

**THE HUMAN NATURE OF CHRIST—FALLEN OR UNFALLEN? A
COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CHRISTOLOGIES OF
PANNENBERG AND HATDZIDAKIS WITH REFERENCE TO THE
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH DEBATE**

by

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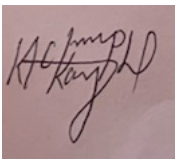
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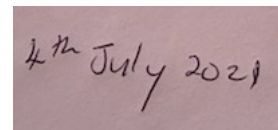
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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, KEITH CHUUMPU, Student no: 35927496, herewith declare the content of this dissertation to be my original work that has not at any time, totally or partially, been submitted to any other university for the purpose of attaining a degree.



SIGNATURE



DATE

SUMMARY

Did Christ, in the incarnation, take a fallen or unfallen human nature? This question, in its various forms, has occupied the Christian Church for as long as it has existed. For the Seventh-day Adventist church, to which tradition I belong, the question centres on whether Christ as a human being had sinful tendencies or not. This question has divided the church into two main camps, with one camp saying he did, and the other saying he did not. And the debate goes on. It is from the Seventh-day Adventist church tradition that I picked up on this debate, following it up to mainstream Christianity and motivating this research. My research seeks to identify the causes of the debate. Its premise is that unless the specific causes of the debate are clearly identified and appropriately addressed, it is difficult, if not impossible, to conclude it. For a close analysis, two scholars, each representing one side, are picked and examined: Pannenberg, representing the fallen nature position, and Hatzidakis, representing the unfallen nature position. Their respective arguments are gleaned, compared and analysed; and their differences, causes and possible solutions are pointed out. The findings are then applied to the Seventh-day Adventist church debate and to Christianity at large.

KEY-WORDS AND PHRASES

Anthropology, assumptions, Christology, fallen, human nature, postlapsarian, prelapsarian, salvation, sin, sinlessness, sinful tendencies, soteriology, truly human, truth, truth validation standard, unfallen, without sin

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CHAPTER 1: AN INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

The Seventh-day Adventist church, a child of the Great Awakening of the American 18th century, and, to a great extent, a theological product of the Anabaptists, Restorationists, Wesleyans, Deists and Puritans, was formally organised in 1863 (Schwarz & Greenleaf, 2000:94, Knight, 2000:30-36). Like its progenitors, the Seventh-day Adventist church emphasises a return to the scriptures, coupled with reason. The word “reason” here is understood to be our God-given ability to think through a given set or sets of data and to make judgment about the same. However, as understood by Seventh-day Adventists, sin has so impacted this ability that it is incapable of being faultless. For this reason, when reason and clear scriptural revelation clash—for example regarding scripture’s assertion of Christ’s resurrection—scripture is given the upper hand (Reid, 2006:17).

Up until the early 1950s, most thought leaders in the church agreed that Christ’s human nature had sinful tendencies (Knight, 1998:158). But with the discovery of what in Seventh-day Adventist circles is now famously known as the Baker Letter, written by one of the church’s founders, Ellen White, who is also believed by the church to be a prophetess,¹ opinions changed (Knight, 1998:158). In this letter, Ellen White appears to advise the Australian pastor, William Baker, to stop teaching that Christ had sinful tendencies. Based on this teaching, and further bible study, many Adventist thinkers changed their minds. They took the position that Christ took a sinless human nature—a nature without sinful tendencies. But another group maintained the earlier position—that Christ’s human nature had sinful tendencies. Henceforth, the two groups have remained in opposition and their debate is largely still unresolved.

I developed my current interest in the human nature of Christ during my undergraduate studies at a Seventh-day Adventist college. This was while doing a research project course. In this course, we were required to prepare approximately twenty pages on a topic of

¹ Though acknowledged to be extracanonical and subject to the canon, Ellen White is considered by the Seventh-day Adventist church to be a prophetess, like any other biblical prophet (Dederan, 2001:627, 633; Knight, 1997:16-29; Ministerial Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1988:224-228). Her subjection to the cannon in no way makes her inferior to the canonical prophets in that the church’s understanding is that each prophet or prophetess should always be subject to the utterances of the previous prophets or prophetesses. In doing so, each prophet or prophetess is being subject to God. This is because prophets and prophetesses are

choice. Having read a little bit about the debate within the church I chose the human nature of Christ as my topic. My initial aim was to learn more about this debate. Upon doing my literature review, I discovered the two main camps in the debate, as identified above. Having known this much about the debate, I developed a deeper interest to contribute to its resolution. Therefore, I chose the same topic for my masters degree. But while doing my literature review, I discovered that the same debate existed also in the Christian Church in general, outside the Seventh-day Adventist church. Notwithstanding, this debate is captioned somewhat more broadly: fallen vs. unfallen human nature of Christ.² The pro-fallen advocates argue that Christ took a human nature such as we have, fallen. The pro-unfallen advocates argue that Christ took the human nature of Adam before the fall, unfallen.

Statement of the Problem

Both camps, fallen (which includes Seventh-day Adventists advocating for presence of sinful tendencies) and unfallen (which includes Seventh-day Adventists advocating for absence of sinful tendencies) stand to present God's mind on the question.³ However, that the two camps differ presents a misunderstanding of God for either one or both of the camps.⁴

Purpose of Study

The burden of this thesis is to identify and to explore the foundation of this misunderstanding, and therefore the difference between the two camps. It is hoped that this in turn will contribute toward the resolution of the debate between the two groups, both within and outside the Seventh-day Adventist church.

² This human nature is generally understood to mean the nature of Adam after and before the Fall (the eating of the forbidden fruit as told in Genesis 3:6, whether metaphorical or otherwise) respectively, as long as after the Fall, its difference from before (whatever that may be) is attributed to the Fall. The underlying assumption here is that after the Fall, a change took place in Adam's nature. This debate is, strictly speaking, different from that within the Seventh-day Adventist church in that it includes but is not primarily limited to whether the human nature of Christ had sinful tendencies or not. Furthermore, the fallen vs. unfallen nature debate as here presented may not be equated to the sinful (sin inclined) vs. not sinful nature debate. This is because Seventh-day Adventists for example generally agree with Ellen White (1888:49), that "it would have been an almost infinite humiliation for the Son of God to take man's nature, even when Adam stood in his innocence in Eden. But Jesus accepted humanity when the race had been weakened by four thousand years of sin." Thus they agree that Christ took the nature of Adam after the fall—the fallen human nature, yet not necessarily a sinful human nature. Thus for Seventh-day Adventists, "fallen" and "sinful" do not necessarily mean the same thing. While sinful is understood to be fallen, fallen is not necessarily understood to be sinful. This is the case with some other non Seventh-day Adventist scholars, like Weinandy (as noted on page 19) who argue that Christ assumed a fallen but not sinful human nature.

³ See footnote above on fallen/sinful tendencies and unfallen/no sinful tendencies synonymy.

⁴ Since the sinful vs. anti-sinful tendencies, and, at least as the nature of Adam is defined in the footnote above, the fallen vs. unfallen question is an either/or question. Unless a change occurred in Adam's nature after the fall, he would not be described as fallen. Therefore, our human nature can only be fallen or unfallen.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study will focus on the question of cause regarding the difference of positions on the human nature of Christ as discussed above: why the difference of positions? In doing so, the study will focus on two works, done by Hatzidakis and Pannenberg, each representing one side. The two works are chosen because in them, in my opinion, the two scholars have done a fairly exhaustive work in arguing for their respective sides. It is therefore not necessary for me to redo that work.

Literature Review

In this review, I survey the two camps within the Seventh-day Adventist church. I follow this up by equally appraising the same camps in the Christian Church in general, external to the Seventh-day Adventist church.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church: Anti-sinful Tendencies Vs. Sinful Tendencies

*Anti-sinful Tendencies Arguments*⁵

Perhaps a leading and representative anti-sinful tendencies scholar is the late Edward Heppenstall. According to Heppenstall (1977:141), “to believe that Jesus Christ inherited a...nature that was inclined to evil and incapable of doing any good of itself is to...say that the whole being of His was sinful as is ours.” In other words, it is impossible for any person to possess sinful tendencies if his or her “whole being” is not defiled, dirty or perverted. Therefore, Heppenstall argues that if Christ possessed sinful tendencies, he “needed to be regenerated by the Holy Spirit” (1977:141). This is because, according to him, possession of sinful tendencies is a signifier of being a sinner.

According to Heppenstall (1977:121-4), as a consequence of Adam’s sin man is born without God. Man is born a sinner. This birth results in a self-centredness that makes it impossible for man, by himself, to live a righteous life. In other words, being born without God results in being born with sinful tendencies. Sinful tendencies become a signifier of being born a sinner. In contrast, argues Heppenstall (1977:126) “we cannot apply this alienated condition to Christ. He was not born as we are, separate from God.” He was not born defiled. Consequently, he could not have any tendency to sin.

⁵ This represents the current Seventh-day Adventist church position, which is still being challenged by those who favour the pre-1950 position.

Further contrasting our manner of birth to that of Christ, Heppenstall (1977:127) says, “Christ was conceived of the Holy Spirit. We are not.” In Heppenstall’s view, this birth made Christ’s will to be completely in harmony with the will of his father. This inclination to righteousness therefore becomes a signifier of holy conception. The inclination to evil becomes a signifier of unholy conception. Our wills therefore are completely out of harmony with the will of our father. We are born separate from God and therefore we are born with an evil inclination. We begin our lives with an already existing tendency to sin.

The idea that a sinless or holy nature has no sinful tendencies is a foundational presupposition in Heppenstall’s biblical hermeneutics. Consequently, virtually any bible text that describes Christ as holy is seen by Heppenstall to mean that Christ had no sinful tendencies. “How clear the bible is about it all,” says Heppenstall (1977:130). “In Him was no sin” (1 John 3:5); “He did no sin” (1 Peter 2:22); He “knew no sin” (2 Cor. 5:21); “He was tempted, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15); “God is light, and in him is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5).” According to Heppenstall, in as far as these texts speak about the absence of sin they speak about the absence of tendencies to sin.

This presupposition—that a sinless or holy nature has no sinful tendencies—is central to virtually all Seventh-day Adventist anti-sinful tendency interpreters. *Questions on Doctrine*, a book first published by the church in 1957, when a majority of church leaders were changing their pro-sinful tendency position to the anti-sinful tendency position, quotes several texts to support its anti-sinful tendency position (Knight, 2003:52). Included among these is John 8:46 when Christ asked the Pharisees “Which of you convinceth me of sin?” 2 Corinthians 5:21 that Christ “knew no sin”, and Hebrews 7:26 that He was “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.” Others are 1 Peter 2:22 that Christ “did no sin” and Mark 1:24 referring to Jesus as “the Holy One of God.” To the authors of *Questions on Doctrine*, these texts meant, among other things, the absence of the tendency to sin.

The *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, a summary of Seventh-day Adventist beliefs, follows a similar path as *Questions on Doctrine*. To support its anti-sinful tendency position, the book states that “the Epistle to the Hebrews affirms that Jesus ‘in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin’” (Heb. 4:15)” and that “Peter...refers to Jesus as ‘the Holy One of God’” (John 6:69)” (Dederen, 2001:164). Many other similar texts

including 1 John 3:5, 2 Corinthians 5:21, and John 15:10 are referenced. Again, the absence of sin described in these texts is taken to mean the absence of tendency to sin.

The book *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, another summary of Seventh-day Adventist beliefs, follows the same pattern of interpretation (Ministerial Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Ministerial Association, 1988:49). Its position is that “Jesus had no sinful propensities or inclinations or even sinful passions.” To support this position, the book states that “as a newborn baby He was described as “that Holy One” (Luke 1:35),” and that he was “a lamb without blemish and without spot,” “holy, harmless, undefiled,” and “separate from sinners” (Heb. 4:15; 7:26).” The book further argues that “when facing his severest trial, He declared, “the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me” (John 14:30).” Other texts used include 2 Corinthians 5:21 that “He knew no sin;” 1 John 3:5 that “in Him, there is no sin,” and John 8:46 that “which of you convicts me of sin?” In all these and similar texts, the absence of sin is taken to mean the absence of tendencies to sin.

Roy Adams, another anti-sinful tendencies proponent, says the words “in him is no sin” (1 John 3:5)” mean that Christ’s very nature was pure, meaning he never possessed any sinful tendencies. “While it is clear that Jesus shared a very close affinity with us,” says Adams, “the evidence also indicates that he was...different from us” (1994:62). To support this latter point, Adams then quotes Hebrews 7:26 that Christ was “holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners” (1994:62). This text, according to Adams, means that Christ did not have any sinful tendencies while on earth as a human being.

The anti-sinful tendencies camp assumption that Christ’s human nature did not have sinful tendencies affects its interpretation of yet another set of texts: those that describe his temptation. Central to these texts is Hebrews 4:15, stating that Christ was “tempted as we are.” According to the anti-sinful tendency camp, the “as we are” does not inevitably presuppose a Christ who had sinful tendencies as we all do. It presupposes a Christ who had no sinful tendencies. This Christ is then tempted as we are in the sense that he, like us, had the choice to sin. According to Heppensatall, “the possibility of being tempted is the same for a sinless [one without sinful tendencies] as for a sinful person [one with sinful tendencies]” (1977: 154). It is therefore not necessary, according to this view, for Christ to have sinful tendencies for him to be tempted “as we are.”

The anti-sinful tendencies camp argues that if Christ became exactly as we are, he would become a sinner. Commenting on Romans 8:3 regarding Christ being made “in the likeness of sinful flesh,” Adams argues that when describing Christ’s condensation to take the form of a servant, Paul used the Greek word *μορφή* possibly to show that Christ took that form 100%. However, when discussing Christ’s similarity to us, Paul used the word *ὁμοιώματι*, translated *likeness*. Adams then quotes *A Greek-English Lexicon of The New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* that “in the light of what Paul says about Jesus in general it is safe to assert that his use of our word [*ὁμοιώματι*] is to bring out both that ... Jesus was similar to sinful men and yet not absolutely like them” (1994:63). According to the anti-sinful tendencies camp, one reason why Christ was not exactly like us is that he did not possess sinful tendencies, as we do. If he did, he would become a sinner.

Sinful Tendencies Arguments

Jack Sequeira argues that Christ inherited sinful tendencies such as we have. To support his position, he points to such texts as 2 Corinthians 5:21 that “God ‘hath made Him to be sin for us’”; Romans 8:3 that “God sent Him ‘in the likeness of sinful flesh’”; Hebrews 2:17 that “in all things He had to be made like unto His brethren”; and Mathew 8:17 that “Christ ‘Himself took our infirmities’” (1996:169). For Sequeira, these texts mean that Christ had to be exactly like us, with the exception of becoming a sinner (1996:164-8). Sequeira says Christ had two natures: holy divinity and sinful humanity. According to him, all the texts referring to Jesus as holy describe his divinity,⁶ not his humanity. All the texts referring to his sinful flesh, such as those above, refer to his humanity, not to his divinity. There is therefore, according to this model, a complex amalgamation of sin and purity that results in a Christ who possessed sinful tendencies without becoming a sinner. Jean Zurcher writes an entire book, *Touched with Our Feelings*, to argue for the sinful tendency position. The title of the book⁷ tacitly presents Zurcher’s position. Zurcher references Philippians 2:7 and 8, that Christ took “the very nature of a servant”...he was “made in human likeness”; he was “found in appearance as a man” and was “obedient to death” (1999:286-7) as part evidence for his position. He also uses Romans 1:3 that Jesus was “made of the seed of David according to *the flesh*,” 1 Timothy 3:16 that “God was manifest *in the flesh*,” and Hebrews 2:17 that Christ “had to be made like his brethren” (Zurcher, 1999:287). Commenting on

⁶ And his sinless performance, using a sinful humanity

⁷ Evidently taken from Hebrews 4:15.

Romans 8:3, Zurcher further argues that the word *homoiomati*, translated “likeness,” does not emphasise difference but “resemblance, similitude,” and “identity” (1999:292).

“However,” states Zurcher, “it is important to understand that Paul did not say that Christ “resembles” carnal man” (1999:287). In other words, though Christ possessed sinful tendencies, he never became a sinner.

Dennis Priebe begins by defining sin as a choice and not nature (2008:28-9). According to Priebe, it is true that our nature is twisted, bent, and inclined to do evil, but this twist, bent or inclination is not sin. Our choice to break the law is what qualifies to be sin. With this definition, Priebe can accommodate a Christ with sinful tendencies. Like Zurcher, he references Philippians 2:7, that Christ “made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness” (2008:44-5). To Priebe, this “nature of a servant” includes sinful tendencies. Commenting on Romans 8:3, regarding Christ taking the “likeness of sinful flesh,” Priebe quotes the *Expositors Greek Testament* that “the flesh [i.e. the flesh Jesus took] meant is our corrupt human nature” (2008:49). Thus, Priebe does not say that Christ became a sinner. Yet he insists that Christ took our very sinful and corrupt flesh, sinful tendencies included.

The position that Christ possessed sinful tendencies allows the pro-sinful tendencies camp to interpret Hebrews 4:15 differently. They can accommodate a Christ who was tempted exactly as we are, in that we are first pulled by our own evil desires before we succumb to temptation. The only difference is that Jesus never succumbed to these temptations. He never gave in to his evil desires.⁸ Thus, he never became a sinner. Therefore, the Pauline⁹ declaration that Christ “was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin” seems to sit naturally with this camp.

Zurcher references James 1:14 and 15 that “each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire (*epithumia*), he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin. . . .” (1999:289). For Zurcher, sin is both a power for, and an act of disobedience to God (1999:288-90). It is a power for disobedience in the sense that it draws

⁸ Priebe argues that central to our temptation experience are “self and pride.” “Do we not fall most often because of the inner desires that lead us astray?” he argues. “If Jesus did not have any of these, could it really be true that he was tempted in all points as we are?” (2008:59-60).

⁹ Assuming that Paul wrote the book to the Hebrews.

the individual to the act. And it is an act of disobedience in the sense that it is executed. The temptation for one to commit sexual immorality for example is a power for sin. Sexual immorality itself is the act of sin. It is in this way that Zurcher understands the meaning of this word as used in these verses. But how does this word, “sin,” relate to the word “evil,” seeing that James uses the two words in the same context? Zurcher makes no direct attempt to clarify the relationship, or even to explain the difference if any between the two words as presented in the two verses. We can however understand the meaning of the word “evil” and thus relate it to its counterpart, “sin,” from the way James, and thus Zurcher, uses it to describe desire.

As used by James, and as understood by Zurcher (1999:288-90), the word “desire” encompasses both the will and the drive to do good or to obey God and the will and the drive to do bad or to disobey God. Thus “evil desire” amounts to the drive to do bad or to disobey God. And Zurcher equates evil desire to the tendency “to disobedience” (1999:289). Desire therefore may be equated to the tendency, either to obedience or to disobedience. The word “evil” may thus be understood to mean anything contrary to God’s will. Therefore, it is synonymous with sin. An evil desire may consequently be described as a sinful desire. According to Zurcher, Christ had evil desires or tendencies to disobedience, the only difference with us being that, unlike us, he never succumbed to them. Among the evil desires, Zurcher lists “the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 John 2:16)” (1999:289). “These,” suggests Zurcher, “become sins only with the consent of the one who is tempted” (1999:289). They never became sin for Christ.

Priebe argues that, in fact, Christ had his own will, which was contrary to the father.¹⁰ “Why did Jesus say, “I seek not my own will” (John 5:30)” asks Priebe, “if His own will was unaffected by Adam’s sin?” (2008:60). To Priebe, Christ’s will was bent. It was crooked. It was selfish. His will could only lead him to want to go against the father’s will. This, in Priebe’s line of reasoning, is the will we possess. It leads us astray. It leads us away from God. It leads us to want to go against God’s will. This, according to Priebe, is how we are tempted. And this, therefore, is how Christ must have been tempted. Otherwise, he could not have been tempted as we are.

The position that Christ’s will was contrary to that of his father is in direct opposition to that

¹⁰ Sequeira also presents this same argument (1996:182).

of Heppenstall. As we earlier noted, Heppenstall states that Christ was born with a will that was completely in harmony with his father. But to Priebe, possession of a will completely in harmony with God the father would disqualify Christ from being tempted exactly as we are. In other words, Christ would have an advantage over us in overcoming temptation, an idea to which both camps are opposed.

Finally, many pro-sinful tendencies proponents argue that the idea of being a sinner by birth is unbiblical and rather Augustinian.¹¹ They reference such texts as Ezekiel 18:20 that “the soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.” According to this line of thinking, it is unjust for any of the children of Adam to die for Adam’s sin. Therefore, we all can possess sinful tendencies without necessarily becoming sinners. Since the Baker Letter seems to be what sparked the change of thought for most Seventh-day Adventist leaders, has there been any recent effort to re-examine it in the light of Ellen White’s other writings? The answer is yes, and to this I now briefly turn.

Interpreting the Baker Letter from Other Ellen White Writings

Two Adventist scholars may arguably be used to fairly represent their respective sides in making efforts to interpret Ellen White’s letter to Baker using her other writings, and thus to interpret her position on the human nature of Christ. These are Larson, in his book *The Word Was Made Flesh: One Hundred Years of Seventh-day Adventist Christology, 1852-1952*, and Whidden, in his book *Ellen White on the Humanity of Christ*. Larson supports the pro-sinful tendencies position; Whidden supports the anti-sinful tendencies position.

Larson’s arguments boil down to Ellen White’s apparently equivalent use of the words *propensities* and *passions*. He argues that, as used in the Baker Letter, the word “propensities” may only be interpreted correctly in the context of her other writings (Larson, 1986:22-25). According to Larson, Ellen White used this word to either describe things to be *controlled* or things to be *eliminated*. In Larson’s view, it is the latter propensities and not the former that Christ did not possess. Larson contends that it is these

¹¹ See, for example, Ralph Larson, (1986:330-48).

latter propensities, not the former, which the Baker Letter refers to when it says that Christ did not have any propensities to sin.

To illustrate the difference, Larson gives many examples of Ellen White statements describing each of the two types of propensities. For statements describing propensities to be controlled, following is one of the examples (1986:23): “Our natural *propensities* must be *controlled*, or we can never overcome *as Christ overcame*.” For statements describing propensities to be eliminated, following is an example (1986:24): “When (the grace of Christ) is implanted in the heart, it will *cast out* the evil *passions* [or propensities] that cause strife and dissension.” Propensities to be controlled would include our *natural* bent or inclinations to sin, which Christ, in Larson’s view, possessed. Propensities to be eliminated would include actual sin, which, according to Larson, Christ surely did not possess.

Additionally, around the same time that Ellen White wrote the Baker Letter, Larson points out that there were many prominent Seventh-day Adventist church leaders—with far greater influence than the obscure Baker—who taught that Christ assumed our flesh of sin, with sinful propensities. He lists thirty-five statements to this effect, from six such leaders (Larson, 1986:100-105). Granted that the letter meant that Christ had a sinless nature, without sinful propensities, Larson (1986:106-107) wonders why Ellen White would leave these church leaders to promulgate an error, only to correct some isolated pastor in Australia.¹² The fact that she left the prominent ministers unrebuked means that, in Whidden’s view, she did not consider their teachings incorrect. What she considered incorrect was to say that Christ had evil propensities—propensities that needed to be eliminated. And it was against this teaching that she advised Baker.

Whidden on the other hand pointedly disagrees with Larson’s double definition of the word “propensities.” As far as he is concerned, and according to him as used by Ellen White in the Baker Letter, this word means one thing: a bent, inclination, or proclivity towards sin. While Whidden surely references other Ellen White writings in his discourse, he maintains that notwithstanding, “the document’s Christology must [and can] stand on its own merits, and its doctrinal counsel is sufficiently clear in the immediate literary context” (1997:61). In other words, if understood properly according to Whidden, the Baker Letter is sufficient to

¹² The Seventh-day Adventist church was born on the mainland of North America, where these leaders were at the time, together with Ellen White.

unambiguously answer the question of whether Christ in his humanity possessed sinful tendencies or not. In his opinion therefore, other Ellen White writings add very little to our understanding of the word, if anything. Whidden (1997:62) contends that to suggest that the word “propensities” as used in the Baker Letter points to actual commission of sin, to which Christ is thus exempt, “goes against the usual and common everyday sense in which people use the word.” As far as Whidden (1997:64) is concerned, “not one of the dictionary entries [now and in Ellen White’s day] comes close to suggesting that the terms “propensity” and “inclination” (or any of their synonyms) imply an “actual participation in sin.”” Whidden (1997:64) argues that to the contrary, “these expressions referred to natural tendencies, leanings, or a bent toward sin.” It is from these propensities according to Whidden that Christ’s humanity is exempted.

Furthermore, Whidden (1997:63) observes that Ellen White describes these “propensities” as attributes or characteristics that every child of Adam is born with, therefore how can they be acts of sin? According to Whidden, it is crucial to note that, at least as far as the Baker Letter is concerned, Ellen White makes no distinction between types of propensities. For Whidden, Ellen White speaks of one type of propensities only in the Baker Letter: those with which one is born. “The obvious implication...” he concludes, “is that Christ was not born with such natural inclinations to sin” (1997:63).

A key sentence in the Baker Letter, of course addressed to Baker, reads as follows: “Never, in any way, leave the slightest impression upon human minds that a taint of, or inclination to corruption rested upon Christ, or that He in any way yielded to corruption” (1993:19). To further push his point, Whidden (1997:64) observes that in this sentence, Ellen White’s “intent was to warn Baker to present Christ as one who was sinless both in nature (in the sense that “no taint of or inclination to corruption rested upon Christ”) and actions (He never “in any way yielded to corruption”).” Whidden (1997:64) further notes that Ellen White “*did not equate* the expression “a taint of or inclination to corruption” with the expression “yielded to corruption.” The two are different. Thus, Whidden maintains that according to Ellen White, Christ had no propensities to sin whatsoever. And he never yielded to any temptation to sin.

The Christian Church in General: Unfallen Vs. Fallen

Unfallen

A non-Seventh-day Adventist example of those arguing for the unfallen position is Erickson. Virtually all Christian theologians—for and against the fallen human nature—accept that in the incarnation, Christ assumed true human nature. But they differ in how they understand the concept. For those arguing for the fallen nature, true humanity means fallen human nature such as we have. For those arguing for the unfallen human nature, true humanity means unfallen human nature such as Adam had before the fall. Arguing for the unfallen nature position, Erickson says true humanity is not defined by sinful fallen humanity such as we have. Says Erickson (1998:737):

For the type of human nature that each of us possesses is not pure human nature. The true humanity created by God has in our case been corrupted and spoiled. There have been only three pure human beings: Adam and Eve (before the fall), and Jesus. All the rest of us are but broken, corrupted versions of humanity. Jesus is not only as human as we are; he is more human. Our humanity is not a standard by which we are to measure his. His humanity, true and unadulterated, is the standard by which we are to be measured.

Another non Seventh-day Adventist example, arguing for the unfallen position is Macleod. Macleod (1998:228) enumerates two counts for his rejection of the postlapsarian position. The first count is his desire to avoid Nestorianism. In this count, Macleod argues that ascribing fallenness to Christ's human nature alone, as most postlapsarians do (unless they choose to refer to the entire person of Jesus as fallen) is a form of Nestorianism. He argues that this mode of thinking separates Christ's humanity from his person. Following the same thought, O'Collins (2009:281) says "we sin or refrain from sinning as persons; it would be incorrect to excuse oneself on the grounds that 'it wasn't me but only my (human) nature that sinned.'" And Best (1985:111) says Christ's "assumption of human nature...does not indicate a change in the personality of the second Person in the Godhead." Macleod therefore concludes that attributing the fallen nature to Christ's humanity alone is a form of Nestorianism.

The second count for Macleod is his desire to separate Christ's person from the contagion of sin. In this count, Macleod (1998:228) argues that since (quotes the Westminster

Assembly's *Shorter Catechism*) "to be 'fallen' ... is to have sinned against God; and to be 'fallen' is to be in a state of sinfulness, devoid of righteousness," it is impossible to say Jesus took a fallen human nature and still maintain that he is sinless. Macleod argues that if we say that Jesus took a fallen human nature, we must also be prepared to say that Jesus became a sinner.

Fallen

An example of those arguing for the fallen position is Barth. Barth grounds his understanding of the human nature of Christ on his interpretation of the *vere homo* Chalcedonian declaration. Barth argues that to truly become like us, Christ had to take fallen humanity. According to Barth (2004:153), "God's Son not only assumed our nature but He entered the concrete form of our nature, under which we stand before God as men damned and lost." "If it were otherwise," argues Barth (2004:153), "how could Christ be really like us? What concern would we have with Him?" According to Barth therefore, as opposed to Erickson, the main issue has nothing to do with what it means to be human. In fact, as referenced in Berkouwer (1962:92), "Barth said that the "original and archetypal form" of human nature is revealed in Jesus." This is Erickson's anthropology. But for Barth, the main issue has to do with *who* the Lord came to save. God came to save fallen humanity. Therefore God had to take the nature of fallen humanity.

A second example of the proponents of the postlapsarian position is Pannenberg. According to Pannenberg, for Christ to properly effect the plan of salvation, he had to 'wear' such battle attire as humans wear against sin. Pannenberg (1977:361) characterises this 'battle attire'—which is our fallen nature as "the fundamental condition of the actual existence of man in its ego-centricity and ego-obstructedness to God." Then he (1977:361) asks: "To what extent has Jesus broken through that fundamental condition of actual human existence with which his fall under the power of death is associated?" In partial answer to his own question, Pannenberg (1977:362) says, "Jesus' breaking through the self-centeredness of human existence cannot be derived from a miraculous birth [immaculate conception] if the man who thus emerges is to be a man like all others." Referencing Romans 8:3, Pannenberg (1977:355) says "God sent his Son in the form of sinful flesh (that is, in our sinful condition of existence) and so condemned sin in its own realm, in the flesh."

Methodology

The solving of any problem begins with a clear understanding of its cause. Then, it follows with the removal of this cause. In trying to contribute towards resolving the debate, Kopic (2001:155) begins by asserting, “it is our contention that many—though not all—of the problems grow out of preconceptions and continuing misunderstanding.” Presenting a bird’s eye view of the controversy, Kopic notes that there is an obvious muddle of interpretation, owing to deep-seated biases. He traces the origin of the controversy in the last 150 years to the desire to guard the human nature of Christ from docetic tendencies. Kopic lists Dorries and Torrance as being among the defending voices whose reading of patristic literature supports the fallen nature position. But he also lists Baillie and Romanides as voices whose reading of the same literature supports the unfallen nature position.

“What are we to make of this apparent confusion over the sources?” asks Kopic (2001:158). Before attempting to answer his question, Kopic (2001:159) further establishes the ‘confusion’ by examining Weinandy’s usage of the “sinful” or “fallen nature” language. According to Kopic (2001:159), Weinandy argues “in favor of the Irvin/Barth thesis.” Yet, unlike Irvin and Barth, Weinandy exempts his human Christ from sinful tendencies. This means that as a human being, Weinandy’s Christ had no proclivities or tendencies to sin. Herein is illustrated the confusion over interpretation of language in this debate as identified by Kopic. For Weinandy, ‘sinful flesh’ for Christ should not include biases to sin. But for Irvin and Barth, ‘sinful flesh,’ for Christ should include these biases. So, again, ‘what are we to make of this apparent confusion?’

“Upon reflection,” says Kopic (2001:160), “it seems that much of the division has arisen from confusion over what the phrase ‘without sin’ [Hebrews 4:15] implies.” For further insight on this, Kopic appeals to Calvin’s hamartiology. “According to Calvin,” says Kopic (2001:160), “*fallen* usually refers not only to sufferings and limitations, but also to moral corruption, since the fall has its roots in ‘unfaithfulness’ – a category which can never be applied to Christ.” Here we see how those in the unfallen nature position cannot apply the fallen nature to Christ and still be consistent in their Christology—for to do so would be equivalent to making a sinner out of Christ. But, as already noted in the Seventh-day Adventist church debate above, the fallen nature position can comfortably assign the label “fallen” to Christ without thinking about him as a sinner. This is because their idea of being

a sinner differs from that of their opponents. The actual commission of sin, according to the fallen position, is required for a person to become a sinner.

So what is the way forward according to Kopic? He concludes that “the issues at hand are less clear than sometimes acknowledged, requiring more than simply an affirmation or denial of whether the Son assumes a fallen or unfallen nature” (2001:163-64). Kopic suggests that the real cause for the differences must first be clarified before moving on to the debate. “Given the lack of clear and agreed definitions,” says Kopic (2001:164), “claiming one position or the other does not actually convey much of theological substance.” In identifying the real challenges, Kopic (2001:166) proposes that we must “move from apparent disagreements to actual differences, allowing for the possibility of genuine dialogue between the two groups.” In other words, we must move beyond our surface disagreements to the actual causes of these disagreements. Only then may we be able to have a genuine debate. In this dissertation, I attempt to identify the causes of the disagreements between the prelapsarians and the postlapsarians. I further attempt to suggest the way forward.

Row and Hays (2007:5-6), in their *Biblical Studies*, discuss how more established doctrine can be used to define subsequent teachings. They argue, for example, that Luther used the doctrine of justification by faith to even define the Christian canon—in this case, to reject the book of James. This is because Luther perceived the book’s author to be promoting justification by works. “Therefore,” concluded Luther, as quoted in Row and Hays (2007:5), “I will not have him in my bible. . . .” Row and Hays refer to Luther’s hermeneutical principle as “*sachkritik*,” “a doctrinal criterion for right reading of the Bible” (2007:5-6). In as far as the study at hand is concerned, it may already be seen that the Chalcedonian declaration, being accepted by the majority of Christianity as a guiding light for all subsequent Christologies, serves as such a ‘doctrinal criterion’ for these post-Chalcedonian Christologies. I therefore make it the backdrop of the entire study. It will also be seen that there is a hermeneutical triad that serves as *sachkritik* for both the prelapsarian and postlapsarian positions. This triad is hamartiology, anthropology, and soteriology. The hamartologies, anthropologies and soteriologies of the respective camps have defined their respective arguments. This study examines the two sets of arguments primarily through these lenses, in addition to the overarching Chalcedon lens.

To answer the question of what is causing the difference of positions, I compare the arguments and related assumptions from each side. Two works were picked to represent the thinking of each of the two authors selected—Hatzidakis and Pannenberg: the book *Jesus: Fallen? The Human Nature of Christ Examined From an Eastern Orthodox* for Hatzidakis, and the book *Jesus—God and Man* for Pannenberg. Both works were picked for their perceived relevance, depth and comprehensiveness.

Design of Study

Chapter 1 is an introduction to the study. In chapter 2, I do an in-depth study of the Chalcedonian Christology, its formative process and its impact on the current debate. To the extent that they impact the current debate, the Chalcedonian understandings of hamatiology, anthropology, and soteriology are of special interest. In chapters 3 and 4, and against the Chalcedonian backdrop, I seek to create a summary of the current prelapsarian and postlapsarian arguments and related assumptions as presented by Hatzidakis and Pannenberg respectively. In chapter 5, I compare Hatzidakis and Pannenberg, while simultaneously pointing out the differences and underlying causes. I then suggest the way forward. I follow this up by applying my study findings to the Seventh-day Adventist church debate. Finally, I conclude the study by succinctly answering the study question of cause: what is behind the differences between the fallen and unfallen Christologies of Pannenberg and Hatzidakis respectively? The answers to this question may be applied to the general prelapsarian vs. postlapsarian debate.

CHAPTER 2: CHALCEDON—A HERMENEUTIC LIGHTHOUSE FOR CHRISTOLOGY?

An Introduction

A lighthouse shows the passing ships which way to go and which way not to go. It serves as a guide through treacherous ground. It solves the perplexity of the captains guiding those ships. So what is the perplexity for which Chalcedon may be a lighthouse? It is the current prelapsarian versus the postlapsarian debate. Did Christ take the nature of humanity before or after the fall?

The now old words of Berkouwer (1954:69)—that the decisions embedded in Chalcedon have “served as a compass to the church in later ages”—still ring true for most theologians. What are these decisions? At the Council of Nicaea (325 AD), Christ was declared to be fully God. At the Council of Constantinople (381 AD), Christ was declared to be fully human. At the Council of Ephesus (431 AD), Christ was declared to be one person. And finally, at the Council of Chalcedon (451 AD), Christ was declared to be all three: fully God, fully human, and one person. And every subsequent Christology must affirm all three statements to pass the bar of orthodoxy. In the now timeworn, yet held to be true, words of Schaff and Schaff (1910:749):

That symbol [Chalcedonian formula] does not aspire to comprehend the Christological mystery, but contents itself with...establishing the boundaries of orthodox doctrine. It does not mean to preclude further theological discussion, but to guard against such erroneous conceptions as would mutilate either the divine or the human in Christ, or would place the two in a false relation. It is a light-house, to point out to the ship of Christological speculation the channel between Scylla and Charybdis, and to save it from stranding upon the reefs of Nestorian dyophysitism or of Eutychian monophysitism.

Pertinent to the question at hand is that the Christian church has maintained, as noted above, that for any Post-Chalcedon Christology to be acknowledged as correct, it must affirm that in the incarnation, Christ became fully human. But what is Chalcedon’s *content* of this assertion—since the assertion is part of the church’s Christological “Compass?” More

specifically, what *exactly* does Chalcedon mean when it states that Christ became fully human? And how does the answer to this question help, if at all, the current debate?

According to Shelley (2008:115), and as Schaff states above, “Chalcedon did not solve the problem of how deity can unite with humanity in a single person.” Instead, it simply declared the full humanity of the Christ incarnate. Beyond this declaration, Chalcedon could not venture. In the words of Honig (as quoted in Berkouwer, 1954:87), “the development of doctrine [of the person of Christ]...reached its limit” at Chalcedon. Honig further states that “the doctrine of the Person of the Mediator, as it has been formulated by the church, is incapable of further development.”

Furthermore, Packer (1994:44-45) states that “the Council of Chalcedon’s ‘one person in two natures, fully God and fully man,’” sounds “simple, but the thing itself is unfathomable.” The declaration, according to Parker, is beyond human understanding, and therefore beyond human explanation. Olson (1999:243) observes that “All the [Chalcedonian] definition does is express and protect a mystery. It does not explain anything.” In expressing the same thought, Shelley (2008:115) says “The merit of the Chalcedonian statement lies in the boundaries it established. In effect, it erected a fence and said, ‘Within this lies the mystery of the God-Man.’” Declares Athanasius (as quoted in Schaff & Schaff, 1910:671), in the run-up to Chalcedon: “Man can perceive only the hem of the garment of the triune God; the cherubim cover the rest with their wings.” So, even before the Council of Chalcedon, there was a certain sense and acknowledgement of impenetrable mystery around the Godhead. Chalcedon, it was argued (and evidently still is), created a hem beyond which we may not go. Part of that hem, and in as far as it concerns our question, is the phrase “truly man.”

However, I argue that it is possible to understand something of the content of this hem— or at least something of Chalcedonian thought about the content—by a closer examination of the creedal hem itself, and the *circumstances that led to its formation*. To this task I now turn my attention.

The Chalcedonian Creed

The fuller Chalcedonian creed reads as follows, in part:

Following the holy fathers, we unanimously teach one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, complete as to his Godhead, and *complete as to his manhood*; truly God, and *truly man*, of a *reasonable soul and human flesh* subsisting; consubstantial with the Father as to his Godhead, and *consubstantial also with us as to his manhood*; *like unto us in all things, yet without sin*; as to his Godhead begotten of the Father before all worlds, but as to *his manhood*, in these last days *born, for us men and for our salvation....* [emphasis mine]

God incarnate is “complete as to his manhood” and “truly man.” In being “complete as to his manhood” and “truly man,” God incarnate has a “reasonable soul” and “human flesh.” In being this human, God incarnate is the same as us “in all things” except in “sin.” And the reason he is this human is so that he can effect “our salvation.” He is born “for us men *for* our salvation.” In one sentence, the Chalcedonian description of the full humanity of Christ may be expressed in a threefold sketch as follows:

Christ, in the incarnation, became (1) truly human, (2) except in sin (3) to effect our salvation. The “truly man” definition appears to presuppose shared Chalcedonian understandings of three areas of theology: (1) human nature (2) hamartiology, and (3) soteriology. It seems to suggest a complete and internally coherent system of this triad. Perhaps more specifically, the Chalcedonian statement appears to imply shared definitions of hamartiology, human nature and soteriology in as far as these three shed light on the *human nature of Christ*. However, it will be noted that even the most respected thinkers around Chalcedon differed in their interpretations of the phrase “truly man” due to differences in their understandings of sin and human nature in particular. Without this unity of understanding, Chalcedon fails to *adequately* guide the definition of the phrase “truly man.” Chalcedon’s proponents, at least in as far as the phrase “truly man” is concerned, were in no better position than the current day champions of the same idea: they interpreted true humanity differently. Consequently, Chalcedon can only guide the current debate in areas where its arch architects agreed. This is because that which is properly called Chalcedon and acknowledged as a guide is a consensus. Individual points of opinion among the Chalcedonian thinkers may equally be valid, but these cannot be called Chalcedonian, and can therefore not get the acknowledgement and weight that Chalcedon itself gets. Furthermore, Chalcedonian agreement, and not individual opinions, is the focus of this

chapter. Yet even then, this can only be so with the assumption that such agreed-upon doctrine was exhaustively set, and that no modification could be made to the same.

In this chapter, I seek to go behind Chalcedon and understand the thinking that led to the formulation of the phrase “truly man.” I seek to ‘go behind the curtains’ of this definition of Christ’s humanity. Can we learn something from there? Is there something we can apply to today’s pre vs. postlapsarian debate?

Understanding the Creed and its Origins

As Boersma (1992:47) notes, “an approach which takes its starting-point in Chalcedon...requires a dogmatic-historical analysis of the Council of Chalcedon (451) and of the *events and documents leading up to this council*” [emphasis mine]. Particular to this study is one reason of note: The fact that there was a vote taken to declare Christ’s true humanity can give the false impression that the Chalcedonian *architects* of the phrase “truly man” understood it to mean the same thing. To the contrary, and as earlier stated and will be demonstrated, their interpretations of this phrase varied. I argue in this chapter that the differences in their interpretations of true humanity lay in the differences in their understandings of human nature, sin, and salvation. Hypothetically speaking, if the Chalcedonians who supported the “truly man” phrase interpreted it the same way, it would follow that any mind that was considered authoritative and in support of the creed would very closely approximate, if not replicate, the underlying thinking of Chalcedon. Examining every one of the “four hundred and fifty two” minds that according to Chadwick (2001:582) signed the Definition, and then creating a detailed analysis of the same would be the best way to verify this. But, besides the daunting immensity of such a task, Chadwick (2001:582) observes that not “every signature was given in full conviction and a clear conscience.” Chadwick (2001:583) further notes, for example, that “Amphilochius of Side needed to be cuffed ... to be persuaded to sign.” Thus, to demonstrate the Chalcedonian differences of understanding and to apply these differences to the current pre vs. postlapsarian debate, I will pick on acknowledged pro- Chalcedon authorities.

It is also worth noting that the “truly man” part of the hem was originally birthed in a specific controversy. The phrase was partly in response to a particular heresy, known as apollinarianism (Allison, 2011:372-73). This heresy taught that in the incarnation, Christ did not assume a human soul. Neither did he assume a human mind. Instead, both were

replaced by the logos (Allison, 2011:373). In response to this teaching, the church birthed the “truly man” definition. It would therefore be most beneficial to pick on a mind that was immediately responding to the apollinarian challenge, in addition to being foundational to the creation of the formula. Gregory of Nazianzus is such a mind.

Gregory is among the foremost opponents of apollinarianism (McGrath, 2011:278, Erickson, 1991:61). Though not delegate to Chalcedon, Gregory is also said to be “a witness...of the same theological insight which guided the Church in the formulation of the Chalcedonian definition concerning the ... person of Jesus Christ” (Wesche, 1984:98). I will especially probe his creed-pertinent definition of human nature and its definitive presuppositions in his letters against Apollinaris. As Browne and Swallow (1894:201) point out, Gregory’s letters against Apollinaris are 1. the two letters to Cleodnius; and 2. the letter to Nectarius. It is also generally conceded that “the two main thinkers behind the Chalcedonian Definition were Leo of Rome...and Cyril” (Olson, 1999:234) of Alexandria. Their involvement and importance in the formulation of the creed can be seen in Chadwick’s *The Church in Ancient Society: From Galilee to Gregory the Great* (2001:578-82). Boersma (1992:48) specifically cites 1. Cyril’s “second letter to Nestorius,” 2. “his letter to John of Antioch containing the Symbol of Union,” and 3. “Leo’s letter to Archbishop Flavian” as “documents that are explicitly mentioned in the Chalcedonian Definition as being authoritative.” These will be my documents of focus. I will ask Gregory, Cyril and Leo for their understandings of the creedal components of sin, human nature, and salvation, according to the selected documents (their writings outside these documents being considered more personal than communal to Chalcedon—except when they further explain and are in agreement with what is contained herein). What was their definition of sin? What was their concept of humankind? What did they think about salvation? And how did all these relate to their concept of Christ’s human nature? Thus, through these three men, we hope to have a clearer vision of the Chalcedonian lighthouse and therefore how it guides or must guide subsequent Christology. Let’s start with Gregory’s letter to Nectarius, his successor as bishop of Constantinople.

Gregory: Letter to Nectarius

This letter was written to Nectarius in Constantinople around 383 AD as part of Gregory’s correspondence to correct the teachings of Apollinaris. In this letter, Gregory complains that

he does not understand how Nectarius could allow the teachers of apollinarianism to have teaching authority and to continue teaching their heresy at the church in Constantinople. Says Gregory (1894:438) to Nectarius: “The most grievous item of all in the woes of the Church is the boldness of the apollinarians, whom your Holiness has overlooked, I know not how, when providing themselves with authority to hold meetings on an equality with myself.” Gregory (1894:438) then goes on to enumerate the heresies of apollinarianism: “For he [Apollinaris] asserts that the Flesh which the Only-begotten Son assumed in the Incarnation for the remodelling of our nature was no new acquisition, but that that carnal nature was in the Son from the beginning.” Having denounced Apollinaris’ misapplication of scripture to defend his teaching, Gregory (1894:438) further states Apollinaris’ position as follows:

Then he assumes that that Man who came down from above is without a mind, but that the Godhead of the Only-begotten fulfil[ls] the function of mind, and is the third part of this human composite, inasmuch as soul and body are in it on its human side, but not mind, the place of which is taken by God the Word. This is not yet the most serious part of it; that which is most terrible of all is that he declares that the Only-begotten God, the Judge of all, the Prince of Life, the Destroyer of Death, is mortal, and underwent the Passion in His proper Godhead; and that in the three days’ death of His body, His Godhead also was put to death with His body, and thus was raised again from the dead by the Father.

This is the gist of what Gregory says about apollinarianism in his letter to Nectarius. So what does Gregory teach about sin in this letter? And how does his teaching about sin affect his view of human nature? At strictly face value—that is, without allowing his other writings to speak to his thoughts here¹³—the answer is that Gregory says nothing about sin. Consequently, we cannot see how his concept of sin affects his concept of human nature. But what does Gregory teach about human nature? Again, the answer is that Gregory teaches nothing directly about the nature of humanity, in this letter. And finally, what does Gregory teach about salvation? In his explanation regarding Apollinaris’ teaching on what kind of flesh the incarnate Christ took, we see a glimpse of *his* thoughts on salvation.

¹³ Because they do not directly form part of the Chalcedonian discussions.

According to Gregory, Apollinaris teaches that Christ took a ‘mindless’ body “*for the remodeling of our nature*” [emphasis mine]. We can here say that according to Gregory, salvation involves a “remodeling” of our nature.

What does Gregory mean by “remodeling?” In his study on Gregory’s views of salvation Alfeyev (2004:111) says that according to Gregory, “the goal of the incarnation...is [quoting Gregory] ‘to make man god and a partaker of heavenly bliss.’” This process of making “man god and a partaker of heavenly bliss” is remodeling. Alfeyev (2004:112) further quotes Gregory as follows:

“...As man, He [Christ] is interceding for my salvation. [sic] until he makes me divine by the power of His incarnate manhood”

“Since man did not become god, God Himself became man ...in order to reconstruct [synonym of remodel] what was given through what is assumed.”

Alfeyev (2004:112) adds that Gregory’s writings above are a polemic against Apollinaris. As earlier noted, Apollinaris taught that the incarnate Christ did not assume a human mind. But Gregory argues, as will later be seen, that a mindless Christ would not be completely human and would therefore not result in total salvation for humankind. A mindless Christ would only result in half remodeling. If God did not become entire human, human could not become entire god. This gives Gregory’s writings (quoted by Alfeyev above) the same apologetic impetus as that which led to the formulation of the Chalcedonian “truly man” phrase: the drive to establish the total humanity of the Christ incarnate in order to establish the total salvation of humankind. This total salvation is what Gregory calls remodeling. Alfeyev explains the link to Apollinaris as follows:

Gregory not only repeats a classical formula of deification, but also adds a *tantum-quantum* (“so far as”) specification to it: God becomes man... “in order that I may become god so far as He has become man” [quotes Gregory]. Here a direct link is established not only between God's Incarnation and man's deification, but also between the extent to which God became man and man, god. This qualification is added in order to oppose the teaching of Apollinarius: if God did not become a man entirely, there is no possibility for a man to become entirely god.

Gregory's fundamental formula and thrust is that the human becomes god to the extent that God becomes human. Expressed differently, humankind becomes remodeled to the extent that God assumes humanity. Gregorian salvation therefore is the upward Godward movement of the human propelled by the downward human-ward movement of God. Again, this upward Godward movement is what Gregory calls "remodeling." Some classical theological terms used for this Godward movement, or "remodeling," are "deification" and "divinisation." But is this what Chalcedon taught? Did Chalcedon teach "remodeling," or "deification" or "divinisation?" According to Afeyev (2004:110-11), "for all the Fathers of the age of Ecumenical Councils [this would include Chalcedon] the Incarnation of the Word of God is the sole basis of man's deification." Chalcedon uses the same seesaw formula as Gregory: it emphasises the true humanity of Christ because it believes that the extent to which humankind is deified or saved is determined by the extent to which God becomes human. The council believes, as Alfeyev observes, that the incarnation of the Word of God is the sole basis of humanity's "remodeling," or "divinisation," or salvation. Because it held this view, the Council completely opposed Apollinaris' idea of a mindless Christ. The Chalcedonian fathers wanted total salvation for humanity. Therefore they emphasised the complete humanity of the incarnate Christ. Like Gregory, Chalcedon opposed the idea of a "mindless" Christ because the council was wary of a half "remodeling" of humanity. It is because Chalcedon believed in the idea of "remodeling," or "deification," or "divinisation" that it argued for a complete humanity of Christ incarnate. A review of the creed should make this apparent:

Following the holy fathers, we unanimously teach one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, complete as to his Godhead, and *complete as to his manhood*; truly God, and *truly man*, of a *reasonable soul and human flesh* subsisting; consubstantial with the Father as to his Godhead, and *consubstantial also with us as to his manhood*; like unto us in all things, yet without sin; as to his Godhead begotten of the Father before all worlds, but as to *his manhood*, in these last days *born, for us men and for our salvation* [Emphasis mine]

I will now turn to Gregory's letters to Cleodnius, written against Apollinaris.

Gregory: First Letter to Cleodnius

This and the second letters to Cleodnius, a priest of Nanzunzus, were written about 382

AD. As it was with Gregory's letter to Nectarius, these letters were written to address the wrong teachings of Apollinaris. In this letter, as in the letter to Nectarius, Gregory defends the total and complete humanity of the Christ incarnate. But what is contained in this total and complete humanity? We answer this question by exploring Gregory's understanding of humankind. According to Gregory, complete *ἄνθρωπος* is the amalgamation of mind, soul, and flesh. The absence of any of these components leaves a less than complete human, a nameless thing. And the assumption by Christ of any one or two of these components—less than the total—is assumption of incomplete humanity. Gregory (1894:440) argues as follows:

For Godhead joined to flesh alone is not man, nor to soul alone, nor to both apart from intellect [mind], which is the most essential part of man. Keep then the whole man [mind, soul, and flesh], and mingle Godhead therewith, that you may benefit me in my completeness.

Furthermore, that the *ἄνθρωπος* Gregory discusses is not generic but that of Adam after the fall can be seen from the following argumentation (1894b:440): “If only half Adam fell, then that which Christ assumes and saves may be half also [because that is the part which fell]; but if the whole of his nature fell, it [the nature that fell] must be united to the whole nature of Him that was begotten, and so be saved as a whole.” Taken to its logical conclusion, Gregory's statement here may read as follows: if zero Adam fell, then that which Christ assumes is zero Adam. Christ needed to assume only that which fell. He did not need to assume what did not need healing. Gregory's idea that Christ assumed a fallen human nature makes a good place for us to transition into his understanding of sin and its nature.

To Gregory, sin is a disease—an infectious *spiritual* disease. This disease has affected the whole of human nature and not just a part. That Gregory's sin is a disease is at least evidenced by his use of the ‘healing’ terminology (1894:440): “For that which He [Christ] has not assumed He has not *healed*; but that which is united to His Godhead is also saved” [emphasis mine]. Following Gregory's arguments this far, we may say that fallen humanity is sick humanity. According to Gregory, the mind is the sickest part of a human being.¹⁴

¹⁴ Concerning the mind, Gregory (1894b:441) says (as will soon be seen) “for that which received the command was that which failed to keep the command, and that which failed to keep it was that also which dared to transgress; and that which transgressed was that which *stood most in need of salvation*” [emphasis mine].

Therefore, it is the part most in need of healing. Arguing against the apollinarians, who could not envision a Christ with a sick mind,¹⁵ Gregory (1894:441) reasons as follows:

But you are acting as if, when a man's eye had been injured and his foot had been injured in consequence, you were to attend to the foot and leave the eye uncared for; or as if, when a painter had drawn [sic] something badly, you were to alter the picture, but to pass over the artist as if he had succeeded.

In this argument the person's injured eye, which because of its inability to see clearly causes the foot to get injured, is compared to a human being's sin-sick mind, which because it fails to resist sin, causes the rest of the person to sin. Similarly, the painter who paints something badly is compared to the failing mind, which causes the entire person to sin. Consequently, Gregory (1894:441) argues that the root cause of sin, which is the mind, must be healed first before any other part:

But if it was that He might destroy the condemnation by sanctifying like by like, then as He needed flesh for the sake of the flesh which had incurred condemnation, and soul for the sake of our soul, so, too, He needed mind for the sake of mind, which not only fell in Adam, but was the first to be affected, as the doctors say of illnesses. For that which received the command was that which failed to keep the command, and that which failed to keep it was that also which dared to transgress; and that which transgressed was that which stood most in need of salvation; and that which needed salvation was that which also He took upon Him. Therefore, Mind was taken upon Him.

According to Gregory therefore, sin is an illness. It is a disease, an injury, and an anomaly that needs correction. Perfection, on the other hand, is freedom from this disease. In our discussion of Gregory's *ἄνθρωπος* and his disease, we have necessarily seen another dimension¹⁶ to Gregory's conceptualisation of salvation. It is to this dimension that I briefly turn.

In Gregory's mind, if sin is a disease, and perfection is freedom from this disease, salvation

¹⁵ According to McGrath (2011:278), Apollinarius' reasoning went as follows: "...was not the human mind the source of sin and rebellion against God? Only if the human mind were to be replaced by a purely divine motivating and directing force could the sinlessness of Christ be maintained. For this reason, Apollinarius argued that, in Christ, a purely human mind and soul were replaced by a divine mind and soul."

¹⁶ Other than that of "deification" and "divinisation."

is consequentially a healing process. Apparently comparing the sick *ἄνθρωπος* to a lump of unleavened flour, and the healer to yeast, Gregory (1894:441) likens salvation to a leavening process: “If the clay was leavened and has become a new lump, O ye wise men, shall not the Image be leavened and mingled with God, being deified by His Godhead?” Since yeast can only leaven that which it touches, argues Gregory, God can only heal that which he touches. And since the whole human is sick, salvation necessarily involves God’s touching of the whole human. According to Wesche (1984:89), Gregory defines salvation as “a cleansing which must touch every aspect of human nature.” Before revisiting the Chalcedonian creed, via Gregorian lenses, we shall move on to Gregory’s second letter to Cleodnius.

Gregory: Second Letter to Cleodnius

In his second letter to Cleodnius, Gregory zones in on the apollinarians’ deceptive use of words. Apparently, in a confessional write-up to Pope Damasus, to clear themselves of charges of heresy, the apollinarians declared their agreement with the orthodox teaching that the incarnate Christ assumed the three essential and definitive elements of complete humanity: mind, soul, and flesh. But they deceptively maintained their unorthodox position that the incarnate Christ’s mind and soul were not of humanity but God. In this, they desired to keep the sinlessness of Christ. Gregory (1894:443) explains as follows:

...they [apollinarians] confess indeed the orthodox words, but they do violence to the sense; for they acknowledge the Manhood to be neither without soul nor without reason nor without mind, nor imperfect, but they bring in the Godhead to supply the soul and reason and mind, as though It had mingled Itself only with His flesh, and not with the other properties belonging to us men....

With this crookedness, the apollinarians manage to deceive Pope Damasus, thereby gaining his, and accordingly the church’s acceptance into the fellowship of orthodoxy. This acceptance however surprises and angers those of the faithful who know the underlying teachings of apollinarianism. It is to this surprise and anger that Gregory (1894b:444) responds:

Since then these expressions [the acceptance that the incarnate Christ assumed mind, soul, and flesh], rightly understood, make for orthodoxy, but wrongly interpreted are

heretical, what is there to be surprised at if we received the words of Vitalius [a leading apollinarian] in the more orthodox sense; our desire that they should be so meant persuading us, though others are angry at the intention of his writings? This is, I think, the reason why Damasus himself, having been subsequently better informed, and at the same time learning that they hold by their former explanations, excommunicated them and overturned their written confession of faith with an Anathema; as well as because he was vexed at the deceit which he had suffered from them through simplicity.

In this letter to Cledonius therefore, Gregory maintains his emphasis on the complete humanity of the Christ incarnate. He adds no other explanation to his understanding of the ideas of sin, human nature and salvation. It is now time to revisit Chalcedon.

A Review

Earlier, I summarised the Chalcedonian creed in one sentence as follows: Christ, in the incarnation, became (1) truly human, (2) except in sin (3) in order to effect our salvation. So what, given Gregory's teaching this far, would be Chalcedon's content of the phrase "truly man?" Unless the creed is divorced from part of its formative context,¹⁷ and its underlying logic;¹⁸ or the Gregorian response to apollinarian heresy is purposely tapered¹⁹ to exclude Gregory's emphasis on Christ's assumption of a diseased mind, it is difficult at this point to avoid the conclusion that this phrase refers not only to the generic *ἄνθρωπος*, i.e. a merger of mind, soul and flesh, but to a sick *ἄνθρωπος*. As Gregory has already argued, it would not make any sense for God to assume a healthy *ἄνθρωπος*, an *ἄνθρωπος* that needs no healing—if healing depends on God touching the sick. In order to heal it, God must assume a sick *ἄνθρωπος*, yet remain without sin²⁰—much as he remained without leprosy when he

¹⁷ Which includes Apollinarianism (and its anti-diseased mind stance) and the resultant Gregorian responses considered.

¹⁸ Which, as already demonstrated, is virtually the same as that of Gregory. According to Kärkkäinen (2003:74), "The logic of Eastern Christology [to which Gregory subscribed] was governed by soteriological motives. Christ had to be fully and genuinely...human to serve in the capacity of savior. If Christ were less than human, he would not be able to identify with us...."

¹⁹ Reasons of which, for purposes of maintaining the definition's 'Chalcedonicity,' would need to be justified *within*, and not *away* from the creed's formative context or nurturing womb.

²⁰ This is explicitly stated in the creed. And Gregory himself exempts Christ from sin: "For He...continues to wear the Body which He assumed...except sin" (1894:315). When comparing John 1:14 to 2 Corinthians 5:21 and Galatians 3:13, Gregory says "And so the passage, The Word was made Flesh, seems to me to be equivalent to that in which it is said that He was made sin, or a curse for us; *not that the Lord was transformed into either of these, how could He be* [emphasis mine]?" (1894b:442). Elsewhere, after giving a similar argument, Gregory asks the same rhetoric question: "For...not only doth He take to Himself all monstrous and vile names, but even that which is most monstrous of all, even very sin and very curse; *not that He is such* [emphasis mine], but He is called so. For *how can He*

touched the lepers. But what exactly is sin? It is a disease. It is a sickness from which we all must be healed. How exactly Christ remains sinless (and therefore ‘healthy’) while assuming a sin-laden *ἄνθρωπος*, neither the creed (assuming it so teaches) nor Gregory explains—at least not in the creed itself, and not in Gregory’s three letters against Apollinaris. But if Chalcedon’s thinking pattern is truly that of Gregory, there must be no doubt as to what kind of being the Lord assumed: it is the diseased being. Salvation, therefore, is emancipation from the shackles of this disease. To save us, Jesus assumes disease without becoming diseased. Then he annihilates the disease and frees the diseased.

Cyril: Second Letter to Nestorius

We may now turn to Cyril. What is sin, according to Cyril? What is human nature in his view? How does Cyril’s view of sin affect his concept of human nature, if at all? What is salvation according to Cyril? And what does the phrase “truly man” mean in Cyril’s view? Let’s start with his second letter to Nestorius, written about 429 AD. At the time, Nestorius was archbishop of Constantinople. The letter was part of the ongoing correspondence between Cyril and Nestorius, regarding the human nature of Christ.

It will be noted that in this letter, Cyril does not address any of these questions in a way that adds new information to that which we have already seen in Gregory. In fact, the main burden of this letter is to explain to Nestorius the oneness and indivisibleness of the Christ incarnate. From about the second century AD, the church began to think of Mary in terms of *Θεοτόκος*, meaning Mother of God (Acosta, 2016). The reasoning behind this designation is that if Mary is the Mother of Christ, and Christ is both God and human, then Mary is the Mother of God. But Nestorius did not relish the idea of calling Mary the Mother of God, for how could this be?

Notwithstanding, he still had to explain the biblical fact that Mary was the Mother of Christ. Therefore, Nestorius postulated a Christ composed of two distinct and loosely connected sides: the divine and the human. The divine, of course, he conceived of as God (*θεός*) and the human he conceived of as Christ (*Χριστός*). Having somewhat ‘disjointed’ the two sides,

be sin, Who setteth us free from sin; and how can He be a curse, Who redeemeth us from the curse of the Law?” (1894:338). Yet, Gregory believes so much in the necessity of Christ’s assumption of every part of our sin sick nature that he sees not another way of salvation: “But if they [apollinarians], overwhelmed by these arguments, take refuge in the proposition that it is possible for God to save man even apart from mind, why, I suppose that it would be possible for Him to do so also apart from flesh by a mere act of will, just as He works all other things, and has wrought them without body. Take away, then, the flesh as well as the mind, that your monstrous folly may be complete” (1894b:441-442).

Nestorius could then apply Mary's parenthood to the human or—in his view—Christ side only, thereby creating a new designation: *Χριστοτόκος*. It was against this concept that Cyril wrote his letter to Nestorius.

According to Cyril (1900a: 198), “the difference of the natures is not taken away²¹ by the union, but rather the divinity and the humanity make perfect for us the one Lord Jesus Christ by their...union.” This “union” he calls “ineffable and inexpressible” (Cyril 1900a:198)—it escapes human understanding. For Cyril therefore, the incarnate Christ is one person, while indeed maintaining his two natures. Having explained further how “the difference of the natures is not taken away by the union,” Cyril (1900a: 198) says to Nestorius: “If, however, we reject the personal union as impossible or unbecoming, we fall into the error of speaking of two sons.” Cyril (1900a: 198) rejects this “error” and states, “We, therefore, confess one Christ and Lord.” This is the essence of Cyril's second letter to Nestorius. Cyril's balance between total division and indistinguishable mixture of the two natures is maintained through the Eutychian controversy.²² This balance finally earns itself a place in the Chalcedonian creed in the following expressions:

Following the holy fathers, we unanimously teach one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ...one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, known in (of) two natures, without confusion, without conversion, without severance, and without division; the distinction of the natures being in no wise abolished by their union, but the peculiarity of each nature being maintained, and both concurring in one person and hypostasis. We confess not a Son divided and sundered into two persons, but one and the same Son....

Clearly then, in this letter, Cyril does not address the questions asked of sin, human nature, salvation, and the incarnation of Christ in any more penetrative way than that which we have already seen in Gregory. But he does add background to one central tenet of the Chalcedonian creed: the unity of the one person of Christ, which is central to the orthodoxy of subsequent Christologies, by Chalcedonian definition. We must now move to Cyril's letter to John of Antioch.

²¹ This is important to Nestorius, who is wary of Apollinarianism.

²² Reacting to Nestorius, Eutyches, a presbyter of Constantinople, “fell into the opposite extreme, and asserted that though the two natures of Christ were originally distinct, yet after the union they became but one nature, the human being changed into the Divine” (Feltoe, 1895:vii). Chadwick (2001:553-556) gives a longer treatment of the controversy.

Cyril: Letter to John of Antioch

This letter was written in 433 AD. In this letter, Cyril (1900b: 251) celebrates that John agrees with him in his Christology: “‘Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad’ for the middle wall of partition has been taken away, and grief has been silenced, and all kind of difference of opinion has been removed....” The reason for this celebration is that at the Council of Ephesus, though late, John had led a delegation of bishops all on the side of Nestorius (Chadwick, 2001:514). At this council, John was an arch-enemy of Cyril, later setting up a counter council in which he deposed Cyril (Socrates, 1890:172). But now, two years later, (Chadwick 2001:538-40), John had adapted his position to suit Cyril’s central position. According to Cyril (1900b:251), quoting John in this letter, John accepted “a union of the two natures,” but maintained a distinct difference between the divine and the human natures. Says John, according to Cyril, (1900b:25), wherefore we confess one Christ, one Son, one Lord.” And, confesses John per Cyril (1900b: 251-252), “according to this understanding of this unmixed union, we confess the holy Virgin to be Mother of God.” Here, again, we see Cyril maintaining his balance—the balance that, as already noted, earns itself a place in the Chalcedonian creed. But he does not better our current understanding of the triadic three—sin, human nature, and salvation—especially as they relate to the “true” humanity of Christ. Yet, again, he does add background to the one person Christ of the Chalcedonian creed. Therefore, we will now move on to Leo.

Leo: Letter to Flavian

This letter was written in 449 AD, two years before the Council of Chalcedon. Leo writes his epistle to Flavian, bishop of Constantinople in support of Flavian’s decision to depose Eutyches from his position as presbyter. Flavian had deposed Eutyches for his unorthodox Christology, to which I will turn shortly. Leo (1900:254) writes as follows:

Having read your Affection’s letter...and having gone through the record of the proceedings of the bishops, we have now...gained a clear view of the scandal which has risen up among you, against the integrity of the faith; and what at first seemed obscure has now been elucidated and explained. By this means Eutyches, who seemed to be deserving of honour under the title of Presbyter, is now shown to be exceedingly thoughtless and sadly inexperienced, so that to him also we may apply the prophet’s words, “He refused to understand in order to act well: he meditated

unrighteousness on his bed.”

What, according to Leo, is this “unrighteousness?” It is Eutyches’ Christology—to which I now turn. Concerning Eutyches, Leo (1900:255) writes as follows: “And he [Eutyches] should not have spoken idly to the effect that...the Christ who was brought forth from the Virgin’s womb had the form of a man, and *had not a body really derived from his Mother’s body*” [emphasis mine].

Leo (1900: 257) then tries to explain Eutyches’ rationale as follows:

Possibly his reason for thinking that our Lord Jesus Christ was *not of our nature* was this—that the Angel who was sent to the blessed and ever Virgin Mary said, “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, and therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God;” as if, because the Virgin’s conception was caused by a divine act, therefore *the flesh of him whom she conceived was not of the nature of her who conceived him* [emphasis mine].

According to Leo (1900: 257), “this Eutyches...*does not recognise our nature to exist* in the Only-begotten Son of God, either by way of the lowliness of mortality [Christ incarnate], or of the glory of resurrection” [emphasis mine]. To this effect, Leo (1900:259) quotes Eutyches (apparently based on information from Flavian) as saying, “I confess that our Lord was of two natures before the union, but after the union I confess one nature.” And that nature, evidently, had no trace of humanity in it—only a form. This, in a nutshell, is Eutyches’ Christology according to Leo.

What then, was Eutyches’ concern? Why did he teach thus? Why did he deny the true humanity of the Christ incarnate? According to Chadwick (2001:554) Eutyches’ position “originated in his Eucharistic faith.” Referencing John of Rufus, Chadwick says, “at holy communion he received ‘the body of God,’ and that could not be merely a human body of the same nature as ours.” Chadwick further notes that according to Eutyches, stressing “two distinct natures must seem to make everything about the human body and soul of Christ less than divinely life giving” (Chadwick, 2001:554). Eutyches’ concern therefore was the “how” of salvation. According to Eutyches, only God, and not a human being, could save. Therefore Eutyches could not allow for a human Jesus. It is against this background that

Leo writes his letter to Flavian.

Leo wonders how Eutyches, in his position, could have strayed so far from the clear teachings of the bible—or, least of all, from the Nicene Creed. According to Leo (1900:254), it was impossible for us to “overcome the author of sin and death, unless he who could neither be contaminated by sin, nor detained by death had taken upon himself our nature, and made it his own.” Leo (1900:255) argues that “the newness of the mode of production [involving God’s ‘divine act’]” kept the proper character of the kind—that is, our nature. But Leo (1900:255) carefully separates the incarnate Christ from sin, stating, “of that which the deceiver brought in...there was not a trace in the Saviour; and the fact that he took on himself a share in our infirmities did not make him a partaker in our transgressions.” According to Leo (1900:256), Christ was “born by a new mode of birth; because inviolate virginity, while ignorant of concupiscence, supplied the matter of his flesh. What was assumed from the Lord’s mother was nature, not fault.”²³

Having thus examined Leo’s letter to Flavian, it is time to go back to our triadic questions of sin, human nature, and salvation. What, according to Leo, is sin? How does sin affect human nature? What is salvation? And how does Leo’s view of sin, human nature, and salvation shape his concept of the true humanity of Jesus Christ? In seeking to answer these questions, we must first understand the specific meaning of the word “concupiscence” as used by Leo in this letter—something of which “inviolate virginity” was ignorant in supplying “the matter of his [Christ’s] flesh.” In Leo’s time, the idea that sin was transmitted by sexual intercourse was almost a presupposition,²⁴ held by many thinkers. And Leo was a child of his time. Elsewhere, explaining the sinlessness of the incarnate Christ, Leo (1895:131) says:

And to this end, without male seed Christ was conceived of a Virgin, who was fecundated not by human intercourse but by the Holy Spirit. And whereas in all mothers conception does not take place without stain of sin, this one received purification from the Source of her conception. For no taint of sin penetrated, where

²³ As will later be noted, the ignorance of concupiscence is arguably a hint at Christ’s exemption from Original Sin. Explaining the same concept in 1141 AD, “Porrée, Bishop of Poitiers” states, “For He [Christ] was not born of male and female by the law of sin, i.e. human concupiscence ministering. Therefore He is not held by original guilt, nor by any necessity of sinning ...” (Pusey, 1869).

²⁴ For example, because every human being was born via sexual intercourse, they were presumed to have the stain of sin—hence the practice of infant baptism in order to remove this stain. Wiley (2002:49-50) discusses this.

no intercourse occurred. Her unsullied virginity knew no lust when it ministered the substance. The LORD took from His mother our nature, not our fault.

Here, Leo gives a more developed description of the “new mode of birth,” by which Christ is born. It is one in which the “inviolable virginity, while ignorant of” *sexual intercourse*, “supplied the matter of his flesh.” It is by this “new” birth process that Christ assumes our “nature, not our fault.” Therefore, at least in Leo’s letter to Flavian, the word “concupiscence”—at the very least—means sexual intercourse. Sin therefore is a “fault,” or defect transmitted through sexual intercourse. In the words of Cyprian (1886:354), it is a contractible “contagion of the ancient death.” And no human being—for as long as they are born through sexual intercourse—escapes it. We are all born infected. We are sick and diseased.

We shall now carefully examine Leo’s view of salvation. In his letter to Flavian, Leo (1900:254) calls it “the work of *restoring* man” [emphasis mine]. In Leo’s view, this work involves the process of *reinstating* man—who is sick and diseased—to his original *spiritual* status. Elsewhere, comparing this process to that involved in the conception of Christ, Leo (1895:135) states:

And each one is a partaker of this *spiritual origin* [Christ’s status at conception] in regeneration; and to every one when he is re-born, the water of baptism is *like the Virgin’s womb*; for the same Holy Spirit fills the font, *Who filled the Virgin, that the sin, which that sacred conception overthrew, may be taken away by this mystical washing* [emphasis mine].

What, therefore, is salvation according to Leo? It is the removal of sin—the “contagion of... death”—from every child of Adam. And it begins at baptism.

This leads us to Leo’s conception of “true humanity”—the humanity Christ assumed. “What was assumed,” says Leo, as noted above, “from the Lord’s mother was *nature* [human], not fault” [emphasis mine]. This “nature” is as humanity was made *spiritually* before the entrance of sin. It is our “*spiritual origin*.” In his response, Leo takes care of both the concerns of Apollinaris, who feared that Christ could be contaminated by sin, and those of Etyches, who feared that a human Christ could not give life. To Apollinaris,

Leo says Christ was exempt from any taint of sin. To Eutyches, Leo says Christ cannot save us without assuming our nature. Leo's response however is decidedly different from that of Gregory. While Gregory specifically allows for the assumption of our *fallen* nature, a nature infected by sin, Leo does not. For Gregory, Christ needed to assume a fallen nature. For Leo, he did not.

Chalcedon: Understanding its Teachings

Before we move back to looking at what Chalcedonian thought would look like at this point, we must establish two things—evidenced by our discussions this far: first, that the true architects behind the phrase “truly man” are Gregory and Leo; second, that the true stimuli to the formation of this phrase are Apollinaris and Eutyches. Without Apollinaris, we would never be talking about the 381 AD Constantinople council, which is really the pioneering ecumenical council regarding *reflection* on the true humanity of Christ.

Widely acknowledged as the main thinker behind this council—at least in as far as thought contributing to the formulation of the “truly man” phrase is concerned—was Gregory of Nazianzus. Without Eutyches, we would never be talking about the Chalcedonian council, which is really the validating ecumenical council of the thought behind the axiom. The main thinker behind this council—again, at least in as far as the thinking behind the “truly man” phrase is concerned—was Pope Leo.

We will now compare Gregory and Leo's thoughts on our triadic foci—hamartiology, human nature, and soteriology—and how these thoughts shape the two men's thinking about the human nature of Christ. Both men think of sin as a disease. They think of it as an anomaly or intrusion to true human nature. Both men think of *anthropos* or humankind as the totality of that which God created in his image in the beginning—mind, soul, and body consisting. Sin, in their view, is a non-essential to *true* human nature. Both men think of salvation as at least some kind of transformation in which sin is eliminated. The keyword for Gregory is “deification.” Leo uses the words “regeneration” and “washing”—at least from that which we have already discussed. As noted above, Leo says that we all are partakers “in *regeneration*” and that the “Holy Spirit fills the font...that the sin...may be taken away by this mystical *washing*.” Again, Leo's “regeneration” and “washing” take away our sin. Both men agree that Christ took our *true* human nature; that is, the totality of that which God created in the beginning. They also agree that in his human nature, Christ

was exempted from sin—that is, he was sinless. But this is as far as they can agree.

For Gregory, Christ did not only take our *true* and *complete* human nature. He took our *fallen* human nature. He was not only “*truly*” and “*fully*” human; he was “*fallen*” human. He took our diseased and contaminated nature without being contaminated himself. He took our fallen human nature without our guilt. How Christ maintained his sinlessness in our soiled nature, Gregory does not explain. For Leo, Gregory’s Christ is an impossibility. There are only two options in Leo’s view: a fallen and guilty Christ or an unfallen and guiltless Christ. This is why, in Leo’s view, Christ could not be born the normal human way—since sin, in his view, was transmitted via sexual intercourse. Christ had to be born by the intervention of the Holy Spirit himself. In Gregory and Leo’s arguments we see a microcosm of the present-day debate on the human nature of Christ. To this debate, of course, we will return later. But what does Chalcedon teach? In view of our discussion thus far, how is Chalcedon a guide to the present-day debate?

It should be noted that the need to establish the true humanity of Christ did not originate with Chalcedon. In fact, this need is rather about as old as the Christian church itself. As early as the apostolic times, John writes: “By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God (1 John 4:2-3).” Therefore, what has been happening over time is a detailed development, or rather growing understanding, of this doctrine. Ecumenical creeds have been an attempt to express this understanding. What sets Chalcedon apart—at least concerning the human nature of Christ—is that it is the first ecumenical council to bend its energies towards a full expression of the church’s understanding of the incarnation—thereby including the *extent* to which God assumed human nature and the *composition* of that nature. That after the apostles, the church maintained that God assumed human nature is seen in the first ecumenical council’s creed—the Nicene Creed, which states that God “came down and was *incarnate* and was *made man*” [emphasis mine]. When against Apollinaris Gregory of Nanzianzus defended the complete humanity of Christ, he was simply defending the truth stated in this creed. Therefore, the resulting council of Constantinople in 381 AD saw no need to change the creedal wording regarding the incarnation. When against Eutyches Leo argued for the true humanity of Christ, he was defending the same Nicene truth. Therefore,

the Chalcedonian council saw no need to alter the earlier creed—had it not been for the insistence of the emperor. Chadwick (2001:573-83) gives an extended treatment of the pertinent proceedings thereof. The resulting creed, however, gives further clarification of what the church meant when it said that God became human. It emphasises the completeness of God’s humanity. It also gives the composition of this humanity. As noted earlier [emphasis mine], the creed states that Christ was “*complete* as to his manhood,” “*truly* man,” “*consubstantial* also with us as to his manhood,” “*like* unto us in all things” [emphasising complete humanity], and “*of a reasonable soul and human flesh*” [giving the composition of this humanity]. The word “reasonable” is important because it distinguished the human from the rest of creation (McGrath, 2011:349). Other living beings had souls but those souls were not reasonable, therefore not human. The creed then excludes that which, according to Leo, is not essential to complete humanity: “yet without sin.” The truth yet remains the same: God became human.

It is evident however that even around Chalcedon, individual theologians interpreted the “manhood” of God differently, depending on their concepts of sin, human nature, and salvation. Apollinaris believed in the humanity of Christ. But his human Christ could not have a human mind; otherwise Christ would be a sinner. To Apollinaris, sin and guilt were inseparable and their central abode and source of infection was the mind, therefore Christ’s humanity could not have a human mind—since this mind was sin infected. While Apollinaris’ humanity could only be truly so if mind, soul, and body were present, he did not think that these entities *all* had to be human. This allowed him to replace the sin infected human mind with the sin-free divine mind, and still call the resultant union human. Gregory believed in the humanity of Christ. His human Christ, however, *had to have* a human mind. To Gregory, human nature was only truly so if *all* the three entities—mind, soul, and body—were *human*. Additionally, all the three parts had to be those of *fallen* humankind because this was the Adam that needed to be saved. To Gregory, salvation could only occur if the *particular*, that is the *fallen*, was touched.

According to Gregory, sin and guilt could be detached from each other; therefore Christ could touch sin without becoming a sinner. Gregory offered no explanation as to how this was possible. Leo believed in the humanity of Christ. But his human Christ was not fallen—for how could this be? Leo could not separate sin from guilt; therefore he could not see how

Christ could assume fallen humanity and still remain guiltless. These theologians can be considered a sampling of the para-Chalcedonian ‘noise’—similar to contemporary talk—behind the “truly man” profession. We must now get back to the questions we started with and conclude at presenting Chalcedonian thought thus far.

We started by stating that the Chalcedonian phrase, “truly man” appears to presuppose shared Chalcedonian understandings of our triadic foci: (1) understanding of human nature, (2) hamartiology, and (3) soteriology. We also said that the phrase appears to presuppose a complete and internally coherent system of this triad: shared definitions of hamartiology, human nature and soteriology in as far as these three shed light on the human nature of *Christ*. I argued that, hypothetically speaking, without this unity of definition Chalcedon would fail to adequately guide the definition of the phrase “truly man.” I further stated that with this unity in place however, Chalcedon should have a system that becomes, or should become, the proper lighthouse of subsequent Christologies. Our criterion for what qualifies to be truly Chalcedonian at this point is that—at the very least—our main theologians here surveyed and considered orthodox by the church be in agreement, or be in positions that cannot be shown to be in disagreement. In this case, and particularly concerning the question of Christ’s complete humanity, these are Gregory and Leo. So let’s see how we fair.

According to Chalcedon, what is sin? We must note, as should be concluded from our foregoing discussions, that it is difficult to define such an abstract idea without the use of tangible, felt metaphors. We can only conceive of certain ideas—of which sin is one—in forms we already know. Beyond this we cannot go, and this spells out our finiteness. It also spells out the complexity of the idea with which we have to work. So, again, what is sin? It is a disease. It is a sickness from which no human being may escape. It spoils. It taints. It corrupts. It is a mysterious and extra-physical spoiler from which we may not free ourselves. We are all infected by it. We are all bound by it. This in short, and at least as far as Gregory and Leo can agree, is what we may conceive of as the Chalcedonian definition for sin. Yet, we must say, a world of unknown mysteries about it remains to be explored. So how does this definition of sin, if so, shape the Chalcedonian definition of humanity? The answer is that it does not. As far as Gregory and Leo are concerned, sin is a non-essential to true humanity. It is an intruder, a burglar, and a prowler. For both Gregory and Leo, a

human is simply and essentially a union of three units: a *human* mind, a *human* body and a *human* soul. These three entities are indispensably *vital* to true humanity. The absence of anyone or two of them results in something else other than human. This, in a nutshell, is the Chalcedonian definition of true humanity. It is also a good point at which we may transition to the central issue: the humanity of Christ.

What, according to Chalcedon, is meant by the axiom “truly man?” What is Chalcedon’s *content* of this phrase, apparently and necessarily given the council’s definition of true humanity? It goes without saying that at the very least, the human Christ is unavoidably a union of the same three elements: a *human* mind, a *human* soul, and a *human* body. This fact partly comes out in the creed itself: “of a reasonable [as already noted, this means human—since only human souls can reason] soul and human flesh subsisting.”

Furthermore, this union has no trace of sin in it. The creed states, “yet without sin.” As already noted, to this “yet without sin,” both Gregory and Leo give their assent. However, this later addition—the exemption of Christ’s nature from sin—assumes that though all human beings have sin resident in them, they are still truly human.

Humanity’s exemption from sin is not required for them to meet the criteria for true humanity. However, because Christ has become human, and human beings have sin in them, this exemption has to be added to clarify the *extent* to which—in becoming truly human—Christ may have assumed any *extra-human* baggage. In this case, both Gregory and Leo will not allow a Christ who is defiled, lest he needs a savior himself. And this is the Chalcedonian position. But over and above all this Chalcedonian humanity is, in the main, a composition of these three essentials: a human mind, a human soul, and a human body. To be truly human therefore is to have all three in one package. The human soul and flesh or body are expressly stated in the creed as part of Christ’s true humanity. Furthermore, the mind is the reasoning part of a human. If the soul is reasonable, as the creed states, it follows that this soul somehow contains the mind. This leads us to our next question—the question of incarnation’s necessity.

Why did our salvation require that Jesus assume true humanity? The reason hinges on Chalcedon’s definition of salvation itself. According to both Gregory and Leo—whose agreement with each other is our criterion for Chalcedonicity—salvation is both a transformation and a separation. It is a transformation in the sense that it is our upward

movement towards God. It is a separation in the sense that, in our upward movement, we get detached from sin. Therefore weighing more on the idea of salvation as transformation—that is, the idea of salvation as our upward Godward movement—Chalcedon presupposes a seesaw formula: the downward movement of God propels our upward movement towards God. For this reason, the extent to which God moves downward determines the extent to which we move upward. And because we need complete salvation, God has to make a complete move to our base. And that base is our nature—*true* human nature. This is why God needed to assume true humanity.

Conclusion

Having come this far, we may now ask our all-important question for this chapter: How may Chalcedon be a lighthouse for subsequent Christology, and more specifically, the debate question at hand: Did Christ take the nature of humanity before or after the fall? Here is how:

1. At the very minimum, for Christ to be truly human, he must possess the critical three elements: a *human* mind, a *human* soul, and a *human* body. It must be noted however, that this requirement is based on the church's *shared* understanding of human nature at the time. And the church's shared concept or view of human nature was based on particular presuppositions, whose validity should be open to further enquiry to today's theologian.²⁵ The fact that the church of Chalcedon could specify its basic outline of non-negotiable components of true humanity, based on its understanding of human nature at the time, means that today's church can—in fact *should*, if our understanding of God should increase—specify its basic outline of the non-negotiable components of true humanity according to the church's current understanding of human nature. And this exploration, therefore exposition, should be the *essence* of debate—at least partly—between the pre and the postlapsarians.
2. The incarnate Christ must be “without sin,” lest he needs a savior himself—

²⁵ For example, where did the idea of “soul” first come from? How has the idea developed over time? What have been its implications on the whole idea of anthropology? And why should our definition of the idea be universally accepted today?

thereby ceasing to be saviour. But it can be seen that not even the most regarded minds around Chalcedon—in this case, and per our inquiry concerning the ‘enfleshment’ of God, Gregory and Leo—could agree on the meaning of this phrase. For Gregory, Christ could be “without sin” while assuming Adam’s fallen nature. For Leo, he could not. Assumption of fallen human nature in Leo’s view meant assumption of fallen human nature’s *guilt*. For Gregory however, assumption of fallen human nature did not necessarily mean assumption of its guilt. It was imperative at the time that Gregory and Leo agree on their understanding of the idea of sin, especially as it related to guilt, before they could agree on the meaning of the “without sin” assertion. This agreement of understanding is still imperative for today’s theologian. Without it, any solution to the debate remains untenable.

3. The incarnate Christ must be discussed as one person: “We confess not a Son divided and sundered into two persons, but one and the same Son.... (Schaff, 1910:744-745). Gregory and Leo cannot be shown to be in disagreement on this creedal point—at least not via the documents considered in this chapter.

We will now examine the current debate. We will start with the prelapsarians, outlining their arguments and assumptions as presented by Hatzidakis

CHAPTER 3: PRELAPSARIAN ARGUMENTS AND ASSUMPTIONS— EMMANUEL HATZIDAKIS

An Introduction

Hatzidakis is a product of the Eastern Orthodox Christian tradition. He has served as priest in this tradition, teaching about, and dispensing the Christological emblems of salvation to his parishioners for at least thirty years.²⁶ Born in Crete, and trained at Oberlin College in Ohio (B.A. Classics), and at the Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Massachusetts (M.Div), Hatzidakis is known for his first book, *The Heavenly Banquet: Understanding the Divine Liturgy*, in which he discusses the incarnate Christ as the life giver in the Eucharist. His book, *Jesus: Fallen? The Human Nature Of Christ Examined From An Eastern Orthodox Perspective*, is picked for its depth, relevance to and comprehensive treatment of the subject at hand.

Standing in his community of faith, Hatzidakis makes the Eastern Orthodox tradition his key assumption. Though considered somewhat different in their interpretation of the bible and tradition by their western counterparts, Eastern Orthodox Christians use the two as normative sources of their theology. In this way they tow together with western Christianity. As in the West, central to Orthodox theology is the idea of human salvation. What is salvation? Why do we as humans need salvation? Who gives and how does this person give us this salvation? These questions and their corollaries form the crux of both the western Christianity theological discussions and those of the Eastern Orthodox tradition. And central to these questions is the person of the one acknowledged redeemer, Jesus Christ: who is he? Of course, this is where the subject of Christology finds its entrance, having the same stimuli and foundations for both the West and Eastern branches of Christianity. In fact, it may be said that the East and the West are two horns, springing out of the same head, the New Testament church. This is why there have been attempts in recent years to reconcile the two. This can be seen, for example, in Salaris (2001). Comparing Eastern Orthodox Christology to that of the Presbyterians and Reformed Churches, this scholar's conclusion is that there is agreement from the two sides on the

²⁶ See <http://orthodoxwitness.org/who-we-are/>

person of Jesus Christ. Viewing Christology from both horns—East and West, as opposed to viewing it from either, is therefore having a broader view of what we as Christians think about Christ today. And Hatzidakis—comprehensively, relevantly, and contemporarily—arguably presents the Orthodox prelapsarian Christology well. In showing how he does this, I will indicate how his thinking aligns with other Orthodox theologians. Hatzidakis’ position, I will further show, presents Christianity’s prelapsarian position in a manner that is complete enough to make it good grounds for comparison with its counter position, postlapsarianism. I will start by giving a synopsis of Hatzidakis’ view.

Hatzidakis in Brief

Hatzidakis rejects the idea that Christ took a fallen human nature. His main reason for rejecting this idea is that Christ would fall from being God and therefore fail to be Saviour, which he argues, is impossible. He strongly believes in the one person God-Man of Christ proclaimed at Chalcedon. Nothing therefore, according to Hatzidakis, should be said of this one person that denatures either of his two-part essences: divinity and humanity. And nothing should be said that separates the two parts. This is Hatzidakis’ view in brief. I will now give a brief description of my approach to Hatzidakis’ work.

Addressing Hatzidakis’ Work

At five hundred plus pages, Hatzidakis’ discussion is surely massive. It can, however, be distilled into five main categories of ideas: 1. Fundamentals of Divinity—things that, if given up, would essentially make deity lose its divinity, 2. The Unity of Christ’s Person—that Christ must always be discussed as one person, 3. The Criterion for Human Nature—the one standard by which human nature must be measured and defined, 4. The Nature of Sin—what sin is and how it cannot be part of the incarnate Christ, and 5. The Nature of Salvation—what salvation is and why it requires a pre-fallen incarnation. I will therefore discuss his submissions under these five headings.

Fundamentals of Divinity

Two attributes, among others, have long been accepted in Christian theology as characteristic of, and fundamental to Christian deity or divinity. These are omnipotence and omniscience.²⁷ God is all-powerful. And God is all-knowing. Perhaps closely connected to

²⁷ See for example, McGrath (2011:209-12, on God’s Omnipotence.

the idea of omnipotence is God's freedom. God is completely free.

Hatzidakis founds many of his positions on these three ideas—omnipotence, omniscience, and freedom. He does not endeavor to prove the veracity of any of them concerning God. He rather takes them for granted. Thus, Hatzidakis uses them as assumptions, based on which he presents his arguments. That God possesses the three attributes is also part of Orthodox theology, the birthing cradle of Hatzidakis theology, and therefore umbrella assumption. But over and above this, Hatzidakis assumes that the man Jesus is God, and that furthermore, as man, Jesus continues to possess the three attributes of divinity. In other words, Hatzidakis begins his Christology from above. I will now exemplify how he does this, beginning with omnipotence, followed by God's freedom, and finally ending with omniscience.

A. Positions Founded On The Omnipotence Of God

According to Hatzidakis (2013:94), as God-Man, Christ had relinquished none (and could not) of his Godly power. He was still the all-powerful God. It follows therefore, that nothing could *unavoidably* happen to him. He *allowed* every one of his experiences. To the contrary, we are born 'boxed in.' We must *unavoidably* experience life as is because 1. We are not God—not omnipotent, and 2. We are fallen creatures—deserving of the consequences of sin. It is impossible however for Christ, according to Hatzidakis, to experience life *exactly* the way we experience it unless he ceased to be God or fell into sin, which thing cannot happen.

“Although the humanity...Christ assumed was subject to mortality and corruption,” writes Hatzidakis (2013: 94), “these consequences of sin were not *imposed* upon him dynastically (as they are on us), *because the divinity* [which is all powerful] *was united hypostatically* [making one person] *with his body*” [emphasis mine]. In other words, his divinity protected him. His divinity gave him some kind of immunity, which is absent from fallen humanity. Had the divinity of Christ not been “hypostatically” united to his body, he would have experienced “mortality and corruption,” just as we do. He would have died, just as we do. He would have suffered, just as we do. But because of his divinity, Christ had to allow everything that came his way.

Pain, for example, is one of those things we suffer when an injury is inflicted upon us. If we

are stabbed, we *involuntarily* suffer pain. If we are spiked, we *involuntarily* suffer agony. But, according to Hatzidakis, Christ chose the extent of pain he suffered. He quotes St. Hillary as follows (Hatzidakis, 2013:95): “[W]hen in his humanity He was struck with blows or smitten with wounds or bound with ropes or lifted on high, He felt the force of the suffering but *without its pain...*” [emphasis mine]. The “without its pain” assertion can give the impression that Christ suffered no pain whatsoever. But Hatzidakis attempts to correct this by giving us the other side of Hillary’s view, which seems to allow for Christ’s choice to accept pain if he willed, again quoting Hillary directly (Hatzidakis, 2013:95): “It must be clearly understood that He was subjected to suffering of *no natural necessity*, but to accomplish the mystery of man’s salvation; that *He submitted to suffering of His own will, and not under compulsion*” [emphasis original, as quoted by Hatzidakis]. Based on this, Hatzidakis (2013: 96) concludes that Christ “experienced pain only and to the extent that He allowed it to act upon Him.”

In fact, Hatzidakis (2013:282-3) argues that due to his omnipotence, Christ could not sin. According to him (2013:283), Christ “cannot fall into sin, which would imply...weakness.... The Son of God is...God omnipotent.” Hatzidakis (2013:283) then quotes Shed that “the possibility of being overcome by temptation is inconsistent with the omnipotence of Christ. It implies that a finite power can overcome an infinite one.”

Furthermore, Hatzidakis (2013:120) argues that could the consequences of sin be imposed upon him, Christ’s death itself would then not be a sacrifice: “How would Christ’s death be a sacrifice if it were necessarily imposed upon Him, if He were not completely free, especially in His humanity to embrace it?” To the contrary, argues Hatzidakis (2013:120), Christ died freely and “not by necessity.” That Christ suffered and died voluntarily is cornerstone to much of Orthodox Christology, thus shaping Hatzidakis’ thinking. Agourides (1969:201), for example, states that “the Crucified is not presented on the cross in agony, but in calmness and serenity in order to denote that Christ voluntarily accepted death....” Louth (2013:54) observes that “in the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus is presented not as someone to whom things happen, but as one who stamps his own character on events....” It is from this theological community that Hatzidakis makes his arguments. He further argues therefore that that Christ accepted death voluntarily is demonstrated in Christ’s words: “I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I

lay it down *of My own accord*. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again” (John 10:17-18). Hatzidakis (2013:486) goes so far as to assert that Christ “is the only human being that chose to be born as a human being, and selected His mother to bring Him to this world in His human existence.” By contrast, we do not choose to be or not to be born. Worse still, we do not choose our parents. Christ then is the only human who experienced only that which he chose, and that had to be only what was necessary for our salvation. We, on the other hand, experience everything that is due to fallen nature. “God,” concludes Hatzidakis (2013:180), “in the flesh remained what he was: God omnipotent, ruler of the universe. Christ as human is not trapped in the vulnerabilities of our humanity.”

B. Positions Founded on the Freedom of God

Hatzidakis argues that Christ, who is very God, could not take our fallen nature because whereas God is completely free, we are not. Relative to sin, Hatzidakis (2013:308) defines God’s freedom as “freedom *not* to sin.” By this, he means that God cannot sin, not because he lacks “the ability...to do so, but that in Him” is “the perfection and fulfilment of freedom.” “To ascribe possibility of sinning to Christ,” contends Hatzidakis (2013:317), “would be to admit either that God could sin, or that Christ could cease being God.” Hatzidakis sees God as the very apex and perfection of freedom. Humanity on the other hand is in the process of growing towards that apex: we are growing Godward.

When we get to that apex, we are said to have achieved *theosis*. Even Adam and Eve were still in the process of growth when they sinned. According to Hatzidakis (2013:309) “Adam and Eve sinned...because their freedom was *not complete*, and they made the wrong choice *on account of their immaturity*, which led them to disobey God.” He (2013:327) further elaborates as follows:

There is an *abysmal* difference between the second Adam and the first. Although they were both sinless, the first one could sin, and did sin, while the second one could not sin. The first Adam was created in a state of innocence, but not a state of moral perfection. He needed to grow spiritually and mature through testing to achieve the divine likeness, *theosis* [emphasis original]. Christ was born already perfect in His humanity, as He was perfect in His divinity. He was already “holy, blameless, unstained, separate from sinners” (Heb. 7:26-27), and thus He is able to

offer Himself “without blemish” to God (Heb. 9:14) [emphasis mine].

It follows therefore that Christ could not even take the nature of Adam before the fall: though not fallen, it would be too imperfect a nature for God to assume. “Far from assuming a fallen nature,” maintains Hatzidakis (2013:326) “the Incarnate Son of God is what the first Adam was not: perfect in His humanity, as He is perfect in His divinity, adorned with the divine perfections *qua* human [emphasis original].”

According to Hatzidakis (2013:309), a human being who reaches the God apex (or theosis) has ceased from sinning, just as God does not sin: “Those who have reached theosis not only do not sin, but they cannot sin at all.” Calling such a one a “divinized man,” Hatzidakis (2013:309) says, “in the perfect state of the divinized man, freedom is expressed in perfect obedience to God’s will.” This is why, according to Hatzidakis (2013:309), apostle John says “We know that whoever is born of God *does not sin*; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and *the wicked one does not touch him* (1 John 5:18)” [emphasis mine]. Every man who reaches theosis gets divinised after the image of Christ. But again, as we noted earlier, Hatzidakis (2013:162) argues,

If the image of God (Christ) is distorted, disfigured and imperfect, how can human beings who are created in His image model themselves to it? If the mirror is broken, what is the image mirrored in it going to look like? If the original is defective, can the copies be perfect? How can Christ obtain for us something He Himself lacked?

For this reason, Hatzidakis will not allow a Christ whose image is deficient. God is completely free—free from everything, including sin (sin being, as we will note in Hatzidakis’ view below, a warped state of being—the warp being and including a sinful tendency). He is a worthy model and standard for us all.

C. Positions Founded on the Omniscience of God

As he does for Christ’s omnipotence, Hatzidakis argues that as God-Man, Christ had relinquished none (and again, could not) of his omniscience. As God-Man, Christ was still the all-knowing God. It follows therefore that unlike us, Christ could experience nothing that suggested his ignorance. Every single one of his experiences took into account his omniscience. As will be noted for example, Hatzidakis (2013:149) argues that Christ could

not hesitate. Neither could he have any “opinion” (Hatzidakis, 2013:146), as hesitancy and opinion are an indication of ignorance. Furthermore, Christ could not laugh (Hatzidakis, 2013:86) “because laughter shows surprise, and He knew what was in everyone’s mind.” Hatzidakis (2013:147) describes the human mind before, and after the fall as follows:

“Where as in its natural, pre-fallen state the mind was fully illumined by God’s grace and perceived clearly the good, ... in its perverted, *fallen* state the mind no longer sees clearly.... The will thus acts based on an opinion (an educated guess) formed by inadequate and incorrect information [emphasis original].”

Hatzidakis (2013:147) then buttresses his point by referencing 1 Corinthians 13:12, that “we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face.” Based on his argument, therefore, it is possible from this platform of ignorance to err or to sin even if we did not intend to. We can sin out of ignorance and therefore require restitution (see, for example, Leviticus 4:13-15). Thus, Hatzidakis (2013:158) describes fallen nature as “a wounded nature [with a ‘darkened’ mind, potentially resulting in unintended sin] *necessarily* vulnerable to sin, *both of commission and of omission*” [emphasis mine]. This status of ignorance, and therefore its potential results, is what Hatzidakis is unwilling to ascribe to Christ.

According to him (2013:146), “Christ formed no opinions in His mind because His will always proceeded from full knowledge, and always knew naturally what is good, and His will followed it naturally.” It was impossible therefore for Christ to commit any sin, including unintended sin resulting from ignorance. But who can claim this for fallen humanity?

Speaking to the idea of ignorance, Hatzidakis (2013:378) concludes with a warning:

We should be aware that whenever we draw too sharp of a division between a *fallen* [emphasis original] human nature assumed by the divine Logos...and the divine nature with its attribute of omniscience, we would tend to separate the two natures of Christ beyond the *limits set by Chalcedon* [emphasis mine], and make this teaching lean perilously toward Nestorianism, condemned at Ephesus.

The introduction of Nestorianism here makes a good transition for us to the next important point for Hatzidakis: *The Unity of Christ’s Person*.

The Unity of Christ's Person

A critical piece of Chalcedon, as noted in chapter 1, is the unity of Christ—that Christ must always be discussed as one person. This is clearly anti-Nestorius who, as again noted in chapter 1, ventured to make a distinction between God (*θεός*) and Christ (*Χριστός*). In fact, according to Nestorius as quoted by Hatzidakis (2013:356), Christ “had all those things that belong to our nature, anger and carnal desire...and evil thoughts...” Therefore, concludes Hatzidakis (2013:155), “the Church condemned Nestorianism because it maintained that fallen nature with its sinful passions should be ascribed to Christ...” thereby forcing a separation between the divinity and the humanity of Christ. Hence, the creed states: “We confess not a Son divided and sundered into two persons, but one and the same Son...” Hatzidakis argues that postlapsarians, in their move to establish the full humanity of Christ, discuss this humanity without accounting for his divinity. According to him, discussing Christ apart from his divinity is not only a logical conundrum but is, in itself, falling into Nestorianism. He (2013: 486) argues as follows: “Postlapsarianism resembles Nestorianism because it considers Jesus as a human being endowed with divinity [like a prophet], and *does not accept the hypostatic union*, or underplays its impact” [emphasis mine]. In other words, and in the spirit of loyalty to Chalcedon, Hatzidakis argues that the incarnate Son of God must always be discussed as *one person*. Discussions on his humanity must always keep in mind his divinity, and *vice versa*. According to him (2013: 488),

Postlapsarianists violate Chalcedon, if not in letter, definitely in spirit. They address the humanity of Christ as if it were a separate entity, a concrete reality functioning and acting independently from the divine nature with which it is inextricably bound in hypostatic union.²⁸ To be true to Chalcedon means to contend with the mystery of Christ's oneness: one reality, one source, one “agent,” yet willing and acting both as man and as God.

Therefore, in Hatzidakis's view, to say that Christ necessarily experienced the consequences of sin (like we do) is to forget that unlike us, he is God. It is to ‘Nestorianise.’ Here we see the key assumption, Chalcedon, at play. With this assumption, Hatzidakis takes it for granted that at Chalcedon, the doctrine of one person in Christ is definitively set. And

²⁸ According to Hatzidakis (2013:229), “the humanity of Christ does not have its own concrete human subsistence. There is no human “I.” The “I” of Christ is that of the eternal Son of God who assumed humanity and made it His own.”

apparently, this seems to be the tenor of Orthodox doctrine: that what the church fathers said, in ecumenical council, is to a great extent cast in stone. Orthodoxy, of course, is Hatzidakis' theological context.

Continuing with his argument that the incarnate Christ could not possibly pick up the consequences of sin, Hatzidakis picks on the idea of ignorance, for example. He (2013:378) references Weinandy, Rahner, and Reardon as being among the scholars that ascribe ignorance to the incarnate Christ. But Hatzidakis wonders how this can be reconciled with the omniscience of God if the Christ incarnate is one person. In his view, the only way one can ascribe ignorance to Christ and still be consistent is to go the Nestorius way—separate Christ's divinity from his humanity. According to Hatzidakis (2013:378):

Attributing real human ignorance to Christ weakens the hypostatic union of the two natures. The distance between an ignorant humanity and an omniscient divinity is too great to be bridged by a merely nominal allegiance to Chalcedon. The union appears to be external and forced.

Then he states (2013:378), “We do not see an intimate union of the two natures, but a Nestorianizing union of a humanity without real communion with the divinity.” Hatzidakis (2013:488) accuses the postlapsarians of following Nestorius, “whether they openly express it and want to admit it or not.”

Appealing to the principle of *communicatio idiomatum*, Hatzidakis (2013:253) maintains that “to advocate that Christ was necessarily subject to corruption and death runs opposite the doctrine of interchange of predicates. If the human nature He had appropriated were fallen, God the Logos would also be fallen, because whatever is true of His human nature is ascribed to His person.” Therefore nothing must be said about Christ that cannot fit his person as God.

Describing fallen nature, Hatzidakis (2013:160) affirms as follows: “Fallen nature means a corruptible and mortal nature, a nature diseased by sin and swayed by the passions, a nature at war with God.” Then he questions (2013:160):

How can the postlapsarians attribute conflict within the single person of the God- Man? How can the same Lord be life and death, holiness and sinfulness,

free and slave, God and alienated from God? *Only a view of Christ along Nestorianizing lines can possibly divide His single hypostasis, which commands both his nature, and attribute sinful passions to Christ* [emphasis mine].

For Hatzidakis, the issue at heart is the difference between sin and holiness, between light and darkness. Just as sin cannot be mingled with holiness, and light cannot be mingled with darkness, fallen cannot be mingled with divinity, unless one ‘Nestorianises.’ In fact, Hatzidakis (2013:294) states this to be his study’s main thesis: “The main thesis of our present study is...that there is a contradiction in maintaining Christ’s sinlessness while attributing to Him a fallen state. The two concepts,” he argues, “sinless and fallen, are utterly irreconcilable.”

The Criterion for Human Nature

One of the critical questions of this study is this: What does it mean to be “truly man,” as stated in the Chalcedonian formula? The assumption behind this question is that *there is a standard* by which we must measure true humanity. Hatzidakis offers that standard: the Christ incarnate. According to him, the more we become like Christ, the more we become human. It follows therefore that Christ does not need to be like us—fallen—in order to become human. Instead, *we* need to be like him—unfallen—in order to become truly human. Hatzidakis apparently assumes that his standard of what it means to be truly human was Chalcedon’s standard.

According to Hatzidakis (2013:340), “Christ was not made in our (fallen) image and likeness. *We* were created in His image and after His likeness [emphasis original]” He (2013:6) accuses the postlapsarians of trying to make Christ in our own image: “Postlapsarianism,” he states, “is included among modern liberal teachings that tend to view Christ in *our* image and likeness [emphasis original]”—that is in our fallen nature. This, in his view is not to be. Hatzidakis (2013:162) questions as follows:

If the image of God (Christ) is distorted, disfigured and imperfect, how can human beings who are created in His image model themselves to it? If the mirror is broken, what is the image mirrored in it going to look like? If the original is defective, can the copies be perfect? How can Christ obtain for us something He Himself lacked?

According to him (2013:498), the incarnate Christ is the measuring rod for true humanity:

His [Christ's] humanness is the humanness of the new man, more real than that of the first one, whether before or after the fall, because He bears the perfect image of humanity as it will remain forever. His humanness, the new humanness, *is the measure of ours*, not the reverse: 'until we all attain...to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ' (Eph. 4:13) [emphasis mine].

Following this thought therefore, the more we become like Christ, the more we become human (cf. O'Grady, 1982:114 and Pelikan, 1985:74). In fact, it can be said that the first man, Adam before the fall, was less human than the Christ incarnate (cf. Fillion, 1940:425). Fallen human is therefore far less human, and far from being designated "truly man": "Being fallen," maintains Hatzidakis (2013:509), "is just that: less than how God had originally created us and far less than what He intended us to be." To be "truly man" therefore, in Hatzidakis' view, is to be like Christ. Christ does not become more human by becoming like us. We become more human by becoming like him. "Ultimately," argues Hatzidakis (2013:498), "our anthropology is based on Christology." We understand who man is by doing Christology. We do not understand who Christ is by doing anthropology. Referencing St. Justin as the coiner of the word "Christification," Hatzidakis (2013:499) states that "humanization [or becoming human] then is Christ- ification [becoming like Christ]." He (2013:498) conclusively states as follows:

So in Christ, God's perfect image, we have the answer as to who we are and what is our goal in life, because in Christ we have the complete man: "perfect God, perfect man," according to the Athanasian creed. We know who we are and what we are in beholding the Man—the *whole man*, the *complete man*, the *real man*, the *genuine man*, the *authentic man*, the *true man*, the *perfect man*...." [emphasis mine].

This here might surely seem to be at odds with my observation in chapter 2, that how we understand human nature informs our incarnational Christology, and that it is imperative therefore that to properly discuss this Christology, we must understand anthropology. However, it is not. Hatzidakis argues that when he does his Christology, he is in effect doing anthropology. By understanding Christ, he understands humankind. To Hatzidakis therefore, for Christ to become human is nothing more than for him to be what he already is: Christ.

It is clear here therefore that Hatzidakis' understanding of human nature impacts his understanding of the Chalcedonian phrase, "truly man." This understanding serves as one of Hatzidakis' key assumptions in his interpretation of the phrase.

The Nature of Sin

On the whole, Hatzidakis maintains that beyond being an act, sin is *a state being*—one that Christ can therefore not become. And that state of being is the *fallen nature*. According to him (2013:270), sin is "*anything* that takes us away from our target, God, and the goal of our union with Him" [emphasis mine]. That "*anything*" includes our state of being, as he (2013:271) explains below:

The very fact that we are away from our target constitutes in itself a state, *a condition of sinfulness*. This state of sin then is something beyond a personal willful act that can be controlled, with some measure of success, by us. It is a state of *ontological alienation from God*, the source of existence and of every good [Emphasis original].²⁹

According to Hatzidakis (2013:271),

The fall produced a psychosomatic change that *lies beyond our control*. It is the source and cause of personal acts, but even without them we would be inclined to *sin* and *we would reap its unavoidable consequences*, which are chiefly corruption and death [emphasis mine].³⁰

Following this reasoning therefore, we do not need to commit sin to be called sinners or to receive the consequences thereof. We simply need to be, i.e. to exist as descendants of fallen Adam and Eve.³¹

Hatzidakis (2013:272) explains that "human *nature* has been altered and is subject to the consequences of the fall, which, besides passibility, corruption and death, include a propensity to sin and, invariably, its [sin's] actualization [emphasis original]." Following this reasoning, it means that if Christ were to take the "altered" [fallen] human nature, he

²⁹ Being away from our target here includes the fact that we are *born* away from God.

³⁰ Aghiorgoussis ([sa]:179) defines sin as "a sickness of the soul."

³¹ Though Orthodox theology seems to separate "guilt" from the "condition of sin." See Chryssavgis (1994:79).

would “invariably” sin. To maintain Christ’s purity, Hatzidakis is unwilling to commit him to this kind of nature—a fallen human nature. But again, per Hatzidakis’ thinking, if Christ were to take the fallen nature, he would not even have to sin for him to be called a sinner and to bear the consequences thereof; he would simply need to be born.³² One of the bible texts Hatzidakis (2013:273) uses to describe this “altered” nature is Ephesians 2:3, stating that “we all...were by *nature* children of wrath” [emphasis mine]. In his view, this text means that we do not have to sin to be called sinners and to bear the consequences of sin. We simply need to be born. He wonders if this is the nature we want to ascribe to Christ.

Referencing Paul (Romans 7:24), who cries out “O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” Hatzidakis (2013:274) says “we all share this ‘body of death’ from which springs,” among other things he enumerates, “ignorance, confusion, hesitation.” First of all, unless there is some intervention, Paul’s body is *unchangeably* destined for death. And Paul has no control over his destiny. He needs a saviour. Secondly, Paul is ignorant, confused, and therefore hesitant. Hatzidakis maintains—as has already been noted in our earlier discussions—that both of these characterisations cannot be applied to Christ. Christ is omniscient; he therefore cannot be ignorant. Consequently he cannot be confused; neither can he hesitate, for he always knows what is right. Furthermore, if Christ were to need a savior, like Paul, he would not qualify to be savior himself.

Citing Matthew 7:11, Hatzidakis (2013:275) observes that Christ “clearly differentiates and distances Himself from all human beings: “If you, then, who *are evil*....” [emphasis mine]. Following Hatzidakis’ thinking this far, the ‘being evil’ in this text can be interpreted in three ways: 1. Being evil by nature; 2. Being evil by sinning *deliberately*; 3. Being evil by sinning *ignorantly*. If by sheer will power we escape 2., and by some chance we escape 3. (both of which are not possible but are here being used to emphasize the impossibility of escaping sin), we cannot escape 1. Christ on the other hand escapes all three. He is not evil by nature, for how can he be savior? He is not evil by sinning deliberately, for, as Hatzidakis (2013:275) observes, Christ “proclaimed what no human being dares to utter: ‘I *always* do what is pleasing to the Father’ (John 8:29)” [emphasis mine]. He is not evil by sinning ignorantly because he is omniscient. Per Hatzidakis, whichever way we look at it, we are evil; we are sinners, but Christ is everything opposite—different and separate from

³² And therefore fail to be savior.

us.

According to Hatzidakis (2013:276), “when the apostle John says, ‘in Him there is no sin’ (1 John 3:5), *he does not say that Christ committed no sin*, [emphasis mine] but that being the Son of God He was *naturally* [emphasis original] sinless.” Here, Hatzidakis addresses those who argue that a sinner becomes one only by the act of sinning. These would interpret John as saying that Christ did not sin. But to Hatzidakis, sin in this text takes on an ontological presence that is localisable. Therefore, when John says that *in Christ* there is no sin, he means that in Christ there is no *localisable thing called sin*. On the other hand we *contain* sin. In fact, we *are* both sin and sinners. We are sin because we were born that way (we are sin by nature) and because sin is a state of being. We are sinners because we are sin. By extension, we are sinners because we sin. Christ, on the other hand, cannot be any of this lest he becomes a sinner.

According to Hatzidakis (2013:282), “sinful means fallen and unredeemed.” This is why, argues Hatzidakis (2013:282), “Paul nowhere speaks of Christ’s sinful flesh,” for how could Christ be fallen and unredeemed? Instead, points out Hatzidakis (2013:282), Paul “speaks of God having sent His own Son ‘in the *likeness* of sinful flesh” [emphasis mine]. We are born fallen and unredeemed. We are born lacking, short of God’s mark.

Christ, on the other hand, is born ‘standing’ so to say. He is born full to the mark—not requiring any make up. We are born disconnected from God. We are born detached from life. In contrast, Christ is born fully connected to God. In fact, Christ is born God himself. He is born life itself. Unlike us, he does not need to be reconnected; he does not need to be redeemed.

Further describing our fallen nature, which, as already noted, according to Hatzidakis is equivalent to sin, he (2013:290) argues that while we are tempted “from within” Christ was not. We *naturally* like sin (sin here refers to *action* contrary to the will of God, for example lying, distinguished from our fallen nature—of which the sinful tendency is a part—which nature again, in Hatzidakis’ view, is equivalent to sin). We are *naturally* attracted to sin. Christ was never *naturally* attracted to sin. In fact, he was *never* attracted to sin. Instead, he was appalled by it. He *hated* it. According to Hatzidakis (2013:290) therefore “Christ’s temptations were produced not from within, as happens with us, but only from without,

precisely as it was with the first Adam” [emphasis mine]. Enlisting apostle James’ help, Hatzidakis (2013:290) observes as follows:

This [that unlike us, Christ was only tempted from outside] is a significant difference between Christ’s sinless human nature and our *fallen* human nature, because, unlike Him, we are beings who “are tempted when we are lured and enticed *by our own desire* (James 3:14), which desire gives birth to sin, and ends in death (v. 15) [emphasis original].

Hatzidakis (2013:290) then notes: “Christ was not lured and enticed by His own desire.” Instead, he was tempted from outside. It is clear here that because Hatzidakis defines sin as a fallen state of being, and because the Chalcedonian creed states that the human Christ was without sin, he cannot allow Christ to take a fallen human nature. Hatzidakis’ understanding of sin then becomes a presupposition or assumption that shapes his definition of the true man that Jesus became.

The Nature of Salvation

According to Hatzidakis (2013:7, 67) salvation is “our theosis,” “deification or divinization.” Salvation is our becoming like God. But to become like God, we must ‘eat’ of his divinity, and this divinity must therefore be life-giving. Our fallen nature, he (2013:203), argues cannot be life-giving; it is—as earlier noted—a “body of death” (Romans 7:24): “Christ’s body is the source of our salvation, it therefore cannot be itself corruptible, *fallen* and unredeemed!” [emphasis original].

Here we see the impact of Orthodox sacramental theology on Hatzidakis’ thinking—especially, in this case, regarding the Eucharist and salvation.³³ The concepts in this theology are his assumptions. These assumptions in turn shape his views of the human nature of Christ—thus shaping his Christology. In Orthodox theology, salvation is basically a growing into God, though not necessarily becoming God (Fairbairn, [s.a.]:42).³⁴ The Eucharist is the food that is essential for this growth (Fairbairn, [s.a.]:44). This view, that the Eucharist is not just symbolic but essential for a person’s salvation, is not unique to the

³³ In Orthodox theology, a sacrament, such as baptism, has salvific power. According to Chryssavgis (1994:86), for example, “a sacrament transforms the limitations of sin, death and corruption—which have become characteristics of our world...” In other words, a sacrament gives life. It vivifies the dying. Chryssavgis (1994:86) further states that “the entire creation is an historical and material sacrament of God, a palpable mystery of divine grace, an immense incarnation of cosmic proportions.”

³⁴ See also Harrison ([sa]:430,432), and Clendenin (2003:130)

Orthodox Church. It is found in Roman Catholicism as well (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994:420), thereby making it western. For Catholics (as well as the Orthodox), the efficacy of the Eucharist is so far-reaching that it modifies the destiny of the dead. This is why it is important for them that Mass be conducted for the departed. But for the Eucharist to give life, it must itself be free from death and corruption. It must be pure. And this is because it represents Christ, who is free of corruption, a pure Christ. And this is Hatzidakis' argument.

"It is pertinent," he (2013:446-7) argues, "to ask the following question: If...Christ's human nature was *inherently* corrupt and fallen, what do we receive in Holy

Communion: corrupt or the incorrupt body and blood of the Lord?" [emphasis mine] Citing "St. Ignatios" and Paul respectively, Hatzidakis (2013:447) further asks, "Do we approach to partake of 'the medicine of immortality and the antidote that we should not die but live forever in Jesus Christ'...or of a 'body of death' (Rom. 7:24)?"

As far as Hatzidakis is concerned, just as we must physically eat in order to grow and mature physically, we must spiritually eat in order to grow and mature spiritually. And just as, in order for it to give physical growth and maturity, the physical food we eat must be life-giving, in order for it to bring spiritual growth and maturity, the spiritual food we eat must be life-giving. According to him (2013:446), "in the Holy Eucharist, Christ encounters us...to change us...with His own divine life, bound ineffably with our own life."

Unfortunately, he argues, our fallen nature is—as noted above—a 'body of death.' For this reason, Christ could not have taken this body of death; otherwise he would not be able to give us life.

The growth and maturity discussed above, coupled with what it means to be truly human according to Hatzidakis lights up his concept of salvation. Salvation, in Hatzidakis' view, is a growth into God. "By partaking of the holy mysteries," he (2013:447) states, "we are changed mystically by the power of the Holy Spirit *into what He is*" [emphasis mine].

Salvation therefore is a ripening, a maturation, and a readying into God. We all are in the process of ripening. We are in the process of readying and maturing into what God has intended for us all to become: Godlike. We are in the process of *theosis* or deification or divinisation. But again, as noted above, for this growth to occur; for this maturity to happen;

for this ripening to be, we must partake of God. For *theosis* to occur; for deification to happen; for divinisation to be, we must partake of *theos*; we must partake of deity, and we must partake of divinity respectively. And these three—theos, deity, and divinity, in as far as they apply to the Christian God—are the very antithesis of death.

They are the very opposite of *fallen*. Therefore, concludes Hatzidakis (2013:449), since Christ gives us life, he could not possibly have assumed a fallen human nature:

Unless the sacrificial body of the Lord had the power to transform us and unite us to Him it would not be suitable for spiritual food. A body inherently corrupt and fallen would not be a pleasing and acceptable sacrifice. Yet, this body, stricken and in agony, is our ‘medicine of immortality’ and incorruption.

In his view, sin and life cannot go together. Sin, which as noted above as a state-of-being, is inseparably linked to death. Since salvation as defined by Hatzidakis is a process of obtaining life by partaking of life-giving-food, this food cannot be a source of death.

Since sin and death are inseparably linked together, and since sin is a state-of-being, the life-giving body of Christ, his human nature or state-of-being, is imperatively separate from sin—therefore separate from the fallen human nature. One more time, Hatzidakis’ view of salvation—that it is a growth into God, dependent on sinless food, and that that food is the incarnate Christ—impacts his definition of Christ’s human nature (true humanity). This view becomes another one of Hatzidakis’ assumptions in defining the phrase “truly man.”

Summary of Arguments and Assumptions

What then, in short, are the arguments and assumptions of the prelapsarians, as presented by Hatzidakis? They are as follows:

1. Christ could not have taken the fallen human nature and still be God. This is because, following the principle of *communicatio idiomatum*, God cannot be described as fallen: incapable, restricted, and ignorant.
2. Christ could not have taken the fallen human nature and still be one person, per Chalcedon. This is because fallen human nature and divinity are incompatible: one (fallen) is sinful; the other (divinity) is sinless.

3. Christ could not have taken the fallen human nature and still be our ideal human being, after whose likeness we must strive, and in whose likeness we must become. This is because fallen human nature is just that: fallen and imperfect.
4. Christ could not have taken the fallen human nature and still be sinless. This is because to be fallen is to be sinful.
5. Christ could not have taken the fallen human nature and still be our life (salvation) giver. This is because a fallen human nature cannot provide life (salvation).

We must now turn to the postlapsarians, equally outlining their arguments and assumptions as presented by Pannenberg

CHAPTER 4: POSTLAPSARIAN ARGUMENTS AND ASSUMPTIONS— WOLFHART PANNENBERG

An Introduction

Pannenberg, a Lutheran theologian, was born in Stettin, Germany, in 1928. Having studied at the Universities of Berlin, Göttingen, Heidelberg, and Basel, Pannenberg has more than six hundred publications to his credit, whose substance has earned him international recognition in academia, especially in academic theology. In the discipline of Christology, Pannenberg is best known for his book *Jesus: God and Man* first published in 1968. Like Hatzidakis' work, this book is selected for its depth, relevance to and comprehensive treatment of the subject at hand.

Pannenberg founds his theology mostly on the epistemological principle of empiricism: that knowledge must be based on experience. “We can validate,” says Pannenberg (1991-1998:47), “and appropriate as true only that which our own experience confirms.” It is this stance, perhaps, that has won him an all-round approbation, both from the purely scientific community (believing only in experience-based knowledge) at one end, and from the foundationally³⁵ non-scientific community (believing foundationally in faith-based knowledge) at the other end. Pannenberg's theology (knowledge of God) therefore is firmly hinged on that which we *all* can see, smell, touch, handle, or experience. This knowledge is therefore not necessarily limited to a select few, blessed with special privileges and abilities, like prophets. It is available to all who can experience and reason from cause to effect. Through the examination and exploration of that which we all can access, Pannenberg believes that we *all* can, and in fact should, access this knowledge. Pannenberg's Christology therefore is based on this concept.

The problem however with Christology is that Jesus, the subject matter, is absent from us. Jesus is not here for us to see, touch and handle. He rather stands in history. So how do we know that what we are saying about him is true? For Pannenberg, we verify. It is Pannenberg's stance that God reveals himself in ongoing, unfolding, experienceable, human

³⁵ Meaning that in matters of knowledge acquisition, whenever members of this community cannot reconcile their faith to that of their experience, they rather go for their faith. In other words, their faith is seen to be more important than their experience. In fact, it is even seen to be more important than their reason—if the two, reason and faith, cannot be reconciled. Their faith is allowed, and, in times of conflict between faith and experience, *appealed to*, to hold a higher epistemological function than their experience.

events. These events, as they pass, shape up into concrete ‘statues’ of history— statues accessible to, and examinable, as well as verifiable by us. The story of Jesus, to Pannenberg, is such history. According to Pannenberg, this story is open to all; it is available for public examination and interpretation. It is the case therefore that from history in general, Pannenberg builds his theology—an experience-based and verifiable theology. And from the history of Jesus in particular, Pannenberg builds his Christology—an experience-based and verifiable Christology. In Pannenberg’s view therefore, God has revealed himself in the Jesus story—a history examinable by and accessible to all.

Jesus: Sinless or Not?

So what is Pannenberg’s response to our main thesis question? Was Jesus sinless (per Pannenberg’s understanding of sin) or not? Was Jesus fallen or not? According to Pannenberg, Jesus was sinless, yet he took our fallen, sinful human nature. It is important to Pannenberg that Jesus be sinless. It is also important that he assumes our fallen sinful nature. Perhaps what makes Pannenberg stand out from most postlapsarians is that he does not necessarily base the sinlessness of Jesus on the appearance or non-appearance of sin— either by conduct or nature—in Jesus’ life,³⁶ but on God’s declaration, via the resurrection, that Jesus is indeed sinless.³⁷ I will explore Pannenberg’s thinking in four main parts. First, I will look at Pannenberg’s argument that Jesus must be the correct starting point for all Christology. Next, I will look at what Pannenberg means when he says that Jesus, as a human being, was sinful. At the same time, I will examine his view of the sinlessness of Jesus’ human nature. Next, I will look at Pannenberg’s definition of true humanity and the fulfilment of the same in Jesus.

Pannenberg begins by justifying his choice of methodology. In view of the two acknowledged Christology options, Christology from above and Christology from below, Pannenberg asks (1991-1998:276-277), “should we begin with the basis in God and his initiative in sending his son, or should we move on the plain of human reality, on which we must show that the event took place, if it really took place at all?” For Pannenberg, Jesus the Jew; Jesus as he existed in Palestine, must be the cornerstone of all Christology. Other than

³⁶ The fact that Pannenberg does not base the sinlessness of Jesus on the appearance or non-appearance of sin does not mean, in his view, that Jesus sinned or had sin in him.

³⁷ Though this is not to say that Jesus sinned or had sin in him.

in his *Jesus—God and man*, Pannenberg argues his point in his “*Systematic Theology*, the ninth chapter: “Anthropology and Christology” (1991-1998:276-323). By taking this stance, observes Tupper (1974:60), “Pannenberg posits a distinction between a Christology ‘from above’ and one ‘from below.’” It is from this point, that of the real historical Jesus, that we begin our study of Pannenberg’s Christological thought, at least as it relates to Jesus’ fallenness.

Jesus: The Correct Starting Point for all Christology

According to Pannenberg (1977:48), “Christology, the question about Jesus himself, about his person, as he lived on earth in the time of Emperor Tiberius, must remain *prior to all questions about his significance....*” [emphasis mine]. Everything else, soteriology included, is a predicate to *this* Christology. Nobuhara ([s.a]:269) summarises Pannenberg’s drive in beginning from this Jesus as follows:

In rejecting the concept of incarnation as the point of departure in his Christology, Pannenberg is motivated by a desire to verify the Christian community's confession of Christ in two ways: (1) Jesus appears first as a human being who claims authority or unity with God; (2) through the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, God the Father has confirmed, legitimated, and verified Jesus' earthly claim to authority. Pannenberg must do this in order to affirm retroactively that God is revealed in Jesus and that Jesus is the Son of God.

Pannenberg is keenly aware of the possibility and danger of creating a phantom Christology—a reflection of our human desires. Such a creation, states Pannenberg (1977:47), would essentially be a fulfilment of “Feuerbach’s thesis that all religious concepts are only projections of human needs and wishes onto an imaginary and transcendent world.” In this case, we would be projecting our ‘human needs and wishes’ on to the *real person*, Jesus, to such an extent that we essentially cover him with our wishes, remaining only with these wishes in view. For this reason, Pannenberg (1977:48) argues that “Jesus possesses significance ‘for us’ only to the extent that this significance is inherent in himself, in his history, and in his person constituted by this history.” Consequently, argues Pannenberg (1977:48), “only when this can be shown may we be sure that we are not merely attaching our questions, wishes, and thoughts to his figure.”

Soteriological Motifs in History: How they have shaped Christology

There are at least seven soteriological motifs, argues Pannenberg (1977:39-46), that have shaped Christology in history:

Deification Through Incarnation

In this motif, salvation is man becoming Godlike (the process of deification). The extent to which deification happens is determined by the extent to which God becomes man. Therefore, if man must completely be saved, God must completely become man. According to Pannenberg (1977:39), “the whole history of Christology in the ancient church” is determined by the deification motif. During the Arian debate, Pannenberg (1977:40) notes for example that “it was the concern for the deification of man that made it so important...that...God himself really became man in Jesus.” This “concern for the deification of man” determined the church’s Christology. That this Jesus was *God-* become-man was *essential* to man’s salvation. Pannenberg (1977:40) cites the Christologies of Irenaeus, Athanasius, and Gregory of Nazianzus as examples of soteriology-based Christologies. For Irenaeus God had to become like us so that we might become like him. For Athanasius, Jesus had to be God—the only source of salvation—in order for him to save us. For Gregory, God had to assume all of our being in order for him to save all of that being. For all three, Christology was shaped by soteriology. And the three give us an authoritative picture of what Christology looked like in the early church.

Deification Through Assimilation to God

Salvation in this model involves an increasing participation in that which is good, till the participant is unchangeably good. “However,” writes Pannenberg (1977:41), “according to Plato, the good is that which is truly divine.” To increasingly participate in that which is good therefore means to increasingly become good, and thus to increasingly become divine, or deified. Human beings are to increasingly participate in that which is good, till they become unchangeably good. So where does Jesus come in in this process? He is our *example*: as he overcame, so must we.

According to Pannenberg (1977:42), describing the resultant Christology of this soteriology, espoused by what he calls the “patristic church,” “Jesus appeared as the great example for man’s ethical striving, and Jesus’ saving significance,” he adds, “was sought in that.”

Perhaps the best description of Jesus as our example, among those considered by Pannenberg (1977:41), is the one he says is given by Theodore of Mopsuestia:

Through the power of his free, human will, certainly with the support of God's grace, Jesus freed his soul from sinful drives. In this he is an example for all those who are called to freedom. In this manner Jesus made his soul unchangeable in the good and through this became ever more similar to the divine Logos. Thus the indwelling of the Logos in Jesus' soul constantly became more complete in the course of his moral development until the man Jesus was exalted through the resurrection to total unchangeableness....

Here again, argues Pannenberg, we see how a soteriology of increasing deification creates its own shadow: A Christology of increasing deification.

The Christology of Vicarious Satisfaction

Salvation in this model is freedom from debt. Humankind, in becoming a sinner, owes God. In order to redeem himself, he must pay his debt. The problem is that *by being a sinner*, man has nothing that he does not owe God; therefore he is unable to pay. It is at this point that Jesus comes in as the saviour, and central to what qualifies him, according to Pannenberg (1977:42), is that he is sinless: "Only the man Jesus, born *without sin*, can offer God a work of supererogation, the gift of life. For, *in distinction from all other men*, Jesus as a man without sin was not condemned to death, he did not need to die...." [emphasis mine].

In this model, the sinlessness of Jesus is necessitated by the price that needed to be paid in order to secure salvation: the model's definition for salvation, particular to the human predicament, *dictates the price; it moulds the Christ*. Furthermore, according to Pannenberg (1977:42), even the divinity of Jesus is necessitated by the salvation being offered: this salvation had to be of "infinite value," and only God, who alone is infinite, can offer anything of infinite value. It follows therefore that both the sinlessness and divinity of Christ are necessary results of soteriology. But, as already noted, Pannenberg argues that Christ—the man Jesus—should define salvation; Christology should shape soteriology.

The Christology of God's grace alone

In this model, salvation is God, alone, making and declaring us righteous. We obtain this

salvation by accepting and making our own, God's judgement upon us, which declares that we are unrighteous and that we therefore must die. Pannenberg (1977:43), reading Luther, calls this acceptance humbling ourselves: "God gives his grace to the one who is unrighteous in his own eyes and thereby shows himself to be *humble* before God" [emphasis mine]. So where does Christ fit in here? He becomes our representative before God by becoming the perfect representation of humility in order to obtain exaltation. Says Luther, as read by Pannenberg (1977:43), "Jesus is the representative of humanity before God *by humbling himself* under God's wrath against sin and *thereby being righteous before God.*" However, the sin that brings God's judgement and wrath on Christ is not his—it is ours. Therefore when we accept God's judgement on us, we accept it, in a sense, in Christ: the judgement falls on Christ and not on us. God does to Christ that which he is supposed to do to us. Christ therefore becomes our *representative*. Here is how Luther, as read by Pannenberg (1977:43), describes God's saving work for us concerning Christ as our representative: "Because God wanted to glorify Christ and install him as king, he permitted him on the contrary to die, to be broken, and to descend into hell. *God deals in this way with all the saints*" [emphasis mine]. God permits us "to die, to be broken, and to descend into hell" because he wants to glorify us. But we die in Christ.

We are broken in Christ. And we descend into hell in Christ. We do not *ourselves* bear the wrath of God; Christ bears it for us. And this is where the vicarious concept fits in: Christ vicariously bears our sentence. According to Pannenberg (1977:44), "Luther emphasized...the vicarious character of Jesus' penal suffering. This," he says, "is particularly clear in the well known formula about the 'happy exchange': because Christ bears our sins, we in turn receive a share in his righteousness."

Evidently, Pannenberg would argue, the Christ we have in this motif is a clear reflection of our image. He is, in a sense, a projection of what we want to be, a projection of our mental picture of ourselves in the process of being saved. And this is a result of our understanding of salvation as a process of humbling ourselves before God in order to gain his favour. And this is exactly what Pannenberg argues against: a Christology based on our own understanding of salvation, and thus a shadow of our own thoughts.

The Prototype of the Religious Man

Schleiermacher's God-consciousness theology is at the centre of this model. According to

Pannenberg (1977:44), “Schleiermacher sought man’s salvation in the domination of the consciousness of God [in man] over all other knowledge and action.” So how does this affect Schleiermacher’s Christology? Christ becomes the prototype fulfilment of this salvation: his consciousness is fully and completely dominated by God. This fulfilment, writes Pannenberg (1977:44) “determines all Christological statements in Schleiermacher’s dogmatics,” again, a soteriology based Christology.

The Ideal of Moral Perfection

Salvation in this model may be thought of as an achievement of moral perfection. Individuals who have attained this ideal together make up the Kingdom of God. According to Pannenberg (1977:45), referencing Kant, this kingdom may be described as “a community [of morally perfect individuals founded and living] according to the laws of virtue.” Who then is Jesus in this model? According to Kant, again as referenced by Pannenberg (1977:44), he is the “personification” of moral perfection. Thus, says Kant, in Pannenberg’s (1977:44) words, “We cannot...think of a morally perfect man in any other way than as someone who not only lives morally himself but also spreads good in his environment and even sacrifices himself for it.” In other words, we cannot think of a morally perfect man in any other way than that of Jesus. He is the ideal of human perfection. Therefore Ritschl, according to Pannenberg (1977:45), calls him the “founder of the Kingdom of God in the world.” Following Pannenberg’s argument then, Jesus becomes nothing more than a “personification” of our wishes—a creation.

The Christology of Pure Personality

Salvation for this model is existence or being, as a person. But what exactly does this “being” mean? For Gogarten, as referenced by Pannenberg (1977:46), this being means the existence of “an ‘I’ over against a ‘thou’ and from a ‘thou...’” “The ‘thou’ from whom man as ‘I’ exists,” continues Gogarten, again as read by Pannenberg (1977:46), “is decisively the ‘Thou’ of God.” So who then is Jesus in view of this ‘anthropology’?

According to Pannenberg (1977:46), “Gogarten sees man’s being as a person fulfilled in Jesus, in so far as” he “exists entirely from God’s ‘Thou.’” Pannenberg would argue here that this is a perfect example of making Jesus in our own image—a hoped for image. It is an example of personifying or embodying our own desires of what we want to be, into Jesus. But this Jesus, unfortunately, is nothing but a creation; a projection of our mental wishes.

In another example of salvation or genuine being as a person, Pannenberg (1977:47) characterises this being as “trust in God’s future, in God’s power.” He goes on to say that “Jesus is here essentially the witness of faith. He is this through his own certainty of God, as well as through opening the certainty of God to others by the call of faith.” So Jesus here is not only the essence of genuine existence, but, by being a believer in God, he is the saviour of humanity. One more time here we see the play of soteriology into Christology: Jesus is the perfection of what we want to be—a perfect believer in God, but only so because we are, at least in our idealised existence. He is a shadow of our mental creations; a projection of our deepest existential longings.

Finally, and in reference to all the seven motifs and all soteriology based Christology, Pannenberg (1977:47) conclusively (and perhaps rhetorically) asks:

Has one really spoken there about Jesus himself at all? Does it not perhaps rather involve projections onto Jesus’ figure of the human desire for salvation and deification, of human striving after similarity to God, of the human duty to bring satisfaction for sins committed, of the human experience of bondage in failure, in the knowledge of one’s own guilt, and, most clearly in neo-Protestantism, projections of the idea of perfect religiosity, of perfect morality, of pure personality, of radical trust? Do not the desires of men only become projected upon the figure of Jesus, personified in him?

Then he (Pannenberg, 1977:47) closes, “the danger that Christology will be *constructed* out of the soteriological interest ought to be clear [emphasis original].” What therefore is the correct basis for all Christology? It is, in Pannenberg’s view, Jesus the man—the 1st century Palestinian. It is to this Jesus that we now turn.

The Human Nature of Jesus: Its Sinfulness and Sinlessness

In opening this chapter, we did state that Pannenberg believes that Jesus took a fallen human nature, sinful such as we have. He also believes that Jesus, in this fallen and sinful human nature, was also sinless. How Pannenberg reconciles the two—sinfulness and sinlessness in Jesus—will engage us in this section (section 2.). First, we will discuss Jesus’ sinfulness: What exactly is contained in this sinfulness? What does Pannenberg mean when he says that Jesus took a sinful human nature? Second, we will consider the sinlessness of

Jesus. It would be expected here that we start by exactly defining sin *in order* to know what exactly it is that is absent from Jesus. But we already stated that the appearance or non-appearance of sin in Jesus is not exactly Pannenberg's basis for declaring him sinless. His basis is, instead, the resurrection. We will here therefore explore Pannenberg's understanding of sin only in order to aid our understanding of his definition for sinlessness. Against this backdrop, we will then close this section (section 2.) by describing Pannenberg's basis for declaring Jesus sinless.

Its Sinfulness

For Pannenberg, the humanity of Jesus was exactly such as we have, fallen—sinful. Quoting Karl Barth, his teacher, Pannenberg (1977:362) says, “Barth is right in emphasising that Jesus ‘is identical with our nature under the conditions of the fall.’” Barth's (2004:143) fuller statement reads as follows:

...there must be no weakening or obscuring of the saving truth that the nature which God assumed in Christ is identical with our nature as we see it in the light of the Fall. If it were otherwise, how could Christ be really like us? What concern would we have with Him? We stand before God characterised by the Fall. God's Son not only assumed our nature but He entered the *concrete* form of our nature, under which we stand before God as men *damned* and *lost* [emphasis mine].

According to Pannenberg (1977:362), God assumed “human nature in its corrupt,” damaged, and “sinful state,” otherwise he would not be truly human. As humans, for example, we inevitably make mistakes. Therefore, Pannenberg believes that the Jesus of Palestine—the man Jesus—made mistakes or blunders, else he would not be truly human. “There is no doubt,” writes Pannenberg (1977:226) for example, “that Jesus *erred* when he announced that God's Lordship would begin in his own generation (Matt. 23:36; 16:28; Mark 13:30 and parallels; cf. Matt. 10:23)” [emphasis mine]. Pannenberg (1977:227) describes Jesus' announcement here as an “erroneous and...outdated eschatological message.” This of course implies that Jesus was ignorant, another one of our human characteristics. Therefore Pannenberg (1977:329) does not credit Jesus with omniscience: “...to attribute to the soul of Jesus a knowledge of all things ...makes the danger more than considerable that the genuine humanity of Jesus' experiential life would be lost.”

In addition to affirming that Jesus took a sinful human nature, Pannenberg (1977:362) further argues against the idea of Jesus assuming “a humanity absolutely purified from all sin,” contending that such a position “contradicts...the anthropological radicality [or damage extent] of sin....” In other words, Pannenberg argues that there was no way that Jesus could be born a genuine human being, and yet escape our sin-shaped nature. All human beings, he maintains, are born sinful, therefore so was Christ. According to Pannenberg (1977:361), the only way that one can talk about a Jesus who is sinless *by nature* is to assign him a sinless conception, which according to Pannenberg (1977:361), the Church, recognising the problem, did.³⁸ But, as we will see later, Pannenberg considered this step by the Church erroneous.

Going further, Pannenberg (1977:362) argues that the thought of Jesus taking up a flawless human nature counters “the testimony of the New Testament and of early Christian theology that the Son of God assumed sinful flesh....” For Pannenberg (1977:357), Romans 8:3—that God sent “his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh”—is an example of New Testament testimony that Jesus took a sinful human nature.

Pannenberg (1977:357) rejects as erroneous the alternative interpretation of Roman 8:3—that Jesus took a sanctified human nature that was only *analogous* to sinful flesh. Moving on to “early Christian theology,” referenced above, Pannenberg (1977:356) states that when Irenaeus affirmed Jesus’ sinlessness, “he made no reservation regarding a sinlessness that would have distinguished the humanity of Jesus by nature from other men, apart from his activity overcoming sin.” In other words, Irenaeus held that Jesus had exactly the same nature as we have, the only difference being that whereas we fail to overcome sin, he did not. This, again, is Pannenberg’s example of the “early Christian theology” testimony, referenced above. Another such example he gives is that of Tertullian. According to Pannenberg (1977:356), “Tertullian said that just that flesh whose nature is otherwise sinful has been assumed by Christ and in him sin is thus made powerless ” So, again, Pannenberg believes that both the New Testament and the early Church supports the idea that Jesus assumed our sinful human nature.

Where, then, did the thought of Jesus taking a clean and decontaminated human *nature*

³⁸ By creating the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception.

come from? When, how, and why did the discussion shift, from viewing the human *nature* of Jesus as sinful to viewing it as sinless? According to Pannenberg (1977:356), “Origen was apparently the first” to assign a sinless *nature* to Jesus. This sinless nature, in Origen, again as read by Pannenberg, is a result of the unquestionable dedication to God of Jesus’ preexistent soul. According to Pannenberg (1977:356), Origen describes Jesus’ soul as being “so unwaveringly dependent on God...that...*through the mood that grew out of long habit, the resolution of will became nature*” [emphasis mine]. We note, at least in this reading of Origen, that there is the idea of “the resolution of will” *becoming* nature. The implication here seems to be that there was a time when this “resolution” was not nature. Additionally, as time went by, emphasis seems to have shifted from ontological “becoming” to ontological *being*. In other words, Jesus’ human nature increasingly became viewed as being *naturally* sinless and *different* from that of our sinful nature. “In the East,” writes Pannenberg (1977:356), “the opposition to the Arians seems to have caused a stronger reserve about Jesus’ participation in the human fleshly nature.” The Arians believed that certain human characteristics were unbefitting of divinity. Therefore, they denied Jesus’ divinity. In order to take care of their concerns, writes Pannenberg (1977:356), “in 377, Basil set forth a letter that the Lord did not assume our sinful flesh but only something analogous to it, since he assumed the natural human failings, but rejected as unworthy of divinity those which soil the purity of the human nature.” At this point, Pannenberg (1977:357) notes as follows:

The contrast to the anti-Gnostic emphasis on Jesus’ equality with us as found in Tertullian and Irenaeus is obvious. While these early theologians still restricted themselves to the assertion that Jesus had in fact not committed any sin and thereby had overcome the power of sin in sinful flesh itself, subsequently the emphasis was that human nature was not bound to the Logos in the condition spoiled by sin coming from Adam.

According to Pannenberg (1977:357), at least in the West, the push to make Jesus sinless by nature came to its basic completion in Augustine: “With Augustine, the emphasis of the concept of Jesus’ sinlessness was conclusively shifted in the West from the actual overcoming of sin in the flesh to the concept of a *condition* of a sinlessness and lack of sinfulness that existed from birth” [emphasis mine]. The problem however, Pannenberg

(1977:357-8) notes, regarded Augustine's related doctrine of original sin. This doctrine assumed that Adam's sin was inescapably transmitted from one generation to another through sexual procreation. Therefore, since every descendant of Adam is a product of sexual activity, every single one of them was deemed contaminated. But, since Jesus was a product of a completely asexual process, he was considered to have escaped the sin bug, so to say. The hanging question, however, was obvious: What about Mary? Since she too was a product of sexual procreation, how could she not transmit the 'germ' of sin to Jesus, her son? The church had an answer: Immaculate Conception. Mary was born sinless, said the church (see, for example, Garrigou-Lagrange's commentary on Thomas, published 1950, page 409). But this brought another question: How could Mary be born sinless, since she too was a descendant of Adam? Answer: She was cleansed in advance by Christ's merits. Pannenberg (1977:358) calls this whole explanation "a very artificial construction!" "But," continues Pannenberg (1977:358), "it is only by such artificiality that one can establish Jesus' *natural* sinlessness by the virgin birth" [emphasis mine].

Commenting over the same, Macleod ([s.a.]: 21) notes that Pannenberg "forthrightly denies" the virgin birth's "historicity, describes it as a legend and emphatically rejects Barth's attempt to place it at the same level as the resurrection."

According to Pannenberg (1977:362),

It is inconceivable that Jesus was truly man, but that in his corporeality and behavior he was not stamped by the universal structure of centeredness of animal life that is the basis of the self centeredness of human experience and behavior, but which becomes sin only in man.

It is evident here that Pannenberg has a particular understanding of what it means to be human. It appears that to Pannenberg, one must be exactly like us to qualify to be human. One must take the weaknesses that we, by nature and *human species*-specific constitution, possess. If we are often ignorant (not omniscient), one must often be ignorant. If we are often erroneous (not perfect), one must often be erroneous. If we are self-centred, one must be self-centred. It is impossible therefore, in Pannenberg's view, for one to be called truly human if they miss one of these characteristics. Pannenberg's underlying assumption here is clear: truth claims must be in tune with known experience. "We can validate," says

Pannenberg (47:1998), “and appropriate as true only that which our own experience confirms.” Truth claims must be “conceivable.” If not, then such claims cannot be said to be true. Pannenberg, then, bases his definition and description of true humanity on this experience: true humanity is sinful. It follows therefore that for Jesus to be truly human, he must be sinful, thus fallen.

A few things regarding my position may be clarified here. First, in my view, sin is any act that is contrary to the will of God, whether it results from ignorance or not. For example, killing another human being, whether erroneously or not, is sin. It still negatively affects society (and is thus, in my view, equivalent to evil) and is still an act against the will of God. The Hebrew Scriptures refer to this kind of killing as unintentional sin (Joshua 20:1-9, Leviticus 4:1-35), and for it, restitution was required. For our purposes here, whether classifying wrong acts of ignorance as sin, and thus requiring restitution for the same is just or not is another debate. However, this is a non-factor in defining the erroneous killing as sin. This again is because it is and has always been against the will of God that any person—whether by mistake or not—should die. Death came by sin and the message of salvation is that we, at last, should be free from any kind of sin and its results (which amount to multiplied sin), including that of death.

Second, sinful tendencies are a result of the first act of sin committed by our human race and resulting in our natural bent or tendency towards sin. Whether the tendency itself (which is not an act but a state of being) is sin or not is part of my confessed enquiry and is, therefore, a question about which I am yet to take a position. In fact, for Seventh-day Adventists, how one answers this question determines which side of their Christological debate (outlined in the first chapter) they belong. Sinlessness therefore, in my view and at the very least, refers to the absence of any act that is contrary to the will of God. Whether it also belongs to the absence of the damage caused by our first human sin, part of which is the presence in us of the tendencies to sin, is still part of my unfinished enquiry. What sinlessness means, to Pannenberg, is discussed next. Yet it still remains here that in Pannenberg’s view, to be human is to be exactly like us—fallen, sinful tendencies included.

In other words, and according to Pannenberg, from what we *empirically* know of what it means to be human, we cannot say that Jesus was truly human if he *was* not—at least at one point—self-centred, for example—desiring only that which is his, at the expense of

another. Pannenberg (1977:362) uses a particular label for this self-centredness: “egocentricity.” Did Jesus, as a baby for example, possess the Freudian Id impulses? If not, can we truly say that he was just like any one of us—truly human? Pannenberg objects. Yet, he maintains that Jesus was sinless. It is to this sinlessness that we now turn.

Its Sinlessness

Despite his emphasis that Jesus took a fallen and sinful nature such as we have, Pannenberg clearly exempts Jesus from all sin. Describing Jesus’ unity with God Pannenberg (1977:354) says it “includes his freedom from *all* sin” [emphasis mine]. Commenting on 2 Corinthians 5:21, that God “made him who knew no sin to be sin for us,” Pannenberg (1977:355) argues that “*only because Jesus was himself without sin* can it be said that what he suffered was not the consequence of his own guilt, but that he took his suffering upon himself *for our sake*” [emphasis mine]. To bolster his point, Pannenberg (1977:355) then appeals to Hebrews 4:5, 7:26, 9:14, 1 Peter 2:22, 3:18, John 8:46, 14:30, and 1 John 3:5, which all affirm Christ’s sinlessness. Then he (Pannenberg, 1977:355) concludes: “This breadth of the Christian tradition of Jesus’ sinlessness surely shows that the special importance of this matter had been recognized since the beginning of the Christian community.” Furthermore, Pannenberg (1977:355-356) approvingly credits the “patristic church” (including Chalcedon), which succeeded that of the New Testament, with the same position. But how does Pannenberg reconcile this sinless Jesus with the Jesus discussed in 2.a. above, who for example makes mistakes—thus a Jesus who may sin ignorantly (cf. Leviticus 4:1-35), if the Levitical text is anything to go by? How did this Jesus in 2.a. live his entire life without committing a single sin of ignorance? It must be clarified here that Pannenberg does not say that ignorance is a sin. But he does paint a picture of a Jesus who had the potential to sin without knowing it. Pannenberg’s Jesus had the potential for example, of killing without knowing it. Whereas this ignorance (that is, the fact that he does not yet know that he has killed) is not a sin but simply a state of being, the killing is an act against the will of God and is therefore a sin. How Pannenberg’s Jesus remained sinless is the question we now address.

Let’s start by looking at Pannenberg’s definition of sin. According to Pannenberg (1977:355) sin is “essentially life [lived or positioned] in contradiction to God, in self-centered closing of our ego against God....” A central idea that Pannenberg uses to define

authentic humanity, which will further be discussed at a later stage, is that of openness, specifically openness to God. “Openness for God,” says Pannenberg (1977:193), “is the real meaning of the fundamental structure of being human....” In other words, man fulfills his humanity only when in full communion with God. Where this does not happen, and man lives in self-centred closedness, or even in other-centred (other than God) existence, it becomes sin. Says Pannenberg (1977:353),

... a man falls into sin and thereby into contradiction against God through his relation to things and men...or, more precisely, through insisting upon a supposed self-interest (or even in the supposed interest in others) that, focused on egocentricity, denies the openness to God of just this self.

Pannenberg calls this self-interest “supposed” because, as noted above, it “*denies* the openness to God of *just this self*.” In other words, this so-called self-interest is *misdirected*, relative to the real needs of the self and others. Describing humans in this situation, Pannenberg (1977:353) says, “here they live in fundamental error about themselves, since their true self-interest is not identical with their self-centredness which asserts itself even in dedication to a finite person or task, but which could find fulfilment only in the openness of the self to God.” In other words, such humans are deceived about themselves. Therefore they live misdirected lives.

Pannenberg no doubt accepts the definition of sin as both conduct and condition. In his *Anthropology in Theological perspective*, Pannenberg (1985:80), understands sin to be a “brokenness and distortion of human identity.” Dismissing the ideas of those who end at defining sin as conduct only, that is, as simply unacceptable behavior, and therefore define Jesus’ sinlessness as perfect behavior only, Pannenberg (1977:361) says

...an understanding of Jesus’ sinlessness merely as an irreproachable *moral behavior* presupposes an all too superficial *concept of sin*. In spite of all the justified reserve one may have towards the traditional doctrine of original sin, nevertheless, the *indispensable kernel of truth* in this doctrine is that sin was understood not merely as an *individual deed* but as the fundamental *condition* of the actual existence of man in its ego-centricity and ego-obstructedness to God [emphasis mine].

Pannenberg does not approve of many other aspects of the doctrine of original sin. For example, he (Pannenberg, 1977:361) does not accept the concept that original sin is transmitted through procreation. But he does approve of this one concept: that in addition to being a particular form of conduct, sin is a misdirected condition of existence. So what, according to Pannenberg, is sinlessness?

According to Pannenberg (1977:355), “if sin,” as already referenced above, “is essentially life in contradiction to God, in self-centered closing of our ego against God, then Jesus’ *unity* with God in his personal *community* with the Father...means immediately his separation from all sin.” In other words, if sin is closedness to God, then sinlessness is openness to God; it is that total communion with God that God intended to belong to all human beings. In describing Jesus as the fulfiller of authentic humanity, Pannenberg (1977:199) approvingly references Welte as follows: “Jesus is the fulfilment of that unlimited openness which is constitutive for being human and whose truth is openness for God.” In Pannenberg’s view, this “unlimited openness” to God is sinlessness.

According to Pannenberg, this unity with God, coupled with a person’s dedication to God’s will results in a life that *inevitably* lives right. “Jesus’ dedication to the Father,” says Pannenberg (1977:349), “and to his mission *leaves no room* for ‘other possibilities’ that Jesus’ will could have chosen *in independence from God*” [emphasis mine]. In Pannenberg’s view, it was impossible for Jesus to choose to sin. Pannenberg (1977:349) maintains that “while such ‘other possibilities’ may seem to be present for a remote observer of Jesus’ situation, for Jesus himself they could be present only as possibilities that were *excluded* from the beginning” [emphasis mine].

We can conclude therefore that in Pannenberg’s view, sinlessness is the absence of both condition and commission of sin. It is the absence of self-centredness (condition). It is also the absence of lying (commission), for example. This definition of sinlessness however gives us a problem in that Pannenberg’s Jesus, described in 1.a. above, apparently does not fit its contour. Pannenberg’s Jesus apparently falls short of sinlessness. And perhaps this is where Pannenberg finds a problem with trying to find Jesus’ sinlessness in his human being and life.

According to Pannenberg (1977:363), the “task of penetrating into the inner life of the

historical Jesus in order to establish there his sinlessness” is “impossible.” First of all, argues Pannenberg (1977:360-361),

the New Testament statements that relate to Jesus’ sinlessness, none of which is an authentic saying of Jesus, can in themselves surely not have so much greater authority than other New Testament statements, for example, about miracles performed by Jesus or having happened to him.

In other words, if we believe the testimony of these texts, that Jesus was sinless, based solely on their own authority, we must believe the testimony of kindred texts that declare that Jesus walked on water, for example. Or that he raised the dead. Unfortunately, we cannot do this without breaking the rule of consistency. Furthermore, Pannenberg (1977:362) contends that “Jesus’ earthly conduct appeared thoroughly ambiguous.” What we thought was sin in him—at least as we are represented by Jesus’ adjudicating Jews, God declared to be righteousness in the resurrection. Pannenberg (1977:362) gives the incidence of Jesus’ claim to “divine authority” as an example: “In the light of the ego- centrality of the condition of human existence, the claim implied in Jesus’ message necessarily made the impression of unlimited pride, of blasphemy.” But this claim, which we thought to be sin, was declared to be righteousness via the resurrection. In other words, if Jesus had sinned, he would have merited the punishment of a sinner—eternal death. The fact that God raised him from the dead means that he judged him righteous. It is therefore in the resurrection that Pannenberg finds his answer to Jesus’ sinlessness.

Here we see a strong assumption in Pannenberg. He assumes, or posits, that in Jesus, we are unable to see clearly enough to declare him sinless. Instead, we must completely depend on God’s indirect declaration of the same. In other words, we must *believe*; we must believe in God, and in his proposition that Jesus is sinless.³⁹ According to Pannenberg (1977:363), “from Jesus’ resurrection, light is shed backward upon his earthly life that reveals its true significance.” It is the resurrection that removes the ambiguity and gives the true meaning of Jesus’ life. It is the resurrection, for example as noted above that authenticates the appropriateness of Jesus’ claim to divine authority. Commenting on the significance of the resurrection in Pannenberg, McDermott (1974:711) notes that “it can be said that...Jesus is

³⁹ God’s declaration that Jesus is sinless is indirect because it must be deduced from God’s resurrection activity.

essentially one with God [therefore sinless] on the basis of the Resurrection event, and that his entire earthly existence is united essentially to God via this event....” In fact, Pannenberg (1977:363) says, “without Jesus’ resurrection, this truth [Jesus’ sinlessness or openness to God] would not only have remained hidden, *it would not have become a fact*” [emphasis mine].

Therefore, in Pannenberg’s view, Jesus’ resurrection does not only authenticate his life; it makes it true. And this validation and making true applies to Jesus’ sinlessness too: “If we recognize in this light [the resurrection] God’s judgment upon Jesus,” says Pannenberg (1977:363), “the judgment of his sinlessness, we need no longer attempt the impossible task of penetrating into the inner life of the historical Jesus in order to establish there his sinlessness.” According to Pannenberg (1977:363),

God’s decision about Jesus’ sinlessness [in the resurrection] has the character of a divine judgment delivered from beyond, as our justification is from beyond ourselves.... As our righteousness is not to be sought in the givenness of our earthly existence, so also Jesus’ sinlessness is not to be sought in the givenness of his pre-Easter appearance. Jesus’ righteousness also lay *extra se* in the hands of the Father, in God’s judgment [emphasis original].

Pannenberg (1977:363) differentiates between our righteousness and that of Jesus. Whereas in Jesus’ case, God was confirming and making true Jesus’ pre-Easter claim to sinlessness, in our case, God redeems us from our sinfulness and declares us righteous *in Jesus* alone. Whereas Jesus has his own *inherent* righteousness—never preceded or interrupted by any sin, we take our righteousness from Jesus, preceded by our sin and sinfulness.

According to Pannenberg (1977:363), “Jesus’ sinlessness is not an incapability for evil that belonged naturally to his humanity but *results* only from his entire process of life” [emphasis mine]. At the centre of this process is the cross. It is in the cross that sin is annihilated and a new man—the resurrected Jesus—is emerged.

Thus commenting on texts like 2 Corinthians 5:21, Pannenberg (1977:355) notes that “Paul stressed that Jesus was without sin *precisely where he emphasized that Jesus was judged, cursed* (Gal. 3:13) *treated as a sinner* by God in our stead” [emphasis mine]. The location of Jesus’ sinlessness is in God’s judgement of sin. It is precisely where God punishes sin, at

the cross, that Jesus is ‘acquitted’ or declared sinless. Sin is punished in Jesus’ death and Jesus is ‘acquitted’ in his resurrection. Jesus is acquitted because, as he said in his pre-Easter existence, he is without sin. Therefore his death is not for himself—and cannot be, since he is sinless. It is, as Paul states, for us sinners. We die in Jesus and we rise in him. “Thus out of the Judgment on sin,” says Pannenberg (1977:363), “the new man was raised up in him—and only in him since all other men are destroyed together with *their* sin” [emphasis mine].

In section (2.), we have just finished discussing Jesus’ human nature. According to Pannenberg, this nature is both sinful and sinless. In our discussion, we noted that Pannenberg emphasises the importance of Jesus taking up our very own fallen and sinful human nature, if he is to be like us—truly human. In our next discussion, we will seek to take a closer look at what exactly Pannenberg thinks it means to be truly human. We will then look at how Pannenberg’s Jesus fully measures up to this standard.

True Humanity: Its Definition and Fulfillment in Jesus

Its Definition

So what is true humanity? In answering this question, as earlier noted, Pannenberg makes great use of the anthropological idea of openness—openness to experience, to the world and to the beyond (1977:83-88). This openness may be described as a deep-seated human *need*, and therefore search, for self-understanding and fulfilment. Openness’ realm of search cannot be limited to the accessible; it goes beyond. Says Pannenberg (1977:85), “It belongs to the structure of human existence to press on, even beyond death, that search for one’s destiny, which never comes to an end.” In other words, to search, even beyond death is to be human. In Pannenberg’s definition of true humanity here, as will further be seen, one more time we see one of Pannenberg’s key assumptions (if not *the* key assumption) underlying his definition of truth: that the truthfulness of truth must be sense testable. As earlier stated, it must be experienceable.

According to Pannenberg (1977:83), it is “a generally demonstrable anthropological finding that the definition of the essence of man does not come to ultimate fulfilment in the finitude of his earthly life.” It is impossible to meet this deep-seated human need for fulfilment in this life. That this need must of necessity be fulfilled after life is the only alternative. It

follows therefore that a search beyond life must be made. Unfortunately, the afterlife is inaccessible. Therefore, we are forced to form our own *conceptions* of what this afterlife may be. Pannenberg is careful to maintain that our formulations are simply that—formulations. In fact, he essentially calls them symbols (Pannenberg, 1977:86): “These concepts unavoidably remain, therefore, merely symbolic.” Then he (Pannenberg, 1977:86) cautions, “that one may remain conscious of the inadequacy of every concept of destiny and not fall into false certainties belongs to the soberness of the question about what lies beyond death.”

This, however, is not to say that our concepts of the afterlife are nothing more than wishful thinking. To Pannenberg, they are justifiable representations of the real—that to which we have no access—imperfect though they may be. According to Pannenberg (1977:86),

In spite of all the unavoidable inadequacy of every concept that reaches out beyond death—because every such concept must take its content from our experience in this world—nevertheless, the particular content of such ideas is not simply left to an arbitrary decision. Even in this area there remains a possibility of distinguishing and testing.

Pannenberg compares the idea of the immortality of the soul to that of the resurrection. According to Pannenberg (1977:87), “Plato was the first to develop the idea of the immortality of the soul in the form of a philosophical demonstration.” In other words, Plato was the first one to present the idea of the immortality of the soul in a manner *testable* by known anthropology, at the time. Unfortunately, based on what we know about the nature of man today, this idea cannot be sustained. Says Pannenberg (1977:87), “the separation between body and soul that forms the basis of the concept is no longer tenable, at least in this form, in the light of contemporary anthropological insights. What was once distinguished as body and soul is considered today as a unity of human conduct.” In other words, modern anthropology sees a human being as one inseparable whole that can only exist as such. Therefore, “the so-called ‘life after death,’” concludes Pannenberg (1977:87), “can no longer be thought of as immortality of the soul, but only as another mode of existence of the *whole* man. However,” he observes, “that is the content of the picture of the resurrection of the dead [emphasis original].” Yet Pannenberg (1977:87) maintains that even the concept of resurrection is still symbolic, albeit “a symbolic concept whose

particular form can be justified by what we know about man.”

Pannenberg (1977:85) uses the idea of hope beyond death to set out a clear difference between humans and animals, and therefore to further clarify the meaning of being human: “Man,” he says, “is the only being who knows that he must die.” Other creatures, he points out, do not know. Therefore they cannot question beyond their existence. “Man,” says Pannenberg (1977:85), “is not restricted in his behavior by definite environmental signs whose perception sets off instinctive reactions.” In other words, man, in his thinking, is not bound by the tangible (or that which can be experienced). He thinks and goes beyond the concrete, in search of his fulfilment. Animals on the other hand cannot do this—they act and live within the continuum of the sensible. According to Pannenberg therefore, the ability to think beyond our detectable and existential horizon is distinctively human.

For this reason, Pannenberg (1977:86) concludes that

because of the structure of human existence, it is necessary for man in one way or another to conceive of the fulfillment of his destiny and indeed of the totality of his existence beyond death. Where such inquiry beyond death, in understood metaphors, does not happen or, perhaps more precisely, where it is suppressed— since the drive to such questioning in man is inalienable—the clarity of the accomplishment of existence is *impaired*; there the humanity of man as man is *impaired*, not only in a single element but in the very openness of questioning and seeking that characterizes man’s behavior. This openness is *lost* when questioning beyond death does not take place [emphasis mine].

On the other hand, “the humanity of man” is maintained where such openness is allowed. Unfortunately, as earlier noted, this humanity never comes to *ultimate* fulfilment in this life, except in Jesus. How this fulfilment happens, together with its salvific significance for human beings, is our next discussion.

Its Fulfillment in Jesus

In the resurrection, Jesus has broken through the boundary of death and accessed that of which all other humans can only form conceptions. Pannenberg (1977:197) characterises him as “*the man well pleasing in the eyes of God...through the resurrection*” [emphasis mine]. Jesus has not only lived in hope; in open and expectant fulfilment—like other

humans: he has consummated that hope *in the resurrection*. Therefore, whereas all other humans are and die in a state of expectancy, Jesus alone has arrived; he alone has become *truly* human, and this again, *in the resurrection*.

According to Pannenberg (1977:193), to be truly human is not only to consummate one's anticipated hope of destiny—in the resurrection; it is to fulfil that for which God intended all humans to be: in complete communion with God; in complete openness for God.

Unfortunately, that communion or openness is broken. Human beings, according to Pannenberg, naturally exist in self-centred closedness. They exist in sin. As earlier noted, Pannenberg (1977:361) accepts the Augustinian definition of sin as “not merely...an individual deed but as the fundamental *condition* of the actual *existence* of man in its ego-centricity and *ego-obstructedness to God*” [emphasis mine]. But Jesus, in fulfilling true humanity, has broken that closedness, or, as Pannenberg puts it, “obstructedness.” Again, as earlier noted, Pannenberg (1977:199) thinks that Welte is right when he describes Jesus as “the fulfillment of that *unlimited openness* which is *constitutive* for being human and whose truth is openness for God.”

For Pannenberg (1977:189), “Christology involves Jesus' uniqueness...only to the extent that this particularity possesses saving significance for all other men.” Surely, Jesus is unique in the fact that he is the only one to have tasted the meaning of being fully human. But what is the *saving* significance of this “particularity?” For Pannenberg (1977:190), Jesus is unique not only that “in him that which is man's destiny as man has appeared for the first time in an individual,” but that this destiny “has become accessible to all others only through this individual.” In breaking the bounds of the grave, and in opening the door of communion with God, Jesus has opened the door of salvation for all humanity.

Pannenberg (1977:190) calls this fact “the soteriological power of Jesus' humanity.” Aware that the same could be interpreted as a projection onto Jesus of our own longing for salvation, Pannenberg (1977:190) says

That soteriological power is not an expression of human nature as such; it is not attributed to him by his community in the sense that the community projected its own desires and experiences back onto Jesus, that it merely became conscious through him only of the powers slumbering within itself. The soteriological power of Jesus' humanity *follows*, rather, from his particular relation to God [emphasis

mine].

What is Jesus' "particular relation to God?" Jesus is one with, and equal to God—a fact confirmed by the resurrection—and thus is able to save. In other words, Jesus is able to save because he is God.

According to Pannenberg (1977:193), salvation is "the opening of men for God." God opens himself up to men in his revelation to them, *and this revelation is Jesus*. Pannenberg (1977:191) says Jesus is not only "the revelation of the human nature and of the destiny of man," he *is* "God's revelation." In other words, Jesus is man's ladder to God, and God's ladder to man. Based on Barth's idea of God's self-revelation in Jesus, the demonstration of which Pannenberg (1977:130) says "constitutes one of Barth's greatest theological contributions," Pannenberg (1977:129) argues that in being God's revelation, Jesus is God: "the concept of God's self-revelation contains the idea that the Revealer and what is revealed are identical. God is as much the subject, the author of his self-revelation, as he is its content." Commenting on the centrality of Jesus in God's self-revelation, Johnson (1982: 238) says, "Pannenberg" developed "his theses into a full-blown Christological synthesis...as the magisterial *Jesus—God and Man*, a work virtually universally acknowledged as a significant theological contribution." From the idea that God is revealer as well as content of his revelation, Pannenberg (1977:129) concludes that therefore, "to speak of a self-revelation of God in the Christ event means that the Christ event, that Jesus, belongs to the essence of God himself." This, therefore, is the "soteriological power of Jesus' humanity": that Jesus is also God, thus, he is able to save.

Thus, in Pannenberg's view, Paul refers to Jesus as the second Adam—because, standing again at the head of the human race, Jesus gives us a second chance. As Adam was a human being at the head of his race, Jesus is a human being at the head of his race—he is truly human. The difference between the two is that the first Adam led us to death; the second Adam leads us to life. Says Pannenberg (1977:196), concerning this Pauline concept, "Jesus is the New Adam, the second heavenly man, the life-giving Spirit in contrast to the first, earthly man (I Cor. 15:45 ff)." Jesus then, continues Pannenberg (1977:196), "is the prototype of reconciled humanity." To this effect, Pannenberg (1977:199) approvingly quotes Rahner, that therefore "Christology is the beginning and end of anthropology, and this anthropology in its most radical realization, namely Christology, is in all eternity

theology.” In other words, Jesus so fulfilled the requirements for being human that if anybody wants to study what that means, they only have to look at him. But, for salvation purposes, this human was also so much God that if anybody wants to know who God is, that is, to do *theology*, they only have to look at Jesus. Thus Jesus is *vere homo, vere deus*. This fact transitions us to our fourth and last section in this chapter.

The Person of Jesus: Its Unity

If Jesus is very man and very God, how is he one without abrogating his humanity or his Godness and without forming a third being, resulting from a mingling of God and himself? Pannenberg finds his answer in Jesus’ reciprocal *relationship* with God. For Pannenberg, Jesus is related to God and God to Jesus, thereby making God and Jesus’ individual existences imperative, since relationship can only exist between at least two entities. Yet this relationship is precisely what makes the two both one, and of one essence, which essence is not a third creation since the two beings are not in synthetical but relational unity.

Pannenberg (1977:339) understands “person” as “a relational concept.” According to Pannenberg (1977:336), “it is the essence of the person itself to exist in dedication” to the other. In other words, we become, and we are because we relate. Pannenberg (1977:336) quotes Hagel that “in friendship and love I...win...concrete personality. The truth of personality is just this, to win it through...submerging [oneself and], being submerged into the other.” Furthermore, says Pannenberg (1977:336), “to be submerged in the ‘thou’ means at the same time, however, participation in his being.” In other words, I taste, experience, and in a way assume the essence of being the other by submerging myself in that other’s being.

According to Pannenberg (1977:336) then, “Jesus is one with God through his dedication to the Father,” and this dedication “is confirmed as a true dedication by the Father’s acknowledgment of him through Jesus’ resurrection.” Jesus is one with God by completely giving his will up, in complete self-abrogation, to the Father’s will. This self-abrogation is of such a manner that there then remains no functional distinction between Jesus and his God. The two egos—God and Jesus—are in complete unison—relational unison. Yet of course, since this unity is relational, the two egos remain in two respective existential distinctions from each other. Perhaps Richard of St. Victor, in the words of Pannenberg (1977:340), best describes this distinction: “only in relation to the Father is the Son, Son

and nothing else.” The Son can never be Son if he is not in relation to the father. And the father can never be father if he is not in relation to the Son. Therefore relationship both unites and delineates the two. And, precisely because the two egos remain in distinct existences, they do not form a third being: “nor does something new, a third thing,” deduces Pannenberg (1977:342), “result from a mixture of the two. Nor is the humanity absorbed in divinity so that it disappears. Precisely *in* his particular humanity Jesus is the Son of God [emphasis original].”

Summary of Arguments and Assumptions

Having come this far, its time now to succinctly outline the postlapsarian arguments and assumptions for Jesus’ fallen nature, as presented by Pannenberg. And these may best be crystallised as follows:

1. Jesus could not have taken a sinless human nature—devoid of error, ignorance, and self-centredness—and still be human like us. The arch assumption behind this argument is that such a nature would defy what we know by experience to be true about being human; it would have no empirical backing. Empiricism, therefore, is Pannenberg’s cornerstone assumption. Jesus, argues Pannenberg, took our very own human nature—known and verifiable to us by experience (*empeira* in Greek, from which we get our English word, “empirical”): erroneous, ignorant, and self-centred. Yet Pannenberg maintains that Jesus was sinless, not because of the absence of error, ignorance, or self-centredness in him, but by God’s declaration alone, via the resurrection—an event he argues *should be*, and in fact *is*, verifiable in history.
2. In taking this stance, Pannenberg leans on *experience* as the sure conduit to, and tester of truth. Since, in Pannenberg’s view, the resurrection is a historically verifiable event, and it is God’s judgement on Jesus’ life, it can be used to test and validate Jesus’ truth claims, one of which is that he is sinless (John 8:46). It follows therefore that Pannenberg answers every charge that his Jesus is a sinner with the resurrection event. To him, that God raised Jesus from the dead means that he judged every aspect of his fallen life to be

pure. This judgement, in Pannenberg's view, is enough no matter how unfathomable it may appear to us. In taking this stance, that of refusing to base Jesus' righteousness or sinfulness on the appearance or non-appearance of sin in his life, Pannenberg goes beyond most postlapsarians.

In our second chapter, we invested Chalcedon with the power of 'truth tester' in as far as Christological claims are concerned. We positioned it as the lighthouse of all Christological claims. We will now see how Chalcedon, in the arguments of Hatzidakis and Pannenberg, is allowed to fulfil this function. We will further compare the two authors, and thus the camps they represent, and further note, and then analyse their points of difference. We will then seek to point out the causes of these differences, followed by resolution suggestions.

CHAPTER 5: FALLEN OR UNFALLEN?, A COMPARISON OF INTERPRETATION—HATZIDAKIS VS. PANNENBERG

A Hermeneutical Split: An Introduction

We all begin our search for truth—whether consciously or unconsciously—with one great assumption: that truth exists. Even if we begin from a more sceptical premise about truth, for example that truth itself does not exist, that premise in itself is an assumption of what we think is the existing truth about truth: that it does not exist. Furthermore, at least in the Christian community (where we claim to be talking about one God, and thus generally aim for doctrinal coherence), and especially in our present discussion, where we claim to be talking about one Christ—we all must agree—if we do not, and if our truth-seeking enterprise is worth anything—that there is a way to test the truth validity of that which we claim or hold to be true. There must be a way, for example, to verify the assumption that truth does not exist. For Pannenberg, we have already noted that his most basic way to do this is through experience: all truth claims must be validated by our common experience. Thus for Pannenberg, whatever we claim regarding the question of Christ’s humanity must be grounded in our common experience of what it means to be human. If not, our claims—no matter how plausible, and for as long as we are on this side of heaven—must at their best be held to be tentative, until empirically proven otherwise. Hatzidakis on the other hand holds the cumulative consensus of Christian tradition, including that of Chalcedon, to be the ultimate test of orthodoxy. Given that the word “tradition” can have a complex and varied set of interpretations,⁴⁰ I am compelled to streamline its meaning, as used in this chapter: “a separate and distinct source of revelation, *in addition to scripture* [emphasis original]” (McGrath, 2011:140). “We will not apologize,” states Hatzidakis (2013:27) in reference to the writings of the church fathers for example, which comprise part of the said tradition, “for taking their word as evidentiary.”

Thus, unlike Pannenberg, Hatzidakis will not question this tradition; he will instead question and evaluate our understanding of it. Thus tradition’s statements, for Hatzidakis, and their self-elaboration are enough truth in themselves and explanation of thereof. For this

⁴⁰ For a brief discussion of this, see William A. L., 2007. Tradition. *The Oxford Handbook of Systematic Theology*, September: 1-18.

reason, Hatzidakis and Pannenberg immediately tow separate paths. Whereas Pannenberg will continuously question and reevaluate (against common human experience) the truthfulness of every statement of the Christian tradition, Hatzidakis will not. Instead, Hatzidakis will question and reevaluate our understanding of the same against more tradition. Tradition, in Hatzidakis' mind is set. It contains the irrevocable, un-improvable truths of God. We may only increase our understanding of it and therefore of the truths that it contains. Tradition, in Pannenberg's mind is not set. It contains revocable and improvable statements about God. We can surely increase and correct our understanding of it and therefore of the truths that it contains; but we can also improve and correct its presentation of truth, and thereby better align it with that which is true. Since the Chalcedonian creed is a statement of tradition, we must now see how both Hatzidakis and Pannenberg operationalise their principles in interpreting the same.

On the Truly Human Idea of Chalcedon

We have seen, in our previous two chapters, that both Hatzidakis and Pannenberg, and therefore the positions that they represent, accept the Chalcedonian statement that in assuming human nature, Christ became truly human. Additionally, we have also seen that both authors agree that Jesus is the true measure of human nature. Beyond this however, Hatzidakis and Pannenberg part company. To more clearly showcase the contrast of ideas between the two authors, and to thereupon point out the causes of these differences, I will, hopefully without the risk of undue repetition, comparatively revisit their major thoughts on Jesus as the measure of true humanity, and consequently their understandings of the meaning of true humanity.

For Hatzidakis, Jesus—the complete and perfect human—is neither like us nor like Adam before the fall. Jesus is truly human, and we are becoming (and Adam was becoming), in a developmental upward movement sense, truly human. Therefore, to be truly human is neither to be like us nor to be like Adam before the fall; it is to be better (thus better than unfallen); it is to be like Jesus. For Pannenberg, Jesus is exactly like us—fallen human. We are truly human; therefore Jesus became exactly, experientially, like us—truly human. Therefore to be truly human, in Pannenberg's view, is to be exactly like us. But what do these definitions of true humanity really mean?

At the centre of true humanity for Hatzidakis is pristine purity, unspoiled beauty and

unsullied perfection. It is virgin magnificence, original spotlessness and primaeval flawlessness. Consequently, everything else called human is, *of necessity*, a shadow or replica of this humanity. This humanity of which every other humanity is a shadow, in Hatzidakis' view, is true humanity. And it can only be found in Jesus. The rest of us grow into it. On the other hand, at the centre of true humanity for Pannenberg is the fallen human being—us. And central to our nature is the idea of capacity to grow and to become, and thus (for Pannenberg) to become truly human—an anthropological idea Pannenberg acknowledges as openness—openness for appropriate or correct fulfilment or actualisation. Like Hatzidakis, Pannenberg believes that we are somehow unfulfilled. We are somehow un-actualised. We live in a state of open expectancy, waiting to be fulfilled, actualised or complemented. And he believes that this state of unfulfilled expectancy is constitutive of being human. Therefore he argues that in becoming truly human, it is this state that Jesus assumed. But, via the resurrection, Jesus went beyond this state of expectancy and acquired that for which we all long—fulfilment, actualisation or complementation. It is in this sense—that of acquiring fulfilment—that Jesus becomes our model or measure of true humanity.

Both authors can claim allegiance to Chalcedon, in that they agree that Christ became truly human. But their interpretations of true humanity are different. In fact, these interpretations may be said to be antithetical. So how therefore does Chalcedon help us to resolve this situation, since it is our Christological lighthouse? What does Chalcedon say is true human nature, so that we may test the claims of these authors against that standard? Unfortunately, from our study in the second chapter, we may notice that Chalcedon does not spell out its definition of true human nature in a fashion that is adequate to be used as a test of orthodoxy.

The closest that the creed comes to defining this concept is, as we concluded in chapter 2, to say—or at least to imply—that to be truly human is to have a human mind, a human soul, and a human body. It is, as quoted from the creed in chapter 2, to be “of a reasonable soul and human flesh consisting.” I have already explained in chapter 2 that a reasonable soul, in the minds of the crafters of the creed, was equivalent to a human soul. This is because according to their understanding, only a human soul could reason, and this ability is what distinguished it from other souls. The power to reason is what made this soul human. And,

as stated in chapter 2, since the mind is the reasoning part of a human being, the power to reason implies the presence of a mind.

Finally, the phrase “human flesh” is equivalent to the human body. With these concepts at hand, of what it means to be truly human, are we ready to decide the debate? The answer is a definite no. At this point therefore, Chalcedon is unable to amply guide the debate. So what is the way forward? I suggest that we clearly outline the cause or causes of the differences in interpretation. Then only may we be able to suggest the way forward.

I started this chapter by arguing that virtually all of us start our search for truth by assuming that the truth we seek exists. I also reasoned that if our truth-seeking enterprise must make any sense, there must be a standard against which we validate our findings. I further stated that for Hatzidakis, that standard is tradition. For Pannenberg, that standard is experience. In deciding what it means to be truly human, both authors are asking one question: what does my standard of measurement say? It is obvious from our discussion that the two standards, at least as understood by both authors, have different answers. For Pannenberg, to be human is to be exactly like us—fallen. For Hatzidakis, to be human is to be like Jesus—unfallen.

The difference we see between Pannenberg and Hatzidakis is similar to that which we saw in the second chapter, between Gregory and Leo: the two differed in their understandings of what it means to be truly human. For this reason, they had different understandings of the human nature of Christ. Similarly, Pannenberg and Hatzidakis differ in their understandings of what it means to be truly human. Therefore, they have different understandings of the human nature of Christ. It is imperative therefore that before any debate (over which human nature Christ took, fallen or unfallen) can occur between Pannenberg and Hatzidakis, and by extension between the pre and the postlapsarians, the two sides must agree on the meaning of being truly human.

As should already have been noted, there is a more foundational cause of difference between Pannenberg and Hatzidakis: their standards of truth validation. Whereas Hatzidakis sticks to what he understands tradition to be saying, Pannenberg lets experience validate tradition, and therefore tradition’s claims. Because Hatzidakis will not question tradition, he will not question Chalcedon—since it is part of the Christian church’s tradition. Instead, he will seek to clarify his own understanding of the creed by consulting more of tradition. On

the other hand, because Pannenberg will question tradition, he will question Chalcedon. He will seek to validate and, where need be, correct its claims by way of experience. Because of this difference of standards, the two authors end up at different conclusions. It may be said that by the standards of empiricism, or our common knowledge of what it means to be human, Pannenberg is correct in his definition of human nature. On the other hand, it may also be said that by the standard of tradition, Hatzidakis is correct. But, as has already been pointed out, and in as far as they truly present opposing positions, they may not both be correct. Either one or both of them is wrong. It is imperative therefore that the two authors, at least in areas where they present opposing views, agree on which standard to use in order to correctly define true human nature, or even to do their theology in general. Will they use either standard—tradition or empiricism—by itself? Will they use them both? Is there room for balance or complementation between the two standards? How, if any, is this balance achieved? Or maybe, is there, in fact, another standard or standards?

It can however not be taken for granted that as soon as Hatzidakis and Pannenberg agree on their truth validation standard, they will also agree on their understanding of human nature. Gregory and Leo, discussed in the second chapter, did not have an issue in terms of what standard to use in order to validate the truthfulness of their theologies. They both used tradition and scripture as their sources. Yet they disagreed in their understandings of what those sources said concerning the human nature of Christ. It is important therefore that Hatzidakis and Pannenberg not only agree on their standard of truth validation, but on their principles of interpreting that standard as well. What principles will they follow? Who or what decides those principles, and on what basis? Definitely, all these questions are broad and are not an easy venture. In fact, debate over the same is certainly already ongoing. But such foundational debate must first be settled before moving on to what I think are secondary, or maybe even tertiary issues, such as the human nature of Christ.

On the “Without Sin” Idea of Chalcedon

As has already been noted, both Hatzidakis and Pannenberg agree that the human Christ was without sin. Furthermore, both authors accept the definition of sin as both commission and condition. However, the two authors disagree in their description of the sinless Jesus. For Hatzidakis, the sinless Jesus is different from us—unfallen; for Pannenberg, the sinless Jesus is exactly such as we are—fallen. However, it would be expected that because the two

authors agree in their basic definitions of sin, they would also agree in their depictions of the phrase “without sin.” But evidently, this is not the case. So wherein lays the difference? The difference lays in their chosen paths to truth. At this point, in addition to, and without in any way contradicting tradition, Hatzidakis uses simple reason to arrive at truth: if sin is both a condition of existence and a commission of wrong acts, and Jesus is without sin, it must follow that this Jesus must be, by condition and commission, sinless—unfallen.

Pannenberg on the other hand leaps to what appears to be contradictory faith: though sin is both a condition of existence and a commission of wrong acts, and though Jesus existed in a condition of sin such as we have, and in fact did in effect commit at least one sin of ignorance by telling an untruth, as noted in chapter 4, when he wrongly “announced that God’s Lordship would begin in his own generation” (Pannenberg, 1977:226), he was sinless.

The foundational reason that Pannenberg gives for Christ’s sinlessness is the resurrection. As has already been noted in chapter 4, Pannenberg argues that God’s resurrection of Christ is his declaration that Christ is sinless. Had Christ been in any way liable to sin, argues Pannenberg, God would not have resurrected him. We therefore must believe, and that means without unclouded understanding, that the human Christ was sinless—believe because the assertion of a sinful Christ’s sinlessness by itself definitely defies logic. This is because the two, sinfulness and sinlessness are mutually exclusive. In Pannenberg’s view, our faith in Christ’s sinlessness is based on Christ’s resurrection, not on the appearance or non-appearance thereof, of sin in his life. Pannenberg does not end here. He grounds the resurrection itself in verifiable history (Pannenberg, 1977:88-106), thereby, one more time, making experience itself foundational. For Pannenberg, since we can historically (via experience) verify the resurrection of Christ, it must be true. And since Christian theodicy demands that God does not resurrect Christ if he is found to be liable to sin, Christ’s resurrection demonstrates that he, as a human being, is sinless.

Thus while Hatzidakis locates Christ’s sinlessness in his being and life, Pannenberg does not—as noted in chapter 4. In fact, we noted in chapter 4 that according to Pannenberg, trying to locate Christ’s sinlessness in his life is an impossible task. Instead, Pannenberg locates the sinlessness of Christ in God’s declaration, in the resurrection. And this is so to Pannenberg, even when his senses tell him that the human Christ is like any other

descendant of Adam, sinful. This difference in the location of Christ's sinlessness leads to the creation of two different conceptions of a sinless Christ. It also leads to two different understandings of the "without sin" concept. For Hatzidakis for example, "without sin" means without bodily corruption. For Pannenberg on the other hand, "without sin" may still be "without sin" despite the presence in Jesus of bodily corruption.

Pannenberg maintains this position because he still wants to stay faithful to experience's definition of true humanity—a humanity that is exactly like ours, fallen. He is unable to say anything that contradicts the dictates of this experience because he has, consciously or unconsciously, made it to be the compass of his theology, foundational to that of the resurrection. However, Pannenberg also wants to stay faithful to the overwhelming witness of Christian tradition to Christ's sinlessness. But how does he do this in the face of overwhelming empirical overtakes that to be human is to be sinful? He hangs the sinlessness of Jesus, not on that which is observable in Christ's life, but on his resurrection. But this creates ambiguity, which he acknowledges: we no longer know with unclouded certainty what Pannenberg means when he says that Christ was without sin. Clarity here is lost. The solving of this resultant puzzle is what Pannenberg seems to reserve for the eschaton. Only then, he reasons, will that which now stands unclear be clarified. But this also means that it is impossible to do a thorough comparison of Hatzidakis and Pannenberg's understandings of the Chalcedonian idea of "without sin." While Hatzidakis seems to be clear on what he means when he affirms that Christ was without sin, Pannenberg reserves the clarification of his position for the eschaton.

So how can Chalcedon help us in this situation? What does Chalcedon mean, when it says "without sin," and how may the answer to this question be used to iron out the differences between Hatzidakis and Pannenberg? The answer is that Chalcedon is of little help in this respect. If our findings in chapter 2 are correct, Chalcedon localises sin in the being and person of Christ. To be without sin therefore in Chalcedon's view is to be without the sin disease. This position is closer to that of Hatzidakis than it is to that of Pannenberg. For Pannenberg, Christ is sinless primarily because of the resurrection. Without the resurrection, the answer as to whether he is sinless or not would still be uncertain. To be without sin in Pannenberg's view is not as clearly cut, as it seems to be with Chalcedon. Neither is it strictly dependent on the Chalcedonian definition. It is instead dependent on the resurrection

event, which also is dependent on historical verification. This is because Pannenberg has chosen from the very onset to be normatively independent of tradition, even of the Chalcedonian pronouncement itself. Instead, he has chosen to be normatively dependent on empirically verifiable data. Therefore one more time, the testing ground for Hatzidakis and Pannenberg is still uneven. Whereas Hatzidakis reverentially accepts tradition as normative, Pannenberg does not. I will now attempt to suggest the way forward.

First of all, for Hatzidakis and Pannenberg to agree on the meaning of the phrase “without sin,” they must logically synchronise the two main reasons or locations they give for Christ’s sinlessness: Christ’s resurrection vs. the absence or presence of sin in him. It is doubtful that Hatzidakis has a problem with Pannenberg’s proposition that in the resurrection, God declared Christ righteous, despite all appearances to the contrary. But for Pannenberg to out rightly state that Christ as a human being took our exact nature—sinful such as we have, is beyond Hatzidakis’ acceptance. It is important to Hatzidakis that Pannenberg explains the definite ambiguity and not simply leave it for the eschaton. On the other hand, there is, as we have seen, argumentation with Pannenberg that the eschaton will actually reveal to us that all we thought to be sin in Christ was in fact never so. But this would only hold good if Pannenberg did not out rightly ascribe sin or sinfulness to Christ. In ascribing sin and sinfulness to Christ, Pannenberg creates not an illusionary ambiguity but a real one—one that needs to be addressed in the present. In fact, it appears to me that he creates an inconsistency because he also argues that Christ is without sin. Synchrony between the two ideas—Christ’s resurrection and the absence or presence of sin in Christ as reasons or locations for Christ’s sinlessness in Pannenberg and Hatzidakis respectively is imperative for the two to achieve agreement in their conception of the idea of the human Christ as being without sin.

Second, Pannenberg’s situation here demonstrates one concept: it is impossible to use faith and experience as equals in clearly determining what is true. Striding faith and experience together as epistemological instruments, at least on this part of the world— before the afterlife, can easily result in confounding perplexity. One or the other—faith or experience—must eventually take an upper hand if clarity is to be achieved. In this case, Hatzidakis chooses to take faith over experience. He definitely values experience and its empirical concomitant, reason; but where the two—faith and experience (and then reason)

conflict, Hatzidakis chooses faith and this results in his relatively clearer position, meaning that his is a logically neater argument, having less loose ends internally. Admittedly, his position creates some cognitive dissonance in that it conflicts with our experience and reason. But unless one chooses to change what tradition says, in order to suit our experience—thus making experience superior to tradition—this dissonance is unavoidable. Pannenberg, on the other hand, attempts to ride on both the vehicles of experience and of faith—but only for a while, before the noted ambiguity in his view of the human nature of Christ sets in. It is this ambiguity; again, that makes it impossible to make a thorough comparison between specifically his sinless Christ and that of Hatzidakis. Paradoxically though, it is this same ambiguity that causes whatever difference that is noted between the two authors. A choice between faith and experience, for Pannenberg, is imperative to consistently level (or at least clarify the difference in) the ground of debate between the two authors.

Third, and more importantly, for as long as Hatzidakis and Pannenberg do not agree on their standards of truth validation, they are likely to constantly go separate ways. In this case, in deciding what it means to be without sin, both authors are asking one question: what does my standard of measurement say? For Hatzidakis, tradition is clear: sin is fallenness. To be without sin therefore is to be without fallenness. For Pannenberg, experience is equally clear: to be truly human is to be exactly like us, fallen. Since Jesus assumed true humanity, he became exactly like us, fallen. But since God, in the resurrection declared him sinless, Jesus was without sin. To be without sin therefore can include fallenness. It is evident here that tradition and experience dictate Hatzidakis and Pannenberg's thinking respectively. For Hatzidakis, tradition first dictates his definition of sin. This definition in turn moulds his picture of what it means to be without sin. For Pannenberg, experience first dictates his definition of what it means to be truly human. This definition in turn moulds his picture of what Jesus became in the incarnation, since he assumed true humanity. That which Jesus became therefore definitely included fallenness. Yet since God declared Jesus sinless in the resurrection, being without sin does not necessarily exclude fallenness. Here again, Pannenberg places experience over tradition: following experience, he makes room for fallenness in sinlessness, an idea completely opposed to what tradition says. Hatzidakis on the other hand places tradition over experience: following tradition, he makes no room for fallenness in sinlessness, an idea completely opposed to what experience says. This creates

a deeper and more foundational conflict than that of what it means for Christ to be without sin: a source conflict. It is imperative therefore that the two authors resolve this conflict before they can move on to the secondary issue at hand. Yet, as noted above, concerning understanding the meaning of Jesus becoming truly human, resolving a source conflict does not automatically guarantee immediate resolution of secondary conflicts. It is important that the parties in conflict not only agree on their standard for truth validation but also on how to interpret that standard.

On the One Person Idea of Chalcedon

Both Hatzidakis and Pannenberg accept the Chalcedonian idea that Jesus was one undivided person—the God-Man. But they differ in how they understand this idea. We have noted that for Hatzidakis, there are some human aspects that Jesus could not possess without losing his divinity. Pannenberg on the other hand does not even seem to make any such consideration. He decks his Jesus with every human characteristic that is necessary for him to be called our brother, therefore according to him, fully human. Where Hatzidakis argues for Jesus' omnipotence, Pannenberg argues for his finiteness; where Hatzidakis argues for his omniscience, Pannenberg argues for his ignorance, and where Hatzidakis argues for his perfection, Pannenberg argues for his corruption. Pannenberg understands the unity of humanity and divinity in terms of the relational unity between Jesus the man [son] and God the father. Hatzidakis on the other hand understands the unity of humanity and divinity in terms of ontological unity of natures— human and divine. Herein, therefore, lays the difference: the use of two different languages, potentially contradictory, between the two authors in order to explain the one- person idea of Chalcedon. Pannenberg uses relational language whereas Hatzidakis uses ontological language.

Given the ontological nature of his definition of sin, it is not feasibly possible for Pannenberg to use the same language in order to portray the human-divine unity of natures. This is because trying to do so would present a definite contradiction of ideas: how can the fallen sinful nature of Adam in Jesus be united to the chaste sinless nature of God, without changing it, i.e. without making the latter less God? In other words, how can God be sinful and yet be God at the same time? To avoid this difficulty, Pannenberg must use a different language—one that though will unite the two, it will still clearly keep them separate and unchanged. Therefore, Pannenberg picks on Hagel's idea of how person is formed: by

relating to another. This allows him to talk about the unity of persons without worrying about any kind of change, mixture or formation of a third substance, thereby keeping within Chalcedon's definition. For Hatzidakis however, there is no contradiction of ideas. His human Jesus is sinless by nature and conduct. It is therefore not difficult for him to unite this Jesus with a sinless God. And since the two—son and father—are of the same essence, they are one. And they do not form a third substance. Yet since the two are different persons, they are two. And they do not cease to be different. In this way, Hatzidakis manages to stay within the confines of Chalcedon. It can however not be ignored that these two—Hatzidakis and Pannenberg's ideas of the one person God-Man are two different ideas. But what did Chalcedon have in mind? Is it Pannenberg's idea, of the ignorant God-Man Jesus for example? Or is it Hatzidakis' idea, of the omniscient God-Man? A cursory review of our findings in chapter 2 quickly shows us that beyond proclaiming the one-person idea, Chalcedon does not give us much more information. The definition is therefore not of much help here. What therefore is our way forward? It is to this that I now turn.

First, in order to maintain consistency of description, it is essential that Hatzidakis and Pannenberg either synchronise their two languages—ontological and relational, or use the same language in their description of the God-Man unit. Apparently, Hatzidakis should have no problem with Pannenberg's relational language that both God the father and Jesus the son are only so in relation to each other and that they are therefore one entity by that relation. Pannenberg, on the other hand, should have no problem with Hatzidakis' ontological language, that God the father and Jesus the son are of one essence and are therefore one entity by that essence, yet separate beings by personage. But for Hatzidakis to suggest that this Jesus the son was therefore unlike us, unfallen, is beyond Pannenberg's conceptualisation. And for Pannenberg to suggest that sin in Jesus the son could be united to holiness in God the father is beyond Hatzidakis' comprehension. It is important to note that in describing sin, both authors use the ontological language: other than describing it as commission, they describe it as being. Yet in describing the unity of God the father and Jesus the son, Pannenberg changes his language to a relational one.

Hatzidakis on the other hand stays consistent with his ontological language. There apparently is no problem in describing the God-Man in different languages, but in this case, Pannenberg's change in language is where the conceptual difference with Hatzidakis

begins. How does one reconcile Pannenberg's description of sin in Jesus as being (as in being fallen) with his description of the Jesus God-Man as sinless? How can the fallen sinfulness nature in Jesus be united to the spotless sinless nature of God, without changing it, i.e. without making the latter less God? How can God be sinful and yet be God at the same time? In this case, I suggest that it would probably be more helpful for Pannenberg to use the same language in describing the unity of the father and son as the one he uses in describing sin: ontological. Or, since there should be no problem for either of the authors to use different languages in describing the divine-human unit, it is important that their languages be synchronised before they can engage in any, more secondary debate.

Second, the use or non-use of ontological or relational language above is motivated by a more foundational reason: the need to stay faithful to the chosen truth validation standard. For Hatzidakis, that standard is tradition. For Pannenberg, that standard is experience. Tradition, as read by Hatzidakis, does not allow for a God-Man unit that has sinfulness in it. If God is sinless, i.e. unfallen, the Man also must be sinless, i.e. unfallen. For Hatzidakis, tradition is consistent in this: its Man Jesus is sinless, i.e. unfallen, and therefore its God-Man is sinless, i.e. unfallen. Experience on the other hand, as read by Pannenberg and as discussed already, does not allow for a non-fallen Jesus if this Jesus is to be fully human, such as we are. Unfortunately, a fallen Jesus can also not be in union with God the father, since the latter is unfallen: consistency demands that the two be separate, if they must maintain their essences. But Pannenberg's affirmation of the one-person idea of Chalcedon does not allow him to separate the two. Therefore he chooses Hagel's relational idea in order for him to go around the obvious difficulty of ideological inconsistency. He does this in order for him to stay faithful not only to the one-person Chalcedonian idea, but more so to experience. But Hatzidakis rejects Pannenberg's manoeuvre as an impossibility. He rejects this manoeuvre in order for him to stay faithful to tradition. Therefore, the two truth validation plates—tradition and experience—clash. Which one of the two plates is correct? Should both be used? Or should one, or even another? How? These and other corollary questions must be attended to before such secondary debate as the one-person idea of Chalcedon can be successfully completed.

On the Salvation Idea of Chalcedon and how it relates to Christology

We have noted in our second chapter that for Chalcedon, the incarnation is the basis of our

salvation: the more our God becomes human, the more we become like him. We have also noted that for Chalcedon therefore, salvation is our becoming like God; it is our transformation to Godlikeness. We further noted that there therefore exists a seesaw formula in Chalcedon, whose direction is determined by the direction of God's movement: the deeper his incarnation, the higher our transformation. However, though it is God who determines the direction and height of our salvation movement, it is in fact his salvation goal for us, which determines the direction and depth of his incarnation movement. He becomes human in order to save us. And since his goal is complete salvation for us, Christ becomes complete human. It follows therefore that we understand the depth of the incarnation by studying the height of God's goal for us. To a great extent therefore, we understand Christology by studying soteriology.

Hatzidakis accepts the cause-effect aspect of Chalcedon's seesaw formula. According to him, our conception of salvation influences our understanding of who Christ became in the incarnation. We noted in chapter 3 that for Hatzidakis, salvation is obtained by partaking of Christ's body. We partake of Christ in order to become like him, unfallen. But, argues Hatzidakis, how can we become like him, unfallen, if he is fallen? According to him, we ought to partake of an unfallen Christ in order for us to be unfallen; therefore the incarnate Christ was unfallen. Pannenberg too accepts the cause-effect aspect of Chalcedon's seesaw formula. But he turns Hatzidakis' reading of the link on its head: our understanding of Christ influences our understanding of salvation. The incarnate Christ comes before salvation. As will shortly be noted, this is not necessarily a problem. In comparing the two authors, it can be said that for Hatzidakis, Christology is a function of soteriology; soteriology helps us to better understand Christology. On the other hand for Pannenberg, soteriology is a function of Christology; Christology helps us to better understand soteriology. This difference between the two is clear. And it is not a problem in as far as it enhances our collective Christian understanding of both theological branches—Christology and Soteriology. But when it creates a difference in these understandings (such as is the case in Pannenberg and Hatzidakis' understandings of salvation) it needs to be addressed. And this is part of the purpose of this study. At this point, before we think of any possible resolution, let's first examine the cause.

The cause is decidedly epistemological. It is the answer to the question, "How do I know

that what I am saying is true?” For Pannenberg, the answer to this epistemological question is experience. Do I see it? Do I experience it? If I don not, or if I at least cannot properly deduce it from common experience, it is not true—or at least not yet. This is the reason why Pannenberg insists on starting our study of Christology with the real, known, empirically experienceable Jesus of Jerusalem. Then only—after we have seen and touched and handled him (or at least based our knowledge of him on this experience), and necessarily leaning on the knowledge we obtain thereafter—may we move on to more Christologically dependent subjects such as soteriology. For Hatzidakis however, the answer to the question is tradition. If I can back it up with tradition, it must be true. This epistemological difference creates a definite potential for theological clashes. It is the cause of the noted difference between Hatzidakis and Pannenberg, regarding what epistemologically comes first—Christology or soteriology. Consequently, it is also the cause for nearly all conceivable differences in the definition of salvation between Hatzidakis and Pannenberg.

What therefore is the solution? Pannenberg and Hatzidakis must first agree on an important first principle: how to know that what they are saying is true. They must agree on their ultimate measuring standard. Without this standard, the two may not meaningfully engage in theological debate. They are playing football, so to speak, with two different referees—each referee using a different set of rules. Hatzidakis has chosen one referee—tradition; Pannenberg has chosen the other referee—experience. For this reason, they see things differently. We will now summarise our findings in this chapter: what are the differences in interpreting Chalcedon, between Pannenberg and Hatzidakis? What are the causes of these differences? And what are the suggested solutions?

Differences, Causes, and Suggested Solutions

Item	Difference	Cause	Suggested Solution
<i>On Jesus Being Truly Human</i>	For Hatzidakis, Jesus became truly human, like himself—unfallen; for Pannenberg, Jesus became truly human, like us—fallen.	1. Different understandings of what it means to be truly human: For Hatzidakis, to be truly human is to be like Jesus—	1. Pannenberg and Hatzidakis must agree on the meaning of being truly human. 2. Pannenberg and Hatzidakis must

		<p>unfallen; for Pannenberg, to be truly human is to be like us—fallen.</p> <p>2. Different truth validation standards for defining the term “truly human:” Hatzidakis uses tradition to define true humanity; Pannenberg uses experience.</p>	<p>agree on their standards of truth validation— tradition or experience, or even another standard— for the meaning of being truly human.</p>
<p><i>On Jesus Being without Sin</i></p>	<p>For Hatzidakis, to be without sin for Jesus is to be unfallen; for Pannenberg, to be without sin for Jesus is to be either— fallen or unfallen.</p>	<p>1. Different, potentially opposing grounds for Christ’s sinlessness: For Hatzidakis, Jesus was sinless because he had no sin; for Pannenberg, Jesus was sinless because God had declared him to be so, in the resurrection.</p> <p>2. Different truth validation standards for deciding the grounds for</p>	<p>1. Pannenberg and Hatzidakis must synchronise their reasons for declaring Jesus sinless</p> <p>2. Pannenberg should choose between faith and experience, as ultimate epistemological instruments, in order to consistently level the ground (or at least clarify the difference in) of debate between the two authors</p> <p>3. Pannenberg and Hatzidakis must</p>

		declaring Christ sinless.	agree on their standards of truth validation— tradition or experience; or even another standard— for deciding the grounds for declaring Christ sinless
<i>On Jesus Being One Person, the God- Man</i>	For Hatzidakis, to be one person for God and the Man Jesus is to be one in being—ontologically; for Pannenberg, to be one person for God and the Man Jesus is to be one in relationship—communally.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The use of two different and potentially contradictory languages— ontological (relating to being) vs. relational (relating to association of that being with other)—to express the idea. 2. Hatzidakis and Pannenberg’s motivation to use the ontological and relational languages respectively: the need to stay faithful to their truth validation standards— tradition for Hatzidakis and experience for 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pannenberg and Hatzidakis must use one language— ontological or relational, or synchronise the two languages. 2. Pannenberg and Hatzidakis must agree on their standards of truth validation—tradition or experience; or even another standard—for what language to use, ontological or relational.

		Pannenberg.	
<i>On the Idea of Salvation in relation to Christology</i>	For Hatzidakis, soteriology is best understood by studying Christology; for Pannenberg, Christology is best understood by studying soteriology.	Different truth validation standards—tradition and experience, each dictating a different starting point for the author: Soteriology for Hatzidakis and Christology for Pannenberg.	Pannenberg and Hatzidakis must agree on their standards of truth validation—tradition or experience; or even another standard—for where to start from, Christology or soteriology.

I will now move on, to appropriately apply these findings to the Seventh-day Adventist church debate.

An Application of Findings to the Seventh-day Adventist Debate

On the Hermeneutical Split

Seventh-day Adventists take the bible as their supreme standard of truth validation (Dederen, 2001:42). For a Seventh-day Adventist therefore, if the bible says it, it is true. Unfortunately, this by itself has not kept the church from internal differences. The debate referenced in chapter 1, coupled with the Chalcedonian differences in the meaning of true humanity (discussed in chapter 2) tells the story. However, the presence of differences in the church does not nullify the need for a truth validation standard, more than two or three individuals' different misreadings of a person's weight on a good scale nullify the need for the scale. We always need a standard to validate the truthfulness of our claims. It follows therefore that in the analogue of the scale, in order for us to have the correct reading, we must have and follow particular standards for reading it. And these standards cannot be arbitrary; the scale itself, and its nature must dictate them to us. For a non-digital scale that uses a pointer for example, in order for us to come up with a correct reading, we must look at the pointer from a particular angle. In the same manner, those who take the bible as their supreme rule of faith must look at the bible from a particular 'angle.' And this angle must

be dictated by the bible and its nature (Canale, 2001:11, 21). While it is true that all of us read from a tradition, it is also true that we all want to divest ourselves of anything that may distort our view of the truth we are searching for. For Seventh-day Adventists, this means that there is more work to do regarding their rules of interpretation and/or how these rules are followed. The following questions must be considered: What are the church's rules of bible interpretation? Are these rules sufficient enough to help this debate? If so, are they being followed? If the rules are not sufficient, what is the reason? How can this situation be helped? If the rules are not being followed, how are they not being followed? What can be done to remedy this?

On the Truly Human Idea of Chalcedon

One's understanding of what it means to be truly human shapes his understanding of the kind of human nature Christ took. If to be truly human means to necessarily have a fallen human nature such as we have, then Christ assumed a fallen human nature. Conversely, if to be truly human means to have an unfallen human nature such as Adam had before the fall, then Christ assumed an unfallen human nature. In the difference of opinions, between Gregory and Leo, regarding the kind of human nature Christ assumed, the understanding of what it means to be truly human took a central role. This was the case also in the Eutychean controversy some twenty years before Chalcedon. It is the case in the debate between Pannenberg and Hatzidakis. And it is the case in the Seventh-day Adventist church debate.

Relative to sin and fallenness, the camps in debate must clear the meaning of being truly human before they can engage in the debate regarding the nature of Christ in the incarnation. What does it really mean to be truly human? Does it mean to be like us—fallen, or to be like Adam before the fall? If being truly human means either of the two, does it then negate the other? If being truly human, for example, means being fallen—like us, does it then mean that Adam before the fall was less than truly human? If the answer to this latter question is in the affirmative, meaning that Adam was surely less than truly human, where then is the sense of this debate? What really was behind the Chalcedonian declaration that Christ became truly human? These and other pertinent questions must be addressed and resolved between the two camps prior to them engaging in the fallen vs. unfallen human nature of Christ debate.

On the “without sin” Idea of Chalcedon

Kapic, discussed in chapter 5, clearly shows the need for clarifying the meaning of terms and related ideas before engaging in any meaningful debate. And we see this need, from the very beginning, in the difference around Chalcedon, between Gregory and Leo for example (chapter 2). And it is clear, from the onset, that the idea of sin plays a major role in this debate. How one understands this idea dictates not only his understanding of Christ’s sinlessness but also the basis for declaring him so. If sin is understood as a state of being, which includes the state of being fallen, then it becomes difficult to think in terms of a fallen Christ. If sin, on the other hand, is defined otherwise, i.e. other than a state of being, then the opposite is true; it becomes easy to think in terms of a fallen Christ.

We discovered however that for Pannenberg, his understanding of sin did not directly influence his choice of whether Christ assumed a fallen human nature or not.

Notwithstanding, it *did* influence his basis for declaring (or not declaring) Christ sinless, at least in the negative sense. Because Pannenberg understood sin to be both an action and a state of being, and because he understood Christ to have at least assumed a sinful human nature, he could not base, without contradiction, the sinlessness of Christ on the absence or presence of sin in him. He based it instead, on the resurrection. We can therefore not escape the impact that our understanding of the idea of sin has on our position regarding whether the human nature of Christ was fallen or not. And Seventh-day Adventists are not an exception in this. It is therefore important that before they can engage in the debate regarding which human nature Christ took, they must revisit their understandings of the nature of sin: What is it? Is it a state of being, a deed, or both? Only then, after this clarification of understanding, can their Christological debate go on meaningfully.

On the One Person Idea of Chalcedon

How is the God-Man one person? Our study has given at least two answers: ontologically and relationally. We also noted that for Hatzidakis and Pannenberg, critical to deciding what language to use and not use—whether ontological or relational—is the researcher’s need to stay faithful to his chosen method of truth validation. We noted that for Hatzidakis, tradition as he reads it equates fallenness with sinfulness, and this in the ontological sense. To accept a fallen Christ therefore for Hatzidakis would be to accept a sinful Christ. Consequently, this Christ would not be properly said to be one with God the father, since

the latter is absolutely sinless. And more foundationally, such a position would go against tradition's declaration that the God-Man is sinless. For this reason, Hatzidakis rejects a fallen Christ. For Pannenberg too, experience equates fallenness with sinfulness. However, unlike Hatzidakis, Pannenberg cannot opt for an unfallen Christ because he has to stay faithful to his truth validation standard—experience. Paradoxically, Pannenberg also has to stay faithful to his conviction that God the father is sinless. Therefore, he opts for relational language. For this reason, the two theologians differ in their descriptions of the one sinless Christ. This is because the languages they use are different—ontological and relational. And these languages are in turn motivated by two different truth validation standards: tradition and experience.

The Seventh-day Adventist debate follows a somewhat similar pattern, except with different motivations. To the question, “How is the God-Man one person?”, the answer is one for both camps (though there are two major camps on the question of which human nature Jesus took—fallen or unfallen, this does not imply that there are always two camps in the Seventh-day Adventist church, more than the existence of two major camps on the same question in general Christianity implies that there are always two camps therein): he is one ontologically. Yet their descriptions of the God-Man Christ are different. Just as Hatzidakis and Pannenberg's truth validation standards motivate the language each of the theologians use, the camps' understandings of sin motivate their descriptions of their God-Man Christs. As noted in the first chapter, for the Adventist postlapsarian, sin is commission and not state of being. Therefore, a sinless Christ is a fallen Christ who has not committed any sin. And because he is sinless, he is part of, as well as the God-Man. For the Adventist prelapsarian, sin is both commission and state of being. Therefore, a sinless Christ is an unfallen Christ. And because he is sinless, he is part of, as well as the God-Man. Yet, as the descriptions for the one sinless Christ are different and in opposition for Hatzidakis and Pannenberg, the descriptions for the one sinless Christ are different and in opposition for the two Adventist camps. And as Hatzidakis and Pannenberg must agree on their truth validation standards before they can describe, or even explain their God-Man, the two Adventist camps must agree on their definition of sin before they can describe, or even explain the God-Man.

On the Salvation Idea of Chalcedon and how it relates to Christology

Following chapter 3, it can be said that Pannenberg amply demonstrates the effect of soteriology on Christian Christology in general. As a matter of fact, his observation holds true even for Hatzidakis, who makes soteriology the determinant of his Christology. This in turn explains many of the differences observed in the two theologians' Christologies, since Pannenberg makes Christology the determinant of his soteriology. We further noted that the difference in these theologians' starting points—Christology to soteriology and *vice versa*—is caused by their choice of truth validation standards. Fortunately, and as already noted, Seventh-day Adventists agree on their truth validation standards. It must be noted however that Pannenberg's observation—that soteriology has, for the most part, shaped Christendom's soteriology—does not exempt this denomination.

Donkor (2005), in his article, *The Nature of Christ: The Soteriological Question*, is a clear demonstration of this stance. Based on their standard of truth validation, Seventh-day Adventists mostly agree that soteriology may shape Christology. And in his article, Donkor virtually takes this fact as a given. Therefore, he proceeds (and urges Adventist theologians to do so) to use it as an index for correct Christology. Unfortunately, as observed in Donkor's article, Seventh-day Adventist theologians differ in their views of salvation. This in turn leads to their different Christologies. It is important therefore that this difference in soteriology be resolved before productive Christological debate can be engaged in.

Conclusion and further Research

We started this study with one main question: What is behind the differences between the postlapsarians and the prelapsarians in their views of the human nature of Christ? In other words, what is causing the differences in their positions? To help answer this question, I picked on two scholars, each representing one side, Hatzidakis for the prelapsarians, and Pannenberg for the postlapsarians. The rationale in this question is that to solve any problem, one must first clearly find and understand the cause of that problem. It is only then that they can properly forge a way forward. The study's more specific question therefore became, "What is behind the differences between the fallen and unfallen Christologies of Pannenberg and Hatzidakis respectively?" I believe that this study has adequately answered the question of cause, at least as far as Pannenberg and Hatzidakis are concerned. Furthermore, the study has suggested appropriate solutions to the same. In concluding this

work therefore, I will briefly revisit my answers to the question. I will also revisit my suggested solutions to each of the causes. I will then make suggestions for further research.

First, the two sides—in this case Hatzidakis and Pannenberg—have different understandings of what it means to be truly human. For Hatzidakis, representing the prelapsarians, to be truly human is to be like Jesus. Therefore, in becoming human, Jesus became who he already was—perfect human; unfallen. For Pannenberg, representing the postlapsarians, to be truly human is to be exactly who and what we are—fallen. Therefore, in becoming human, Jesus became exactly who and what we are—fallen. Furthermore, the two scholars use different truth validation standards for defining true humanity. For Pannenberg, that standard is experience. For Hatzidakis, that standard is tradition. It is necessary therefore that before the two scholars can debate about what human nature Christ took—fallen or unfallen—they should agree on what it means to be truly human. Additionally, Pannenberg and Hatzidakis should agree on what standard to use in validating their definition for true humanity.

Seventh-day Adventists must revisit their doctrine of what it means to be truly human especially in relation to Chalcedon. Does it mean to be like Adam before the fall (without sinful tendencies), or to be like Adam after the fall (sinful tendencies included)? A general description of what it means to be human is attempted by multiple authors in the book *What are Human Beings that You Remember them?* In this book, Davidson (2015:37), interpreting Genesis 8:21, describes fallen humanity as possessing a natural inclination to sin from birth, a state which according to him merits divine punishment. “On the basis of the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ typified by the animal sacrifices,” says Davidson (2015:38), “God does not punish humanity for their sinful, depraved *nature*” [Emphasis mine]. On the basis of this statement, one would conclude that since Christ was sinless, and that therefore deserved no punishment of his own, he could not have assumed a nature with inclinations to sin—thus disqualifying this nature from being truly human. But neither Davidson nor the rest of the authors in this book positively and fully addresses the question of what it means to be truly human, relative to possession of sinful inclinations. Additionally, Davidson’s statement definitely raises difficult and perhaps unavoidable questions of theodicy: Does God punish us for our nature, thus for being?

Seventh-day Adventists should also revisit their rules of interpreting scripture, and/or

application thereof, with the aim of making them more adequate in deciding their teaching regarding what human nature Christ took. This will help them to avoid many differing theological interpretations, like is the case with the human nature of Christ. Beyond the Seventh-day Adventist tradition, the Christian Church should equally revisit its idea of being truly human, with the aim of clearly answering the question of whether this means to be like Adam before the fall or like Adam after the fall. It is time for the Church to more fully develop the Chalcedonian concept of being truly human. Furthermore, the Church needs to further develop its doctrine on sources of theology and/or interpretation thereof in order to more clearly define its doctrine of the God-Man. Christian consensus is that God is superior in nature to human beings, and that human beings reflect his being. That means that God is volitional and can thus self-communicate. If God wants us to know him, and if he wants us to be saved (as Christian tradition teaches) there seems to be no reason, in my view, for him to leave us groping about in darkness as to how we must hear his voice. It seems reasonable to me therefore to expect (from him, or with his help) some level of certainty in doctrine, proportionate to our need of salvation. If our knowledge of whether Christ assumed a fallen or unfallen human nature in the incarnation is necessary for our salvation—which it seems to be—it is reasonable to me to expect a definite source of authority regarding this question. To search for a more definite and less contradictory source (or sources) of theology than currently is, therefore, is reasonable.

Second, the two authors have different understandings of what it means for Jesus to be sinless. For Hatzidakis, to be sinless is also to be unfallen. Therefore since Jesus was sinless, he was also unfallen. For Pannenberg on the other hand, to be sinless is to either be fallen or unfallen. Therefore it does not really matter what nature Jesus took, whether fallen or unfallen. The difference between Pannenberg and Hatzidakis is caused by the different grounds used by each one of them in declaring Jesus sinless. For Hatzidakis, Jesus is sinless because he has no sin. For Pannenberg, Jesus is sinless because God has declared him so, in the resurrection. For both scholars, the grounds used to declare Jesus sinless are determined by their respective truth validation standards. For Hatzidakis, that standard is tradition: it says that Jesus is sinless by the absence of sin in his life. For Pannenberg, that standard is experience: it says that Jesus is sinless by God's declaration of the fact, via the resurrection, since the resurrection was seen (or experienced) by the apostles and others and is thus based on experience, and since the resurrection to life is granted only to the righteous. It is

important therefore that before the two scholars can debate what it means for Jesus to be sinless, that they agree on the grounds for declaring him so. Should the grounds be the observable absence of sin in his life? Or should they be God's declaration, despite observable fact? Or could there be other grounds? Additionally, Pannenberg and Hatzidakis should agree on what truth validation standard determines the choice of grounds. Should it be tradition? Should it be experience? Or could there be another?

Seventh-day Adventists need to agree on what it means for a human being to be sinless, and therefore what it means for the human Jesus to be thus. But, foundational to this, Adventists must develop their doctrine of sin well enough to unequivocally answer the question of what it means to be without sin. Beyond the seventh-day Adventists is General Christianity. For doctrine formulation, Christianity generally accepts multiple sources of theology, including scripture. And, for all practical purposes of Christian theology, each source is vested with equal authority. It seems to me that beyond this fact, each scholar, or stream of scholars, is left to decide as to which of the sources will play the role of final judge, if at all, in doctrine formulation. Otherwise, the individual researcher is left to be the final arbiter of truth, after examining all available data. In our study of Pannenberg and Hatzidakis, it is clear to me that the two scholars have differing loci of doctrinal authority: tradition for Hatzidakis and experience for Pannenberg. Because these loci seem to suggest different locations of Christ's sinlessness, the two authors end up at different understandings of what it means for Christ to be without sin. Therefore, it is important that they, and by extension Seventh-day Adventists and Christianity in general, further define and/or revisit their doctrine on sources of theology, rules of interpretation and application thereof.

Third, Hatzidakis and Pannenberg have a different understanding of what it means for Jesus to be one person, the God-Man. For Hatzidakis, Jesus is one person with God the father in being, ontologically. Therefore, Jesus cannot take a fallen nature and still be united to the sinless, pure nature of God the father. He had to have an unfallen nature. For Pannenberg, Jesus is one person with God the father in relation, communally. Therefore, Jesus can take a fallen sinful nature and still be one with God the father, without compromising the latter's purity. The difference in Hatzidakis and Pannenberg's understanding of what it means for Jesus to be one with God the father is caused by their use of different languages. Hatzidakis, as already stated, uses the ontological language. Pannenberg on the other hand uses the

relational language. But the use of these languages is dictated by a more foundational reason: the two scholars' truth validation standards. For Hatzidakis, that standard is tradition: Jesus is one in being with God the father because tradition says so. For Pannenberg, that standard is experience: Jesus is one in relation with God the father because experience requires other than ontological unity—an ontologically sinful Jesus cannot be ontologically one with God the father without 'contaminating' him with sin. It is important therefore that Hatzidakis and Pannenberg agree on their choice of language in describing Jesus' unity with God the father. The two should also agree on what truth validation standard should dictate the choice of that language.

The history of Christology, at least as examined in this study, teaches us that to a greater extent, the Church's understanding of sin has shaped its understanding of the one-person idea of Christ, both at individual and corporate levels. This is the case with the Christological controversies that preceded and led up to Chalcedon. It is the case with the Chalcedonian deliberations themselves, and it is the case with every major Christological debate that followed thereafter. This is because nobody wants to contaminate Christ with sin (at least not in the Christian tradition). And nobody wants to divide him either. It is this desire—the desire not to contaminate Christ with sin, and the desire to keep him one—that guides both Pannenberg and Hatzidakis's discussions of the one-person idea of Christ. It is the same desire—the desire to keep Christ pure, and the desire not to 'nestorianise'—that guides the Seventh-day Adventist church's discussion of the human nature of Christ, and thus his unity. And because the two Seventh-day Adventist camps discussed in this study have differing understandings of sin, they have differing understandings of the unity of Christ. The pro-sinful tendencies camp understands it as a fallen unit. The anti-sinful tendencies camp understands it as an unfallen unit. For this reason, it is important that Seventh-day Adventists develop their doctrine of sin well enough to unambiguously answer the question of what it means for Jesus to be one person. Not only should this be the case for Adventists; it should be the case for the rest of Christianity.

But as we have seen with Pannenberg and Hatzidakis, there is a more foundational concept to be handled: our source or sources of theology. This is because these sources (or source) determine our concept of sin. If they are contradictory, our concepts of sin will be contradictory. In seeking the sources of theology, we seek the voice of God. And, like I

noted earlier, if God is volitional and can therefore self-communicate, and if he wants us to know him, there should be no reason as to why he should leave us alone to search for his voice—unless we are able to independently find it. If it is required for us to understand doctrine, and in this case sin, enough for us to be saved, it is inevitable that we develop our doctrine of sources or source of theology and/or rules of interpretation thereof⁴¹ to such a level that there should be no ambiguity—at least in as far as this is necessary for our salvation, and in as far as we can understand—in what the source or sources teach about sin. This doctrinal development therefore is a must for Christian theology today.

Finally, the two scholars have different understandings of the relationship between Christology and soteriology. For Hatzidakis, soteriology should shape Christology. For this reason, Hatzidakis advocates an unfallen Christ because his understanding of soteriology does not allow him to accept a fallen Christ. For Pannenberg, Christology should shape soteriology. For this reason, Pannenberg can advocate a fallen Christ without breaking any soteriological framework—since the latter is necessarily a child of Christology. The difference in the two scholars’ understandings of the relationship between Christology and soteriology is caused by their choice of the truth validation standards. As already clearly noted by now, for Hatzidakis, that standard is tradition: as clearly demonstrated by Pannenberg in chapter three, soteriology has been tradition’s foundation for Christology. For Pannenberg, that standard is experience: we must start from the person of Jesus—the concrete, in order to understand the work of that person, specifically, the *idea* of salvation. It is necessary therefore that Hatzidakis and Pannenberg agree on their choice of truth validation standards before they can answer the question of what shapes the other between Christology and soteriology.

Seventh-day Adventists accept the bible as the ultimate arbiter of truth. They also take soteriology, as they understand it from the bible, as the shaper of Christology. But they differ in their understandings of soteriology. And this causes them to differ in their understanding of Christology—the human nature of Christ to be specific. It is important therefore that Seventh-day Adventists reconcile their understandings of soteriology

⁴¹ Seventh-day Adventists have no conflict on sources; they are decided that scripture is their infallible source of doctrine. Yet, like we have seen, and as I have noted earlier, they are conflicted in their understanding of the human nature of Christ. In this case, they are conflicted in their understanding of the unity of Christ. This means that if they are right in taking the bible as their ultimate source of theology, their problem should be with individual or cooperate interpretation. It is necessary therefore that not only their doctrine or choice of sources be revisited, but that their rules of interpreting those sources be addressed.

especially as it affects their understanding of the human nature of Christ. Furthermore, it is important that they revisit their rules of scripture interpretation and/or application thereof with the aim of making them more adequate in deciding their teaching regarding soteriology. This will help them to avoid many differing theological interpretations, like is the case with their different understandings of the subject now. Beyond the Seventh-day Adventist church, general Christianity should revisit its choice of sources of theology and/or its rules of source interpretation, with the aim of avoiding conflict as to what should shape the other between Christology and soteriology. As stated earlier, this conflict by itself is not a problem in as far as it helps us to better understand each of the branches—Christology and soteriology. But where it creates a conflict of these understandings, such as is the case in Pannenberg and Hatzidakis, it ought to be addressed

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