every detail to His good pleasure. The Psalmist further in (Ps. 79:13) declares that the principle of true devotion is that God alone is the Guide and Ruler of all prosperity and adversity and that He is never in undue haste but that He distributes all good and evil with the most equal justice. Therefore this new creation or creature begins as soon as one has learnt to begin dying to the false or sinful self and starts living to the true self in Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. This is the thrilling feature of Christianity.

In order then to understand this solemn declaration of Jesus in (Lu.9: 23) the importance to be ascertained is this, what is the true idea of taking up the cross and denying one’s self? This question presupposes the existence of appetites and propensities which call for indulgence, it then means, obviously, that in some cases this indulgence must be refused. Denying oneself then, involves denying in the sense of resisting the gratification of all appetites and propensities whenever and how far so ever such gratifications are forbidden by the law of love.

All impulses towards self indulgence whether in the line of avoiding things we fear or seeking things we love, must be denied, and ruled down by a determined will, whenever indulgence is not demanded, but forbidden by the law of love, this enablement the Holy Spirit provides. In other words, within the limits of Gods law, these constitutional appetites may be indulged beyond those limits they must be denied. At whatever point they run counter to the law of love to God or love to neighbour, they must be put down. The thing demanded then, is consultation and obedience to the will of Christ in this whole matter of self indulgence, as
neither desire nor appetite must be obeyed and that love of approbation should not be gratified in disobedience to Christ.

This self-denial is demanded and founded in the fact that He has made us rational and moral beings, our rational faculties intended for the control of our entire voluntary activities, and our moral nature rendering one properly responsible for the self control which God requires. Also in view of the fact that our sensibilities are blind, and therefore were never intended to be our rule of life. To apply such a rule, God has given us intelligence and conscience. The law of God and the voice of our reason urge us to deny ourselves and find our highest good in obeying God. God and reason require us to withstand the claims of appetite sternly and firmly. We possess conscience and we have affections correlated to God as truly as we have affections correlated to earthly things.

Therefore the spiritual side of our nature needs to be cultivated. It has been kept back so long and crushed down; it greatly needs to be brought up. But in order to do this and develop the spiritual side of our nature, it is indispensable that the worldly side be crushed and brought under. For flesh is a dangerous foe to grace. There is no harmony, but only repellence and antagonism, between the earthly affections and the heavenly. Unless we subdue the flesh we shall die, or it is only when, through the Spirit, we mortify the deeds of the body that we can live. We all know that the gratification of our animal nature is hedonistic in nature, how much more must the gratification of our nobler moral affections be joyful. When the soul comes to feast on its spiritual affections, it begins to taste real happiness.

Another reason for denying oneself is that it is intrinsically right. Calvin (1952:95) argues that the lower appetites ought not to govern us but the higher laws of our nature ought to. The evidence of this is simply the confirmation which proves it to be the duty of beings created rational to use their reason and not degrade themselves down to the level of beasts. The only way to enjoy oneself is to deny the sinful self, fully up to the demands of faith, reason, and of God’s revealed will. In other words, one must determine to deny oneself whenever God, faith, reason and justice demand it, and fully up to the extent of those demands. Anyone therefore can afford to deny himself/herself, since thereby he/she opens his/her heart to the joys of immortal life and peace.

We further observe that Paul speaks of the human, the old person, as being crucified with Christ, so destroyed by the moral power of the cross that he/she who was once a sinner shall
no longer serve sin. As Christ died for sin, so by a general analogy we die to sin, while on the other hand, as He rose to a new and infinitely glorious life, so the convert rises to a new and blessed life of purity and holiness, as signified in the resurrection. We are dead to sin in the sense that it no longer is our master, implying that it has been in power over us. Finney (1976: 124) points out that Christ died to abolish its power over us. He died for the sake of making atonement for sin, and of creating a moral power that should be effective in killing the love of sin in all hearts.

Therefore dying to self involves being dead to sin, one must be indifferent to its attractions, beyond the reach of its influence, as fully removed from its influences as the dead are from the objects of sense in this world. As he/she who is dead in the natural sense has nothing more to do with earthly things, so he/she who is dead to sin has nothing to do any more with sins attractions or with sinning itself. It is only when we are empty of the sinful self that we begin to be filled of Christ. It is imperative at this point to distinguish between what self-denial is not and what self-denial is.

3.4.2.2 What self denial is not:

It is not hating one’s true self; on the contrary we have an urgent mandate to love ourselves as we love our fellow’s. Jesus made this very clear that it is normal and natural for you to care for, accept, and affirm yourself, and love your neighbour as yourself. Augustine (1990: 201) interpreted this self-love as loving God in ourselves since God dwells in the heart of the believer. Therefore self-love is the unconditional acceptance of ones self created in the image of God and for whom Christ died. To flagellate the true self because of the false or sinful self is to sell short the death of Christ on the cross for our sins and to confuse the self with the carnal nature.

Therefore one needs to understand that we are talking about the old self of the flesh and not the new self in Christ. Psychologists today are declaring emphatically that a person who chooses not to love self in a healthy acceptance and respect will have considerable difficulty loving others. Therefore Jesus assumed the normality of self-love in order to express wholesome neighbour-love. It is not love of self, but love of self alone, which is sinful. It is not imposing on the conscience of others stricter rules than those laid down in the Word of God. In other words, eating and drinking anything but dry bread and pure water. It is not like Crates of Thebes, of whom it is told that he threw his treasures into the sea out of fear that
unless they were destroyed he himself would be ruined by them. It is not to be confused with the morbid desire for suffering, which we call in psychology, masochism.

Further it does not mean throwing oneself away, or renunciation of the value of one's own existence, nor even the value of one's physical existence.

3.4.2.3 What is self-denial?

Therefore self-denial means seeking God's Glory, asserts Calvin (1952: 23). One should not seek one's own but that which pleases the Lord, and is helpful to the promotion of God's Glory. There is a great advantage in almost forgetting ourselves and in surely neglecting all selfish aspects, for then only can we try faithfully to devote our attention to God and his commandments. For when Scripture tells us to discard all personal and selfish considerations, it does not only exclude from our minds the desire for wealth, the lust for power, and the favour of men, but it also banishes false ambitions, and hunger for human glory, with other more secret evils.

Indeed, a Christian ought to be disposed and prepared to keep in mind that he has to reckon with God every moment of his life. Self-denial further means that a Christian will measure all his deeds by God's Law, and his secret thoughts he will subject to God's will. If an individual has learned to regard God in every enterprise, he will be delivered from all vain desires. Further still, the denial of ourselves which Christ has so diligently commanded his disciples from the beginning will at last dominate all the desires of our heart.

The denial of ourselves through the efficacy of the Holy Spirit will leave no room for pride, haughtiness, or vain glory, nor for avarice, licentiousness, love of luxury, or wantonness. Without the principle of self-denial, humanity is either led to self-indulgence in the grossest vices without the least shame, or if there is any appearance of virtue in him, it is spoiled by an evil passion for glory. Even those of the philosophers who have contended that virtue is desirable for its own sake, have been puffed up with so much arrogance, that it is evident they desire virtue for no other reason than to give them a chance to exercise pride. God is so far from being pleased either with those who are ambitious of popular praise, or with hearts full of pride and presumption, that He plainly remarks 'they have their reward' in this world, and that repentant harlots and publicans are nearer to the Kingdom of Heaven than such persons.
It is an ancient and true observation that there is a world of vices hidden in the soul of individuals, but Christian self-denial is the remedy of them all. There is deliverance in store only for the individual who gives up his selfishness, and whose sole aim is to please the Lord and to do what is right in his sight. Self-denial further means forsaking all carnal thoughts, to subdue and renounce all false appetites, and to devote ourselves to God and our brethren, and to live the life of angels in a world of corruption. To deliver our minds from every snare Paul calls our attention to the hope of a blessed immortality, and encourages us that our hope is not in vain. Paul further emphasizes in Titus that Christ once appeared as a Redeemer, so he will at his second coming show us the benefits of the salvation which he obtained. He further admonishes us that Christ through the Holy Spirit dispels the charms which blind us and prevent us from longing with the right zeal for the glory of heaven, and also teaches us that we must live as strangers and pilgrims in this world, that we may not lose our heavenly inheritance.

Self-denial further embraces true humility which means respect for others, which refers partly to human beings but principally to God. When Scripture commands us to conduct ourselves in such a manner towards men, as in honour to prefer others to ourselves and faithfully devote our whole attention to the promotion of their advantage, it gives such commands as our hearts can by no means receive without being first cured of our sinful self. We are so blinded and upset by our sinful self that everyone imagines he has a just right to exalt himself, and to undervalue all others in comparison to self.

Therefore to paraphrase Paul in this regard, (Rom.12: 10, Phil. 2: 4, 1 Cor. 4: 7) if God has bestowed on us any excellent gift, we imagine it to be our own achievement and we swell and even burst with pride. The vices of which we are full we carefully hide from others and we flatter ourselves with the notion that they are small and trivial, and we sometimes even embrace them as virtues. If the same talents which we admire in ourselves appear in others, or even our betters, we depreciate and diminish them with the utmost malignity, in order that we may not have to acknowledge the superiority of others. If others have any vices we are not content to criticize them sharply and severely, but we exaggerate them hatefully.

Hatred, instructs Paul, grows into insolence when we desire to excel the rest of humanity, and imagine we do not belong to the common lot, we even severely and haughtily despise others as our inferiors. The poor yield to the rich, the common people to the upper ten, the servants to their masters, the ignorant to the scholars, but there is nobody who does not imagine that he
is really better than the others. Everyone flatters himself and carries a kingdom in his breast. Everyone is self-complacent and passes censure on the ideas and conduct of others, and, if there is a quarrel there is an eruption of poison. Many, argues Paul, discover some gentleness in others as long as they find everything pleasant and amiable, but how many keep their good humour, if they are disturbed and irritated. He therefore concludes, as the upshot of his thesis, which is to live happily, the evils of false ambition and the false or sinful self plucked from our hearts by the roots.

We must remember that our talents are not of our own making, but free gifts of God. He admonishes that we must watch and acknowledge our faults, and be truly humble, and whatever gifts we notice in others, let us value and esteem both the gifts and their possessors, for it would betray great wickedness in us to rob them of their God-given honour. The faults of others we are taught to overlook, not indeed to encourage them by flattery. In the same vein we should never insult others on account of their faults, for it is our duty to show love and respect to everyone. Self-denial further means paying attention to the honour and reputation of others whoever they may be, we conduct ourselves not only with moderation and good humour but with politeness and friendship. Paul concludes that true self-denial shall never arrive at true meekness by any other way than by humiliating ourselves and by honouring others from the depths of our hearts, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

3.4.2.4 Its necessity in overcoming the world as demanded by God

What is it to overcome the world?

First, it is getting above the spirit of covetousness which possesses the world of human beings. The spirit of the world is eminently the spirit of covetousness warns Finney (1978:13). He amplifies this point by saying that it can be perceived as greediness after the things of the world. It would further appear that some worldly humans covet one thing or the other, but all are living in the spirit of covetousness in some form or the other. This spirit has supreme possession of their minds. Therefore the first thing in overcoming the world is, overcoming the spirit of covetousness or the spirit of bustling and scrambling after the good this world proffers in respect to worldly things and objects. To illustrate, one is swallowed up with study, another with politics, a third with money-getting, and a fourth perhaps with fashion and pleasure and in each case the earthly good becomes the all engrossing object. Therefore to gain victory over the world every form of its pursuits, not just one must be overcome.
Second, overcoming the world implies overcoming the fear of the world. It is a mournful fact that all human beings of worldly character have so much regard to public opinion that they dare not act according to the dictates of their conscience, as this would incur the popular frown. To illustrate this point, one is afraid lest his business should suffer if his course runs counter to public opinion, another, fears lest if he stands up for the truth it will injure his reputation, and diminish or destroy his influence. Admittedly, great multitudes are under the influence of fearing the world.

Third, overcoming the world implies overcoming a state of worldly anxiety. It is perfectly natural if the heart is set upon securing worldly good, and has not learned to receive all well from the hand of a great Father and trust him to give or withhold with his own unerring wisdom. But the individual who loves the world is an enemy of God, and hence can never have this filial trust in a parental Benefactor, nor the peace of soul it imparts. Hence worldly humans are invariably in a fever of anxiety lest their worldly schemes should fail.

Fourth, overcoming the world further implies not being enslaved and in bondage to the world in any of its forms. There is a worldly spirit and a heavenly spirit, one or the other exists in the heart of every individual and controls his whole being. To illustrate, one form which the spirit of the world assumes is being enslaved to the customs and fashions of the day. It is marvellous to see what a goddess Fashion becomes. No heathen goddess was ever worshipped with costlier offerings or more devout homage or more implicit subjection. No heathen deity since the world began has ever had more universal patronage. Every Christian is careful to secure the approbation of God, his chief concern to commend himself to God and to his conscience. The victorious Christian filled with the power of the Holy Spirit is in a state where he is no longer in bondage to fellow human beings. He is bound only to serve God.

3.4.2.5 Who overcomes the world and on what principle is this result effected?

It is evident that those who are born from above or born of the Spirit are the ones referred to by John in (1 John. 5:4.) This victory over the world results as naturally from the spiritual or heavenly birth, as coming into bondage to the world results from the natural birth. This law admits of a philosophical explanation, at once simple and palpable to everyone's observation. Natural birth reveals to the mind objects of sense only. It brings the mind into contact with
worldly things. Of course it is natural that the mind should become deeply interested in these objects thus presented through its external senses, especially as most of them sustain so intimate a relation to our sentient nature and become the first and chief sources of our happiness. Hence our affections are gradually entwined around these objects, and we become thoroughly lovers of this world, our eyes being opened to its seduction.

Alongside of this universal fact let another be placed of equal importance and not less universal, namely, that those intuitive powers of the mind which were created to take cognizance of our moral relations, and hence to counteract the two great influences of worldly objects, come into action very slowly, and are not developed so as to act vigorously until years are numbered as months as in the case of the external organs of sense. The very early and vigorous development of the latter brings the soul so entirely under the control of worldly objects that when reason and conscience come to speak, their voices are little heeded. As a matter of fact we find it universally true that unless divine power interposes, the bondage to the world thus induced upon the soul is never broken. This elucidation was necessary to show that the natural birth with its attendant laws of physical and mental developments becomes the occasion of bondage in the world.

Right over against this lies the birth into the Kingdom of God by the Spirit. The role of the Holy Spirit is very significant at this point as He brings the soul into intimate contact with spiritual things. God the Holy Spirit seems to usher the soul into the spiritual world, in a manner analogous to the result of the natural birth upon our physical being. The great truths of the spiritual world are opened to our view through the illumination of the Spirit of God. Spiritual truth now takes possession of the mind, and draws the individual into its warm and life-giving embrace by the Holy Spirit.

3.4.2.6 How is this overcoming of the world achieved?

The great agent is the Holy Spirit. Without Him, no good result is ever achieved in the Christian’s heart or life. Believing in God, and having realizing impressions of His truth and character made upon the mind by the Holy Spirit given to those who truly believe, we gain the victory over the world. Therefore the crucial role of the Holy Spirit in self-denial as it prepares the individual to overcome the world and as it relates to the individuals life on earth cannot be overemphasized.
In bringing the individual through self-denial the Holy Spirit prepares him for the difficult task of taking up his cross and following Christ, in other words, self-empowerment, self-renewal, self-realization and self-fulfilment. The Holy Spirit is delegated the task of nurturing the individual as he prepares for a life that is costly, difficult and demanding and He does this through the cross. Therefore Paul (Heb.5:8, Phil.3:10) challenges the individual to a higher and deeper level of commitment and sacrifice which is inseparably connected to, and a vital and integral part of self-denial and more difficult, where Christ calls every disciple to “take up his cross.”

3.4.2.7 The relevance and the significance of the Cross

Paul (Rom 8:10) makes it abundantly clear that those whom the Lord has chosen must prepare themselves for a life that is hard and difficult. His argument runs like this, if God did not spare His Son, why will He spare His children, and therefore will pursue the same manner with all His children. The reason he advances is that it was necessary for Jesus to learn obedience by the things He suffered. He therefore concludes that it is the destiny of all God’s children to be conformed to Him, and know the fellowship of His suffering while we are participating in His death.

First, the Holy Spirit uses the cross to inculcate the all important aspect of humility within the individual. Calvin (1952:64) perceives the virtue of being humble in this regard, seeing that individuals are naturally prone to attribute everything to the human flesh, unless we have, as it were, object lessons of our stupidity, we easily form exaggerated notions of our strength and take for granted, and whatever hardships may happen that we will remain invincible. This results in the individual becoming puffed up with a foolish, vain and carnal confidence which arouses one to become haughty and proud towards God, as if ones power would be sufficient without His grace.

Therefore God the Holy Spirit allows one to experience humiliation or poverty or loss of relatives or disease or other calamities and because we are unable to bear them we are buried under them. Being thus humbled we learn to call upon God’s strength imparted through the Holy Spirit which alone makes us stand under such a load of affliction. David (Psalm. 30: 6-7) reminds us “In my prosperity I said I shall never be moved, Lord by thy favour Thou hast made my mountain to stand strong. Thou didst hide Thy face, and I was troubled”. Here David confesses prosperity had stupefied and benumbed his senses that he disregarded the
grace of God on which he should have depended instead of relying on himself.

Second, the Holy Spirit uses the cross to make us hopeful. Paul (5: 3, 4) teaches that tribulation works patience and patience experience. Patience, affirms Calvin, affords proof to the saints that God the Holy Spirit will actually give them the help He promised whenever there is a need. This Calvin (1952: 50) emphasises and confirms their hope, when humbled they are taught to rely on God alone. Paul encourages individuals, by advising that experience works hope, which is not to be ashamed. Paul continues this line of thought when he says that we need to have such an understanding of one’s weakness that it engenders distrust in one’s sinful self.

Further, Paul claims, one needs to distrust one’s sinful self to such an extent that all trust is placed in God, through the new self, enlightened by the Holy Spirit. This further implies dependence with such boundless confidence in God that the individual relies entirely on the help of the Holy Spirit to victoriously persevere to the end. He exhorts that God is true and faithful to His promises so that our hope may become firmer.

Third, the Holy Spirit uses the cross to teach obedience. Calvin (1952: 65) is adamant in asserting that by afflicting His children and trying their patience, He teaches them obedience. Therefore Peter (1 Peter 1: 7) points out that our faith is tried by tribulation just as gold is tried by fire in a furnace. Therefore through the cross we are instructed, according to Calvin to obedience because in this way we are taught to follow God’s desire and not our own. If everything proceeded according to a person’s wish they would not understand what it means to follow God.

Seneca informs us that it was an ancient custom to exhort people to bear adversity with patience by the maxim “Follow God”. This implied that a person submitted to the yolk of God only when he willingly accepted chastisement with the meekness of a child. Therefore the grace conferred on the saints, God through the Holy Spirit tests that they may not remain hidden and become useless. Calvin (1952:70) concludes that we should show ourselves obedient in all things to our Heavenly Father and not deny Him the right to use every way to accustom us to practice this obedience.

Fourth, the Holy Spirit uses the cross to discipline the individual. It would appear God’s complaint against Israel in (Deut .32:15) is continually seen in every one of us. Calvin (1952:
67) therefore stresses that the kindness of God as revealed through the Holy Spirit ought to lead one to consider and love His goodness. Unfortunately, the Christian is so spoilt by God’s indulgence on his behalf that he becomes ungrateful. It is at this point that it is very necessary for one to be restrained by some discipline from breaking out into wilfulness.

When we have grown “fat” and “covered with fatness” we kick against Him who has fed and cherished us. Calvin (1952:67) observes, that in order for us not to become proud when we receive honour’s, that we may not become insolent when we are bless with property and wealth, the Lord through His blessed Holy Spirit as He deems fit uses the cross to oppose, restrain and subdue the arrogance of the sinful self. Therefore different people are disciplined with different crosses. He concludes his argument by inferring that the Heavenly Physician takes care of the well-being of His patients. He gives some a milder medicine and purifies others by more shocking treatments, He omits no one.

Fifth, the Holy Spirit uses the cross to bring repentance. Solomon (Prov. 3:11) admonishes us not to shrink from correction and chastening as it is the evidence of God’s love for us, but review our lives, realizing that we deserve such chastisement. Therefore correction is learning the will of God through the Word and by the Holy Spirit, it is not, asserts Calvin (to destroy or ruin us but to deliver us from the condemnation that is in the world through lust. Paul comments in (Heb. 12:8) “if ye be without chastisement then ye are bastards and not sons”. He goes further to say in (1 Cor. 4:8, 9) that the cross should not make us indifferent, “for we are troubled on every side, yet not distressed, we are perplexed, but not in despair, persecuted but not forsaken, cast down but not destroyed”.

Sixth, The Holy Spirit uses the cross to bring God’s favour. Scripture teaches and admonishes in (Matt. 2:10, and Acts 5:4) that one is greatly honoured by God when He decorates us with the tokens of His service. Persecution for righteousness sake not only when one suffers in defence of the Gospel but also when one is opposed in upholding any just cause. When the truth is defended over against the falsehood of Satan, good and innocent people are protected against injury and injustice, it may be necessary for one to incur the hatred and indignation of the world so that ones life, possessions, and reputation may be endangered.

This should not be seen as grievous and one should not count oneself miserable, for when God breathes His favour on the individual all things work together for the happiness and well-being of the individual. Therefore Paul says he counts it worthy to suffer shame for His name.
Calvin (1952:82) puts it in this way and says, if one is robbed by the wicked of one's possessions it will have a positive result for one's true riches will be increased with God in Heaven. He goes on to say if banished one will be received into the intimate fellowship of God. On the other hand if tormented and despised it makes one more firmly rooted in Christ, and if covered with reproach and shame, the individual receives the more glory in the kingdom of God and finally if massacred one is received into eternal glory.

The Holy Spirit fills one with spiritual joy in the midst of persecution. Scripture (1 Peter.4:14, 1Tim.4:10, 2 Cor.6:8 ) Paul and Peter comfort us time and again when we are maltreated in the defence of a righteous cause, these hardships must be received with spiritual joy since this type of affliction or cross is most peculiar to Christians. For our suffering, Christ would be glorified, according to Peter. Paul also warns that not only persecution but reproaches also await us just because “we are trusting in the living God”.

Paul (1Cor 11:32 , Heb. 12: 8) further exhorts that hardship, sickness, distress and the horror of death bows down our hearts as a matter of course, but the faithful empowered by the Holy Spirit will show their real strength by resisting and overcoming their grief, however much they have to labour. The individual will be patient when provoked and restrained by the fear of God from any outbursts of intemperance. The individual’s joy and cheerfulness will be apparent when, wounded by sadness and sorrow they rest in the spiritual consolation of God through the power of the Holy Spirit

Seventh, the Holy Spirit uses the cross to entrench submission. Scripture praises the saints for their patience when they are severely afflicted by their adversities but are not broken or overcome by them, when they are bitterly distressed but nevertheless filled with spiritual joy, when they are weighed down by anxiety and become exhausted and yet leap for joy, because of the Divine consolation imparted by the Holy Spirit. The cross therefore is the ultimate disarmament, for it locates Jesus as ‘emptying Himself’ ‘becoming utterly disarmed. In this regard the great Indian thinker, Ramon Panikkar (1995:62) has written “Peace is not possible without disarmament. There is a need for a cultural disarmament.” It is a true observation that our natural feelings avoid and fear what is hostile to our experience. However our zeal for devotion struggles through our difficulties so we become obedient to the Divine will.

This conflict is expressed by Christ when He addressed Peter as follows “when you were young you girded yourself and walked where you would, but when you are old another will
gird you and carry you where you would not”. In this regard Calvin (1952:73) reminds us that if we want to be disciples of Christ, to fill our minds with such a great reverence for God and such an unrestrained obedience that we may triumph over all contrary inclinations, and submit to God’s plan. Paul therefore reminds us that the key to successful Christian living lies in appropriating and apprehending His allusion “that I may know Him in the power of the resurrection.”

Finally, the Holy Spirit uses the cross so has not to make one indifferent. The individual’s life involves the struggle against the natural emotions of sorrow while they try to build up patience and moderation. This is reflected in Paul’s words in (2 Cor. 4:8 and 9) “we are troubled on every side, yet not distressed, we are perplexed but not in despair, persecuted but not forsaken, cast down but not destroyed”. If I understand Paul correctly he is saying that carrying the cross does not mean that one hardens oneself, for Jesus Himself mourned and wept for His own calamities as well as for those of others. “The world” said he “shall rejoice but you shall weep and lament”. He even pronounced a blessing on them that mourn. This is clearly taught in (Jhn.16:20, Matt.5:5, Luke 22:44.)

The cross therefore is the eternal expression of the length to which God will go in order to restore broken community. The community being an assemblage of individuals, it therefore follows that restoration of the individual must first be accomplished in order for the community to be integrated. The cross therefore symbolizes an altar on which the sinful self with all its lust and passions must be sacrificed. This action we call self-denial, implying a renunciation of the flesh, or old person and an embracing of the new self created after the similitude of Christ. In other words, it is a putting off of the old and a putting on of the new, a restoration of the image of God within the individual. This can only be accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit, as He searches the hearts of individuals.

Thus the role of the Holy Spirit can be clearly seen in the act of self-denial wrought through the cross in which the individual is regenerated, reconciled and restored to God through the working of the self-same Spirit. Therefore the cross symbolizes a death to the old dispensation and old ways, an abandoning of other narrative identities and embracing Israel’s narrative world or belonging to the commonwealth of Israel. In the cross then, one dies to sin and lives to Christ, the old life fades away the new has come. The Divine power needed to inaugurate this vital process is provided by the Holy Spirit, who plays a key role in effecting the change needed, in conforming the individual to the image of Christ. Therefore the action
of Holy Spirit is to seal and direct one’s ascent to God, bringing one in conformity with divine goals.

Therefore Major Jones (1990:102) comments that, “The Spirit of God is God – at-hand, and in another sense, God-at-work”. Thus, the greatest venom and hate of which a human is capable, even sin against the Holy Spirit, cannot defeat God’s purpose and love for humanity, but only bring it into bolder relief. In this fashion Jesus intended that the cross should be the medium of a new Passover, a new liberation from slavery, a new exodus to the Promised Land. With the Holy Spirit, we can make a subjective claim for God as the Sustainer of our own innermost reality.

MacGrath (2003: 411-423) on the other hand, perceives the cross as a sacrifice, which is trustworthy, of permanent effect, and which is unfailing in its nature. He quotes Athanasius’ festal letters, in which he explores the idea of Christ’s sacrifice in terms of the Passover sacrifice of the lamb, as presented by Paul in (1 Cor. 5 : 7). Augustine also states that Christ “was made a sacrifice for sin, offering Himself as a whole burnt offering on the cross of His passion.” Hugh of St. Victor writing in the twelfth century, says MacGrath, also understood the cross as Christ’s sacrifice for sin. The cross was further understood as a symbol of victory.

The New Testament and the early Church laid considerable emphasis upon the victory Christ gained over sin, death, hell, the grave and Satan through His cross and resurrection. Christ through the Holy Spirit fights against and triumph’s over the evil powers of the world, under which humankind is in bondage and suffering and in Him God, reconciles the World unto Himself. MacGrath (2003: 419) quotes Paul Tillich, a systematic theologian, who interprets the cross as victory over existential forces which threaten to deprive us of authentic existence.

MacGrath’s third approach involves a co-relation between the cross and forgiveness, in which he states that on the basis of the cross God is enabled to forgive sin. Thus one can perceive the restorative power of the Holy Spirit at work in the cross. This is further amplified in the Heidelberg Catechism, which views Christ as the judge who “has represented me before the judgment of God, and has taken away all condemnation from me”. Through the cross, God aims to restore the rightness of the world through rightful means. Therefore for Barth Christ represents the locus in which the righteous judge makes known His judgment of sinful humanity, and simultaneously takes that judgment upon Himself.
His last approach relates to the cross as a moral example, where the meaning of the cross relates to the demonstration of the love of God for humanity. Augustine (1990:125) says that Christ’s mission was the ‘demonstration of the love of God towards us’. Clement did the same and insisted of a reciprocal love from humanity towards God. This is also reflected in Abelard’s writings that Jesus taught by word and deed by becoming human and showing us love even to the point of death. In other words Jesus gave His life because of love; He hung on the cross and died all because of love. When the moment of testing emerges Jesus matched His words with actions, leaving for humanity, example as the strongest moral influence.

In this regard Schleiermacher (1928: 429-31) comments, that Jesus is the one ideal example of a perfect human consciousness of God, and that Christ is capable of communicating this God consciousness to others. In others words Jesus was not simply the incarnation of an ideal, but one who possesses the ability to evoke or arouse this quality in others. It is therefore the work of the Holy Spirit to act as an agency of recreation, recreating the image of Christ within the souls of humankind. The restorative work then is delegated to the Holy Spirit, in renovating and renewing the new self to reflect the image of God, created after Christ. Thus the great act of God in restoring fallen humanity can be perceived in the cross accomplished by the Holy Spirit through love.

3.4.2.8 The principle of Self-love

What it is not

Self-love is not as has been erroneously equated with selfishness, self-centeredness, egotism, conceit, arrogance and pride. It is not something evil to be avoided. It is not loving oneself inordinately, although others consider self-love a divinely given moral obligation as well as a healthy approach to life and a necessary pre-requisite to loving others.

What it is

It is my firm belief that just as the Christian has a responsibility to others, so he or she has a basic responsibility to him or her self. First we distinguish between ‘selfless love’ and self-love. These terms represent two significant viewpoints regarding the self of the believer. One view is that Christian love is purely selfless, solely an outgoing love for one’s neighbour, something the Bible commands us to do. The other viewpoint states that self-love is a God-
given capacity and a necessary requirement for loving others.

Firstly, the theory of selfless love has been carefully spelt out by many noted Christian writers over the centuries. Martin Luther (1957: 343-77) German monk and theologian, and leader in the Protestant Reformation, distinguished between the Roman Catholic theory of acquisitive self-love and a God-centred, self-giving love. The self is not to be loved but only given in love to and for others. Consequently, Luther’s position seems to deny the validity of self-acceptance.

Leo Tolstoy (1904:57) Russian novelist and Christian social reformer, called for an unclaiming, non-resisting, non-preferential love of neighbour, involving a preference for others over one’s self. Genuine love, he said, is a present activity only: hence future love does not exist. This is similar to what is often said today: love is something you do.

Anders Nygren, (1953: 45) a Swedish theologan in his book entitled _Agape and Eros_ he compares divine “gift-love “with human “need-love”. He believed that gift love is totally incompatible with need love. Need-love is radically self-centred, greedy and demanding. It is evil as it expresses itself in the strong desires of sensual lust; it is even more evil when it reaches out towards God to manipulate for one’s own selfish purposes. Nygren even goes so far as to say, “Christianity does not recognize self-love as a legitimate form of love”. And again he says, “So far from self-love being a natural ordinance of God in nature, it is a devilish perversion”. He further argues that the apostle Paul agrees.

When Paul sets self-love and neighbour –love in opposition to each other, he is not merely condemning a lower self-love, but all self-love whatever, even in its most highly spiritual state. Nygren’s answer to man’s inordinate self-love is neighbour-love. Loving neighbour as your self is love turned from self to neighbour, and so the natural perversity of the will is overcome. Neighbour-love excludes and overcomes self-love, according to him. This sounds very much like salvation by human achievement.

The second theory of self-love is based on the clear assumption of Jesus that it is normal and natural for you to care for, accept and affirm yourself. When a Pharisee asked Jesus which was the greatest commandment in the Law, Jesus responded, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with your entire mind”. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it “Love your neighbour as yourself” (Matt.22:37-38.)
The words “as your self” imply an acceptance of self-love. Jesus did not say to love the neighbour instead of your self, but as yourself. These words were not original with Jesus. The first commandment came from Deuteronomy 6:5 and the second from Leviticus 19:18. Therefore, love for God, neighbour and self go back to the ancient Law of Moses given directly by God to the people of Israel. Jesus saw in these two verses the essence of “all the Law and the Prophets”. Paul concurs with Jesus on this point (Rom.13:9).

Augustine (1990: 205) bishop of Hippo in North Africa interpreted this self-love as loving God in ourselves since God dwells in the heart of the believer. Loving others means loving God in them. Even though Augustine implies some reservations about the self, it is a far improvement over self-negation or self-rejection.

The self-love theory assumes that since God so loved us in Christ, we have no right not to love that which God loves. God’s love for me makes my self worth loving. Therefore, self-love is the unconditional acceptance of one’s self, created in the image of God and for who Christ died. To flagellate the self because of its sinful nature is to sell short the death of Christ on the cross for our sins and to confuse the self with the carnal nature or sinful self. Paul calls upon believers to “put to death the misdeeds of the sinful self”, (Rom. 8:13). To love and affirm myself is to accept myself as God does, to respect myself as one created in the image of God, and to see myself as redeemed by the blood of Christ and re-created in the likeness of Jesus Christ. This does not mean that I am now perfect, sinless, and faultless. But I am worth loving: God’s own example tells me so.

The biblical teachings certainly do condemn inordinate egotism, for this is the root of all sin, warns Paul (Rom.6 and 7). Human pride, arrogance, self-centeredness, and selfishness are expressions of the sinful or unregenerate self exalting itself in the face of God, rebelling against God, and even working to take the place of God. I am referring here to the new or true self, the new creation in Christ Jesus affirmed by the Holy Spirit. (2 Cor. 5:17,Eph. 4:24,Col. 3:10). That new self has been graced by God and deserves to be loved, affirmed, accepted, respected, and nurtured. This is not only good New Testament theology but also good Christian psychology. Actually, Christian psychologists today are emphatically declaring that a person who chooses not to love self in a healthy acceptance and respect will have considerable difficulty loving others.

Consequently, I have thrown my lot with the self-love theorists. If we as Christians
understand that we are talking about the new or true self in Christ and we are not talking about the old self of the flesh under sin’s power, that Jesus assumed the normalcy of self-love in order to express wholesome neighbour-love, and that we are not talking about self-worship or false pride, unregulated and excessive, we should have no problem understanding the value of self-love.

Moreover, there is great danger in self-negation both psychologically and relationally. It could be a form of false humility. There is a biblical balance called for here: both the cross and the resurrection is needed. These two principles, based on the historical events at the heart of the Gospel of Christ, underlie the entire sixth chapter of Romans, wherein Paul calls upon us to consider ourselves dead to sin but alive to Christ. Too many Christians put all the emphasis on dying to sin with little if any focus on being alive to Christ. However both principles are needed “…count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus” (Rom.6: 11).

Smedes (1983:34) makes five suggestions to loving one’s self. First, seeking one’s own self-fulfilment is a helpful kind of self-love. God intended for each of us to become what we were meant to be. A part of that intention was that we find, know and love God, our Creator. In loving God we also love ourselves. Second, we love ourselves well when we long for joy. The need for joy guides us to seek a feeling of being in union with the goodness of life, and knowing God is part of that goodness. Just as in knowing God we also know ourselves, to enjoy God is to enjoy ourselves. Third, we love ourselves well when we love ourselves as members of the body of Christ. I love myself well when I have love for the body of which I am a vital member. I am not to love myself as an island but as a significant part of an even more significant whole. Fourth, self-love can be the road to loving others. One cannot love anyone effectively if you hate yourself.

We must not squander the energy we need to take care of others by failing to take care of ourselves. This means that we love ourselves as a means to loving others. Fifth, we love ourselves when we learn to love our spouses sexually. When a husband and wife love each other fully, with body, mind, and soul they are also loving each’s own self. Such love offers one an avenue to self-fulfilment. Smedes says “God’s agape does not eliminate eros from the treasury of his good created blessings.” However a different perspective of self-love is provided by R. Schuller (1969:57) offers many helpful suggestions for developing a healthy self-love. We briefly summarise his ten steps.
First, one needs to get rid of the fear of failure. Failure causes others not to love us. Cowardice is more shameful than failure. One needs to understand that people accept us not so much for what we do, but for who we are.

Second, the individual needs to discover the unique person within himself. One must begin to honestly and openly share your self with someone else, for this is a way to self-discovery. Listen with an honest ear to both praise and criticism.

Third, complement yourself by learning to stroke and affirm yourself. Stop telling yourself what you are not.

Fourth, work to improve yourself and believe that you can improve or learn something. Avoid the postponements of life, waiting until you find the right job or mate, until you get to be manager, until you have enough money, until the kids are through college and the mortgage is paid, until you retire and so on.

Fifth, forgive yourself and don’t drag your mistakes with you. Let God’s forgiveness motivate your own self-forgiveness.

Sixth, accept yourself and believe God thinks a great deal of you, so should you.

Seventh, commit yourself to a great cause by getting out of the bleachers and onto the playing field. Get into something bigger than yourself. Wholesome responsibility generates self-love, for constructive responsibility fulfills the need to be needed.


Ninth, strive for excellence by doing and thinking your best. Strive to be the most thoughtful person you know.

Finally, build self-love in others. Forget yourself by helping others. As they progress you progress. Affirm both yourself and others.

These helpful hints from Schuller need to be understood not only within the context of the
power of the resurrection but in terms of the full process of the five dimensional approach of the Holy Spirit’s work in human self-actualization, self-denial, self-empowerment, self-renewal and self-fulfilment in correlation to the grand acts of God in creation, salvation (cross and resurrection), Pentecost and the future consummation of all things. The Holy Spirit grants divine enablement to attain this level of spirituality, whereby self-love becomes a reality within the individual’s life. It is the Holy Spirit that inspires, motivates, and encourages the individual to attain this state of being. Therefore Smedes (1983:40) concludes his argument by saying “God’s gift-love which came in Jesus was meant not to destroy but to liberate his creation. It is not love of self, but love of self alone, which is sinful. Indeed we ought to love ourselves so that we can be loving agents of God’s love”. Thus loving one’s self in Christ is also accepting one’s humanity, realizing that we have been made in the image of God and re-created in Christ by the Holy Spirit.

Therefore to love oneself with sacrificial-giving love means to pay whatever price is necessary to meet one’s highest needs, which are primary spiritual. We find Jesus neither condemns nor praises self-love, but his saying that we should love others as we love ourselves leads us to suppose that self-love can be as good as it is natural, and vital to enabling or empowering the self in its quest for self-realization.

### 3.5.3 Self-empowerment

Paul implies that self-actualization of ones true self kicks in through self-empowerment when he declares that he can do all things through Christ who strengthens and empowers him (Phi.4:13). In other words, a Christian’s self-actualization is made real and effectual by the Holy Spirit which applies the cross of self-denial and the resurrection of self-empowerment as the pivot around which everything regarding God’s gift of grace rotates. This unique partnership between Jesus Christ of the cross and the resurrection and the self-actualization in one’s creatureliness produces amazing results. Barth (1960: 40) develops this idea by saying that God becomes a human being’s free partner in a history inaugurated by God. However, he is quick to mention that God is a superior partner in this relationship. This, Barth adds, is a matter of God’s sovereign togetherness with human beings, a togetherness grounded in Him and determined, delimited and ordered through Him alone.

Therefore the pinnacle of this self-empowerment is to be seen in Paul’s proclamation that one is more than a conqueror in Christ Jesus (Rom 8: 37.) Thus the believer has the whole of
heaven as his backup in his fight against the powers of darkness and this wicked world. This empowered John to write in Revelation that one overcomes by ones testimony and the blood of the lamb. Jesus himself said, as recorded by Matthew (28:19) all power is given unto me, go ye into the entire world.... and lo I am with you always. In this regard, Barth comments that God chooses to give man the benefit of His power. The power referred to here is the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore Major Jones (1990: 115) stresses that God’s gift to the believers is the Holy Spirit which transforms them by giving them a quickened understanding of Scripture and being their Teacher and means of enlightenment, in explicating texts and applying them to reality.

Therefore John exclaims (John 21:19 - 22) when one is filled with the Holy Spirit one is truly the son and daughter of the most High. This can be further seen in the lives of the disciples when pre-resurrection and post-resurrection events are discussed. Therefore self-empowerment is a key facet in the life of children of God in their reflection of the crucified but especially the risen Christ in his general deportment of life. In self-denial the old human person is buried with all his/her evil deeds and in self-empowerment the new human person is raised to newness of life with all the divine power at his/her disposal. Therefore he/she is bold, brave, strong and powerful to the pulling down of strongholds. He/she speaks, writes and lives with the authority equal to the Prophets and Apostles.

In the cross of Christ we die to sin, self and the world, but in the resurrection ones self is empowered, rooted and grounded in Jesus Christ, through the empowering but renewing enablement of the Holy Spirit. In common parlance, if you can dream it you can achieve it through Jesus Christ who empowers you.

This self-empowering finding of oneself in Christ which the Holy Spirit renewingly perpetuates symbolises a new order of beings, possessing high self esteem, boldness, courage and assertiveness as leaders of renewing influence, importance and renewing trailblazers in a world that has either lost its way or is stuck in old tracks like an express train that can be seen as running into its own devastation. This is what the disciples possessed after Pentecost as they spoke with credibility, legitimacy, authority and power, revolutionizing the world of their day. Thus the self-denying and self-empowering self can be seen in Christ’s formula for action, be ye harmless as doves and wise as serpents, postulating a dialectical principle between a cruciform and a resurrective approach to life.
In other words a Christian is a strong human being who possesses antithesis strongly marked, he or she is a blend of opposites, possessing the toughness of the serpent which depicts and typifies a tough mind and at the same time possessing dovelike qualities evidenced by a tender heart, all seen within the centrality of Christ, as presented by the Holy Spirit, who is depicted in Scripture as the Lion of Judah (Rev.5:5) that breaks every fetter and the Lamb that takes away the sins of the world.

During the three years the disciples were in immediate and intimate contact with the Word made flesh and subject to the whole influence of His personality, example, and teaching. Jesus matched his words with actions and led by example, the perfect role model of the Christian. The disciples as Christians evidently possessed a measure of the Holy Spirit. They had been through ups and downs thick and thin with their Master during His earthly ministry. Yet when the moment of testing arrived, they failed miserably. During Christ's betrayal and prior to his crucifixion, Peter, an intimate disciple of the Lord denied all friendship and familiarity with his Master on three occasions. Scripture informs us that all His disciples forsook Him and fled save for John.

They saw Him as well as heard Him, with those opportunities of comprehension, which manner and gesture imply. They saw His life illustrating and exemplifying every saying. They saw and heard infinitely more than is recorded. They saw and heard with the advantage of perfect conviction, with that sense of knowing His truth, which is in the same sense possible only to the eyewitness. Moreover, they were the subjects of His anxious care. What was spoken to others in parable was explained to them in the most literal simplicity. They received an inner teaching which others did not. Nevertheless, they remained incapable of comprehending Him. He grew to represent to them all truth and all authority. They knew and were sure that He was the Christ, the Son of the living God. It was not on their part an unwillingness that hindered but an incapacity that prevailed.

We find the Lord baffled by this. Ideas that do not seem to us in any sense profound or sublime stumbled and confused them and that even at an advanced stage of their discipline, as the teaching of defilement by actions rather than by meats. Are you so without understanding, He asked them when they appealed for an explanation of this. Or a little later, when they read His warning against the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducee's as a reproach for omission to provide bread for the journey, 'how is it that you do not understand', He laments. Or again, on the eve of His Passion, 'Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me.'
Or most significantly of all, His silence when Peter offered him the two swords, He replied merely, 'It is enough,' without attempting to correct his misapprehension's after the resurrection 'o fools, and slow of heart to believe.'

In the final discourse recorded by John, the Lord turned, as it were from His conflict with their dullness to set His hope for them, not upon the lessons of His passion, and not upon the supreme sign of His Resurrection, but upon the transforming agency of the Holy Spirit, when He should be given. "I will send unto you the Spirit of truth, in that day you shall know." "These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you, but the Paraclete, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" admonishes Jesus. He then says "I have many things to say to you, but you are not able to bear them now. Albeit, when He, the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth." The impression of these sayings is very much deepened by their recurrence throughout the discourse. It is not once, it is Again and again that He recognizes the fact that He was not understood, that what He was articulating was beyond their grasp, and yet again He pours out to them the fullness of His Heart, and again to recognize their helpless groping after His meaning.

It is important to fix attention upon the point to which then His hope directed itself. He does not rely on His sacrifice to move them, or on His resurrection to convince them, or upon His ascension to open their eyes to the truth. Nor, as a matter of fact, had these events any such power. The arrest of Christ scattered the twelve from Him. The crucifixion broke their expectation in Him utterly. The resurrection gathered them again to Him and reinstated their personal conviction of him, but did not bring them into any closer sympathy with His thoughts. On the eve of the ascension itself, and after the converse of the forty days in which He spoke with them of the things concerning the Kingdom of God, they remained in the old carnality of mind which had previously blunted their apprehension. Pentecost first breaks their passivity. Following the injunction by Jesus to wait until they are endued with power from on high, the same disciples on the day of Pentecost obedient to the injunction received the power Christ had promised to them.

Contrast then this incapacity to receive the thoughts of Jesus, this want of power to understand the significance, purpose, and result of the transcendent events which passed under their eyes, a want of comprehension that lasted unaffected up to the event of Pentecost itself, with the immediate grasp of the whole Gospel in its past and present relations, which is
forthwith evidenced by Peter as the mouthpiece of the twelve in his preaching of Christ to the multitude which gathered when that sound as of a rushing mighty wind was heard. Contrast the previous inactivity of the Apostle’s with the abounding labours which now begin and thenceforth continue.

Above all, contrast the men themselves as they were before with the same men as they were after Pentecost, the men who forsook Jesus and fled, who followed afar off to see the end, who denied Him, or who refused to believe that He was risen, or who were even after the certainty of the Resurrection returning to their former occupation. What had happened in the interval to produce the change, what had opened their understanding? What has made the past clear to them? What has revealed to them the events of the Lord’s life as a salvation for the world? The Spirit of truth has come and has shown them all things. The change is subjective and it is transformation, it is truly life from the dead.

Wotherspoon (1937: 98) puts it this way, for that interval between the Ascension and Pentecost, the body of Christ, the Church, lay before God as the Adam wrought of the dust, complete in form but lifeless. The Spirit of Christ descended upon it, and forthwith the deaf ears were unstopped and the dumb lips were opened, and the hands that hung down were stretched forth to bless. In that same hour the Apostles descended upon the world empowered with the Holy Spirit and began to declare the words of that life. The ministry of Reconciliation had begun.

This powerful infilling, this awesome baptism turned Peter into an oracle of the Holy Spirit and the disciples became bold and brave, for God was with them, against all odds, including the might of Rome, they proclaimed the Gospel in the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, even to the point of death. Thus the power of the Resurrection made the difference. The same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead quickened their mortal bodies on the day of Pentecost and turned the weak, feeble, timid and anaemic into strong, powerful, brave and fearless soldiers of the Cross.

The empowerment thus received is therefore the Spirit of all fitness for our need, bringing to us the specific abilities and qualifications which our vocation in Christ requires. It follows then that this empowerment that we have by the Pentecostal descent of the Holy Spirit from Christ is the presence of Christ Himself, the ministry of Christ Himself, and the rule of Christ Himself. Thus this empowerment depicts and typifies the opening of a River of life, the
beginning of a flow of the Spirit in a current of communication from the Father to the Son, and from the incarnate Son to His Body.

To illustrate, light does not fall upon the earth from the sun as a flame is carried and kindled here, but radiates to us in uninterrupted vibration. The blood in our member's pulses from the heart in a constant stream, the energy from the brain to the limbs and organs of our frame is a thing of constant and unbroken communion. So the descent of the Spirit is not an incident, but a constant process.

For most of the previous century there has been division in the church over the role of the Holy Spirit. Instead of understanding and appreciating the different perspectives within the church, there has been a partisan view expressed with regard to the Holy Spirit, Shelton comments that the prevalence of the Pentecostal and charismatic movements served as an impetus for the Church to rediscover the Holy Spirit and its significance for the Church today. He further draws an analogy between Paul's pneumatology which is ontological which relates to conversion and being a Christian and Luke's pneumatology where the Holy Spirit empowers the Christian to witness. The latter is our concern under this head. There we find the dominant theme in Luke is witness and inspired speech. Therefore the recipients in Luke are like Moses, mighty in word and deed, even as Jesus Himself was mighty in word and deed, Luke 24: 19. Thus the Holy Spirit reveals things to individuals enabling them to speak authoritatively.

Firstly, the filling might be seen as an abiding presence as in John, Jesus, and Simeon, and second it may be a specific endowment for a specific occasion. This enables the recipient to witness authoritatively concerning Jesus or salvation history, to properly interpret the scriptures and to confront and defeat the enemy. Therefore in Luke the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a baptism of empowerment. The Holy Spirit empowers Jesus to give orders to His disciples and anoints Him with the Holy Spirit and power, enabling Him to do well, to heal to confront and overpower evil. The believer is guided and empowered in the same manner by the Holy Spirit, as He comes upon them for the purpose of witnessing.

Therefore Luke's main emphasis is the Holy Spirit's inspiring human beings to witness concerning Jesus. Thus crucial to our understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit in empowerment is the reference to the conception of Jesus. Luke sees the Holy Spirit as the source of Jesus development and activity as a child. This culminates in the descent of the dove
and Jesus being full of the Holy Spirit and empowered to do mighty works. Luke further maintains that the anointing of Jesus empowered him for ministry. This empowering enabled Jesus to speak authoritatively against Satan, and furthermore to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, as recorded by Isaiah.

In other words Luke's main point is that Jesus was empowered by the Holy Spirit to speak and perform wonders. In like manner the believers continue the works of Jesus and confront the authorities and like Jesus suffer for the kingdom. Thus the emphasis is on empowerment to witness through the Holy Spirit. Thus the role of the Holy Spirit is inspiring and empowering witness, making the believer mighty in word and deed. Therefore for Luke the dominant function of the Spirit is empowerment for mission, especially in relation to effect witness. Pentecost is therefore seen as an empowering event, although the operation of the Holy Spirit was of old, from everlasting, yet the Pentecostal gift was a new thing in human experience.

Wotherspoon (1937:104) comments that no human has had pity, no human has loved, no human has judged between good and evil, no human has felt after God, no human has repented him of the wrong, except by the blessed Spirit of God, Who only is good and without whom there is no goodness of ours. Included in empowerment is not just power to witness although this is integral but the Holy Spirit sheds abroad in the individuals heart the love of God. In other words the power of the Holy Spirit is also needed to love, to live a holy life, to imitate Christ, to live a self-sacrificing life and to live a cross-bearing life. Therefore the fundamental purpose, inter-alia, of the Holy Spirit is to recreate the image of Christ within the souls of human beings.

This is what Calvin (1952: 85) calls, revealing an imitation of Christ and exhibiting the character of Christ in ones life. In short, the Holy Spirit makes the individual more and more like Christ. Thus as much as one preaches, there must be a conduct response by way of a corresponding lifestyle. Therefore preaching Christ is as important as reflecting Christ. In other words it is a kind of praxis, a reflection-action-reflection continuum. This is what Christ meant when He said, let your light so shine before men that they will see your good works and glorify your Father in Heaven.”

Thus we see the new self, empowered by the Holy Spirit inspiring human beings to witness
concerning Jesus and live a godly life in the midst of corruption.

3.5.3.1 Who has the right to receive this empowerment?

Finney (1984:24) insists that this was promised to the whole church and that every individual who professes the name of Christ has this solemn and sacred duty to work towards the salvation of the world as this implies extending the reign of God and promoting His Glory. One must therefore equate the promise with the admonition. The pre-condition of the baptism in the Holy Spirit was enforced on the disciples so that work should only commence subsequent to its reception. In other words this was a pre-requisite for success, in terms of mission and witness and is firm and binding on all Christians of every age and nation. Thus the way to receive this empowerment is to embark on a historical analysis of the first event and its implications and excesses and emulate the methods employed in securing the reception of the Holy Spirit so that similar success can be achieved in our present age of revivales Christanity.

Scripture teaches that the disciples dedicated and committed to the task or mission ahead of them. This dedication was given stimulus and impetus through incessant prayer and supplication until they received this empowerment God had promised them. This would then be the means of appropriating it, however terms and conditions apply, to borrow a contemporary and secular phrase. What Jesus said in Matthew’s gospel (7:7-8) about asking and receiving, John (1John3:22) summarises in his gospel account, “whatsoever we ask of Him we receive when we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight”. John further has Jesus saying in (John 15:20) “if you abide in me and I in you, you shall ask what you will and it will be given unto you.”

To apply this contextually, everyone everywhere is praying, some even fasting to receive this empowerment but how few receive this spiritual enduement. It would appear there is a gaping chasm between the asking and the receiving. How can we account for this inconsistency? Finney (1983:120) appoints several reasons why this is the case. Ironical though it may seem people are not willing to receive what they so painstakingly ask. The Psalmist advocates the reason for this contradiction when he asserts “if I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me.”(Psalm 66:18)

Therefore the petitioner is self-indulgent, this is iniquity or wickedness on his part and God
will not hear him, of whom Scripture testifies that He “is of purer eyes then to behold iniquity.” In addition to this, a number of other reasons can be adduced as to why so few receive this empowerment. Among them are, petitioners or individuals being uncharitable, censorious, self-dependent, resisting conviction of sin, refusing to confess to all parties concerned, and refusing to make restitution to injured parties.

Further, the individual is often prejudiced and un-candid, resentful and has a revengeful spirit. Some have worldly ambition and resist the teaching of the Holy Spirit while some grieve the Spirit by dissension, and quench the Spirit in justifying wrong. Others still possess an evil temper and are dishonest in business, in other words, they undertake too much business, too much study and too little prayer. However the greatest stumbling block of all is unbelief, as was said earlier, to wit, praying without expecting to receive it. Here one perceives the relevance of self-denial. Therefore self-denial always precedes self-empowerment. It is the true self that is in a state of readiness to receive divine empowerment.

Finney (1984: 33) argues that there is a great difference between the peace and power of the Holy Spirit. The disciples were Christians before the day of Pentecost and as such had a measure of the Spirit. They had the peace of knowing that their sins were forgiven and of being in a justified state. But yet they had not the enduement of power needed for the accomplishment of the work assigned to them. They had the peace Christ which Christ had given them but not the empowerment He had promised.

Riggs (1949: 79-82) points out in this regard that at the Baptism in the Spirit, He Himself in His own person comes upon and fills the waiting believer. Therefore Luke tells us (Luke 24:49) that this baptism in the Spirit is the fulfilment of the promise of the Father which endues human beings with power from on high.

To reiterate this is the sine qua non of Christian service. Jonathan Goforth (1942:65) wrote as follows, “The Lord Himself met and foiled Satan after first being filled with the Spirit. And no child of God has ever been victorious over the adversary unless empowered from the same source.” Our Lord did not permit His chosen followers to witness a word in His name until endued with power from on high. It is true that before that day they were the born again children of the Father and had the witness of the Spirit. But they were not the Lord’s efficient co-workers and never could be until Spirit-filled. This divine empowering is for us as it was for them.
We, too, may do the works which our Lord did, yea, and the greater works. Therefore it is disrupting and defeating to the plan and purpose of God if we do not co-operate at the outset of our Christian experience, by receiving the fullness of the Holy Spirit Baptism. Therefore the gifts of the Spirit and great boldness and wisdom with which to preach His word were their daily equipment and power. As the varied implements of modern warfare were powerful in the hands of trained soldiers and enabled them to conquer in battle, so God has all this equipment in the Holy Spirit for His warriors. For these reasons, we declare, no Christian should neglect to receive the Baptism in the Holy Spirit.

It is commonly held by Pentecostals that the baptism with the Holy Spirit is the birthright of every believer. It was purchased for us by the atoning death of Christ, and when He ascended to the right hand of the Father, He received the Promise of the Father and shed Him forth upon the church, and if anyone today has not the baptism with the Holy Spirit as a personal experience, it is because he has not claimed his birthright. Thus the Baptism in the Holy Spirit is available to all Christians, Joel’s prophecy proclaims it (Joel 2:30,31.) the latter rain in the end of the Church age and we are living in the end of the Church age. It is on schedule it is here available for us today.

Therefore in the words of A. Mahan (no year: 57) “The promise of the Spirit does not pertain merely to the Apostles, the primitive church, or a favoured few in subsequent ages. It is, on the other hand, the common gift to all who believe in Christ, the least as well as the greatest, to the end of time...Neither is there any gift He is more willing to bestow upon believers than this Divine Baptism...This Baptism is the noblest blessing of Christianity, and no other can fill its place.” This empowerment then is for all believers of all ages for Jesus said,” He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living waters”. He spoke this of the Spirit which they that believe should receive. (John. 7: 38, 39). If these promises are not fulfilled in the lives of human beings today, it is evident that the simple and only reason is, THEY DO NOT BELIEVE. The power of the resurrection is available to all and sundry, for whoever believes will receive whichever age they live in.

3.5.3.2 The relevance and significance of the resurrection

What the Resurrection is not

The resurrection is not a non-event as the Age of Reason, the 18th century Enlightenment assumed. In this regard McGrath (2003:398) quotes Lessing in reflecting this attitude, when
he says one does not have first-hand experience of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, so why, should one be asked to believe in something which he has not seen. The problem of chronological distance, according to Lessing, is made all the more acute concerning the reliability of eyewitness reports. Our faith rests upon the authority of others, rather than the authority of our own experience and rational reflection upon it. He reverts to the truth of miracles and says they have completely ceased to be demonstrable by miracles happening today, they are no more than reports of miracles. In other words men and women are not raised from the dead now, why should we believe that such a thing happened in the past.

For Lessing, being obligated to accept the testimony of others is tantamount to a compromising of human intellectual autonomy. There are no contemporary analogues for the resurrection. Resurrection is not an aspect of modern day experience. So why trust the New Testament reports? For Lessing, the resurrection is little more than a misunderstood non-event.

It is not a myth as 19th century David Friedrich Strauss believed. In his Life of Jesus (1835) he argues that Christians came to believe in the resurrection, when there was no historical basis for this belief. He located the origin of this belief at the purely subjective level. Belief in the resurrection is not to be explained as a response to, “a life objectively restored,” but is “a subjective conception in the mind”. Faith in the resurrection of Jesus is the outcome of an exaggerated “recollection of the personality of Jesus himself “by which a memory has been projected into the idea of a living presence. A dead Jesus is thus transfigured into a mythical risen Christ.

MacGrath (2003:201) also mentions Reimarus who regarded the Gospel writers as confused and liars, dominated by a mythical world-view. We find 20th century Bultmann sharing Strauss’s basic conviction that it is impossible to believe in miracles, and as a result, belief in an objective resurrection of Jesus is no longer possible. He further argues that in this scientific age one cannot take the first century seriously today, which means the world of the New Testament is now discarded and unintelligible. The main emphasis for Bultmann (1964:126) then, is not that Christ has risen, but has He risen in one’s life. It is not living forever disembodied as an ethereal ghostly nebula, but rather having glorified bodies made more wondrously beautiful and functional.

What the Resurrection is
As was referred to earlier or to reiterate, the centre and nucleus of all the work of Jesus, Son of Man, Son of God subsists in the resurrection. It is the resurrection then, that is the spine, the support, the basis or in short the fulcrum of the Gospel message and of history. It concurs with the phrase that love conquers all, for indeed it is a token of love’s victory, and the evidence of things not seen and the first step of Jesus’ triumphant entry into His glory. Most importantly, it is the most glorious and greatest work accomplished by the Holy Spirit. For Paul makes a case for the resurrection by a few assumptions. Assuming that Christ has not been raised, then it follows that our preaching is futile, and futile also is our faith. Assuming that this is the case then we are still in our sins and those who fell asleep in Christ perished.

Assuming that in this life only we have hope, we are of all men most miserable and most to be pitied. He concludes however that Christ’s resurrection is a fact and the guarantee of the resurrection of all other human beings. In other words the believer in Christ has not only the ground rules for abundant life on earth, he also sees how he may have eternal life. Therefore one of the most intriguing things about Christianity is its focus on life. He perceives the resurrection to be the pith and marrow, the centre and circumference, the foundation and the basis of our faith. The empty tomb is proof and evidence that, ‘He is not here, He is risen’, in other words the stone was rolled away, the tomb is empty, the veil was torn and He arose with all power. However there is a twist we need to understand with regard to prophecy.

In the precognitive forecasts that Jesus gave his disciples he told them that he had to go to Jerusalem and there to suffer much from the elders, chief priests and lawyers, to be put to death and to be raised again on the third day. Now for each prophesied event of the passion there was some precedent from the Scriptures and Jewish literature. This however, does not apply to a resurrection on the third day after His demise. I am of the view that the prediction of rising again on the third day did come from the lips of Jesus but such a prediction was so utterly out of question as a possibility in the minds of the disciples that they dismissed it at the time as some sort of figure of speech.

That such an impossible and unheard-of event should actually take place they could not imagine, as there was no precedent in history and it is the opinion of psychology or it is a psychological dictum that we cannot imagine anything that is totally outside our experience. That the resurrection was a real event can be attested from the following facts:
The number of disciples in Jerusalem went on increasing rapidly and very many of the priests adhered to the faith. This early testimony of belief did not concern belief in the cross. The cross was common knowledge, and a matter of recent and verifiable history, and no theology about the cross had by this time emerged. This belief was the acceptance of the 'impossible' fact that Jesus had risen from the grave. For contemporary priests, of all people, to be converted to the faith only a phenomenon such as the resurrection could achieve that.

A British lawyer by the name of Frank Morison (1930:1-2) began to write a book about the last week in the life of Jesus in the conviction that the resurrection was merely a spurious addition to the original Gospels. But the further he went in his research and the more sources of information he tested, the more convinced he became that the resurrection was an historical event. And at last he forsook the book he had intended to write and, overwhelmed by the evidence that Jesus did really achieve the impossible and rise from the dead, he wrote the now famous book *Who Moved the Stone*.

Jesus knew that such a re-appearance on the human stage would give new and startling evidence of the activity of the Holy Spirit, the God who is part of our very selves because He is in us. Jesus rose from the dead to give His disciples such evidence of the power of faith that they would go forward to fulfil his desire, 'Greater things than these shall ye do because I go to the Father.

So the cross, the resurrection and Pentecost were vindications of Jesus' message concerning the reign of God. Thus we see the power of the Holy Spirit in action in the resurrection, and the self-same Spirit empowering human beings to live in intelligent, controlled, healthy relationships with God and with one's fellow human beings and with the physical-organic environment. In this regard Bultmann (1964:241) comments that individuals do not have to live fleshy lives anymore gratifying the visible and tangible realities, but their lives have now been re-described and orientated after the Spirit that rose Jesus from the dead. It is the same Spirit that gives one the victory over lust and passion and empowers one to practice the works of love on a daily basis.

The resurrected power of the Spirit assists and guides and even induces a renewal of the decision of faith and a determination to live after the Spirit, what Paul refers to as walking in the Spirit. (Rom. 8:12-14). Therefore Barth (1960:122-123) points out that on the third day a new story of man begins, a new life of Jesus begins, the old world has been discarded in
Jesus’ death. He places considerable emphasis upon the Gospel accounts of the empty tomb. The empty tomb is an indispensable sign which obviates all misunderstanding. It demonstrates that the resurrection of Christ was not a purely inward, interior or subjective event, but something which left a mark upon history. Easter, He says, “is the breaking in of a new time and world in the existence of the man Jesus, who now begins a new life as the conqueror, as the victorious bearer, as the destroyer of the burden of man’s sin.” The old is past away and the new has come, the enemies sin, the curse and death are overcome. In short, Jesus is the Victor. It is the Resurrection of Jesus that completes the proclamation of victory, and tells the story of how there was an empty grave, says Barth. Therefore the resurrection is crucial to the way we live out our faith, for it is the power of God the Holy Spirit unto salvation, to everyone that believes, for they become recipients of eternal life. Pannenberg (1970:15) however insists that the resurrection of Jesus is an objective historical event, witnessed by all who had access to the evidence. He further asserts that the resurrection of Jesus is thus organically linked with the self-revelation of God in Christ, it establishes Jesus’ identity with God, and allows this identity with God to be read back into His pre-Easter ministry.

Therefore the resurrection is a symbol of God’s triumph over all the forces that seek to block community. In other words, God becomes a subjective living reality within the lives of human beings, spirit meeting spirit. Therefore Jones (1990:103) reminds us that the Holy Spirit kindles in human beings the realization of our deepest possible kinship with God, an awakening brought about by God the Spirit, already immanent in human beings. Put differently, the Holy Spirit is God’s means of inspiring an awareness of divine availability to any individual who is willing to open up to God’s presence and perfecting. The ongoing work of the Holy Spirit makes available to the individual the infinite resources of God. Jones further implies that in the Holy Spirit, the totality of God’s creative being is available to human beings, whom he invites to respond to Him as a personal God in reciprocal personal awareness.

He further amplifies this by saying that God’s grace resides in the movement of the Holy Spirit towards human beings. In other words in the person of the Holy Spirit, grace is that spontaneity in God’s nature through which He comes to His creatures to renew, inform, and transform their existence. Thus there is a nearer side of God fully known only in the person and work of the Holy Spirit. This is the side of God then, that relates God most directly and most intimately with the inner being of each individual human, that keeps God face to face
with His creation.

God’s Spirit, therefore, associates the individual with the highest and is the highest within the individual. Thus central to the Christian faith is the belief that God is with us now in the Holy Spirit. Therefore Jones points out, the Holy Spirit is God and Christ returned, fused into an eternal oneness. The Holy Spirit’s role is now, as it was then, to be another communication of God’s personal being, for His presence by definition is always personal, a fullness of ultimate being that is creative and re-creative of human being. Therefore the extension of God’s being at all levels of His creation can be fully expressed only by reference to the Holy Spirit. Thus one can perceive the resurrection power of the Holy Spirit as God’s enabler, blowing directly from the mutual relationship and common experience of the Father and the Son. This clearly makes the resurrection power of the Holy Spirit the totality of God’s being. In other words through the resurrection, God is Holy Spirit at the centre of being, also the centre of the individual’s being, He abides, He dwells, as Norman Pittenger (1959:240) called the Holy Spirit the self-expression of God continued, the evidence of God’s presence.

In the resurrection, Jones contends, it is God entrusting of His very self to us as the Spirit of love and truth. In other words He is the source and fountain of all truth and it is the one and only truth from which all other truth is derived.

According to Scripture, though Jesus died in shame, He was raised in glory by the power of the resurrection, and God’s gift to His followers is this resurrection power of the Holy Spirit who transforms human beings by giving them a quickened understanding of the Scriptures. In short the Holy Spirit is one’s Teacher and Enlightenment, who shares the knowledge and depth of insight into the ways of God in relation to the people of God.

It is the power of the resurrection that maintains a continued awareness of God by the internal dwelling of the Holy Spirit. This awareness through rising with Christ the individual perceives his salvation to be total and complete, the resurrection power liberating and delivering, like the deliverance of Israel from bondage, the Holy Spirit brings the age to come into the now of history, transforming and redeeming history itself. Therefore Luke (Acts 3: 15) tells us that the Holy Spirit opens up avenues to sharing God’s life after death.

Jones therefore views the Holy Spirit as an updated enabler, an ongoing Teacher, and a progressive means by which we derive more and more awareness of the God-Christ-Spirit
fusion within us. Thus the resurrection power of the Spirit that incited the followers of Jesus Christ to revolutionary actions against this world is available today. God, through the Holy Spirit, shares with human beings in their struggle with an unsaved self. It is the Holy Spirit that keeps Jesus existentially relevant for the individual today, not a dim figure from a remote past. In other words, everything Jesus did, said and was on behalf of God, He still is and says and does now, only more so through the power of the Holy Spirit. God, who sometimes seems far is brought near to us in the Holy Spirit.

Therefore Cullman (1967: 323) insists that Paul and the New Testament writers hold firm that our response to God in the awareness of the Holy Spirit is a faith response. Our responses and our faith come to God as through a double door. Without response there is no faith. Faith is the result of one’s personal response to God’s initiative in and through the Holy Spirit, and it expresses itself both internally and externally, it is a total response, he says, to the total self-giving of God, as reflected in Eph.2:8. The Dutch theologian, Schillebeeckx (1979:404) commenting on the life of God in Jesus Christ, eventuating in the Holy Spirit, remarks that only after death can a final assessment be made of a person’s life, and it can be seen as complete, a rounded totality. Consequently, only with Jesus’ death does our account begin of who he was. As the Swedish theologian Gustav Aulen (1931:17-22) wrote “Through historical self-giving, accepted by the Father, Jesus has shown us who God is.”

In other words, the Jesus story does not stop with His death, nor does Jesus’ revelation of who God is stop at the cross, but the story continues by talking about the resurrection, the return of God, and the looked-for coming in glory. Thus Jesus accomplishes his meaning for our life, today, through His fusion with and by eventuating in the Holy Spirit. Therefore the liberating power of the resurrection in renewing and empowering the new self to reflect the beauty of Jesus in the individual is accomplished by the Holy Spirit.

It is the Holy Spirit therefore who calls, compels, gathers, disciplines and sanctifies. It is the Holy Spirit who becomes the fortress against despair, defeatism, and deep-festering hate. It is through the resurrection power of the Holy Spirit that the integrity of individuals is affirmed, their personhood and the legitimacy of their humanity, by the Spirit of everlasting liberty. Yet another great act of God can be perceived in the resurrection as God through the Holy Spirit liberates, renews and empowers humanity towards self-actualization, to wit, their destiny in God.
3.5.3.3 Crucifixion and Resurrection again linked with self-denial and self-empowerment

Thus we find that Jesus is the bringer of good and bad news. He pronounces good news to those who thought life was a hopeless task, informing them that it is a free gift. This announcement He makes to the weak and powerless, the outcasts and rejected, the poor and marginalized. The resurrection power of Jesus is His authority to include back in the community of meaning and destiny those which false authority had declared dead because they did not qualify for life. This can be seen in the instance of the man who lived among the tombs, for society had pronounced a death sentence over him (Mark 5: 2). Jesus has the power to restore him to life and send him home. The narrative concludes with his empowerment and restoration (Mark 5: 19).

Jesus as life-bringer also brought bad news. He had a different ministry to those who counted too much on the way things were. They presumed life was a gift that need only be protected and coveted. To these Jesus announced that life is a demanding task that must be addressed. He declares and denounces them to be tombstones (Matt 23: 27-28) and calls them to the task of life. He uses hard and abrasive imperatives as ‘repent’ and ‘bear good fruit’ (Matt 7: 16-20).

The story of Jesus’ suffering and caring on the way to the cross is the story of being in the crunch between the gift and the task. He is in hard conflict with those who refuse the task of life and count on a free gift. He is identified with the poor and powerless that can’t perform the task and are denied the gift. Therefore His crucifixion on Friday is His exclusion from the community. He is banished by the authorities and killed outside the city as a despised reject. The powers of death, the powers of exclusion, banishment, and denial, have their powerful way.

Looking at the other motif of Jesus coming again to the church on Easter, they were mightily moved by His present power to gather outcasts around Him to form a new community. Resurrection is the good news that the banished, destroyed one is the one who has the power to create a new community in which the gift of life and the task of life are kept together in a healing balance. Therefore one can say that Jesus and His people always live between the banishment of Friday and the gathering of Sunday, or always between the exile of crucifixion and the new community of resurrection.
The gospel of Matthew has a remarkable tradition about the resurrection. Resurrection is recognized as a disturbance to those who like existence organized for deathly unrelatedness. The power of the resurrection is subversive because it calls into question the patterns of death and exclusiveness, the patterns of competence and qualification on which society is organized. Resurrection is the recognition that God so wills life and so forms community that the very ones the world rejects are the ones to whom new life comes.

What Jesus as the life-bringer did supremely in His resurrection, He did in His whole ministry. To illustrate, He receives the paralytic (Mark 2: 1-12) the one who was immobilized and had lost his worth. He was as good as dead, but Jesus forgives his sin and empowers him to walk. He restores him to life and power, showing Jesus’ capacity to bring life out of death, and having the authority to overcome the power of death which is at work in the world, showing itself in many ways. It is the spiritual power in the world that has social manifestations and shows itself among those who for reasons of interest do not want newness, cannot tolerate forgiveness, and cannot accept restoration of the undeserving. Jesus refers to such status quo persons as hard of heart, inability to accept newness, resistance to any healing which is not based on qualifications. However Jesus people who embody the Church are called to convey life, resurrection life wherever they go.

3.5.3.4 The Church – Community of Resurrection

The Church comprises those who were banished and are restored, those who were paralyzed and are forgiven, and of those who were immobilized and are empowered to function fully again. The Church as the company of the ‘dead-made-alive’ is entrusted with the power and vocation of life-giving in a world organized for death. Acts 3; 1-10 is a paradigm for a church engaged in a ministry of resurrection. Peter and John come to a lame man who embodies all the lost, dead, banished in the world. It is a moving meeting between the agents of resurrection and those whom the world has declared dead. They are engaged in the risk that the power of life entrusted to them is strong enough to overcome the power of death.

Therefore gospel-life concerns the restoration to full power and full function in the total life of the community. Resurrection therefore is personal in that individuals are rehabilitated, as it is clear in the ministry of Jesus. However resurrection is also public because it concerns the restoration and transformation of public institutions for the sake of human well-being. Thus Jesus and the Church faithful to the life-giving ministry are always a threat to institutions
which are organized towards death. Our world has become cynical and exhausted so that resurrection seems not likely. This is because we do not discern either the power of God or the fact that our world is finally subject to His power.

We have been seduced to expect something less from the power of God than full entry into our historical existence. The risen ones are empowered to speak a new language, to sing a new song, to have a fresh picture and perspective of self, to value brothers and sisters in new ways, to discern and act upon public issues in fresh and bold ways and to know the good news of God in ways that matter. This resurrection gift of new life is precisely a function of God’s radical grace which includes a dismantling of the structures of exclusion.

Resurrection news matters today urgently for the Church and for civil society. It is a free gift to have a brother or a sister to love. It is a joyous task to love them in ways which heal and transform. Our world is in love with death, but we know another gospel that speaks about the surprise of life.

3.6.4 Self-renewal

In Christ, God through the Holy Spirit offers us a new or to be more precise a renewed self and invites our cooperation in bringing it to reality. This means both that we can change and we can be changed. God, the Holy Spirit initiates and we co-operate. The Spirit vitalizes and we cultivate. Paul describes this dual process this way, ’Therefore my dear friends, as you have always obeyed continue to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose. (Phil 2:12-13). In other words change is a partnership where the divine and the human work together.

This new self image that is possible for each of us from the Christian perspective is the vision we are given in a new self that replaces the old self. The old self could be dated BC before Christ while the new self dates from A. D or after Christ came. The coming of Christ in the person of the Holy Spirit into ones life makes the difference. The Holy Spirit not only brings the forgiveness of the sins of ones past but a new vision of the self that he has begun to recreate to transform the present and the future. Moreover, the new self in Christ is both, a status and a process, a gift and a task. Paul often balances these two facets of salvation.

In Ephesians he describes the new status as our having been raised and seated with Christ,
while the process is described as a workmanship doing good works. Similarly in Romans Paul portrays the new status as righteousness from God, as being transformed by the renewing of your mind. Therefore the Christian life also includes, not only the words spoken but also the beliefs, values, emotions, goals, and purpose of the role being played out. In other words as the old self is cast aside, the Christian puts on the new self.

The dynamic of the change is not merely conceptual but also experiential, as the Holy Spirit is moving and renewing in a continuous sense God’s children. The goal for every human being then is to be re-fashioned in the new image of God, which is Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit. This renewed self cannot live in isolation, being originally created for community; there is the idea of relationships. That is, the possibility of interpersonal relationships is contained in the image of God. Secondly, the idea of creativity, as God gives to man and woman the power to create a new life. Thirdly, the idea of responsibility where, we are called to be responsible for what we create. Fourthly, the image of God is dynamic and not static. Fifthly there is the idea of completeness or wholeness.

This calls for complementariness and harmony not competition or conflict. In other words there is wholeness not fragmentation. Therefore Paul offers a general principle that applies to the renewed self when he says ‘And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven. 1Cor 15: 49. This change is not a re-arranging of the old personality traits but the gradual and eventual replacement of the Old Self with the New Self. This is accomplished by the Holy Spirit in using the Word in shaping the believers new self in Christ. The Holy Spirit begins the process of re-labelling the believer with the Words own description of the identity of the child of God. The Spirit seeks with the believer’s cooperation, to strip off, as it were, the old labels of the carnal old man and then the Spirit empowers the believer to identify with new labels, to put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. The process of renewal involves the image of its Creator.

The renewed self therefore is holy, loved, compassionate, kind, humble, gentle, patient, forbearing, forgiving, peaceful and grateful as defined by Paul in Col. This same line of reasoning is followed in Ephesians, where the new self is created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. This is a continuous, dynamic process, not a one time decision. The Christian life involves ongoing, spiritual growth. When God the Holy Spirit empowers you to change your life, He does so over a period of time, not in a brief moment where all is
accomplished at once. Therefore when the Holy Spirit changes your life he not only prepares you for heaven, but he also prepares you for earth.

Together, the Spirit and the Word impact the core of the believers renewed self impressing a new self image. The results include, a new status with God, a new script for living the Christian life, and a new power for living this new life. Both the life of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit are needed to bring about divine transformation in ones life. The power of the Holy Spirits presence provides the motivation that makes the transformation a possibility. Finally, the Christian is given a new power by which to live that new life in Christ. This new dynamic is the power of the Holy Spirit, who resides in the heart of every true believer.

The renewed self is a recreation of the image of God in the Christian believer’s heart. The old image, defaced by sin, is now restored, made new, and reordered to fulfill Gods original plan for humans by the Holy Spirit. This divine presence brings the renewed self into being and seeks to cultivate it to its full potential. The old self died with Christ on the cross and is now relegated to the past, stripped off and cast aside. The new self is put on like new clothes. The Spirit of God determines and shapes the new self in Christ, which in turn moulds and directs my new behaviour as a follower of Jesus Christ, preparing me for the consummation of a new earth and a new heaven.

3.7.5 Self- Fulfilling (consummation)

3.7.5.1 Consummatory or Eschatological Implications

MacGrath (2003:554) defines Eschatology – fulfilment of all things in the new heaven and new earth in our sense - as discourse about the end coming from the Greek term ta eschata or the last things. We are living, moving and waiting in the Spirit for the return of Christ. This most exciting event is surrounded by a fascinating history. Up until the Incarnation, life was a meaningless cycle. Everything moved in a cycle. In human terms, babies were born, became teenagers, attained adulthood, got married, had children, became old and died. The whole realm of nature reflects this order, from humans, animals, plants and all creeping things. The advent however brought what Brueggemann (1993:23) calls the emergence of a new reality with Gabriel’s announcement, “unto you is born this day a Saviour.”

According to Brueggemann( 1993:24-27) the news of the angels utterly transformed social
relations. Commenting on Easter he goes on to say that the Church is empowered for transformed life in the world authorised to act counter to the world. The liberty of the Gospel is an invitation to walk in the Spirit and to produce the fruit of the Spirit. In other words, the Spirit brings newness breaking the vicious cycles of barrenness, fear, alienation and hostility forever. The new cry of freedom is redemption. A new order has emerged, for Jesus proclaimed "they that believe in Me shall never die". Life now receives new meaning and purpose, Christ becoming the Christians destiny. MacGrath (2003:556) puts it in this way; something happened in the history of humanity in and through the life and death of Jesus Christ and above all His resurrection from the dead. Hope pre-dominates in the face of death.

Therefore the dominant theme in the preaching of Jesus, asserts Macgrath (2003:557) is the coming Kingdom of God. Paul (2Cor5:17) sees the resurrection as an eschatological event, confirming the new life of believers and their triumph over sin and death through the power of the Holy Spirit. However affirms MacGrath, that a major theme of Paul’s eschatology is the coming of the Holy Spirit, more specially the gift of the Spirit is seen as confirmation that the new age has dawnted.

MacGrath stresses that although salvation remains something that will be consummated in the future; the Christian has assurance of this event through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. According to Augustine (1990:658) believers are able to reach out in hope beyond their present condition. It is hope; he argues that is grounded in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Therefore Moltmann (1964:28) points out that the corporate Christian concept of hope is a central motivating factor in the life and thought of the individual and the Church. He further maintains that it is hope that upholds faith and keeps it moving on.

If we receive Christ and walk in Him, through the power of the Holy Spirit we are the best arguments for the Divine origin and power of Scripture, until He comes. Jesus sends us into the world as his witnesses. We are to be His living Bibles till He comes. The resurrection-life of Christ made a reality through the Holy Spirit is to be made manifest in us. If we assert that the Bible is the Word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit and are not influenced by it as a Divine, heavenly, glorious message of peace and love, if we do not rejoice in Gods salvation and walk in newness of life, if we do not possess that faith which is the victory overcoming the world, realizing the things that are not seen, and resting in the mercy and strength of God, then we ourselves are arguments against the Bible, but if in Scripture we have found Jesus the Anointed, and have received from Him the Spirit of love, and of power, and of a sound mind,
if in Scripture we have heard a loving voice even the joyful sound, and, rejoicing in the salvation of Christ, we walk in the light of God’s countenance then we ourselves are arguments for the Bible, even the epistles of Christ, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God.

The light which is to shine in the midst of darkness is the Church “you are the light of the world” While we wait in the Spirit for the return of the Lord, we are to go forth into all the world, the dark places of our own land and the distant regions of heathenism, as disciples of Jesus Christ, bearing the good news of God.

He has shown us that we are now in heavenly places, accepted in the Beloved, complete in Him, and sealed with his Spirit, and that we are to be manifested with Him in glory. In the regenerated heaven and earth every child of God will enjoy in full measure the life-giving waters from the river that flows clear as crystal out from the throne of God and of the lamb, and the Holy Spirit who brings comfort and hope will remain with us always. However, there are some things we still do not understand, His mysteries, His ways, and His plans, but some day they will unfold, therefore Paul admonishes that the individual to be steadfast, immovable and abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that his living down here will not be in vain. In short, it will be worth it all.

This promise and hope persists, however the time frame is a mystery, it maybe morning, midnight, twilight or noon, one thing is sure He is coming real soon, but the question arises, how long must one wait? It is clear we have been waiting long now, however, all that can be said in this instance is that no-one knows the day, no-one knows the hour, it is just a matter of time. We are led in the Spirit to exclaim like John,” Amen (So let it be). Be coming, Lord Jesus.”

3.7.5.2 Conclusion

The actions of God’s Spirit saturate Scripture, for God revealed Himself as the Spirit of God from creation. His presence is manifested even today through the Holy Spirit seen as Comforter, Guide and Energizer, symbolized as the river of life, imparting life to and refreshing His new creation throughout timeless eternity. In Genesis, He is The Spirit of God breathing upon the dust of the ground to create the first human being. In Ezekiel, He is the one who brings forth a remnant people. In John, He unites the believing disciples in new
resurrection life with the risen Lord. In Exodus, the Spirit is the glorious presence of God going before His people as a cloud to lead them and protect them. In the Old Testament, He is the Spirit that empowers and encourages His servants the prophets to deliver His word to His people. He is the Spirit of God who enlightens our minds to understand His truth.

The Spirit is God blowing as a searing desert wind to bring judgment upon rebels and idolaters. He is God as fire burning up the chaff to purge and sanctify God’s people. The Spirit is God coming as a dove to signal life and peace in a new creation. It is God anointing His own Son to be the Servant-Messiah, and enabling Christ’s followers to carry on His ministry.

The Spirit is God pouring Himself out as water to revive parched souls and to supply the vitalizing power that transforms lives, and floods them with joy. He is the eternal Spirit, the Spirit of Yahweh, the Spirit of Christ the promised Holy Spirit who was sent forth at Pentecost to empower the church.

Filled with the Holy Spirit – Christ was actuated by love which regulated and harnessed the power of the Holy Spirit giving it direction, purpose and meaningfulness. Christ filled with the Holy Spirit and actuated by love went to the cross. Suffered and died all because of love, His imminent return to take His children home is all because of love. The central theme throughout Scripture is God’s love for a sinning world, a world of different cultures, creeds, languages and colours, differentiated yet integrated through Christ, seen through creation, the Cross, the Resurrection, Pentecost and the future consummation of all things. Such differentiation and integration need elucidation, this I propose in the next chapter.
Chapter 4

Differentiation and integration in a ‘universe’ or ‘multiverse’

4.1 Introduction

The one body of humanity, seen in a primordial context, is composed of differentiated organs, in which particular functions are appointed to each. The organism requires differentiation of the organs to fulfil the simple yet sophisticated tasks within the body. Therefore individuality must be understood in the sense of historical and natural differentiation. It is essential at the outset that we define our concepts, differentiation and integration.

Webster (1986:630) defines differentiation as the act of distinguishing or describing a thing by giving its specific difference, whereas integration is the condition of being formed into a whole by the addition or combination of parts or elements. It further involves a combination and co-ordination of separate or diverse elements into a more complete and harmonious whole. Observing the physical-organic environment with its multiplicities of multitudinous life-forms on our planet, one is awe-struck by such diversity and variety yet acting in such marvellous harmony. Biologists in this regard remind us, by taking an egg from the incubator containing a fully developed chicken, whereas, fourteen days ago this egg was a single cell, now it is a mass of hundreds of millions of cells.

The biologist cracks the cell and sacrifices the chick. Although the embryo is dead, some cells live on. They tell us, under the microscope the individual cells appear as long, spindly cylinders, criss-crossed like sections of rail road track. Their destiny is to throb, and they persist although apart from the body. Each cell beats out an incessant rhythm, and if properly nourished can be kept alive. An observer watches over a period of hours an astonishing phenomenon, instead of five independent heart cells contracting at their own pace, first two, then three, and then all the cells pulse in unison. There are no longer five beats but one.

Even species of firefly act similarly. A wanderer discovers a cluster of them in a jungle clearing, flickering haphazardly. As one watches, one by one the fireflies fall into synchronization until soon he sees, not dozens of twinkling lights but one light, switching on and off, with fifty branch locations. The heart cells play the same note at the same time, even when no conductor is present. One is witness to this most amazing spectacle of differentiation
within integration within the realm of the physical-organic environment set in motion and maintained by the Spirit of God, for Jesus remarked that even the sparrows, supposedly insignificant, are recipients of the providence and mercy of God through the Holy Spirit. Therefore anatomy and physiology display innumerable points of resemblances between humans and animals, yet for all the similarity in composition and functions, the contrasts are even more remarkable. Thus at the outset one observes the sensitive working of the Spirit.

Therefore Sir Arthur Eddington has so aptly said in his celebrated work of 1929 *The Nature of Physical World* that is not at people’s disposal as they often think that when they have completed their study on one, they know all about two, because two is one and one. People forget that they have still to make a study of “and”. The analogy of the human body, as proposed by Paul, will enlighten us in our understanding of the above concepts and their implications.

Brand and Yancey (1981:27-33) the former an eminent surgeon and the latter an executive editor, point out that all cells of the human body are almost alike, but visually and functionally they are as different as the animals in a zoo. For example, Red blood cells differ from Muscle cells as do cartilage cells from bone and fat cells, in their form and function in the body. The same can be said of the most important sex and nerve cells. As one reflects with amazement, one realizes that they teach us about larger organisms, like families, groups, communities, villages and nations. From a theological standpoint we refer to the Body of Christ as that network of adherents scattered across the planet who have little in common other than their membership in the group that follows Jesus Christ.

### 4.2 The Human Component

In other words, the human body employs a bewildering zoo of cells, none of which individually resembles the larger body. Just like Christ’s Body comprises an unlikely assortment of humans, unlikely in the sense that we are decidedly unlike one another and the one we follow differentiated yet integrated. To illustrate this, no one could have predicted that God would choose not Esau, the honest and reliable, but Jacob the trickster and heel, or that He would put the finger on Noah, who was in the bottle, so to speak, an inebriate, or Moses for killing a man in Egypt. Even Abraham whom He chose to head a new nation, tried to pawn his wife to an unsuspecting Pharaoh, or Sarah who at the age of ninety-one delivered the child of promise.
More so Rahab, a harlot, became revered for her great faith and Solomon, regarded as the wisest man who ever lived, went out of his way to break every proverb he composed. This trend continues after Jesus came. The two disciples, Peter and John who did the most to spread the Word after His departure, He rebuked most often for their petty squabbling. Even Paul who wrote more books in the Bible than any other author was snfing out Christians to torture. Hence the Body of Christ exudes a collection of individuals as diverse as the cells in the human body. Therefore Jesus prayed, 'they may be one as we are one' (Jhn.17:11). This leads one to the question, how can any organism composed of such diversity attain even a semblance of unity?

We realize that the basis for our unity within Christ’s Body begins not with our similarity but with our diversity. It would appear God revels in variety, not just at the cellular level but in the entire universe, and beyond. Brand and Yancey (1981:92) speak of three hundred thousand species of beetles and weevils alone. This is further evidenced in Job where God points with pride to oddities of creation like the mountain goat, the wild ass, the ostrich and the lightning bolt. Further we find God lavishing colour, design and texture on the world we find Pygmies and Watusis, blond Scandanavians and swarthy Italians, big-boned Russians and petite Japanese.

Thus we find individuals created in His image, continue the process of individualization grouped according to diverse cultures. In Christ, God has dealt with us in personal and transcultural ways. Each of us, of course, is a member of a particular race and has been raised in some particular culture. Each of us has his or her own preferences with respect to race and culture. All of us to varying degrees are prejudiced, for we all have deep-seated preferences and tend to class what does not fall within our preferences as less appealing or less worthy. To illustrate, in China women wear long pants and men wear gowns. In Asia people drink hot tea and munch on hot peppers to keep cool. Japanese fry ice-cream. Indonesian men dance in public with other men to demonstrate that they are not homosexual. Asian custom still persist in marriages arranged by parents. Finally, Balinese men squat to urinate and women stand. In short, one is astounded at the incredible differentiation witnessed throughout the world within the Body of Christ.

This teaches us that God loves variety and understands cultural backgrounds and the worshipers, and looks at His Body like an archipelago spread throughout the world: Therefore
the body of Christ, like our own bodies, is composed of individual cells. He is the whole being and the joy of the body increases as individual cells realize they can be diverse and differentiated without becoming isolated outposts.

Herman Melville in his anthology *101 poems against war* (2003) he has written, 'We cannot live for ourselves alone, our lives are connected by a thousand invisible threads, and along these sympathetic fibres our actions run as courses and return to us as results'. This presupposes the essential and vital connection between differentiation and integration. The Gospel calls on us as Christians to set aside all such dwelling upon our preferences as would lead to pride and exclusivism and to reorganize our oneness or integration with all Christians in the new relationship brought about by God through Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Reiterating the analogy of the human body, Brand and Yancey (1981:55) remind us that cooperation or integration, a curious phenomenon of cells outside the body, is the essential regimen of life inside. All living matter is fundamentally alike and possesses a sense of belonging. This was seen in the first heart transplant were the body rejected the foreigner, as it were. Despite the fact that the body sheds cells everyday it recognizes the new cells created and has a strange way of knowing that they belong. Therefore Brand and Yancey advocate that the secret to membership is hidden in the DNA. Although along the way cells specialize, each carries the instruction code provided by the DNA. They further enlighten us to say that each cell possesses a genetic code so complete that the entire body could be re-assembled from information in any one of the body’s cells, which forms the basis for speculation about cloning. Thus the Designer of DNA challenges the human race to a new and higher purpose I refer to membership in His own Body, or covenant community.

The community called Christ’s Body differs from other groups in that membership entails something as radical as a new coded imprint inside each cell. In reality then, one becomes genetically like Christ Himself because one belongs to His body. This process engages a demise of the sinful self as Paul affirms in Gal.2:20 “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live but Christ lives in me “. Paul uses crucifixion language to convey a full and complete annihilation of the sinful or false self. A restorative act initiated by the Holy Spirit. This elimination is mandatory if Christ is to live by faith in the power of the Holy Spirit within the individual as intimated in (2 Cor. 13: 5.) This manoeuvre which the Holy Spirit initiates is immediately followed by a supplanting of the new or true self, empowered,
renewed, and actualized and on its destination to self-consummation. Thus the act of self-denial or eradication of the sinful self is accompanied by the reinstatement of the true self, which is empowered and renewed by the Holy Spirit.

Therefore to successfully achieve this dialectic, integration within differentiation, the false self must be invalidated and replaced by the true self. In other words there has to be a successive movement from the denial of the false self to the empowering of the new self. This vivacity is clearly discerned in texts like (John. 14:20, John. 5:15.) Thus our integration in Christ entails seeking by God 's Spirit, grace and power to put it into practice in our day in accordance with the paradigm set by the first century Church as depicted in the New Testament, and we are called to follow that example.

Paul amplifies this by saying “Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you” (.2Cor.13:5.) John further stresses “I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you” (Jhn.14:20) .John reiterates this line of reasoning when he says “I am the Vine, you are the branches” Jhn.15:5. In other words, Christ through the Holy Spirit has infused us with spiritual life is just as real as natural life. Although one may doubt and feel like the old self, but these Biblical statements are unequivocal. The difference between a person wedded to Christ by the Holy Spirit, and one not wedded to Him is as striking as a dead tissue, and my organic body. We are reminded that DNA has organized chemicals and minerals to form a living, growing body, all of whose parts possess its unique corporate identity.

I would like to draw a parallel here and say, God uses the materials and genes of natural humans, by splitting them apart and recombining them with His own spiritual life through the efficacy of the Holy Spirit. This is the new birth referred to by John in his Gospel, and entails the destruction of the old man or self, and the reconstruction, empowerment, renewal, and actualization of the new self. Thus, Holy Spirit initiates and seeks to complete the process when the self is finally consummated, which will take place when Jesus comes.

Jesus made the interchange possible, the Virgin Birth assumes that His DNA was fully God and fully human connected in one. And now, through union with Him, I can carry within me the literal presence of God in the person of the Holy Spirit. Therefore Jesus described the process in terms of being born from above in his conversation with Nicodemus, indicating that spiritual life requires an identity change as drastic as a person’s first entrance into the world .The result of this stuff-exchange means that we carry within us the actual substance of
God made available through the presence of the Holy Spirit. Therefore Scripture affirms “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old is gone, the new has come”.

Just as the complete identity code of my body inheres in each individual cell, so also the reality of God the Spirit permeates every cell in His Body, linking us as members with a true organic bond. An individual senses this bond, whether in India or Africa or California one shares each others loyalty to the Head, instantly one regards them as brothers and sisters, fellow cells in Christ’s body, one shares the ecstasy of community in a universal body that includes every man and woman in whom God the Holy Spirit resides. Therefore the integration into Christ’s body may seem like renunciation and a loss of ones sense of full independence, but in actual fact it is realizing one’s true self and net worth within the Body.

Ironically however, renouncing ones old value system in which one has to compete with others on the basis of power, wealth and talent, whereas committing oneself to Christ, the Head, abruptly frees one. The individual’s sense of competition fades. One’s new identity entails living one’s life in such a way that people around the individual recognize Jesus Christ and His love, not ones own set of distinctive qualities. The individual’s worth and acceptance are developed in Him, through the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus we see the vital and organic connection between differentiation and integration, perceived as inseparable twins, as the Holy Spirit seeks to develop this within the individual with the ultimate intention of promoting and advancing God’s glory and His Kingdom throughout the universe for all eternity.

Having said that we can confidently say, as Van Niekerk (2006: 395-398) puts it ‘a human being is a human being through other human beings, through the human self, through the physical-organic cosmic environment and through God.’ or to coin a philosophical phrase ‘I am because we are’ which encapsulates ‘because God is and because the physical–organic environment is’ as a differentiated field of experience. He further focuses on a multiple or differentiated field of experience such as thinking, socialising, believing, loving, feeling and so forth and so on.

These fields of experience can be seen in a differentiated sense, for example ‘a loving, believing and thinking human being is a human being through other human beings, through a loving, believing, and thinking human self, predicated through the physical-organic cosmic environment connected to thinking and through a loving God. Van Niekerk argues that
church-based Christianity has totally omitted the aspect of self-love and relegated it to the status of a fiction. However, Jesus thought it was not only permissible, but also necessary and desirable, for He taught that you should love your neighbour "as yourself". Matt.22:39, the idea that originated with God’s command to Moses in Lev.19:18. If God Himself decreed that self-love is normal and natural, then why do Christians have such a hard time with the idea of self-love? By self-love then we refer to a wholesome acceptance and benevolent feelings toward one’s own total personality as loved and graced by God in Christ through the Holy Spirit. Further, a person who is in Christ has every reason to feel good about himself, or herself. It is healthy and transforming, and it is God’s road to self-esteem, security, and acceptance in the best sense.

Therefore loving in a differentiated sense involves as Van Niekerk (2006:396-397) puts it, loving, believing and feeling God above and beyond anything else, loving, believing and feeling for your neighbours, and this applies to ones animal, plant, neighbours, and loving, believing and feeling in oneself as a human being. Thus the differentiated field of experience is flexible and can lead to any of the pointers named above, that is loving, thinking, feeling and justness. Therefore we find all these pointers include the basic pattern of God, fellow humans, the physical-organic environment and the human self, though differentiated it involves unity and integration in its exercise of faith, love, hope and so forth. Therefore Van Niekerk (2006:395) coins a composite word ‘theanthropocosmic’ to accommodate the all-embracing and all-supporting principle operating within the differentiated fields of experience.

Thus the Holy Spirit respects differentiation seen within the context of integration. The Gospel of Christ in the midst of diversity is faced with the task of thinking through what it means for individuals of diverse cultures to be integrated in Christ, actualizing a Christian understanding and ethic of oneness in both the Church and society. Therefore though different and individualistic yet committed and grafted into one body or belonging to the covenant community. Thus I extrapolate on the concept of individuality and community under the next head.

4.3 Individual and community

Are humans essentially an individual or a collective being/Is His destiny, his dignity, his value, collective and social, or is it rather individual and personal/. These questions posed by
Brunner need amplification and elucidation. Brunner (1957-279), stresses the vital importance of responsibility within the individual.

‘Being’ created in and for God's world makes the person a candidate for responsibility. There is no denying or making any error about this as this fact determines his/her individuality. It is this that sets him/her apart from other species who have no responsibility, or accountability and do not possess the capacity for it. It is only the individual who can decide in a responsible manner and more strictly he/her alone can be held accountable for anything. One sees this even in corporate decisions where responsibilities have individual responsibilities as their basis or foundation. Even a pledge for that matter extracted from a community truly rests on individual securities and guarantors. Therefore decisions are invariably made by individuals.

The individual, his/her mind and his/her will serve as the basis for all decisions. This content and value of responsibility is intensified by the Christian faith. When one views non-human creation, like animals and basic elements like atoms and hydrogen we find they can easily be exchanged for one another. This cannot be applied to human beings, in other words no human being can be exchanged for or confused with any other. This knowledge of exclusive identity is only fully conscious in humans and therefore determines the will to self-existence. Thus humans are different by virtue of their talents or their genius. The value of genius, emphasises Brunner, is a value of individuality, hence it is relative, like all that is connected with individuality. The more personal relations become, the more it is recognised that one human being cannot be exchanged for another. No one can be replaced is the language of personal thinking.

I am a self, I, as this particular person, cannot be exchanged for any other, simply and solely because God, the Self-personal knows me, this person as this person. In view of the fact that He called me by my name, when He created me, and because He loves, I am just not a specimen of a particular species, but a distinct human being, from all eternity, and He destines me, not humanity as a whole, for an eternal goal, namely, for a personal end, for communion with Himself, the Creator. This is because He values me unconditionally and will never exchange me for any other, because He never confuses me with any other, nor depreciates me at the cost of someone else, because He gives me this supremely personal life in His supremely personal Word of election. Brunner, further points out that the divine eternal election is the ground, and indeed the sole and sufficient ground, of my unconditional self-value. In the electing word of God I have my person, my self.
Expressed in another way, humans have been created by the personal word of God and this alone is the reason that they do not belong to a species or are not just a digit but in every sense an individual. Heschel (1966:37) argues that one's existence as an event is an original, not a copy. No two human beings are alike. Every human being has something to say, to think, or to do which is unprecedented. Said differently, being human is a novelty and not a mere repetition or extension of the past, but an anticipation of things to come, a surprise, not a foregone conclusion. Therefore every person is a disclosure, an example of exclusiveness, unique, unprecedented, priceless, and exceedingly precious.

Thus we are unique in character in view of the fact that God has called humans from eternity and He has not called another and this calling cannot be exchanged for another. The human call as an individual is of such a serious nature that it must be understood from the standpoint of the personal call of God. This independence, this absolute impossibility of being exchanged or replaced with anyone else, creates an absolute isolation. It realistically means that the individual must come before the Judge of the world quite alone. Therefore Kierkegaard puts it this way, all corporate life ceases and one is unconditionally the individual.

Put differently, here the individual is quite alone in the presence of God, face to face, as it were. Thus regeneration is a personal matter between God and the individual, in which the Holy Spirit recreates, renews from the fragmented debris of the old human, a new human empowered for service in working the works of God. Therefore the individual must believe, must choose, and must bear the electing Word, the call of God, and no Church, no priest, no Pope, and no word of the Bible can take one from the responsibility for listening to this call, therefore the individual must stand before the Judge. No one else can take the place of the individual save Himself, the merciful God, who provides the Advocate.

Therefore the individual cannot escape from his responsibility not even when he denies it. Thus neutral one cannot be, a stance must be taken and refusal to take one is in real effect taking one. In other words, responsibility cannot be transferred to the Church, priest or Pope and even hiding behind an institution and delegating responsibility to them does not negate his own responsibility. The individual is responsible before the great Judge and this responsibility extends to every day of his or her life before the God who has created and called the individual. Thus the call to responsibility comes to every human being even if he
ignores it.

Therefore the basis of freedom is one's responsibility. This power cannot be stolen from the individual, he possesses freedom of choice and God waits for his/her answer. The individual has been endowed with the power of choice from his Maker and this power from creation continues to echo the call to accountability and responsibility. Brunner calls this a dangerous freedom which belongs to this independence and philosophises that the hand of God must have trembled when he created humanity with this independence. However, it would seem that this independence has made humanity arrogant to the point of insanity, where responsibility has been turned into unfettered freedom, fuelling selfishness, self-centredness and vested interest, and is to a large extent a sham. Noam Chomsky (1989: 30) in our time has shown that false witness against neighbour is clearly seen in the military and the free market economy.

Here we perceive the role of the Holy Spirit in illuminating the mind, and through conversion, and an abrogation of the old self, accomplished by the cross, connecting the human being to an intimate relationship with God, having renewed and empowered the new self, through the resurrection, to good works. The Holy Spirit first awakens him/her to independence, to his/her accountability, his/her responsibility to his/her own powers of thought and will. The Bible abounds with instances of the above individuality which we have been discussing. Several examples will be adduced as proof of God's respect for and His approval of individuality.

Two facts are sure and apparent namely the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and the liberty and individuality of the writers of the Bible. The book of Moses, the Psalms of David, the Proverbs of Solomon, the Epistles of Paul, are all marked by very decided peculiarities. It is evident that the Spirit did not destroy humans' individuality, and that their peculiar history, experience, and conformation of mind, formed not an obstacle, but a medium. In this we can admire the educating wisdom of God. Therefore the human free from error and sin does not lose his individuality; on the contrary he gains it in the fullest sense.

When the Holy Spirit fills the mind with light and the heart with love, he sets the individual free, and the human spirit receives God's Spirit according to God's idea. Scripture thus teaches us that God's children alone have individuality in the highest sense of the word. They are called by name, so that every one receives a name, which is a secret between him and the Lord (Rev 2:17). Can there be a more beautiful and glorious idea of individuality? Will the
saints in heaven not have the most marked individuality? Will there not be the greatest variety, liberty, spontaneity there, and that from the fact that sin is excluded and knowledge is perfect?

The Scripture authors, inspired yet individual and free, give us some idea of our future state. When filled with the Spirit we shall be truly the sons and daughters of the Most High, each having a name given by God. There would be more individuality among Christians, if instead of turning about and looking at our fellow-disciples, we simply followed Jesus. We admit the diversity of the authors, they lived in very different periods, their outward conditions as well as their mental and moral peculiarities, are very diverse. To illustrate, Moses was brought up in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, Amos was taken from the simple scenes of shepherd life, Daniel was a statesman at the court of Babylon, Peter, was a fisherman, Paul, sat at the feet of Gamaliel.

With all this diversity there is the most marvellous harmony and agreement, an individuality in community so to speak, not only in the great outlines of thought, but in the minute details of fact and doctrine as well as in the delicate shades of feeling. Therefore Saphir (1945:77) points out that the Spirit became Paul to Paul, and Mary to Mary, and that He, in wonderful love, like an all wise and considerate Teacher, adapts Himself to our peculiarities in mind and disposition. He has the utmost respect and reverence for individuality in that He knows us perfectly, and watches all our steps, and, according to the inner peculiarity of our character and the outward dependence of our history, He brings light and truth into our hearts. This is strikingly illustrated by the vision which Peter had at Joppa. Luke records (Acts10) that Peter became very hungry, and would have eaten. Naturally the subject of food was in his mind.

The Spirit takes hold of this physical and mental state, and Peter beholds a vision of a certain vessel descending from heaven, with all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts and creeping things, and fowls of the air, and he was commanded to kill and eat. This lesson came directly from heaven, the Holy Spirit revealed to Peter that the Jew and Gentile were now to form one community, and that the Gentiles should be received without hesitation into the Church. Therefore the Spirit uses the individual characteristics of the writers for great purposes.

For instance, if David had not had the experience of a shepherd trusting in God, of an exile,
persecuted, suffering and forsaken, of a king, who lifted not his heart above his brethren, but who declared God's name unto them, and sang praise unto Him in the midst of the congregation, could we have received through Him Psalms such as the twenty-third and the twenty-second? Or if Jeremiah had not been naturally timid, easily cast down and discouraged, sensitive, tender, shrinking from the opposition of man, feminine in his delicacy, rich in sorrow and in tears, how could there have been given to us such a wonderful outpouring of heart as we have in his prophecy and lamentations, which reveal to us the anguish of a godly and holy man in the midst of a rebellious and apostate nation.

Finally, from whom but Solomon could we have received the books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs? From the individual who asked for wisdom as his chief desire, from the philosopher who studied nature and the ways of humans, or even the peculiar history, mind and experience of Saul of Tarsus.

Thus the crucial role of the Holy Spirit in promoting and sustaining individuality cannot be overemphasised. However this is also the moment when He to give us the true meaning of community, and places the individual just as absolutely in community, and gives the individual an incomparable association with others, so that self-consummation can be realized. In other words, no individual can live in a vacuum but must interact with fellow individuals within a community of fellowship. In other words still, real life with God consists in risking commitments, in powerful memories and compelling visions with the Covenant Partner.

Therefore life is never private or individualistic but always communal. It is about liberation from the sinful self empowering, renewing, and actualizing of the true self, which is about self giving for others. In its final consummation we live towards the coming of a community of justice and righteousness, this promise of the future incorporated in the Bible is one of which human dignity and human joy are valued and human worth celebrated.

Brunner (1957:289) points out the mysterious connection of the parts of living organism and the union of all to form the whole. Similarly, living individuals are also connected by community of blood. To illustrate, the hen defends her chicks, all mammals protect their brood, being bound in the community of life. However, in humans it extends beyond the realm of biology, to free choice and therefore it is through free decision that living together becomes community. He further comments on the basis of genuine community and says that
God created humans to be a self, an individual not to be alone or live for himself but to be in community, calling him to His love. In other words God's main and supreme reason in creating humans is for them to be in communion with Him love Him and enjoy Him forever. This vital connection is maintained and sustained through prayer.

Therefore the human is commanded by God to fulfill this great responsibility to pray and to do so seriously. It is this communion with God that makes the individual truly independent. Therefore one realizes one's independence only in communion with God. Brunner quotes Pestalozzi in saying, "God is our nearest relation". Although each individual has to live out his faith and take responsibility for his actions, ultimately his life is perceived within the context of the covenant community. Alternatively, integration is the ultimate intention of differentiation in terms of God's plan and purposes.

4.4 Although differentiated, integration is the final result of the universe.

Humanity was created for community. God is community. The Holy Spirit seeks to entrench this idea and to bring about harmony and integration serving the ultimate intention of life in the universe, to wit, promoting God's Kingdom and Glory. The ultimate worth of a person is determined by his usefulness to others, by the efficiency of his social work. Despite this attitude, he expects others to take him as being valuable in himself. In other words, humans want to be loved for their essence and not their achievements and possessions.

Humanity begins with the individual. It is true that the good of all counts more than the good of one, but the individual lends meaning to the human race, thus the human race is valuable because it is composed of human beings. The covenant community, though different and diverse socially, culturally, and sexually but integrated and one in Christ for the common end of God's Kingdom and His Glory. Therefore these communities of faithful individuals are authorised by the Spirit to stand against oppression and refuse marginality in the name of justice and liberation, where the dominant value structures preclude justice, legitimise marginality, and invite docility and a passive acceptance of the status quo.

Within such a context the renewed and empowered individual imparts life, resurrection life through the assertion of one's dignity, rights, worth and power. The power of the Spirit functions in an integrated context to permit communities to discern, imagine and appropriate life differently. Thus the empowered individuals within the community of faith live an
alternative life in the world. This is the main claim of our apostolic faith, through refracted through many authors who were all circumstance-situated individuals, functioning within the community of faith, who spoke in the power of the Spirit. Therefore the empowered self must not be devoid of the social component, but must cultivate the capacity to care for each other here and now. This is indicative of the enormous benefits of unity within diversity which I extrapolate under the next head.

4.5 The benefits of unity within diversity.

We are in covenant with an active, caring, intervening God who keeps his promise. The future however is breaking in now, and when it breaks in, it does so among the powerless, despised and the weak. Thus the God who makes himself vulnerable in caring ways for his people through the Holy Spirit, in denying ones self and being empowered, and renewed we are able to actualise ourselves by making ourselves vulnerable in caring ways for our brothers and sisters through the prism of the cross and the resurrection.

Life, then, is sterile and powerless when lived in isolation and aimlessness, but it is filled with power to differ in solidarity with the hurting ones so they can be reconciled and rehabilitated. Thus the Bible provides us with an alternative identity, and alternative way of understanding ourselves, and an alternative way of relating to the world. It offers a radical and uncompromising challenge to our ordinary ways of “self understanding” The benefits of unity with diversity is that we are invited to join in and participate in the on going pilgrimage in the shattering of history caring in ways which matter secured by the covenanted God who is likewise on pilgrimage in history.

This unity lets our lives be open to hurts, in other words, Crucifixions but also to healing surprises of new life, in other words, resurrections which emerge in our common life. The crucifixion provides a model for all hurtful solidarity which may be practiced with the poor and powerless. The resurrection of Jesus, like every life giving act of God provides a model for all the surprises of new life, which may happen amongst us.

Therefore to be independent, self-sufficient and supportive mean the propensity to differ and stand apart and to defy as different modes of being human. Although solitude is necessary and serves as a period of cure and recovery, from the incursions of society’s hysteria, humans are never alone. It is together with his peers, that he lives, suffers and rejoices. Therefore solitude
is not discarding but distilling humanity, in short, a search for genuine solidarity.

Therefore human beings are for the sake of, by the strength of, the Spirit involved in the community of human beings. Thus humans are derived from, attended by and directed to the being of community. For humans, to be means to be with other human beings. His existence then, is co-existence. To attain fulfilment or arrive at a sense of meaning, his life must be shared and must pertain to other human beings. In short, social involvement, his interdependence, and correlativity are the heart of being human.

Therefore the prestige a person seeks involves respect for others whose recognition is desired. All achievements are born in the conviction that what is good for me will prove to be good for others. These benefits further involve the component of reciprocity, in other words a giving and providing for those we care for. This line of thought is epitomised in Psalm. 116: 12 where David says, “How shall I ever repay to the Lord all the bounty He has given me.” Therefore personal being is achieved by what we offer in return. This entails appreciation. Thus by receiving and giving I become a person, to the degree I am sensitive to other people’s suffering and humanity.

Conversely, the other side of humanity is brutality, failure to acknowledge one’s fellow-man, to be sensitive to his needs and situations, and to treat him as a generality or an average human. Adam Smith (1976: 39) has adverted the fact that expanding markets depend upon the generation of desire (misdirected and distorted), where the neighbour is replaced with mall. Therefore human beings achieve fullness by being in fellowship, in care for others. One’s existence is enlarged by caring one another’s burden. Therefore the tension is between existence and performance, in other words, how to be, and how not to be. Therefore acknowledging God as the single, uncompromising sovereignty and our fellow humans as brothers and sisters is integral to God’s plan for the Universe, which I explicate below.

4.6 God’s Original Plan

From the Biblical perspective, which I believe has given the world a new concept of God, and a new vision of humans, humankind was created by Yahweh to be in travail with His dreams, vision and designs. Scripture further reveals Yahweh’s deep resolve to transform the world into a genuine community of neighbours. This further entails His dream of a world redeemed, a reconciliation of the entire universe. This further includes rescuing creation or the physical
organic environment from contamination and ruin. Thus one observes the interconnectedness of God, humanity and the physical organic environment.

He envisages an egalitarian community in which the strong will support the weak, the rich will give to the poor, and where all people's, whether haves or have-not's, rich or poor, strong or weak, sick or healthy, ignorant or educated, will share equally in the inheritance of the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning, who practices justice in the world. Conversely, anti-neighbourly ways of the world only end in brutality and nihilism.

Yahweh originally envisioned humanity truly in His image, reflecting His wisdom, justice and compassion. Therefore Runyan (1975: 34) insists, “through His Spirit, God, enlightens Judges, empowers Prophets and Kings, manifests His presence to His people, leads them repeatedly to repentance, accomplishes His purpose, and fulfils His Word”. This is evident in the mandate entrusted to Moses in Deuteronomy, which is reflective of His perfect and faultless administration during the wilderness era. A world of human beings where all goals have been achieved, disease overcome, poverty eliminated, longevity achieved, urban communities established on Mars, the other planets and the stars, where the Moon is made part of our Empire, where the entire Universe reflects His beauty and glory, and His Kingdom reigns for all eternity.

Furthermore, I believe Yahweh's original plan is not to be alone, but to have humankind as a partner, as Barth (1960: 96) so rightly says, in the drama of continuous creation. Together we shall reign forever, Universe without end, Amen. We will do well to remember that in everything we do, we either advance or obstruct the drama of redemption, which in turn either reduces or enhances the power of evil.

Essential to biblical religion is the awareness of God's interest in humans, the awareness of a covenant, of a responsibility that lies on Him as well as on us. Our task is to concur with His interest, to carry out His vision of our task. God is in need of humans for the attainment of His ends. Life is a partnership of God and humankind. In other words, He is not detached from or indifferent to our joys and grief's, for if we seek His Kingdom and His righteousness, and have our eyes fixed on His promise, and our affections set on things above, if we walk in humility and faith, our minds will be clear and calm, our words sober, truthful and kind, our intercourse with our fellow humans will commend and adorn the Gospel.
Therefore God, through His Spirit is a partner in humankind’s struggle for justice, peace, love and beauty, and it is because of His being in need of humanity that He entered into covenant with him/her for all time. I define covenant as a mutual bond embracing God and human beings, a relationship to which God and humans are committed, a trusting relationship of mutuality in which both partners in vulnerability freely give life to one another.
Chapter 5
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

However, humans were not only created for communion with God but for communion with his fellow-human also. Said another way, as an individual, he/she is a member of the broad human family or community. Although each individual is directly responsible to God for his/her actions, this must be seen against the backdrop of the community, for responsible existence is communal existence. God has therefore created the self for self-existence in community, as a non-self-sufficient self, which ought not to exist for itself. This is why God has created such individuality which induces individuals to depend on one another thereby complementing each other. Brunner (1957:323) points that gender and sex individuality is the best example not only for reproduction purposes but to show the relevance of “two-ness” which is indicative of community of life. This is so firmly entrenched in life, that humanity cannot misunderstand himself and think he is a self-sufficient being.

Therefore humanity’s sexuality is a constant reminder that he was not created to be alone, for God has said, it is not good for the human to be alone. Humanity then need to understand that individuality is in this sense an education for community. It is because of their diversity that humans need to complement each other and share their common life. Expressed differently, it is only through individualities and their differentiation can they be united into one body. This is the love alluded to and so beautifully exemplified in the New Testament, and is the basis for true self-hood. Therefore Paul exclaims in 2 Cor 3:17, “Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty”. It is therefore this love alluded to above forms, creates and is the basis of the Christian community. Within this context, all life is interrelated. What affects one directly affects all indirectly. In other words, we are all tied with a common garment of destiny. When the body hurts we hurt so to speak, hence the analogy of the Vine used by the Lord, were He is the Vine and we are the branches, all are linked to one another and to the Head, in a living whole.

God being in community Himself has created the individual in such a way that he is realised only through the others. Brunner illustrates it in this way, the husband can only become truly husband through his wife, and the child gives paternal character to the father. Therefore human life is a mutual exchange of giving and receiving and consummated in the communion
of saints. One can therefore begin to understand the paradox of Jesus when he said, in John 12:25 "If you lose your life you will save it, if you save it you will lose it". In other words personality and self-sacrifice are inseparable twins. This is beautifully and gloriously seen in His self-sacrifice for the sins of many. Therefore true independence is realised, says Brunner in self-denial.

In other words in the New Testament the Church is the community of believers, based upon divine election. Hence in the genuine Church nothing and no-one has authority save the Head, Jesus Christ, His own Spirit, His own Word, no priest, and also no synod, no confession, or dogma, not even the Holy Scriptures, the latter has authority only in so far as it is the Word of God, not in itself, and therefore never as an entity which is at the disposal of theology or ecclesiastical law. The Holy Spirit however, uses the two vehicles at His disposal to achieve true individuality and community and that is the Cross and the Resurrection. It is true that where there is poor vision of self, God, reality, and people will fall short of God’s purpose for their lives. Therefore the Spirit uses the Cross to subdue the works of the sinful self responsible for the poor vision referred to above. It is the Holy Spirit who through the Resurrection offers the individual the perfect vision of God, self, neighbour and the physical-organic environment. In Him we see the Father and the Father’s plan for us as persons and as his people. It is Jesus Christ who through the Holy Spirit makes possible a positive self-image for each of us, and this new self image in Christ through the Resurrection power of the Holy Spirit has great power for changing the direction and character of one’s life. Thus we find sin resulting in the depreciation of the self which is relegated to the work of the Cross, whereas redemption through the power of the resurrection effected by the Holy Spirit produces an enhancement of the new self in Christ.

Therefore a person who is in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit is a new creature, old things are passed away, all things are become new, to paraphrase and contemporise Paul in 2Cor 5:17. In short, this positive self is birthed and encouraged by the resurrection power of the Holy Spirit. From a biblical perspective, these are the new clothes Jesus Christ has given us through the Holy Spirit to put on to wear in kingdom-of -God living (Eph 4:24). From a Christian perspective, the old clothes of selfishness are to be cast off or crucified on the cross of Christ and replaced with the new self made possible by the resurrection; both movements are relegated to the work of the Holy Spirit. Therefore in Christ, new and positive personality traits are available. These become the new goals for the transformation of one’s behaviour, attitudes, and feelings by the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus the original image that
was marred, defaced, distorted, but not destroyed is now a candidate for recreation by the power of the cross and the resurrection through the Holy Spirit. The process is a continual dynamic, not a one-time decision.

It involves ongoing spiritual growth, as the Holy Spirit empowers the individual to change his or her life, which extends over a period of time, not a brief moment where all is accomplished at once. In short, God, the Holy Spirit changes the individual’s life, preparing him for heaven, but also preparing him for earth. In other words the new self is a re-creation of the image of God effected by the Holy Spirit in the individual’s heart, through the resurrection, while the old image, defaced by sin, through the Cross is now restored, made new, and re-ordered to fulfil God’s original plan for humans. The pattern for this transformation is the ongoing life of Jesus Christ, described in detail in Scripture, while the power is the personal presence of Jesus Christ, through the resurrection power of the Holy Spirit in the individual’s life. This divine presence brings the new self into being and seeks to cultivate it to its full potential.

5.2 The five dimensional cluster achieves the best practical ends in concurrence with God’s wisdom.

A core definition of wisdom can be rendered as the choice of the best or most benevolent ends, and the most suitable means for the accomplishment of these ends. In short, it is the most benevolent use of knowledge and power. This is evident in the great acts of God that we adverted to earlier, interconnected to human acts and including the physical organic environment in the fulfilment of His plan and purpose mediated through His Spirit.

Therefore we find the Spirit creates the Universe and prepares earth for human and non-human habitation. To redeem fallen humanity, God the Spirit avails the Son, who is God Himself, inserting Himself into the crisis, to actively engaging Himself on behalf of humanity, thereby reconciling them to Himself. Thus the incarnation became a reality. This model of the true Christian life was portrayed by Christ through the Spirit, and serves as an exemplar for humanity. The Holy Spirit therefore regenerates, in other words, empowers the individual to abandon the false self and embrace the true self. The Holy Spirit utilizes the five dimensional approaches to reinstate, replicate and reconstruct the spiritual person. In denying the false self, the Holy Spirit uses the cross to subdue its activity and empowers the true self through the power of Pentecost. Thus the true self is empowered and renewed by the resurrection to
pursue its goal of self-actualization and finally self-consummation in the new heaven and new earth.

Admittedly, the five dimensional approaches is discussed separately and in piecemeal fashion, however it must be understood that there is considerable overlapping and interaction within these processes as they take place in the individual on a daily and continuous basis, actuated by the Holy Spirit. Thus the Holy Spirit utilizes the cross and the resurrection to re-enact and replicate the true self by bringing about the demise of the old self effected by the cross as a restorative process, unleashing the potential of the new, or true self, effected by the resurrection as a liberating process and set on its final destination to self-consummation.

Therefore the creator Spirit in the grand scheme of things, redeems humanity from the fall through the restorative work done by Jesus on the cross, in which the false self is negated, thereafter He uses the resurrection to empower, renew, and actualize the new self, preparing it for self-consummation in the future. Therefore I say that the five pronged approach is the best method that the Holy Power that encompasses the world utilizes to redeem, renew, empower, and actualize and finally consummate self.

5.3 Sin as the most expensive thing in the universe.

Sin is the most expensive thing in the universe. Nothing else can cost so much, pardoned or unpardoned its cost is infinitely great. It negative effects on individuals and communities can be traced throughout the ages. In 598 and 587 BC Israel found itself exiled in Babylon, through sin, rebellion and disobedience. They were enormously displaced. They knew in their life a terrible bitterness and deep hatred as Psalm 137 informs us. They had become fragmented and community life was disrupted and divided. They felt God had deserted them and they were void and empty.

The same sense of displacement is pervasive among many people today who have felt the homelessness and alienation of our modern world dominated by urbanisation. Sin has caused such homelessness prevalent in all communities across the world through the ages. Individuals are alienated from their group of family, from their values and finally from a sense of meaning in their own lives.

However the God of the Bible is opposed to people being displaced and He will bring them
home as it were. He is not only the Shepherd who seeks out the lost (Isaiah 40:11) but a powerful warrior who will seek the exiling agent, in order to permit His people to go home. The good news is that God the Holy Spirit has aligned Himself against the organisation of the world on behalf of the homeless who yearn to go home. God, by his Spirit wills his people to be settled safely in a world where they are at home politically, Economically, Psychologically and Spiritually. In other words a secure “socio-economic” political place where one belongs and is safe and secure.

Despite the terrible cost of sin, the Holy Spirit shatters opposition that seems to fragment life and basic individual rights. This means just not personal compassion, but transforming public institutions which is part of the alienating process, which further means until all people know the joy, security and freedom of living under God’s rule.

5.4 Effects of actualisation, denial, empowerment and renewal for individuality and community.

A chain is as strong as its weakest link, is an all too familiar adage illustrating the relevance of a specific link to either the strength or weakness of the entire chain. In other words, strong individuals constitute strong community, seen within the context of actualization, denial, empowerment, renewal, and consummation, there must be a most manifest discarding of the old and false self, that has distorted and misdirected desire, therefore the Holy Spirit utilizes the cross in the demise of the false self, which we call self-denial, redirects desire to God and one’s fellows. The Holy Spirit in discarding the false self, reconstructs, renews and empowers the true self, in its goal to actualization and consummation.

This renewal redefines the individual, his identity and his status and imparts an alternative way of perceiving reality. The individual is empowered by the Holy Spirit through the power of the resurrection as a new order of being who finds his rightful place within the community of beings. The Holy Spirit transmits this vital force into the life of the individual so that impossible can be transformed into possible ones, and darkness and hopelessness into light and optimism. Thus we have a holistic individual empowered by Holy Ghost power interacting with fellow individuals, forming an invincible, dynamic and powerful community.

One cannot overemphasise the amazing work undertaken by the Holy Spirit in actualization, denial, empowerment, and renewal and it’s far reaching effects on the individual and
community. He re-enacts, and replicates the life of Christ within the individual so that He can infuse life into the life and surroundings of the individual conveying life to his surrounding in the midst of sorrow and depression. The empowered and renewed self lives out its personal imitation of Christ, as a conveyor of life in a very real way, in its quest for self-actualization en-route to self-consummation within the context of community.

Therefore supreme love to God and equal love to neighbour is the most important concern for individuality and community, and forms the basis or core of ones resurrected life. In this vein, Erich Fromm (1950:86-87) insists, “There is no more convincing proof that the injunction, love thy neighbour as thyself is the most important norm of living, and its violation is the basic cause of unhappiness and mental illness.”

Therefore the Holy Spirit in reconstructing the new order of being through the dimensions of self-denial, where the sinful self is abandoned, and self-empowerment, where the true self is renewed, empowered and actualized and set on course to self-consummation, engages the individual as an active and vital participant in the community, in the realization of his all important role in ushering in the Kingdom of God and thereby consummating self. This manoeuvre requires an embrace of the gospel in its entirety. It is therefore imperative that we delineate the ramifications and implications of what is meant by a full gospel as opposed to a half or quarter gospel.

5.5 Full Gospel, half Gospel or quarter Gospel?

The Full Gospel means embracing life in all its fullness within the context of self-actualization, self-denial, self-empowerment, self-renewal and self-fulfilment taking place within the sphere of the interconnectedness and otherness of God, being human and nature. This further entails an act of entering into covenant with a new covenantal partner. Thus the Holy Spirit reproves the individual of sin through conviction and upon the acceptance of the offer of pardon, uses the cross to eliminate the sinful self which is entirely consecrated to self gratification as the end of life and reconstitutes the true self empowered, renewed and fulfilled by the Holy Spirit, consecrated to God as the ultimate end of existence. It is this empowerment, renewal and fulfilment by the Holy Spirit that energizes the person and brings him/her under a new set of demands. It denotes entering into a different history, embracing a different memory, and living with different promises. It is an altered perception of the world, self and neighbour and an authorization of the Holy Spirit to live differently in that world.
Furthermore it is not something that happens to the individual alone but it is the formation of the new community powered by a new loyalty. This signifies abandonment, a renouncing of other loyalties, other fears, other hopes and other payoffs, but embracing God through the Holy Spirit, who creates, redeems, empowers and consummates. It is evident from the Aforegoing proposition that this new life or birth or transformation if you will is not restricted to a Spiritual or Private agenda, but calls for all of life, including public institutions to be reoriented and to serve the purposes of Yahweh. The individual thus oriented seeks to bring more and more of life personal ad public under the rule of this World-transforming, covenant-making, promise-keeping, Slave-liberating and justice-commanding God.

This I submit is in sketch the full gospel as I comprehend it. Anything short, it follows must be relegated to the status of a half or worst still quarter gospel. As previously intimated because I fervently believe that God through the Holy Spirit has overcome all that threatens to cheapen, enslave and fragment our common life.

Further this Gospel summons individuals and communities to act differently to every sphere of life, in other words every zone of one’s existence must be brought under the will, purpose and expectation of God. This entails enacting in the world of social affairs a new practice of social relationships marked by justice, mercy, and peace which touches all of life, in other words the daily requirement concerning self towards God, and self towards neighbour.

Therefore this empowered and renewed, self through the enablement of the Holy Spirit enters a new, alternative, or counter vision of reality, which is an oddity in the world, because it is at odds with all the conventional orderings of society, political, economic and social. The full gospel then demands love to God with the whole heart. This love in its rich implication blends and integrates Agape and Eros, as true, passionate hearts desire. In other words, to be with, to please and to find joy in the one loved.

In this regard Psalm. 73: 25 beautifully exemplifies this state of mind as the Psalmist exudes with emotion when he writes, “who have I in heaven but you, and there is nothing on earth that I desire but you”. Calvin (1952:75) brilliantly paraphrases this profound text as he exclaims, “I know that thou by thyself, apart from every other object, art sufficient, yea, more than sufficient for me, and therefore I do not suffer myself to be carried away after a variety of desires, but rest and am fully contented with thee. In short, that we may be satisfied with God alone, it is of importance for us to know the plentitude of the blessings which he offers
for our acceptance”. Nobody has understood this as eloquently as Augustine (1990: 12) “thou awake 'st us to delight in thy praise, for thou madest us for thyself, and our heart is restless, until it repose in thee”.

Living the Gospel then signifies a critique of distorted desire and a refocus of desire on the true and faithful subject of our delight and longing. However, the intention of a way of living called consumerism seeks to distort and misdirect desire, whittling down the Gospel to a half or quarter status by seducing the individual into believing that ones fundamental desire is for shoes, deodorant, beer, a car or the best detergent. At the core of our creatureliness such desires are irrelevant, for they do not satisfy. Gospel faith pronounces that the Creator of heaven and earth deserves our true desire. Psalm 42: 1 encapsulates this affirmation, “as the deer pants after the flowing streams... in other words, God is the one whom we constantly yearn, in terms of communion, He is the source and goal of our life, in short, this is what we were created to do.

The second true desire is derived from the first, that is, love to neighbour. This is accomplished through obedience, and creates a yearning for God-neighbour that cannot be gratified with shoes, deodorant, beer, car and detergent, but our attention, focus and vitality should be towards matters that affect neighbour life, for instance, housing, education, health care and active involvement in environmental affairs concerning the ecology, biodiversity and so forth.

This in brief I contend depicts and delineates the full Gospel. Conversely, I would like to extrapolate on what seems to me to be the current state of affairs in the church in terms of a half or quarter Gospel, where God is paid lip service and regarded as an ornament to be revered, or a static presence to be worshiped. I call this a fatal attraction borrowing the term from a popular Hollywood movie.

5.6 Fatal Attraction

As the basis for my evaluation I will use Psalm. 73 where the Psalmist almost fell out of covenantal relationship with Yahweh, which I believe is symptomatic of the church today. Firstly, like the Psalmist, Christians observe the affluent of society, how without a twinge of conscience they work the free market economy to enrich themselves. This awareness provokes envy and jealousy as reflected in verse 2-3. They have no loyalty or commitment to
God or His Kingdom and seemed to have got on well without it. Evidently, they are free of trouble or pain, and live the life of the rich and famous, champagne wishes and caviar dreams. Dressed in the latest fashion and just returned from Hermanus with a lovely tan.

Furthermore, they practice exploitation and violence of the poor with no sense of guilt. Although irreverent, free and self-indulgent, they are icons, with good reviews in the media. Religion is regarded as boring, out-moded and for the weak. Their deportment suggests that there is no God or morality for that matter, and life revolves around looking out for number one.

Like verse 13, Christians and Church Leaders make several observations. They may be working with the poor earning a mediocre salary, lack the comforts of this life, and in view of their reflection begin to wonder if it is worth it all, maybe it is just an illusion, or maybe it is better to join the other side. Many, lamentable as it may be, have taken the decisive step and joined them. This is a sad commentary on contemporary Ministers of the Gospel who have become cynical, exploitative and manipulative and operate their churches like commercial enterprises, what Christopher Bollas (1987: 137) has termed ‘Normotic Personality’ or a life of arrogant self-indulgence that is never able to yield.

A Church is as good as its minister therefore this evil, ensnaring, compromising and selfish spirit transfers itself into the membership of the church. Even University Professors and Denominational Executives have become accustomed to handsome salaries and the old cost of faith seems like obsolete superstition. This does not take place happenstance, or by accident or automatic but is a wilful and deliberate sell-out of the Gospel, by those entrusted with its sacred contents.

This action results in a mollycoddling of the great command, soliciting other loves, a few domestinations of God, and a rendezvous with an icon that resembles free market success. In this scenario, loving God alone is cushioned, relaxed and virtually non-existent, where faith is regarded as promotion and discipleship melts into a massive ego. Many churches persist in this self-destructive lifestyle, unlike the Psalmist who in the nick of time as he is about to sell out Yahweh, goes into the sanctuary (verse 17) and realizes everything anew (v 18-27) and is able to grasp a fresh perspective of these invincible agents, who like a green bay tree flourish for a season and are soon destroyed. They fall, vanish, and are not remembered anymore. How quickly the Onassis's of this world melt into insignificance and the Luther King's of this
world persist for time to come.

The Psalmist’s reflections bring him back to the place where he first believed Yahweh. Pray to God the Churches of the 21 century awake to this realization, and eschew this half-baked and pretentious Gospel, and embrace with open arms and with true and faithful hearts the full Gospel. In other words the authority that we as a believing community affirm must be translated into actual concrete practice.

5.7 Critical Evaluation

“Two souls, alas, dwell in my breast apart”, exclaims Faust, in Christopher Marlowe’s celebrated poem of the same name, reflecting the dualism between the true self and the false self. Put differently, there are two forces working within the individual, one for the Good and one for the bad. Said another way, the greatest battle the individual faces is within. In short self versus self. Freud (1950:86-87) recognized the active conflict that occurs in an individual’s mind because of the presence of these two different forces. In fact, the Freudian school of psychoanalysis believes that this cerebral conflict is the source of most of the individual’s psychic disorders.

Menninger (1938:81) also recognizes the existence of these two inner forces and refers to them in the “life instinct “and “death instinct”. The life instinct of the individual seeks to preserve his life, while the death instinct seeks to destroy it, as well as the lives of others. Therefore Menninger’s book on suicide is aptly entitled, Man Against Himself. People standing near the brink of a deep cliff often sense an inner agent that wants to push them over the edge, at the same time they also sense and usually heed another agent that causes them to step back.

Jung (1933: 273) founder of the school of analytical psychology was also impressed by the fact that neuroses were caused by the battle between two warring cerebral agents: “What drives people to war with themselves is the intuition or the knowledge that they consist of two persons in opposition to one another. The conflict is between the sensual and the spiritual person, or expressed differently, the false self and the true self as we discussed in this dissertation. Robert Louis Stevenson, in Dr. Jekyl and Mr. Hyde, gave a fascinating description of an individual who was swayed one moment by the beneficent Dr. Jekyl in his nature, and then the next minute he was turned into and controlled by his evil and murderous
Mr. Hyde nature.

How does one explain this ambivalence, the presence of two inner forces, one good and one bad. With a little introspection, each of us can sense the presence of two opposite forces within, the false self and the true self. It is especially easy to sense our duality when we have a moral issue to decide. It is not pleasant to have two pugilists battling it out and making a rumpus in our cerebral attics. Thousands of years before psychiatry awoke to the importance of two forces within a person, Paul, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit tells us about the two sons of Abraham, symbolic of the two natures within a carnal human being.

In writing to the Romans (7:15-24) Paul describes two warring forces within his own mind before he was filled with the Holy Spirit. He dramatically describes the greater power of the carnal force or the false self, nineteen centuries before the birth of psychiatry. In the last verse he poses the greatest human question of all time, “Who on earth can set me free from the clutches of my own sinful nature”? If one fails here he/she will, in a sense, fail in every day that he/she lives. Jung (1933:260-262) recognized the importance of God the Holy Spirit in healing the ills of humankind: “During the past thirty years, people from all the civilized countries of the earth have consulted me. Among all my patients in the second half of life, that is to say, over thirty—five, there has not been one whose problem in the last resort was not that of finding a religious outlook on life....it is from the clergyman, not from the doctor, that sufferers should expect help.”

Thus we have observed that Freud, Adler and Jung largely agreed that many of humankind’s mental disturbances are due to conflict between inner good, that is the true self, and evil forces, that is to say the false self. Freud emphasized the sexual propensities of the false self, Adler stressed the ruthless drive of the false self or carnal nature for power and supremacy, while Jung likened the evil part or false self to a wild, ravenous wolf.

Paul, himself answers the question I adverted to earlier and exclaims with triumph, I thank God there is a way out through Jesus Christ our Lord. He is obviously referring to the cross and the resurrection, which must be appropriated daily in the abandoning of the old self and the enfolding and embracing of the new self renewed and empowered by the Holy Spirit. In other words, by His death and resurrection Jesus, through the Holy Spirit did not automatically deliver humankind from the bondage of the old self, but He made the freedom available through our obedience to these divine conditions:
Romans 8: 13 ...if....you cut the nerve of your instinctive actions by obeying the Spirit, you are on the way to real living.

Romans 8 : 4 So that....we are living no longer by the dictates of our sinful selves, but in obedience to the promptings of the Spirit.

Galatians 5: 24 and those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful self with its passions and desires.

Colossians 3: 5 then put to death those parts of you which belong to the earth- fornication, indecency, lust, foul cravings, and the ruthless greed which is nothing less than idolatry.

Colossians 3:8-10 But now you yourselves must lay aside all anger, passion, malice, cursing, filthy talk- have done with them. Stop lying to one another, now that you have discarded the old self with its deeds and have put on the new self, which is being constantly renewed in the image of its Creator and brought to know God through the Holy Spirit.

Billy Graham (1955: 124-125) expresses well the part we must play: “It is only when we come to the will that we find the very heart of repentance. There must be that determination to forsake sin - to change one’s attitude towards self, towards sin, and God; to change one’s feeling; to change one’s will, disposition, and purpose...There is not one verse of Scripture that indicates you can be a Christian and live any kind of a life you want to”.

Paul tells us that Abraham, with two warring sons under his roof, was a symbol of the two forces within an individual’s mind. (Gal. 4:28-31, 5:17). Paul however makes the application for us: “Nevertheless, what saith the scriptures? Cast out the son” (Gal 4: 30). It will give us pain to bid a final farewell to the old or carnal self, which has given us a large share of life’s so called pleasures. It will mean giving up some of our habits, our friends, our practices and our ways of thinking. Let us face it squarely, it is a sorrowful experience to bid adieu to every worldly pleasure, friend and habit that the Holy Spirit marks for dismissal. Yet it is not a dismissal of worthwhile joys and friends but of those born, like Ishmael, outside of God’s will for our lives.

Therefore Jesus promises in (Mark 10:30-31) “nobody leaves home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or property for my sake or the Gospel’s without getting back a hundred times over, now in this life....and in the next world eternal life”. Jesus recognizes that we feel some pain in giving up that which is false or carnal, but He promises that we will receive here and now one hundred times as much of the worthwhile. His statement is
understandable when we realize the vast array of mental and physical diseases from which we are freed when we, with the help of the Holy Spirit cast out the innate troublemaker.

We may shed some tears in saying farewell to the old self and its lure, but our grief will seem inconsequential moments later when we experience the exhilaration of His resurrection, life and power within us. Therefore Paul exclaims with jubilation in (Romans 6: 5-6) “For if we have grown jointly with Him in experiencing a similar death, then the same must be true of our resurrection with Him, aware of this, that our old self has been jointly crucified with Him, so that the sin-controlled body might be devitalized and we no longer be slaves of sin”.

Thus, surrendering one’s will to the divine will may seem to be a negative procedure, but it yields positive dividends. Emerson (1945: 451) writes “it is a will that, while giving up the mastery, has finally become something of a master in its own house”. Only when we do our part in crucifying the inner troublemaker, and in opening the door so that Christ, through the Holy Spirit may occupy the throne room of the individual, can we experience real living, new strength, vitality, life and inward peace.

5.8 Conclusion

The doctrine of God's Spirit saturates Scripture, for God revealed Himself as the Spirit of God from creation. His presence is manifested even through the Holy Spirit perceived as Comforter, Guide and Energizer, symbolized as the river of life, imparting life to and refreshing His new creation throughout timeless eternity. In Genesis, He is The Spirit of God breathing upon the dust of the ground to create the first human being. In Ezekiel, He is the one who brings forth a remnant people. In John, He unites the believing disciples in new resurrection life with the risen Lord. In Exodus, the Spirit is the glorious presence of God going before His people as a cloud to lead and protect them.

In the Old Testament, He is the Spirit that empowers and encourages His servants, the Prophets to deliver His Word to His people. He is the Spirit of God who enlightens our minds to understand His truth. The Spirit is God blowing as a searing desert wind to bring judgment upon rebels and idolaters. He is God as fire burning up the chaff to purge and sanctify God's people. The Spirit is God coming as a dove to signal life and peace in a new creation. It is God anointing His own Son to be the Servant-Messiah, and enabling Christ's followers to carry on his ministry, in the power of the Holy Spirit.
extended vision, acute sensitivities, moral nerve and active endeavour. Thus we are challenged to live lives with greater social responsibility as Christians. This involves respect to such matters as poverty, ethnic minorities, political enslavement, genetic engineering, abortion, euthanasia, environmental contamination, labour-management relations, international relations, and nuclear armaments. Jesus, we are taught lived under the mandate of Isaiah 61:1-2 and saw His ministry having both personal and social significance, and made it very clear that He expected His disciples to express their relationship with Him in ways that would be both personally and socially relevant as well. Therefore we are called the salt of the earth and the light of the world,(Matt.5: 13-16) and His last parable speaks of acceptance by God as being based on feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, welcoming the stranger, clothing the needy, looking after the sick and visiting those in prison.(Matt.25: 35-40).

Therefore our presence in the world like salt and light has a salutary effect, both in condemning evil and in drawing people to Christ. Also like salt and light it is meant to have an outreach and mission to the world, one that seeks to undercut evil and establish justice. In this regard Paul in (Gal 5: 6, v 13-150) admonishes that one’s faith is actively expressing itself through love, and as he brings closure to his book, he pleads for this mindset to resound in our minds and hearts when he says, “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers”.

The Spirit is God pouring Himself out as water to revive parched souls and to supply the vitalizing power that transforms lives, and floods them with joy. He is the eternal Spirit, the Spirit of Yahweh, the Spirit of Christ, the promised Holy Spirit, who was sent forth at Pentecost to empower, and renew, the Church in its quest for self-realization and self-consummation in the Kingdom of God. It is God’s will that He, the third Person of the Trinity, be with you and in you and upon you both now and forever Amen.
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