

**THE CENTRALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN GOD'S GRAND ACTS OF CREATION,
RECONCILIATION, RENEWAL AND FULFILMENT – THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND
CULTURE**

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SUMMARY

The Spirit is the overall renewing and liberating presence-maker of God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment. Not as doctrines, but these acts while we are involved therein are the ortho-experiential drivers of our reflective experience in which we reflectively pattern and process our daily experiences. The centrality of the role of the Spirit in four grand acts of God continuously opens up our awareness of our *creatureliness*, awareness of *sin*, awareness of being *reconciled*, awareness of being in an ongoing *renewal* process and awareness of the dawning of our *fulfilment* in our everyday experience.

Taking an all-encompassing approach, the Spirit is not only present in love with every creature, but in many mysterious ways that we have never imagined possible. It is through the presence of the Spirit that the creatures of the universe are brought into communion with one another. The Spirit of God then embraces individuals, but he also enables them to exist in a social environment, that is, in an interrelated world of created beings, bringing them and keeping them within the ambit of God's creation, reconciliation, renewal, and fulfilment of everything.

Understanding the key concepts of experience and speculation is important, as well as grasping the different theological approaches to the Trinitarian scheme. At the same time, the doctrine of Revelation in form of Scripture, Tradition, Experience and Culture demonstrates how different understanding of Revelation brings about the different understandings of God (and concretely the Spirit) on the part of any Christian. Hermeneutically, the role of the Holy Spirit and God's grand acts is to be attested by the Bible in consensual negotiation.

Finally, the central role of Spirit opens up the reflective vista of the Kingdom of God as a dynamic meandering through God's four grand acts at the end of historical time and as the only access area where people's culture, religiosity, ethnicity, social status and language may be reflected on. Typological approaches describing the relationship between Christ and culture in Niebuhr's work need to be compared and evaluated, leading to a deeper discussion about the 'interminable' and conflicting relationship between the world and state represented by culture on the one side and Christianity represented by the Spirit on the other.

KEY TERMS

Biblical historical timeline; Creation; Reconciliation; Renewal; Fulfilment; Grand acts of God; Faith studies; Mirroring approach; Interpretation; Consensual negotiation; Pentecostal hermeneutics; Christendom; The Holy Spirit; Culture; Revelation; Scripture; Tradition; Experience; Denominations; The Kingdom of God

CONTENTS

Table of Contents

SUMMARY	iii
KEY TERMS	iii
CONTENTS	iv
CHAPTER 1	1
<i>The Multiverse Challenge</i>	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 The Background	3
1.3 The Transition from One Spirit of the Age to another	6
1.4 The ‘Turn’ to the Spirit and the Ortho-Experiential Approach of the Dissertation	15
1.5 The Kingdom of God and Culture.....	20
1.6 The Challenge	22
1.8 Sense-making Methods and Tools	28
1.9 The Structure of the Dissertation	29
1.10 Ethical Considerations	32
CHAPTER 2	33
<i>The Biblical Historical Timeline</i>	33
2.1 God’s Grand Acts of Creation, Reconciliation, Renewal and Fulfilment.....	33
2.2 The Unity and Diversity of the Four Grand Acts of God.....	35
2.2.1 Creation.....	36
2.2.2 Reconciliation	46
2.2.3 Renewal	68
2.2.5 The presence of the Spirit and our experiential involvement	86
CHAPTER 3	88
<i>Experiential versus Speculative Theology</i>	88
3.1 Experience and Speculation	88
3.1.1 Experiential faith patterning versus speculative theology	88
3.1.2 Theology and Faith Studies	89
3.2 The Notion of God as a Trinity.....	91
3.2.1 The first millennial background to the Trinity.....	94
3.2.2 Ecumenical councils and the emergence of the Trinity.....	97
3.2.3 Eastern Orthodox trinitarian approach	99
3.2.4 Augustine’s approach to the Trinity.....	103
3.2.5 Thomas Aquinas and the Trinity.....	105
3.2.6 Trinitarian Views following the Reformation.....	109
3.2.7 Barth’s Christocentric Trinity	111
3.2.8 Moltmann’s Social Trinitarianism.....	113
3.2.9 Oneness Pentecostalism and the Trinity.....	114

3.2.10 The Trinity and God’s grand acts within the biblical historical timeline.....	116
3.3 The essential status of pneumatology in the trinitarian framework.....	117
3.3.1 In pursuit of proper balance between Christology and pneumatology.....	117
3.3.2 Modern views on the role of the Spirit within the Trinity	122
3.4 The Holy Spirit, Scripture and Revelation	124
3.4.1 The four grand acts of God as revelatory acts	124
3.4.2 Revelation since the Reformation of the 16 th Century	124
3.4.3 Revelation as the sense and meaning of the disclosure of God’s grand acts	127
3.4.4 Concluding comments on the Trinity	128
CHAPTER 4.....	129
<i>The Doctrine of Revelation in the Light of Scripture, Tradition, Experience, and Culture</i>	129
4.1 Introduction.....	129
4.1.1 The problematics of revelation and its reception.....	129
4.1.2 The story of four friends	130
4.2 The Cultural Aspect of Revelation	132
4.2.1 Purity of God’s Creation	132
4.2.2 The Fall	133
4.2.3 Faith and reason in church history	134
4.3 The Covenant with Noah, Preservation, and Paul Tillich	136
4.4 The Covenant with Christ, Action and Karl Barth	140
4.5 The Bible, Inspiration and Carl Henry	143
4.6 The Tradition, Ecclesial Illumination, and Karl Rahner	146
4.7 The Way of Personal Illumination.....	149
4.8 Denominational Groups Encompassing the Globality of Divine Revelation	151
4.8.1 Tradition and the Roman Catholic Church	152
4.8.2 Scripture and the Evangelical Movement	153
4.8.3 The Role of Experience and Pentecostalism.....	155
4.8.4 The globalized church	158
CHAPTER 5.....	160
<i>Multiverse Sides of Pentecostal Hermeneutics in the Pursuit of the Dialectics between the Biblical Historical Timeline and the Spirit.....</i>	160
5.1 Introduction.....	160
5.2 The History of Hermeneutics.....	161
5.2.1 The Early church.....	161
5.2.2 The Middle Ages.....	162
5.2.3 The Reformation	163
5.2.4 The era of the Enlightenment.....	164
5.2.5 The historical-critical method	165
5.2.6 The modern approaches to hermeneutics	166
5.2.7 Hermeneutics and Pentecostalism.....	169
5.3 The Development of Pentecostal Hermeneutics	170
5.3.1 The Spirit baptism versus the initial gift of tongues.....	170
5.3.2 Spirit Baptism versus all the spiritual gifts and in-fillings.....	174
5.3.3 Spirit baptism in the light of the totality of God’s creation	176
5.3.4 The relationship between Pentecostal and Charismatic hermeneutics.....	178

5.4 The Bible and the Experience in and of the Holy Spirit.....	180
5.4.1 Introduction	180
5.4.2 The fundamentalist mirroring approach	181
5.4.3 The interpretationist approach	182
5.4.4 The consensual negotiation approach.....	184
5.5 Concluding Comments per Hermeneutics	186
CHAPTER 6.....	188
<i>God’s Kingdom and Culture</i>	<i>188</i>
6.1 Introduction.....	188
6.2 The Kingdom of God, the Spirit, and Culture in the Present Era	189
6.3 The Dialectics of Christianity and Culture	191
6.3.1 The cultural dilemma.....	191
6.3.2 The cultural problematics of the Great Commission	192
6.3.3 Christ against Culture	194
6.3.4 Christ of Culture	195
6.3.5 Christ above Culture.....	195
6.3.6 Christ and Culture in paradox.....	196
6.3.7 Christ transforming Culture	197
6.4 Evaluation of the Transformational Model	199
6.4.1 The dualistic obstacles in balancing the Church and the world	200
6.4.2 Christianity versus Christendom	202
6.4.3 The transformational model in light of the dualistic approach.....	204
6.4.4 Concluding comments.....	206
6.5 The Spirit and Culture	207
6.5.1 The ecclesiological need of pneumatology	207
6.5.2 Two common ways of interpreting the work of the Spirit	209
6.5.3 The Creator’s Spirit versus the spirit of creation.....	211
6.5.4 Rediscovering the Spirit in the culture	213
<i>BIBLIOGRAPHY.....</i>	<i>216</i>

CHAPTER 1

The Multiverse Challenge

1.1 Introduction

For many years, I have been exploring the relationship between Christianity and culture. In a very broad way, I examined different sense-making approaches in the greater Christian world and their attempts to provide answers to the challenge of bringing the Christian message into a meaningful relationship, not to say fusion, with human culture in general.

The issue would not be so interesting if there were a unanimous answer to the various cultural problems and questions asked by people of different backgrounds, including their religiosity, ethnicity, social status and language. But there seems to be no simple solution. The problem is intensified by the fact that it is not only a theoretical problem discussed on academic grounds that gives us a certain cultural perspective for the distant future. On the contrary, humankind is forced to be directly involved in solving the issue on an everyday basis, whether carried out spontaneously or sophisticatedly, as it concerns the very basics of human functionality and interaction.

Over the years, my keenness in exploring the relationship between Christianity and culture has been accompanied by an awareness that this relationship has something to do with one's basic approach to life, to the natural world and to God. I realized very forcibly that such an all-embracing understanding of our lives and the world we live in, has not only been shaping and guiding our own *everyday experience and praxis* but has been constantly borne in an ongoing sense in our *everyday experience and praxis* and it comprises a multiplicity of relationships, towards *ourselves* and *other human beings* and the *natural environment* around us, and our relationship towards *God*.

In earlier years I had been looking for an answer to the relationship Christianity and Culture within the ambit of Richard Niebuhr's classic *Christ and Culture (1951)* in which the author evaluates different Christian approaches to the secular world. Proceeding through the history of Christianity, from the apostle Paul and the early Church Fathers, through the characters of

mediaeval times and the Reformation till the modern era, he has shown how some of these intellectual brains determined to abstain from the worldly culture of their eras while others were basically absorbed by it. Niebuhr outlined a wide variety of opinions, and this has made the study exciting.

However, though Niebuhr's approach has been contributing a lot to my Pentecostal inclusive view of different churches and denominations, it just appeared too Christ-centric and too much incarcerated in a sense-making approach that works with the underlying assumptions of classical trinitarian theology on one side and the secularization process on the other.

Being uncomfortable with Niebuhr's approach brought me face to face with the relationship between God's creation and culture. But again, I found myself stuck in a one-sided mode. Then merging into the research subject, slowly the awareness dawned on me that the Bible dynamically portrays four grand acts of God, namely that of God's *creation, reconciliation* through the earthly life, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ, *renewal* through God as the Holy Spirit of Pentecost and *fulfilment and consummation* of all things in the new heaven and the new earth. Being a Pentecostal, the Spirit's central role in our age as the renewing era of the Spirit in its relationship to the New Testament concept of the Kingdom of God started to fill my theologically reflective mind.

The centrality of the role of the Spirit on the one hand continuously opens up our awareness of our *creatureliness*, our awareness of *sin*, our awareness of being *reconciled*, our awareness of being in an ongoing *renewal* process and our awareness of the dawning of our *fulfilment* in our everyday experience. Conversely, the centrality of the role of Spirit opens up the reflective vista of the Kingdom of God as a dynamic meandering through God's acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment at the end of historical time and as the only access area where people's culture, religiosity, ethnicity, social status and language could be reflected on.

The challenge of describing the centrality of the Holy Spirit's work within the Kingdom of God meandering within the range of God's acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal, and fulfilment opens up the vista of a follow-up challenge. The challenge of reflecting on the mystery of being closely connected but also radically different from God, our conscious unique human selves, humanity as a whole and the natural *cosmos* (world around us) in all the grand acts of God, that is, creation, redemption (reconciliation), renewal, and consummation

(fulfilment) while staying within the ambit of the biblical-historical timeline as the sinuous path of God's Kingdom is nearly overbearing in the face of all the speculative theologies held by many churches.

1.2 The Background

Reading through the major works pertaining to systematic theology shaping denominations in the evangelical Protestant world, very little is said about the pneumatological perspective. "Pneuma" is the Greek word for the Spirit and "pneumatology" stands theologically for the study of the Holy Spirit. W. Grudem's *Systematic Theology* (1995), M. J. Erickson's *Christian Theology* (2013), let alone N. Geisler's multi-volume *Systematic Theology* (2002-2005), all describe Christian doctrines in a noble style but perhaps under the influence of dominating Christology, there is no greater effort to analyse the facts and knowledge evolving around the Third Person of the Trinity. The Christian world, principally within the trajectory of Protestant mainline churches, could for the greater part of the 20th Century be typified as Christ-centric while the evangelical trajectory cutting across all churches and movements is to be viewed as more Jesus-centric. The knock-on effect in these churches has been that the role and the work of the Spirit of God has been inequitably portrayed as a secondary working of God not only in the lives of their members, but also in their theologies.

A Spirit-driven movement that evolved around the Holy Spirit in the 20th Century started out in a very promising manner. As Vinson Synan asserts in his acclaimed work *The Century of the Holy Spirit* (2001), from Agnes Ozman's experience of speaking in tongues at the Bethel Bible College in Topeka, Kansas on January 1, 1901 and the events that took place from 1906-1913 in Los Angeles in Azusa Street, a new century of the Spirit had dawned wherein the Holy Spirit, from a hindmost position, had been propelled to take up the foremost work of God as the Spirit of Pentecost, the Spirit of Renewal (2001:1ff.).

Early in the second decade of the 20th Century, nevertheless, it would appear as if the emphasis on the Holy Spirit as the pneuma-directed driver of the Kingdom of God in the world had run out of steam and was being replaced by a strong Jesus-centric and Christ-centric emphasis (Wood L. 2000:51). The immense initial focus on the Spirit in the experiential ambience of Agnes Ozman and Azusa Street has been replaced by an overwhelming Christ-cantered view, advocated by a pastor, Karl Barth in the small village of Safenwil in Switzerland where he

wrote his commentary on Paul's letter to the Romans (1919). The role of the great Swiss Reformer Karl Barth should not be underestimated in the overwhelming tendency of advocating Jesus Christ as the exclusive middle and centre of history and reality (Barth 1975:115-116).

Against the tendency to Christ-centricity, a small band of persons in different Pentecostal communities in their experiential ambiances rowed against the stream with their emphasis on God the Holy Spirit as the powerful present agency in their *renewing experiential ambiances simultaneously* with Jesus Christ as actively present everywhere (yesterday, today and forever the same - Hebrews 13:8) as the initiating agent of God's *salvific acts* of the "full gospel," "fourfold gospel," or "foursquare gospel". While both the Spirit as *renewer* and Christ as *reconciler* (saviour) were at work on an equal footing, so to speak, in the early Pentecostal experience, the work of Jesus Christ was unilaterally accentuated as the saviour, healer, baptizer with the Holy Spirit, and coming king (Clark et al 1989:4, 26).

Such a Christocentric tendency of Pentecostal making, which expressed the movement from Christ → Spirit is the one aspect of the Pentecostal story which in its one-sidedness continues to haunt Pentecostals up to the present day because the simultaneous movement from the Spirit → Christ in which the Spirit is simultaneously bringing the fourfold gospel renewingly into operation disappears from the Pentecostal screen. In the movement from Spirit → Christ, the Spirit is the renewing salvific applicator of the cross and the resurrection of Jesus Christ as reconciling saviour, as well as the healing agency employing the salvific energy of Jesus' resurrection in healing. Additionally, the Holy Spirit is also the ongoing continuator of Spirit baptism and ongoing sanctifying baptizer in a person's life, together with His work of presenting God's presence and the ambience within which we await the second coming of Christ.

The unambivalent Christo-centricity of early Pentecostalism with respect to the grand act of God's creation operated with a strong acknowledgement of natural physicality, the natural materiality from whence the action and process of healing takes place. But the entire perception of healing was couched in a dualist approach wherein supernatural divine intervention as regards the illness in the physical creaturely naturalness of our existence belittles the latter as being God's continuing creational process. Sometimes the notions of sin and evil were brought into play as background to the illness. But the upgrading and glorifying of one or two of God's

grand acts at the expense of degrading and underemphasizing of another of God's acts was problematic in the past and continues to be so wherever it is experienced in certain Pentecostal circles. Yet another one-sidedness raised its head in regards to the concept of the second coming of Christ. Instead of saying we are waiting for the return of Christ in the presence of the Spirit, some Pentecostals assert that we are waiting in Christ for the return of Christ. If one takes for instance the following statement of S.J. Land in his book *Pentecostal Spirituality* as a basic statement of Pentecostal experience with regard to the return of Christ, we clearly experience an instance of one-sidedness. Land states:

The waiting for Christ became waiting in Christ for his return. The waiting for the promised Spirit became waiting in the Spirit for the time when, by the Spirit, God would be all in all (Land 2010:31).

A good Pentecostal reformulation of the above would be to state that the waiting for the return of Christ is equally, and perhaps primarily, waiting in the Spirit for Christ's return and that the Spirit of Pentecost is also the >yet< (the experience and the promise in the Spirit here in this life) and the >not yet< (the afterlife reality) when God would be all-in-all in His fulfilled Kingdom (Commonwealth).

Our experiential involvement through the Spirit in God's grand acts enables us to describe the patterns and processes of our experience of our aware experience of our creatureliness, our ongoing sinfulness, our ongoing salvific reconciliation, our ongoing renewing sanctification and our fulfilment processes. This reflective description and processing of our experiences is circumscribing the Pentecostal theological approach of *ortho-experientiality* as follows in this dissertation.

Experience is an occurrence that leaves an impression on an individual or a community. It is awareness of our creatureliness, awareness of sin, awareness of being reconciled, awareness of being in an ongoing renewal process and awareness of the dawning our fulfilment in our everyday experience. Only when the Holy Spirit is experienced and viewed as working and acting centrally in the era of the Spirit activating God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment in our daily experience as well as in our biblically directed experiential theologies, are we able to embrace Bruner's statement to its full extent that

The Pentecostal is persuaded that his historical success is due to his theological discernment, the experience of the Holy Spirit in power. It is from this spiritual centre that Pentecostalism understands “itself” (1970:26-27).

1.3 The Transition from One Spirit of the Age to another

The Pentecostal movement has produced relatively few scholarly theological works; nonetheless, myriads of ‘non-academic theologies’ have seen the light (Macchia 2002: 1120). There are a few factors relating to why Pentecostalism’s experiential theologies, the so-called ‘non-academic theology’, was and still is in many regards underplayed and viewed from mainline protestant churches’ perspectives as a hotchpotch of semi-theological writings which in many respects are flirting with heretical ideas. It would appear at this point, that Pentecostals’ confidence about what their contribution to God’s Kingdom in the world is, is not triggered into action.

Pentecostals did not realize, and are still not realizing, that in a similar way to the Protestant reformation of the sixteenth century had been a transition to a new theological paradigm from an old first millennium paradigm, the events and happenings of the second half of the 19th Century and the first half of the 20th Century in nearly all the prophetic movements over the world, but especially in the Pentecostal movements, have not in a conscious sense been experienced as a radical changeover to a new theological paradigm of experiential theologies.

Needless to say, the challenges that the experiential theology is facing in the modern era exceeds the problems of the Protestant theology of the sixteenth century due to the Enlightenment period, the rise of rational sciences and the elevated role of the reason. For theology to be scientific today to avoid being called just a servant of religion, it needs to have a determined object of study, method of research, and some kind of coherence among the facts. It must also use the common rules of logic and use data of other scientific disciplines for verification.

As a universal science, theology is yet unique in its pursuit of the knowledge of God and cannot be reduced to specific sciences. At the same time, theology and science must be complementing each other just as both the natural theology (nature) and the special theology (Scripture) come

from one source: God. They cannot contradict each other, and if it appears so, it has to do with incomplete data that we are lacking (Amos 2014:282). The meaning of the world finds its illumination in the 'Word', that is, Christ's cross and resurrection. Since the resurrection goes beyond the natural laws of life and death, it has eschatological undertones that need to be understood pneumatologically. The Grand acts of God of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment concern this physical world but the actual hope and fulfillment of life, death, and resurrection of Christ dwell in the Spirit.

Human souls are uniquely implanted into human beings by God. The intellectual moral capacities superior to those of animals and other earthly creatures. The capability to absorb science and theology is one of these unique features. Both of these create a set of believable doctrines based on the surrounding data provided, but when pushed to the edge, a certain degree of faith is required as well. Thus, in research we get different theories that can be equally right or wrong. Theological anthropology tries to reconcile the view of human's creation with belief in God, observing the image of God in every man and woman, and at the same time—regarding also the fall of man—this image has been best manifested by Jesus Christ incarnated. (Amos 2014:284). All the four grand acts of creation, redemption, renewal, and fulfilment have to be understood in terms of the trinitarian and redemptive work of God. Observing the creating energy of the Logos and renewing power of the Spirit, "Any theological account of the world is thus necessarily Christological and pneumatological" (Amos 2014:288). The "natural world" with the limited natural science does not stand on its own but operates in the framework of the four grand acts.

The spirituality is dynamic rather than static. As Anderson puts it, "Pentecostals are not unnerved by the search for a theological explanation for a divine act that has been experienced rather than understood" (Anderson 1990:58). Of course, it would be an unfortunate one-sided approach to make this an excuse for not exploring the dangers of subjectivism, emotionalism in the elements of divine encounters without setting in properly in biblical-historical, ethnic, social and cultural contexts. Nevertheless, the Pentecostal theology seeks to confirm and validate experience as an authentic channel for spiritual encounters with God alongside certain rational guidelines regarding the modes of divine revelation materialized in the historical-biblical timeline, the Christian tradition and the culture.

Culture has a lot to do with cosmology and creation, the first Grand Act of God, in which the

logical framework of things in the universe and the world was established by help of the Spirit as the outset for the other Grand Acts of God. But referring to the modern Pentecostal works of Warrington's *Pentecostal Theology*, Menzies' *Bible Doctrine*, and Duffield's *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*, Vondey concludes that, "a doctrine of creation is absent from many systematic attempts at presenting a constructive Pentecostal theology" (Vondey 2017:155). He continues that "Pentecostal experiences of the Holy Spirit provide experiential, physical, social, historical, and eschatological frames of reference for rethinking fundamental notions of God's activity on the world" (Vondey 2017:156).

The Spirit is often reduced to be an aid to Christ's work of redemption and classical Christological concepts while the actual framework of pneumatology is rather neglected. This may be caused by the fact that the Spirit's work in the initial stages of God's work in Creation, Redemption, Renewal and Consummation is played down, first waiting for Christ to launch Spirit's work after his own redemptive work on the Cross. The Spirit's role is to fill a certain autonomy in God's plan of salvation without being thought of as a wholistic agent of the whole process.

Particularly western Pentecostalism is affected by this approach while in the African and Latin American Pentecostalism the pneumological concepts are part of the entire cosmological narrative (Vondey 2017:158). As it is stated below, these theologies work in the pneumatological framework of both the Holy Spirit and the 'spirits' in the divine sphere, the human universe, the natural world, and even the realm of evil. The relational qualities between the different spiritual spheres are used to be the popular target of Pentecostal theology. The scope of this work does not allow to explore the various spiritual realms in detail as the focus is on the Holy Spirit in relation to the other two persons of the Trinity in the framework of the Grand Acts of Creation, Reconciliation, Renewal, and Consummation. The Holy Spirit was active at the creation, in the conception and mission of Christ and the Father pours out the Spirit through Christ on all flesh as a 'paraclete' and the one who renews people and things to the ends of the earth (cf. Acts 2:17-21). Thus, Christology can never be separated from pneumatology.

Christ is the Savior just as he was conceived by the Spirit at the incarnation and empowered at the baptism and is the one who baptizes with the Spirit (cf. Lk 3:16). The Spirit is "among us",

‘with us’, ‘in us’, and ‘through us’, and thereby invites all of creation to participate in the divine life” (Vondey 2017:160). Sanctification is observed as the eschatological struggle in the pursuit of continuation of the reconciliation of the creation with God where the Spirit’s role is the transformation of the whole creation into a sanctified community (Wenk 2000:259-308). The economic function of the Spirit at the incarnation and the Pentecost introduces new laws on the coming Kingdom of God opening the world in the form of ecology, society and culture to charismatic participation, divine empowerment, and eschatological transformation (Yong 2008: 979-80).

There are yet many factors that have contributed to the state of affairs where the new experiential sense-making paradigm with its new experiential way of theologizing has been struggling to get off the ground. I want to point to a few factors that contributed to this situation.

Generally, new movements bringing about radical change have a tendency not to distance themselves too much in all respects from the groups and the traditions from which they originated. For this reason, aspects viewed as on the periphery and as not part of the core group of aspects of the struggle at the moment of initiation of the movement tend to get nipped in the bud – especially when these aspects on the periphery seem to look like heresy from some or other imagined orthodox or mainline traditional viewpoint.

The transition from the earlier speculative scholastic theologizing of the day to theologizing within the ambit of the biblical historical timeline performed by Calvin and Luther, as portrayed by Judeo-Christian Scripture, was not consistently carried through. The grand acts of God’s creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment were not equally operative in their approaches. Both emphasized God’s acts of creation and reconciliation far more than renewal and fulfilment. In their eyes, the Old and the New Testaments were actually the reflective exploration areas where the entire spectrum of people’s experience are to be unearthed. In Calvin’s view, renewal through the Spirit was narrowed down to the One who internally enlightens a person to interpret the Bible correctly – and the more important function – for Pentecostals – is that Christ because, with his divine and human side, is presently seated at the right-hand side of the Father, his divinity cannot be ubiquitously present.

Luther viewed Christ's divinity as ubiquitously present. Calvin said No, only through the Spirit is Christ present (Inst Book IV, chap17, par 12). This view was merited with the phrase of **extra Calvinisticum** – the something extra that Calvin (and Zwingli) had vis-à-vis other Reformers. The “extra” means that the view that Christ's divinity and humanity with the Father is not part of the other Reformers' propositions. The Swiss reformer Zwingli who died in 1531 accentuated this before Calvin, while the latter was still operating with a mixture of Catholic-Renaissance humanist views. With this view of Christ's divinity and humanity never permeating each other into eternity at the right-hand side of the Father where Christ is constantly interceding for us, Calvin could not fit this view into any of the classical views of the Trinity – and neither could Calvinists after him. The Trinity is always seen as an add-on in Calvinist theologies, with very little practical impact on believers' everyday lives. Calvin's tools for everyday life are the grand acts of God's creation and reconciliation through Christ with a lighter emphasis on His acts of renewal through the Spirit and His fulfilment of everything (cf. Krusche 1957:15-32). Although Karl Barth, with his Christ-centred Trinity, and Jürgen Moltmann with his Social Trinitarian view in the 20th Century, employed an adapted form of the Doctrine of the Trinity as a basic operational schema of their theologies, they did not succeed in bringing the Trinity into the biblical historical timeline of God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment.

The point here is that a doctrine such as that of the Trinity that has emerged through the first millennium sense-making 'logic' of everything in the world being described as trinitarisms from the fourth-century Council of Nicaea and later councils, was taken up by the Reformation of the 16th Century despite the fact that it was not really part of their main approach of doing all their reflection within the biblical historical timeline.

What is equally important about the Pentecostal experience from the end of the nineteenth up to our era is that the doctrine of the Trinity, which was initially a concession to the post-Constantine church of the first millennium, is still used as one of the important measuring rods of orthodoxy by protestant theologians and churches.

The second measuring rod revolves around the notion of daily experiences around the fourfold presences of God, of oneself, of other human beings and of the natural environment. In the majority of Protestant concepts, the individual's daily experience of the fourfold presences is actually to be experientially lived through the Bible. The Protestant paradigm is that any

experience of the four presences has to be checked and measured for its validity, genuineness and truthfulness against their confessions of faith that are to be regarded as truthfully expressing the Bible (Farrelly 2005:110ff.). Against this background, various prophetic movements of the 19th Century, Pentecostals included, claiming experiences of visions and healing, baptism of the Spirit and speaking in tongues were regarded as being “from the world”, primarily because the confessional and scriptural measuring rod says that these experiences could not be from the God of the Bible, that is the Reformed or Lutheran Bible.

Especially in Reformed theology, a theology of experience (German: *Erfahrungstheologie*) was for a long-time *anathema*. Experience of God, oneself, other human beings and the natural environment emerged slowly in the 1200s and 1300s, and with the Reformation of the 16th Century, the widespread experience of mediaeval piety – especially in Calvin’s world – became the mainstay of all experience. In this sense, at least in principle, the experience of this underlying piety and the involvement in the biblical historical timeline of Scripture was on the same level. In the practical sense, one’s daily experience with God, oneself, other human beings and the natural environment was not on the same level as the involvement with the Bible, against which everyday experience had to be measured.

The churches of the 16th Century Reformation are the constructors of the concept that God, for instance, could only be experienced through a holy book – i.e. Scripture – and then, only thereafter in daily experience. Furthermore, the mirroring fundamentalist view subscribing to the view of the inerrancy and infallibility of Scripture as the Word of God emerging in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries exacerbated Protestant history by allowing the Bible to become increasingly the oracle book through which God speaks to a believing reader. While the interpretation approach that mainly derived from the Calvinist side of the Reformation would say that the Bible in a particular verse should be interpreted in a particular context, the mirroring fundamentalist approach was and still is the approach of letting God-self speak through a verse without taking the historical context of the verse into consideration. Again, the daily experience of God within the ambience of the four presences that are the presence of God, the presence of oneself, the presence of other human beings and the presence of the natural environment is degraded and devaluated.

From the outset, just as in nearly all the 19th Century prophetic movements, Pentecostalism’s ‘theological’ patterns emerged from their experience of the powerful working of the Spirit in a

similar sense as Trinitarian views emerged from people's first millennium sense-making experience of trialisms and similar to the centrality of the biblical historical timeline emerging from people's 16th Century experience in Calvin's Geneva and Luther's Wittenberg.

The Pentecostal experiences of healing and baptism in the Spirit are not hovering above everyday experience and are not only part of our everyday experience but are in the deepest and most intricate sense of the word, experiences. It is still widespread in mainline churches to view Pentecostal experiences with a sceptical eye and even in some instances as a bit heretical. This is one of the reasons why Pentecostal theologians are on the back foot when theology is at stake and why they rather affirm mainline church views as acceptable even if the shelf life of some of these has long since passed and they are experienced as problematic within mainline church circles. Furthermore, theological discourses are still not friendly towards experiential theologies. This latter ties in with the factor that people's empowerment by the Spirit of God is overruled by either an approach of a fundamentalist inerrant and infallible biblical text or by the theologians as the authoritative interpreters of the Bible.

The Protestant emphasis is on the Bible and then people's experience of the fourfold presences as if these latter have to be lived through the Bible. Against this, the Roman Catholic emphasis is that people experience God through the funnelling processes of the sacraments as well as in their absolute quietness in prayer and meditation. The Pentecostal emphasis, largely deriving from the Protestant heritage, though in the early stages very convoluted with supernatural and natural dualities and removed from the world, has its place in the physicality and materiality of the world as an enactment of the fourfold presences of God, oneself, other human beings and the natural environment embodied by the Holy Spirit with the Bible as a guide to the truth.

If there is a greater trust in the Holy Spirit's embrace and empowerment of the fourfold presences of God, ourselves, other human beings and the natural environment – obviously in line with the Bible – in our daily experiences of our cultural deeds, religiosity, ethnicity, social status and languages, we then are seen more as co-actors, co-operators and co-writers of the Kingdom of God in the global world. The following claim by Bruner, which he has laid at the Pentecostals' door will no longer be true when other Christian groups have a greater embrace of the central role of the Holy Spirit in the Kingdom of God:

There is a settled conviction that the absence in other Christian groups of the early church's experience of the Holy Spirit is responsible for the comparative insignificance of Christianity in the world today (1970:32).

In our globalizing world, serious pneumatological discussions start reaching other parts of the world as well, enriching the theological angles and cultural perspectives on the Spirit. African theologians have recently contributed to the debate. Megliore suggests that the focus should shift on pneumatology after a long era when the Western theology concentrated on Christology. He mentions several reasons:

Routine neglect and suspicion of the work of the Holy Spirit has damaging effects on both Christian life and Christian theology. It can lead to distortions in the understanding of God, the doctrine of Scripture, the significance of the natural order, the value of human culture, the interpretation of Christ and his work, the nature of the church, the freedom of the Christian, and the hope for the final fulfillment of life. When the work of the Holy Spirit is forgotten or suppressed, the power of God is apt to be understood as distant, hierarchical, and coercive; Christocentric faith deteriorates into Christomonism; the authority of Scripture becomes Spiritless and heteronomous; the church is seen as a rigid power structure in which some members rule over others; and the sacraments degenerate into almost magical rites under the control of a clerical elite (Megliore 2014:109).

Due to the heritage of basic spiritual religions, it is inspirational to read some African theologians who observe a clear connection between the ordinary life and spirituality. "The relationship between human beings and the invisible, since such a relationship derives from a particular vision of the world, and in its turn affects the way of relating to self, to other people, and the universe as a whole." (Kalilombe 1994:115). The reality of African spirituality is all-inclusive to its all-surrounding environment.

It is acknowledged that it is impossible to separate African religion from everyday spirituality. The behavioural ethics is based on traditional religious practice.

The most obvious place to search for spirituality is in the context of traditional religious practice: in worship, ritual, and prayer. Here the shape of a people's spirituality becomes easier to grasp, for their deepest aspirations are made manifest and their underlying outlook on the world of realities is revealed, not in theories or formulas, but in practical attitudes (Kalilombe 1994:119).

To make a scientific set of doctrines on spirituality has been, however, problem even for the African theology. In Africa, there has been plurality of approaches, let alone often complicated rites and ceremonies connected with death, burials, funerals, and the living dead. Therefore, the neglect of defining pneumatology has not been problem of the western segment of the church only.

It has been acknowledged that pneumatology has actually been a neglected topic in much of African theology, which may be surprising against the background of the underlying concept of the “spirits” in numerous African religions. Nevertheless, African spirituality includes several dimensions and stages, such as the belief in impersonal mystical powers or vital spiritual force, the belief in both good and evil spirit beings, the belief in divinities as gods as well as the belief in the Supreme Being. The spirit world is embedded in the general African concepts of reality and govern social and cultural phenomena. It can be divided into two broad categories, i.e., non-human spirits and the spirits of the dead. The belief in the impersonal mystical power is pervasive and the whole creation is consumed with this impersonal spiritual power (see Mbiti 1969:77ff.). The implication is that the belief in the Supreme Being, so needed for the proper kind of Christian theology, has not been the major focus of the cultural-spiritual exploration in Africa.

In his attempt to target the relation between the African spirituality and Christian theology, Sakupapa tries to link the Spirit of God to a vital spiritual force that encompasses creation and cosmic theology. He asserts that “From a theological point of view therefore, it could be argued that vital force is the power of God present in all creation and without which life is not possible. Analogically therefore, it can be construed that vital force is the Spirit of God understood as the principle of life and enabler of communion within creation.” (Sakupapa 2012:426). The vital force needs to understand the Spirit in the context of the trinity, the communion with human agents, and in the context of the cosmic and eschatological dimensions. These concepts correspond to the four grand acts of God, namely the creation, reconciliation, renewal, and fulfilment.

As Kärkkäinen points out, pneumatology is a complex issue that is by no means homogeneous and uniform. We may get the false impressions of uniformity as the doctrine of the Holy Spirit has often been bound by dogmatical rules and church structures. Pneumatology serves a private devotional life while ecclesiology has mainly been built on Christological dogmas. The role of

the Spirit has thus been reduced and limited and never been the focus of the major traditional doctrines. Kärkkäinen notes that despite the progress in the last decades, Christian pneumatologies “are still imprisoned in the paradigm of “unitive” pneumatology. Other spirits, powers, and energies, are not worthy of academic discussion and inclusion in respectable pneumatological presentations (Kärkkäinen 2016:12). It is beyond the scope of this thesis to explore the numerous plurality of the spiritual concepts but it points to the fact that all these spiritual streams included under the umbrella of “pneumatology” or the “Spirit theology” should not be neglected and perhaps even put in the center of our theological endeavors as they express the daily religious practice of many various both Christian and non-Christian believers across the whole world. As Van der Merwe points out, “the most important is the acknowledgement that the Holy Spirit is the interpreter of the Bible” (Van der Merwe 2016:581).

Moltmann in his work *The Source of Life* urges us to experience the Holy Spirit in the framework of the new creation of all things (see 2 Cor 5:17). The renewal is imminent, both for God’s people, all living things, and eventually the whole earth. He prays, “Come, Spirit of life, flood us with your light, interpenetrate us with your love. Awaken our powers through your energies and in your presence let us be wholly there. Come, Holy Spirit.” (Moltmann 1997:145).

1.4 The ‘Turn’ to the Spirit and the Ortho-Experiential Approach of the Dissertation

Everything in the ortho-experiential theological approach as presented in this dissertation takes place within the ambience of the dynamic presence of the Spirit. This means in the first instance that the presence and work of the Spirit currently in our lives and our experience is on the same level as the presence and work of the Spirit in the events and happenings recorded in the oral and written texts of the Judeo-Christian Bible. Secondly, any and every all-encompassing ambience of experience in daily life comprise the presence of God the Spirit, the presence of one’s conscious self, the presence of other people – close and remote – and the natural cosmic environment.

The problem with Pentecostalism's contribution is not that its beginnings were clouded to some degree in controversy, but that Pentecostals seem unable to take further, in the theological sense, the fruit of the Spirit of the early years before and after Azusa Street.

What is now called the 'Turn to the Spirit' actually took place earlier, at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries in the atmosphere of events before and after the Azusa Street period from 1906-1913. What is more, the Turn to the Spirit took place in an era in which people started to speak of a 'linguistic turn' early in the 20th Century. Susanne K. Langer in her book *Philosophy in a New Key* (1943) counted close to thirty of the important philosophical works early in the 20th Century that operated from the standpoint of meaning and symbol, language and the power of speech (1943:16-20).

In speaking of the 20th Century 'linguistic and theological turns', Skip Horton-Parker in an essay 'Tracking the Theological "Turn". The Pneumatological Imagination and the Renewal of Metaphysics and Theology in the twenty-first century' points directly to the heart of the current Pentecostal reflective ambience when he begins with the question "What hath Athens to do with Jerusalem (or Azusa St.)"? And one contemporary answer is: "plenty" (2007:47). Horton-Parker's brackets around the words 'Azusa St.' is a play on the powerful energy that emerged in the happenings of Azusa Street so as to say that it is on par with 'Jerusalem' and 'Athens' – the two best known pointers expressive of Jewish and Greek wisdom and thinking. In terms of world history, Azusa Street may be not that significant but for Pentecostals, indeed for all people within the Christian world, the turn to the Spirit that was enunciated at Azusa Street cannot be overestimated.

The approach followed in this dissertation as regards a Pentecostal reflective ambience is not a world filled with doctrines, but with ortho-experiential patterns of people's ongoing daily experience emerging from the ambience of the presence of the Spirit. What is usually called doctrines emerged from people's experience centuries ago but has been petrified and enhanced to such a level of divine immutability that any new or different experience with God's Spirit in later centuries has no chance of changing it in the slightest way. In passing, if anyone still wants to term these dynamic experiential patterns doctrines or doctrinal patterns, that is fine as long as their dynamic nature of being ongoing experiential patterns under

construction and renovation is acknowledged within the ambience of the experience of the Spirit in our daily life.

The approach followed in this dissertation of ortho-experientiality overlaps to an extent but also goes beyond the ‘radical orthodoxy’ of James K. A. Smith, Stephen Land’s ‘orthopathy’ and Amos Yong’s ‘orthopraxy’ (Horton-Parker 2007:56). The still strong Trinitarian emphases of Smith, Land and Yong as Pentecostal-directed theologians is replaced in this thesis with the ortho-experientiality of the fourfold emphasis on the grand acts of God’s creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment as depicted within the biblical historical timeline encapsulating our fivesome experiential dimensions of awareness of our creatureliness, our ongoing sin experience, daily reconciliation to God through the prism of the cross and the resurrection of Christ applied as ongoing renewal through the Holy Spirit and in the Spirit’s daily opening of our lives to the coming fulfilment and consummation when God will be all in all.

The majority of theologians inside and outside the Pentecostal world currently emphasizing the centrality of the Holy Spirit in theology, do so in terms of the doctrine of the Trinity. Their reflective theological background is Trinitarian because they do not have any other dot-pattern reflective ambience. The experiential realm intrinsically part of Pentecostal experience from its days of inception, is still a bit foreign to the majority of theological approaches in the current Christian world.

Dabney, while operating under the auspices of a trinitarian reflective ambience, is witnessing a turn to the Spirit in ‘a social world that is at once both "postmodern" and "post-Christendom"' (Dabney 2001:118). But already from the thirties to the sixties of the past century two Dutchmen, O. Noordmans (*Herschepping*, 1934) and A.A. van Ruler (*Calvinist Trinitarianism and Theocentric Politics*, 1989), largely overcame the Christ-centric emphasis of Niebuhr and Barth as well as the supernatural/natural double-barrelled operational scheme of early Pentecostalism by emphasizing the centrality of God’s grand act of renewal through the Spirit in the fourfold acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment. Although they contributed more to our theme of the Kingdom of God and culture, Noordmans and Van Ruler still emphasized two of God’s grand acts more than the whole fourfold acts. Noordmans emphasized God’s acting mainly in Christ and as the Spirit while Van Ruler has the emphasis on God’s acting as Creator and as the Spirit; and the relationship to the dynamics of God’s

Kingdom as the workplace where human cultural, religious, ethnic, social, scientific and language doings and acts are taking place within the cosmic natural world. The German Michael Welker similarly emphasized in his book *God the Spirit* (1994) a ‘realistic theology’ in which the Spirit’s presence has to be traced in the midst of everyday realities. In his view a pneumatological orientation is the foundational ambience for theologizing in a postmodern era (Welker 1994:x;30-31). In a similar vein Jürgen Moltmann in his book *The Spirit of Life* (1992) and D. Lyle Dabney in asking the question ‘Why Should the Last Be First? The Priority of Pneumatology in Recent Theological Discussion’ (2001) as title of his paper, placed the main emphasis on pneumatology as the starting point in theological reflection.

The main emphasis of Pentecostal experience and Pentecostal theology is people’s experience within the ambience of the dynamic presence of the Spirit. Precisely on this point many Pentecostals could not bite the bullet of translating and adapting both their experience within the ambience of the Spirit as well as translating and adapting traditional theological schemes they inherited into a new empowered and liberative Pentecostal theology. The history of the many ancestors of Pentecostal experience and theology are kaleidoscopic and motley from their immediate ancestors in the 19th Century to the Protestant Reformation in the 16th Century and earlier through history to the early Christianity of the Book of the Acts of the Apostles.

Secondly, non-Pentecostals are devising theologies for Pentecostals mainly because there are comparatively few scholarly theological works among the Pentecostals. But even their rich “non-academic theology” (Macchia, 2002:1120), from which Pentecostal experiential patterns could be unearthed, is not opened up through an aware experiential theological reflective mindset. In surveys of contemporary theology, therefore, Pentecostal theologies are sometimes treated as a stepchild of the collective of Protestant theologies and at other times simply grouped under the heading of modern Charismatic theologies.

The approach in the thesis is not anti-trinitarian or pro-trinitarian, but rather a-trinitarian. What is meant by this is that the reflection undertaken happens within the margins of the biblical historical timeline in which the grand acts of God’s creation, reconciliation, renewal, and fulfilment are directly linked with our fivesome experiential dimensions of our daily experience. Because we are directly encapsulated and intrinsically part of the fourfold grand

acts of God composed in the biblical historical timeline, it is ultimately relevant to emphasize this aspect.

The working of the Holy Spirit in the portrayal of the fourfold grand acts of God in the biblical historical timeline in the composition of oral and later textual embodiments – the Bible - in which we are encapsulated and intrinsically part of, is on the same and similar level as the working of the Holy Spirit in our daily experience of the fivesome experiential dimensions in whatever we are doing and reflecting upon. An emphasis on the *coevalness* of the workings of the Spirit in the divine historicalness of the biblical timeline and our daily experience is hopefully the main reason why so little speculative and fanciful scholastic theological notions undergird the storyline of the thesis.

More than anyone else, the Reformer Hans Joachim Kraus, an Old Testament scholar who turned to become a systematic theologian in later life, opened up a Spirit-driven or Pneumacentric perspective on the grand acts of God in his book *Heiliger Geist. Gottes befreiende Gegenwart* (Holy Spirit. God's Liberating Presence) (1986).

From Kraus, several clues for our ortho-experiential theological approach are taken up. One of these is Paul's emphasis in the First Letter to the Corinthians in which chapters 1:18-31 and 2:1-16 flow over into each other. In this section, Paul stresses the point that the wisdom of God, which is Christ Jesus in his cross (and resurrection), is delivered to us through the power of the Spirit. The Spirit searches all things even the deep things of God and a human being's spirit knows the thoughts of itself as a human person. No one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. The wisdom, the thoughts of God is only to be discerned and understood by a human being spiritually endowed with the Spirit of God. Paul ends this whole portion with the assertion that 'we have the mind of Christ' (1Cor 2:16) which expresses Paul's sense that our mind carries the cross and resurrection as Christ's template of our mind.

Evangelical Christianity, Catholic mystical traditions, and certain Pentecostal approaches viewing the 'foursquare gospel' as unilaterally Christ-centric disconnected the reconciliation power of the cross and the resurrection from its application, employment and deliverance through the Holy Spirit, God the renewer of all things. How? By directly inserting the divine person Jesus – without his humanity – into the human mind or heart as the driver of all actions.

A divine Jesus directly living in the heart firstly without his humanity, secondly without the power of his cross and resurrection, and thirdly without being made present continuously from second to second by the renewing Holy Spirit (*paracletos*) may be good evangelical theology, but not a good Pauline – Letter to the Corinthians – approach. In this whole section, Paul in a radical sense is connecting God’s grand act of reconciliation of the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ Jesus – the mind of Christ is presented here as God’s wisdom – with the renewing applicator, employer, and deliverer of the Holy Spirit without whom we know nothing of God.

The Spirit is the overall renewing and liberating presence maker of God’s grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment, not as doctrines, but these acts while we are involved therein are the ortho-experiential drivers of our reflective experience in which we reflectively pattern and process our daily experiences (Kraus 1986). The ongoing mystery is only to be framed tautologically, namely, that through the Spirit we become more and more aware of God’s grand acts while we are already involved in these grand acts in our experience through the Spirit.

1.5 The Kingdom of God and Culture

The Azusa Street phenomenon as a modern-day trend – a pacesetter has set new trends for the work and function of the Holy Spirit within and outside the Christian world, the churches and communities (Bartleman 1930:25). The resurgence, and let us say, the renewed discovery of Azusa Street is an opening up, not only to Pentecostals but to the whole of Christianity and the churches to experience the great responsibility and accountability of living in the era of the Spirit. The churches and the whole of Christianity should have become more aware that we, they, and all of us are in an ongoing sense, enfolded and encapsulated in the renewing processes of the Spirit as co-renewers, co-actors, co-operators, co-liberators, co-healers and co-writers with the Holy Spirit in the meandering movement of the Kingdom of God in the history of the world from God’s creation to the fulfilment in the establishment of the new heaven and the new earth. Simultaneously, the Holy Spirit in the renewal process of the world should have made modern Christianity and the churches aware of the intricate relationship between the Kingdom of God and human cultural, religious, ethnic, social, scientific and language experiences. Not earlier, but it was now at the beginning of the 20th Century that we started to

become really aware of the message of the New Testament's Kingdom of God more than before.

One of the main challenges in this dissertation is to describe different approaches to the relationship of the Kingdom of God (= the Commonwealth of God's Kingdom, Priesthood, Prophetdom – an expression I have coined to describe the work, the realm and the responsibility of the prophet – and culture, religiosity, ethnicity, social status, science and language. We realize that within the broad outlines of the biblical historical timeline the Kingdom of God through an all-embracing ambience oscillates in narrowing and widening histories, fusing, moving and meandering in, through and with God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment (Van Niekerk 2006:315ff).

Van Niekerk asserts that few modern people have the experiential awareness of the intrinsic embeddedness of their humanness and the physical-organic environment in God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and consummation. The grand acts of God have been rendered unworkable and impractical as sense-making power and energy pointers in people's daily life-world by either replacing these grand acts with an unworkable bunch of speculation on a trinitarian God that operates above the biblical historical timeline, or by viewing the grand acts of God as incarcerated doctrines in churches, or by only focusing on one of the grand acts of God in their daily lives (2006:371). Van Niekerk argues that the full story and full Gospel of the Commonwealth of God as expressive of the four grand acts of God is not being served through a church, Christian community or movement in which a quarter-, a half- or a three-quarter gospel is embodied and manifested. The full gospel of the Commonwealth of God is not only directed and embodied in communities of faith but is, in the deepest sense of the word, the message of the Kingdom of God. (2006:372f).

According to Van Niekerk (2006:373) many churches and their theological advocates:

“unilaterally emphasize either a quarter, half, three-quarters or, rarely, a full gospel:

- a quarter-version of the fourfold Gospel message amounts to an exclusive emphasizing of either Jesus Christ (reconciliation), or the Holy Spirit (renewal), or God the creator (creation), or God the fulfiller of everything (consummation); or
- a half-version of the fourfold Gospel message amounts to an exclusive emphasizing of either creation (nature) and reconciliation (grace, re-creation), or reconciliation (Word = Jesus Christ) and renewal (Spirit), or renewal (Spirit) and reconciliation

(Word = Jesus Christ), or reconciliation (Jesus Christ) and consummation (apocalyptic/prophetic future events), or renewal (Spirit) and consummation (apocalyptic/prophetic future events); or

- a three-quarters version of the fourfold Gospel message amounts to an exclusive emphasizing of any three of the fourfold grand acts of God; or
- a full gospel message is seldom encountered in church-centred divine or semi-divine churches and the deliberations of their theologistic spokespersons.”

There is no nook or cranny of the earth, the heavenly bodies and the universe where the Kingdom of God, the Commonwealth of God with its main driver the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit is not touching ground, water or air so to speak, while on the one hand sin and evil is still mysteriously part of everything around us though everything around us is the theatre of God's glory (Calvin); on the other hand, the earth, the heavenly bodies and the universe house and espouse the immense contributions and products of cultures, religiosities, ethnicities, societies, sciences and languages of God-fearing and God-less people alike.

1.6 The Challenge

Taking what happened in the many varieties of Pentecostal experience since the latter part of the 19th century further entails the following challenges:

The **first** challenge is to escape the clutches of traditional speculative theology with its prescribing doctrines that emerged mainly in the experience of the first millennium and were handed on steadfastly in the ambiances of the many churches that emerged in the past two millennia. Contributing to the empowerment of the many varieties of Pentecostal ‘theologies’ and experiences is one of the aims: not by agreeing on every point, but by excerpting and taking many clues from especially those views in the broad Pentecostal world from which we differ.

The **second** challenge is to bring an equilibrium in the emphases and the experience of the grand acts of God in our lives as well as to further embrace this equilibrium in which we are involved all the time in our daily experiences. One of the biggest challenges of Pentecostalism is to bring the uneven emphasis on Christ at the expense of the Spirit to a dynamic equilibrium. Furthermore, the ongoing degrading of the natural created world by certain Pentecostal approaches also has to be tackled and brought to a meaningful equilibrium. One of the ways of doing this is to suggest a meaningful relationship between people's culture, religiosity,

ethnicity, social status and language and the Kingdom of God. This we attempt to do by concentrating on the centrality of the Holy Spirit's role in God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment as depicted in the biblical historical timeline and the experience thereof in our daily experience.

The **third** challenge is to be constantly aware of the central revelatory role of the Holy Spirit in the revelatory disclosure and communication of the four grand acts of God via the Bible and via our experientially aware enactment of the grand acts of God – in our daily lives. The main reason is because we and the natural world are involved in all God's grand acts.

The **fourth** challenge is to point to the unworkability of the unilateral approaches; not only Niebuhr's view of 'Christ and Culture', traditional Reformed theological notions of 'Creation and Culture', or even Moltmann's social trinitarianist views undergirded by his idea of a 'future fulfilment of the materiality of people's situations via the experience of hope' (Moltmann 1967), but many more. It is one of the central assumptions of this dissertation that the traditional problem of Christianity and culture has to be reformulated within the timeline of the Judeo-Christian Scripture of God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and future fulfilment at the end of time connected to the enacted awareness of these grand acts in people's cultural, religious, ethnic, racial, social, scientific and language experiences set mysteriously within the Kingdom of God (= Commonwealth of God's Kingdom, Priesthood, Prophetdom – see my earlier comment, etc.), oscillating and moving and fusing through the grand acts of God as milestones until the fulfilment in the establishing of a new heaven and a new earth.

What is immensely challenging in the **fifth** sense is that going back to the biblical historical timeline brings us into conflict with the traditional speculative doctrine of the Trinity. The question is: why, during the last century, has the notion of the Trinity that has emerged from first millennium logic and not from the Bible continued to undergird many neo-orthodox theological schemes despite the fact that it is many times being experienced as problematic. The problems regarding the Trinity arose out of an extremely strong emphasis placed by many 19th and 20th century non-traditional movements and communities on the biblical historical timeline as the dynamic reflective exploration ambience of their experiential theologies. In this regard the problems with the Trinity versus the biblical historical timeline left mainline church mindset and even liberal theologies untouched.

The problem is the following: if God is separately treated from human beings and the natural cosmic environment in an area of reflection called ‘the doctrine of God’ in theology, then in an immediate sense God, the conscious human self, humanity as a collective and the natural cosmic environment are loosened and disconnected from the Trinitarian God on the one hand while the Trinitarian God operating outside the biblical historical timeline is loosened and disconnected from God’s own grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment.

The first millennium logic of the Trinity as a closed system concept is under extreme pressure from all-encompassing sense-making views of our era that discovered the time-space reality of the biblical historical way of reflection about God, human beings, and the natural world. One should be very wary of accepting too easily “the basic Trinitarian concept of one God in three Persons”, the *Deus est Trinitas* of the ancient Church doctrine in the sense Karl Barth employed it as a broad working hypothesis (Barth 1957, 350).

Barth who uses the notion of the Trinity as one of the grounding structures of his own church dogmatics is very aware of the highly problematic character of the Trinity:

Already in the early Church, the doctrine of the Trinity was attacked on the grounds that it is not biblical, that in the form in which it was formulated by the Church’s theology it cannot be read anywhere in the Bible. This is especially true of the crucial terms “essence” and “person”, which theology used. But it is also true of the word “Trinity” itself (Barth 1957, 308).

Barth continues by saying that:

The Bible can no more contain the dogma of the Trinity explicitly than it can contain other dogmas explicitly . . . We cannot prove the truth of the dogma that is not as such in the Bible merely from the fact that it is a dogma, but rather from the fact that we can and must regard it as a good interpretation of the Bible (Barth 1957, 310).

Barth’s ancestor John Calvin, was strongly influenced by Renaissance philosophies and the new way of working reflectively within the theologico-philosophical reflective exploration area of Scripture concerning how God, human beings and the natural environment are always connected and different in his grand acts of creation and reconciliation with an underemphasis placed on God’s grand acts of renewal and fulfilment. He struggled to move from his reflective activities from within the ambience of the biblical historical timeline to the speculative reflective considerations of a doctrine of the Trinity.

The early Calvin treated the doctrine of the Trinity in passing. Only after attacks to which he was subjected, particularly by Caroli who censured him for being not explicit enough on the Trinity, did Calvin feel obliged to take recourse to a formal elaboration of the doctrine (Bieler 2005:486-7). Calvin's strong linking up with the tradition on the notion of the Trinity in some of his works demonstrated that, a dissonance with his 'usual' reflective activities revolving around the biblical historical timeline has been found in the majority of his writings, sermons and biblical commentaries (see Calvin [1559] 1960b, 13ff.).

The dissonance in Calvin's work with the notion of the Trinity, which is created in the ambience of a first millennium sense-making logic and working with God's grand acts of the biblical timeline, effectively caused two broad trajectories amongst his followers in the centuries that followed, namely a strong theological trajectory with philosophical undertones and a strong philosophical trajectory with theological undertones. With the glory of hindsight, we can observe that Calvin was not aware that connecting the notion of the Trinity with God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal, and fulfilment created a dissonance which his theological followers in later eras, especially the Reformed-Presbyterian theological tradition up to the current era, had not been aware of. In the Calvinist philosophical approaches of the 20th century, the grand acts of the biblical historical timeline have been in operation as the religious ground motif of Scripture pertaining to their philosophical activities described as God's creation, falling into sin and redemption by Jesus Christ in the communion of the Holy Spirit (Dooyeweerd 1953:61).

The dissonance between the practicalities of the biblical historical timeline and the speculative notion of a Trinity is precisely what currently haunts us, especially as long as we as Pentecostals connect our experience with our practical reflective theology in order to arrive at patterns that provide us with clues for our every-day living. The exploration and the living out of God's grand acts in the biblical historical timeline are the material of which the Kingdom of God is made. In this sense such a practical reflective theology revolving around the biblical historical timeline transcends as ortho-experiential faith patterning traditional speculative theology with its notion of the *Deus est Trinitas* hovering, in a speculative sense above God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment that always include human beings and the natural cosmic environment. Nearly all the speculative theology about a Trinity outside the biblical historical timeline cannot claim that it includes and embraces human beings and the

natural cosmic environment throughout its practical reflective faith patterns. The latter could especially not be said of any of the classical versions of the doctrine of the Trinity.

The immense challenge confronting us is that in following the classical program of the Trinity, the reflective patterns of a trinitarian doctrine – how hard we try – are not to be fitted into our daily experience as people living before the countenance of God. The fact is that we are intrinsically part of God’s grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal, and fulfilment and that we in a concomitant way are experiencing an overall awareness through the Holy Spirit of being created by God, awareness of our sinfulness, awareness of being reconciled by God in the cross and the resurrection, awareness of being under renewing construction through the Spirit and awareness of being under the powerful guidance of God the Spirit towards the future fulfilment in the new heaven and the new earth.

1.7. The Research Question: Four problem-settings discussed in four sections

One of the main challenges of this dissertation is to describe the centrality of the Holy Spirit within the range of God’s acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal, and fulfilment. My reflection revolves around the mystery of the simultaneity of the close connection and radical differences between God, human conscious individuals, human beings collectively and the natural cosmic world in all the grand acts of God that are creation, reconciliation (redemption), renewal, and consummation (fulfilment). In the divine history embodied and embedded in the salvation-historical trajectory of the grand acts of God, the Holy Spirit operates centrally through renewal as the application of His creation, the cross and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and as the current applicator of future fulfilment blessings and the realities of final consummation within the meandering movement of the Kingdom of God from the beginning to the end of time.

1.7.1 Firstly, by continuing to remain within the margins of unilateral views of ‘Christianity and Culture’, the challenge of describing the relationship of the Kingdom of God (= the Commonwealth of God’s Kingdom, Priesthood, Prophetdom) and culture, religiosity, ethnicity, social status, science and language is set too narrowly. If God is involved in the cosmic environment and in human culture as a whole, from beginning to end a wider spectrum

of God's involvement has to be rolled out. In my daily experience, the biblical portrayal of the wide dynamic spectrum of God's involvement with human beings and the cosmic environment continues to show itself. I realized that the wide spectrum of God's involvement in the history of the world is portrayed in the biblical historical timeline as the mystery of the close connection and radical difference between God, human beings and the natural cosmic world, in all the grand acts of God that is the creation of everything, reconciliation (redemption) through Christ, renewal through the Holy Spirit, and consummation (fulfilment) – with sin and evil playing a role in all four God's grand acts. In this section, the relationship of the notion of the Trinity with God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment is discussed. Perhaps by realizing that sin and evil revolving around human beings and the natural environment are not only to be connected to God's acts of creation, but also directly to the ambience of God's acts of reconciliation, renewal, and fulfilment, it makes it possible to contribute to a more practical and wider scope of linking sin and evil to the cultural doings, happenings and events around human beings and the natural environment surrounding them.

1.7.2 Secondly, I want to discuss and investigate the role of the Holy Spirit in the ongoing actualization, sin-awareness, empowerment, renewal, and consummation of the human self, interconnected to the grand acts of God in creation, reconciliation, renewal, and consummation as attested to in the Bible. Thus, I want to describe the synergy, concomitance, coterminous and correspondence between God's works of Creation, Reconciliation /Redemption in Christ, Renewal/Renovation through the Spirit, and God's Consummation and Fulfilment of the whole process in the creation and establishment of the new heaven and the new earth, correspondingly experienced as a five-fold awareness of the experience had by human beings as being created, as continuously falling into sin, as being saved/redeemed/reconciled, as being under renovation and renewal through the Holy Spirit, and as being encapsulated in the consummation and fulfilment of all things in the new heaven and new earth through the awareness of the irruption of fragments of time and moments from the future into the present lives of human beings.

1.7.3 Thirdly, using Niebuhr's work *Christ and Culture* as a typological guide, I realized more and more that the relationship between Christianity and culture is only to be opened up against the background of one's perception of God, oneself, human beings in general, and the natural environment. What I get to see as my sense-making view revolving around God, myself as a conscious human being, other human beings and the natural cosmic environment is commonly referred to as a worldview or a life-and-worldview in a slightly broader sense. What is of

importance here is the way in which I engage in and read texts, theories, natural processes, and human cultural enactments. Do I become engaged by imitating fundamentalistically, or interpretationally or do I negotiate consensibly in the presence of the Holy Spirit with a text, theory, natural process, or human cultural enactment?

1.7.4 Fourthly, what has become increasingly part of my experience is the awareness that the biblical notion of the Kingdom of God (= the Commonwealth of God's Kingdom, Priesthood, Prophetdom), on the one hand seems unable to be grasped, but on the other hand, though not all people are experiencers of the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of God is the one embracing notion that expresses and embraces the grand acts of God's creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment in the new heaven and the new earth. Precisely at this point that all people are, so to say, not part of the broad stream of Christians in the world, Christianity in popular terms, the relationship of Christianity and Culture has to be reformulated in a broader sense as the relationship of the *Kingdom of God (impersonated by the Spirit) and culture, religiosity, ethnicity, social status, science and language* which in a mysterious way includes all the cultural performances, products and doings of God-fearing, God-apatetic and God-less people through the ages. The reason? Nothing more than God's involvement with all people and with the totality of the universe through His grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal, and fulfilment are the divine milestones of the all-embracing dynamics of the fusing, moving and meandering Kingdom of God (= the Commonwealth of God's Kingdom, Priesthood, Prophetdom) in the world.

1.8 Sense-making Methods and Tools

In this paragraph, the method that makes sense to me in tackling the challenge to hand is spelled out. Methodology is the study of methods. What follows here, is my provisional presentation of 'my methods' or 'my ways of doing things'. (In the original Greek *méthodos* is a systematic course, equivalent to *metá* (basic, main) + *hodós* (way, road) (Liddell and Scott 1968:1901)). The words 'sense-making' in the phrase sense-making methods means that I am here presenting an outline of the multiversal integrated ways that makes sense to me of how I am enfolding, embodying and even embedding the thesis, the challenge or the main theme of the dissertation within its various chapters.

A method with its tools requires material to work with (cf. bibliography below), a pattern within

which to process the material, and an end to provide it with direction and purpose. The material we are working with within the ambit of the '*material condition*' of the method and with the available tools is the notion of the meandering Kingdom of God through the millennia in its relationship and intrinsic linkages with people's deeds and the happenings of cultural, religious, ethnic, social, scientific and language nature, together with the linkage to the ongoing eventful processes and events of the natural cosmic environment. In our sense-making parlance, the material condition of method with its tools corresponds with the '*formal condition*' of God's fourfold grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment in which human beings and the natural cosmic environment are involved – sin and evil is all along mysteriously part of it. The formal condition of method corresponds with what is usually termed one's analysis tool bag or one's hermeneutics. In this dissertation, the approach taken is that of condensable negotiation in which the Holy Spirit is 'equally' and 'evenly' present on both sides of the negotiation process (Van Niekerk 2010:286-289). The other partner to the negotiation is the Judeo-Christian biblical text or a theory or doctrine of belief, whether the other partner is a human person with his or her doings, deeds and acts, or something from the natural world (= animal, plant, or thing), or even if the other partner is the events and happenings of the natural cosmic environment, the Holy Spirit is still not in unequal and uneven measures involved and present on both sides of the negotiation process. This should be especially true for a Pentecostal Christian with whom the Spirit firstly has an embracing relationship. If the Spirit is totally incarcerated in the Judaeo-Christian Scripture, and for this reason, we have to have our relationship with God primarily through Scripture and thereafter with the living God, when all that Pentecostalism stands for could close its books and its churches. In the final instance, the acknowledgement of the '*final condition*' of the meaning-giving impetus and driving force of the mystery of the simultaneous close connectedness (at-one-ment) and the radical otherness (at-other-ment) of God, the conscious human self, humanity as a collective, and the natural cosmic environment is a refreshing and dynamic way of undergoing our experiences of believing, loving, thinking, feeling, verbalizing, socializing, and encountering justice.

1.9 The Structure of the Dissertation

The first chapter of the thesis is intended to provide a general introduction and provisional discussion of the challenges delivered by the main problems. The hypothesis, with the basic challenge the thesis poses and its resulting answer, is presented in a brief and provisional

synopsis of the four problem-settings that are functioning simultaneously as the operational tools in the thesis.

In chapter two, different aspects are discussed as part of the biblical historical timeline expressed in the grand acts of God's creation, reconciliation (redemption), renewal, and fulfilment (consummation). Creation is elaborated on in light of the problem of sin and evil as contrasted with reconciliation, renewal, and fulfilment. The phenomenon of Reconciliation involves the biblical historical timeline and unilateral emphases on the cross and the resurrection. Three approaches of the salvific reconciliatory experience of Christ in everyday life are discussed from the Pentecostal perspective, i.e., Roman Catholic trans-substantialism, Lutheran permeating con-substantialism, and Calvinist interactional substantialism. The section on Renewal will place the Holy Spirit in the centre as ongoing creator, reconciliator, sanctifying renewer and fulfiller of God's grand acts. Similarly, an understanding of the Spirit's role in renewal by different theological schools will be presented. The material on Fulfilment will serve to describe the ultimate role of the Spirit in creation, reconciliation, renewal and consummation with a special note related to how we may experience the Holy Spirit in our everyday lives.

In the third chapter, the problematics of experiential versus speculative theology will be depicted. Understanding the key concepts of experience and speculation is important, as well as grasping the different theological approaches to the Trinitarian scheme. The relationship between the Holy Spirit, Scripture and Revelation will be explored.

Chapter four will take a closer look at the doctrine of Revelation as a whole. How does God reveal Himself to us and to what extent can we understand His will while living in the present world? The role of Scripture, Tradition, Experience and Culture will be put into the context of the pneumatological perspective augmented the biblical historical timeline and experiential theology. It is the different understanding of Revelation that brings about the different understandings of God on the part of any Christian and these differences form the background and reason why believers are attracted to different denominational churches and groups.

Chapter five deals with the question of how the four grand acts of God's creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment that we reflect upon within the biblical historical timeline, play a role when we read or try to understand a chapter or verse of the Bible. From

within a Pentecostal ambience a strong input has to be rendered that the Holy Spirit plays a central part in the way that we treat the Bible. The familiar fundamentalist and interpretative type of engagement with the Bible will be discussed in this context. Fundamentalism with its imitation and mirroring approaches will be elaborated on; likewise, Interpretationism with its interpretation and hermeneutical approaches. A newer approach of condensable negotiation of texts, theories, natural processes and human doings will also be discussed. The problematics of consensual negotiation are linked to the fact of how imitation and understanding of these processes belong together, as well as what is the role of the Holy Spirit and God's grand acts attested by the Bible in consensual negotiation. It is suggested that God's Spirit is equally involved in the biblical historical timeline and our current experience.

Chapter six will then depict the relationship of God's Kingdom and culture. Culture in general has to do with different symbols, values and the resulting artifacts of a certain human group. The challenge is not that easy to answer while culture includes people's religious, ethnic, racial, social, class, scientific and language aspects. It is demonstrated by the polarity of different civilizations we face today. To name but a few, we encounter the global western, Islamic, and eastern cultures as well as hundreds of diverse cultures spread all around the world at different areas and localities. The diversity of cultures in the global and the local sense is expressive of a diversity of all-embracing sense-making approaches that includes views and orientations of culture, religiosity, ethnicity, social status, science and language and the ways they relate and differ towards people within and outside their cultures. The studies of faith and culture will be part of this discussion. It needs to be pointed out that by basing my study around Niebuhr's work, *Christ and Culture*, I had already been narrowing down my investigation to the western culture even though some elements of the study might have applied universally – it could be claimed that western civilization has been built on Christian foundations and many of its traditionally moral values have been taken from the Judeo-Christian Scripture. Duality inclined approaches resulting from Niebuhr's approach will be compared and evaluated, leading to a deeper discussion about the 'interminable' and conflicting relationship between the world and state represented by culture on the one side and Christianity represented by the Spirit on the other. The material should bring us closer to acknowledging the importance of how the Holy Spirit in God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment affects our way of life in the surrounding culture.

1.10 Ethical Considerations

My intention is to create a genuine material that will contribute to the academic world in the area of Christian pneumatological studies with major focus on the western culture in accordance with the instructions of my supervisor and the University of South Africa. The relevancy of the project is important to me, and once approved, I will fully focus on answering the main research question without diverting to other research topics. The written material will be composed in symbiosis of my knowledge using other valuable resources that will be properly documented whenever needed. This study is designated for a general benefit of the academic community without discriminating or tainting any individuals or institutions.

CHAPTER 2

The Biblical Historical Timeline

2.1 God's Grand Acts of Creation, Reconciliation, Renewal and Fulfilment

In continuing to stay within the margins of unilateral views of 'Christianity and Culture', the challenge of describing the relationship of the Kingdom of God (= the Commonwealth of God's Kingdom, Priesthood, Prophetdom) and culture, religiosity, ethnicity, social status, science and language now becomes rather limited. If God is involved in the cosmic environment and in human culture as a whole from beginning to end, a broader spectrum of God's involvement has to be rolled out. In my daily experience, the biblical portrayal of the wide dynamic spectrum of God's involvement with human agents and the natural-cosmic environment repeatedly shows itself. I realized that the broad spectrum of God's involvement in the history of the world is portrayed in the biblical historical timeline as the mystery of the close ties and radical difference between God, humans, and the cosmic world in all His grand acts, that are the creation of everything, reconciliation (redemption) through Christ, renewal through the Holy Spirit and consummation (fulfilment) – with sin and evil playing a role in all four of God's grand acts. In this section, the relationship of the concept of the Trinity with God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment is elaborated on. Perhaps by realizing that sin and evil revolving around human beings and the cosmic natural environment is not only to be connected with God's acts of creation, but also directly to the ambience of God's acts of reconciliation, renewal, and fulfilment, one can contribute to a more practical and wider scope of linking sin and evil to the cultural doings, happenings and events around human beings, and the cosmic natural environment surrounding them.

An all-encompassing functioning of the four grand acts within the biblical historical timeline with the central role of the Holy Spirit needs to be emphasized because we are living in the time of the Spirit. The Spirit is the communion bringer, the indwelling creative presence that relates each entity with divine communal connections. Taylor states that "the Holy Spirit is that unceasing, dynamic communicator and go-between operating upon every element and process of the material universe" (Taylor 1998:5). The Spirit is the anonymous immanent presence of God that embraces each creature in love. As McGrath points out, Basil mentioned centuries

ago that God the Spirit watches over every creature, lovingly providing for each (McGrath 2003:335).

Taking an all-encompassing approach (as followed in this dissertation), the Spirit is not only present in love with every creature, but in many mysterious ways that we have never imagined possible: as a faithful companion, a midwife to the new creation, groaning with those who groan in the birthing of the new. It is through the presence of the Spirit that the creatures of the universe are brought into communion with one another. The Spirit of God then embraces individuals, but he also enables them to exist in a social environment, that is, in an interrelated world of created beings, bringing them and keeping them within the ambit of God's creation, reconciliation, renewal, and fulfilment of everything.

Therefore, the work of the creator Spirit does not only embrace ongoing creation, but also the works of grace that are reconciliation, restoration, empowerment, renewal, and fulfilment as witnessed in the cross and the resurrection. All these stages have become necessary after the original creation was infiltrated by the all-permeating element of evil and sin. For this reason, we proceed to the next great act of God and that is the salvation and redemption of the human race as witnessed in the incarnation, the cross and the resurrection, inasmuch as it relates to the transformation of human existence.

The second grand act of reconciliation brings with it certain challenges because not all Christian believers and scholars are unanimous on its character. Unilateral emphases on the cross and the resurrection make the issue even more complex, just as the views of how salvation is experienced in our lives. While it is generally agreed upon that reconciliation as salvation happens through Jesus Christ, his life and work on the cross and in the resurrection, we can traditionally list at least three different approaches of Christ's salvific reconciliatory experience in everyday life, that is, the Roman-Catholic trans-substantiation, the Lutheran permeating consubstantiation, and the Calvinist interactional substantiation, which need to be addressed from the Pentecostal point of view.

The grand act of renewal lays particular emphasis on the role of the Holy Spirit as the ongoing creator, reconciliator, renewer, and fulfiller of God's grand acts. The all-encompassing Holy Spirit was present at both the creation and Christ's resurrection, as well as serving as the perpetual sanctifying renewer. Every denomination or Christian theological stream developed

its own theory as to how this sanctifying power takes place. The theology coming out of the Azusa Street revival with the preceding healing movements and the subsequent Pentecostal movement developed the ‘foursquare’ concept; adding the dimensions of healing and Spirit baptism to the traditional renewal scheme of the Spirit despite the fact that the theological emphasis remained on Jesus Christ rather than the Holy Spirit.

Along the same lines, the remaining pillar of the ‘foursquare’ Gospel that also has to do with the ultimate grand act of God of fulfilment/consummation, depicting Christ as the coming King, needs to be viewed as the Spirit’s ambience and reality when we wait in the Spirit and not in Christ for the coming of Christ in the era of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit as the fulfiller contributes to and sums up his other three functions, those of creator, reconciliator, and renewer.

2.2 The Unity and Diversity of the Four Grand Acts of God

In terms of the all-encompassing Pentecostal approach that is functioning here, the four grand acts of God cannot be treated as loci or doctrines of theology that we are to speculate upon. Perhaps that was the problem of the many theologies after the Reformation of the 16th century that while Calvin and Luther were strongly working within the biblical historical timeline, the 17th century Protestant Orthodoxy began again with the scholastic type of theologies.

The four grand acts are treated here separately just to emphasize that when any one of the four acts is discussed, the other three are present so to speak. The total poverty of traditional theology is seen precisely at this point. Speculative theology – that is nearly all theology – does not talk about God’s creation from the experience of the awareness of the theologians’ creatureliness, but with reasonable notions, attempts were made to pry into God’s will and intentions and into God himself.

Secondly that the Holy Spirit is central as connector and applicator of all God’s acts in our lives and in the cosmic universe.

Thirdly, regarding all four of God's grand acts there are anticipatory and retrociprocal reflective movements in our reflective activities – our theological activities. It is important to point to the state of affairs that we as human beings are unable to connect and diversify the mystery of God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal, and fulfilment and consummation at the end of time. God has given certain revelation and we are encapsulated in our experience in these acts of God that we could only experientially describe as has been attested by the Judaeo-Christian Scripture throughout the biblical historical timeline. This is the main reason why we cannot move out of the reflective ambience of the biblical historical timeline into speculative theology that nearly always launches itself into the speculative heights of rational constructs of God. In this era of life, we are not supposed to leave the ambience of our daily experience with the Spirit of God within the broader ambience of the Kingdom of God. This includes the ortho-experiential theological description of our everyday experiences.

It would appear that we are able to side-step the problem of speculative doctrines of creation and reconciliation only if we stay within the biblical timeline of creation ↔ reconciliation ↔ renewal ↔ fulfilment as to and fro movements in our experiential reflective ambience of patterning of our experiences with the overall focus on God's act of creation.

The way that is followed below is to emphasize one of the grand acts of God and then to describe the connective links with the others. Under the heading of creation, for example, we also describe the links with God's act of reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment. One has to keep in mind that all God's acts play their part in our reflective activities when the attention is focused on one of the four grand acts.

2.2.1 Creation

What is discussed here is that God created all that exists and that it was, and is, still good and that from the Pentecostal experience in our era, while we attend with our reflective activities to God's act of creation, we must always keep in mind that God's acts of reconciliation, renewal and the end of all things in fulfilment are already dimensionally and perspectively playing their parts within our reflection on God's act of creation.

2.2.1.1 Creation as a beginning and ongoing act

The Creation features the beginning of the spiritual-material world as we know it today. Contrasting some other ancient mythologies and their stories about creation that can be placed into categories, such as *creatio ex materia* (creation out of some pre-existent matter) or *creation ex deo* (creation by a deity), the mainstream Christianity typically prefers the concept *creatio ex nihilo*, that is, creation ‘out of nothing’. That corresponds to the idea that our creation is original and the only intended formation and design. God, the Creator, established His present order first by creating the natural cosmic world, filled with plants and non-human living organisms, before the whole masterpiece was eclipsed by the creation of human beings (Genesis 1f.).

This creational climax revealed God’s two-fold purpose in establishing humanity as appointed ambassadors and rulers: to have a relationship with our conscious unique human selves and also to carry out the plan for humanity as a whole. We were formed to bring the spiritual reality into the physical realm, and hence, to transform the earth into the place where God may reside and the whole Kingdom of God is properly manifested. Thus, God’s creation also takes on the aspect of *creatio continua*, which marks the ongoing creational activities of God through the Spirit as God Himself as creating applicator. What tradition has called God’s providence is seen here as God’s continuing activities of creation through God as Spirit, the Holy Spirit. By this very Spirit, God exercises the relationship with human beings as individuals, just as with entire humanity as a community protecting God’s plan, and vice versa. Augustine viewed this providence as relating primarily to the groups (humanity or church) before it descends to individuals, but it is the individual who benefits most from supernatural grace and manifests God’s divine plan and providence (Elliott 2015:291). The role of the Spirit in the lives of individuals can hardly thereby be overstated.

Some Protestant theologians of the 17th century, being influenced by scholasticism and represented by scholars such as Johann F. König and Johann A. Quenstedt, developed a trilateralism of traditional terms *conservatio*, *concursus*, and *gubernatio* to describe God’s providence and ongoing steering of creation. These three take place simultaneously rather than separately or sequentially (Ward 2008:80). We talk about three aspects, rather than three different actions.

The doctrine of divine preservation (*preservatio*) claims that God actively provides for the created by sustaining their existence. It refutes views such as Deism, which states that God

created the universe but does not provide for it anymore, or Occasionalism, stating that God interferes periodically or repetitively, but not with any ongoing force. The latter is in contrast to the *ex nihilo* principle, claiming that the whole spiritual-material universe comes from God and all the parts require God's imminent ongoing attention (McFarland 2014:139).

Concursus ("accompaniment" or "concurrence") brings additional flavour to *conservatio* by stressing activity of the created. God not only sustains the physical state but also bestows free movement and energy upon His creation. It revokes the functional aspect of the beings, going hand in hand with the ontological one. McFarland states that

[T]here is no theological difficulty in affirming that natural law, creaturely freedom, and uncaused events are genuine and irreducible aspects of the mystery of creation—and thus recognizing that God, already infinitely rich in God's self, can bring into existence a reality other than God, with its own richness (McFarland 2014, 151f.).

Not only does God sustain his creatures on an ongoing basis and provide for their activities, his plan also extends to directly governing the creation toward a certain goal or end (*gubernatio*). By this principle, evoking eschatological undertones, Protestant scholastics acknowledged that the ongoing creation is not random or chaotic, but on the contrary, there is design and order so that the creation may flourish and prosper (Elliott 2015:293). It should, therefore, come as no surprise that God's four grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal, and fulfilment complement each other and follow each other in an orderly manner, reflecting the related problems of the biblical historical timeline and *Heilsgeschichte* (i.e., philosophical-theological term for the history of salvation). These grand acts are accordingly mirrored and "ortho-experienced" by the creation and human beings with the purpose of securing their ultimate flourishing and salvation.

Calvin in the 16th century was far more modest than the Protestant scholastics in his description in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* I, 15-18 where he discussed the whole question of God's providence in a pastoral way. One has to admit that Calvin provided clues with his notion of the doctrine to the Protestant scholastics of the century after him to be more rigid in this regard. On the other hand, the fact where he presented us with a clue for discussing God's grand acts close together is described in the section of his *Institutes* where he reflects on God's creation and immediately follows with a reflection on the knowledge of God the Redeemer in Christ. In general, Calvin regards God's providential work in a very laid-back way because he found that God's work is seldom near our expectations. In this regard he used the phrase for

God's work as not fully formed and incomplete (*inchoate et semiplena*) (Calvin Inst I, chapter 5, par10).

Calvin strongly believed in God's deterministic sovereignty and rejected the teaching about fate, as presented by the Greek philosophers. He trusted in a divine providence by which God not only creates, but also governs, feeds, and protects. At the same time, however, he was aware of our inability to fully understand God's plan and actions, as these lead to higher manifestations that are left to be grasped in another state, where we will also acquire a better understanding of the relationship between good and evil. Calvin's view of providence, therefore, puts the emphasis on the creation and reconciliation in Christ, more than on renewal through the Spirit and God's fulfilment of all things.

This lack of wisdom, manifested in the inability to properly understand the pattern of God's meticulous providence, combined with the fact that the modern philosophies progressed and became estranged from the biblical historical timeline, gave rise to ideologies, such as deism, that became extremely sceptical towards the providential concept of *creatio continua*. While the deists do not deny the divine creation of the universe, they emphasize that nowadays in the human era God can only be known through reason and the observation of nature, by no means through intervening manifestations. By playing down the role of the special revelation and by elevating the mode of the general revelation, deism can be directly linked to naturalism because it is only natural processes that govern the formation and continuation of nature and life.

These well-known facts about deism that may relate well to certain agnostic and philosophical views are unfortunately spiced up by the attitude of a much larger scale of individuals. The problem of deism not only arrived out of philosophies from the 18th century Enlightenment, but in my view, deism is also caused by many people only emphasizing God's grand act of creation with providence as an appendix, while totally omitting God's grand acts of reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment from their reflective activities. Thus, we could speak about one single grand act of God, denying that in reality there are four.

Treating God's creation as nature into which the supernatural intervention of God has to take place is one of the serious problems facing Pentecostals. This means that an accompanying deist view of nature is playing a lower and degraded role as the area where God's salvific acts of healing and even baptism of the Spirit take place. The increasing emphasis on God's

providence, functioning not only naturally but also supernaturally, elevates the role of the special revelation and the whole biblical historical timeline.

The belief in active divine sustenance after the Creation is one of the prominent Pentecostal features. The atheists and deists usually express their scepticism when Christians attempt to discuss the supernatural phenomena (the so-called “miracles”). Despite the fact that almost every individual experiences a certain kind of miracle during his or her life, since there is no pattern as to how and when the miracles happen (as a contrast to an operational science), there comes a denial of supernatural providence.

The period following the Thirty Years War (1618-1648) negatively influenced the understanding of God’s imminent providence. The 18th century philosopher David Hume, perhaps tired of the wars previously between various Christian fractions as a consequence of human church politics, was one of the first who openly criticized miracles in his essay “Of Miracles” that originally appeared in his larger work *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, first published in 1748. According to Hume, the miracles may not have actually taken place because they were never confirmed by a sufficient number of witnesses, and even those who would confirm them were rather carried away by the spectacular nature of the miracles and thereby reported them incorrectly. Furthermore, the alleged miracles often contradict each other in various cultures and religions, which devaluates them.

It is a matter of definition as to how we understand the divine supernatural intervention into the creation. We can view it in two different ways (Erickson 2007:432). First, there are so-called miracles that are based on the lack of our knowledge about nature (i.e., electricity would seemingly be designated as a miracle in the Middle Ages). Second, there are genuine miracles based on supernatural interference with the laws of nature. From the creational perspective, however, it is not necessary to distinguish the two categories as long as we view nature as part of God’s creation and that natural laws are thereby miracles in themselves.

It follows that both natural and supernatural phenomena appearing in the universe have one common source, the Creator and Provider, and need to be interpreted accordingly. Miraculous occurrences must be understood within the framework of the biblical historical timeline. As Geisler points out, the burning bush in Exodus 3 could have appeared as a regular fire, and at the same time, God’s speech could have been heard as a thunderclap in John 12:29 (Geisler

2000:451). For the Jews and subsequently for the Christians, nevertheless, these happenings created important points of contact with their Creator and *Heilsgeschichte* (history of salvation).

The relativity of assessment of their importance can serve as another aspect of the all-encompassing approach towards divine intervention. Some miracles that may appear greater in their essence are in fact not. The event when Jesus Christ turned water into wine is traditionally considered a great miracle (John 2), but it fades into insignificance in comparison with the creation of the first molecules. Similarly, Jesus instantly provided food for five thousand people (Matthew 14), but the creation *ex nihilo* qualitatively speaking stands on a much higher level.

As previously mentioned, apart from the natural processes, supernatural interventions are unpredictable in their nature and do not happen on human command. Calvin stressed God's sovereignty and control over all things. Divine interventions follow the context of the biblical historical timeline and the framework of God's four grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal, and fulfilment. The atonement overshadows individual miracles as the greatest of them all. Jesus Christ asserts as follows:

Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. So, he said to the paralyzed man, "Get up, take your mat and go home." Then the man got up and went home (Matthew 9:5-7).

By way of contrast, Christ points out that humanity searches for instant physical miracles due to their spectacular nature and views them as more important than words of forgiveness. It worked the opposite way for him, that is, to perform a single physical miracle has a lesser value than the act of forgiveness and reconciliation.

2.2.1.2 Creation and sin and evil

God's threefold acts of reconciliation, renewal, and fulfilment are dependent on the initial act of creation. But the actual element that to a greater or lesser extent demanded their existence was the reality of sin and evil. God was not the author of evil because the completed creation *ex nihilo* was considered "very good" (Genesis 1:31). Before we may get into extensive

philosophical discussions about what the essence of goodness means or how much evil it may contain, let us consider the character of God as we observe it in the attitude and behaviour of Jesus Christ who was the guide and interpreter of the New Covenant.

But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous... Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect (Matthew 5:44ff.).

Along the same lines, James says: “when tempted, no one should say, ‘God is tempting me.’ For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone” (James 1:13). In the Christian understanding according to the biblical historical timeline God represents perfection through his holy, righteous, loving, and merciful character. Therefore, evil is not an imminent part of God’s creation inasmuch as it contradicts God’s genuine character. The evidence is so compelling that even the critics of the Christian religion use this apparent discrepancy between the goodness of the Christian God and the reality of evil as one of their heaviest arguments for disproving God’s existence (cf. Crenshaw 2001:327-328).

The problem of evil is necessarily connected with the problem of sin, which is a humanized form of evil related to our lives. Usually defined as a transgression of a certain law, civil or moral, we may experience its consequences, both objectively in a form of a civil punishment and subjectively as an uneasiness of our moral conscience. Thus, evil needs to be defined as it is experienced from the human perspective as a unique contribution to God’s grand act of creation, launching the subsequent acts of reconciliation, renewal, and the proper consummation of all things.

2.2.1.2.1 Sin and evil and the four grand acts of God

Where sin and evil originate and how they impinge on us as humans and on the rest of the created world we do not know. There is no single satisfactory definition. It relates both to individuals and community, and thereby the definition may hover between both the personal and the social planes. What we know today is that to have an embracing experiential perspective on sin and evil we have to reflect on it in terms of God’s grand fourfold acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment. Thus, the reason that a discussion of the emergence and effect of sin and evil is carried out here is so as to get a more comprehensive take on it.

As Christians, we maintain that God is good, but at the same time, we have difficulties in explaining the purpose and vast extent of the evil in the world. This question is undoubtedly one of the greatest and most puzzling mysteries facing the Christian faith. Atheism acknowledges the reality of evil, but denies the existence of one (good) God. Pantheism, on the other hand, believes in God but denies the existence of evil. Christians, including Pentecostals, acknowledge both the existence of God and evil, which does not really correspond to the rational logic. We assert that God is holy, loving, and also omnipotent and hence capable of destroying all evil. He is also omniscient, which would presuppose that God knew what would happen prior to the Creation on the basis of his free will.

The question has been raised as to how a good God, if He is perfect, can “create” evil. The logical consequence would be that either He or His perfect creatures couldn’t do anything evil. To solve the problem, first we need to define perfection. Just as both Augustine and Thomas Aquinas pointed out, one of the qualities of perfection is the granting of free will (Svendsen and Pierce 2010:49). Freedom is the most precious aspect of perfection, but there are two sides to the same coin. We are sovereign beings and not machines in God’s hands, but at the same time, freedom becomes a channel through which evil can spread. Our potential to think and act freely, just as our genuine relationship with God, is redeemed at high cost. Even if God could have been accounted responsible for making evil possible, yet it is the work of free creatures to make evil an actuality. “For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone” (James 1:13).

A human being, on the other hand, can sin either directly through e.g. stealing, or indirectly by allowing things to happen through passivity and ignorance. Thus, God’s creation resonates with the option of human free will, which eventually set the course for reconciliation, renewal, and unique kind of consummation. It was sin that enhanced the role of the Spirit and brought it under the spotlight.

2.2.1.2.2 The origin and nature of sin and evil

One of the greatest mysterious contributions of human beings revolves around the concept of sin and evil. Fundamentalists would readily point to the portrayal of falling into sin in the first chapters of the book of Genesis as if the description there is a historical explanatory rendition

of how sin and evil came into the world. Total liberal approaches totally discard the idea of sin as contrary to good human nature. In my view I have to concur with the Dutch theologian of Reformed origin GC Berkouwer (1971:2). In his great book *Sin (De Zonde)* concerning sin and evil, he says the question *unde malum?* (= from where evil?) is a mystery and is not to be solved. It is vital at this point to draw a correlation between the work of God the Spirit and the works and doings of human beings and natural events and processes.

Sin and evil caused injury to God, human beings as unique conscious beings, humanity as a whole and injury to the natural cosmic environment. One can only speculate on what human destiny would be if evil had never appeared and if Adam and Eve had not carried out the first sinful act. But even if they had not sinned, it was only a question of time before someone else would have done so, because the devil and evil were one of the present realities in the world enabled by the aspect of free will. Human beings may wonder why God would allow evil to exist. Nonetheless, one thing we know is that the presence of evil does not threaten God's sovereignty. Classical understanding would relate to an active kind of evil, performed either by human agents or natural catastrophes.

But the problem is more complex, as there is also a passive form of evil, which is a byproduct of a good process. A byproduct can be used directly to create something positive. Sawdust, for instance, can be viewed as a byproduct of timber preparation, but it can be also used to produce paper. Insofar as theodicy is concerned, we do not have a full rational understanding. God created water as a good and life-essential substance, but it may happen that someone drowns in it. Fire burns at the expense of the air that is consumed. Rain irrigates the earth but can turn into a tornado. Famine may be a signal that it is necessary to construct a self-sustaining society with help of a good educational system solving other inevitable environmental problems. Or human cells can become cancer cells as a chain reaction of Adam's sin and the subsequent pollution by evil.

Nevertheless, evil does not exist as a separate entity, independent of goodness. It is just a 'lack' of something good. Thomas Aquinas explains that the Creator has purpose with different things and the relationship between good and evil must be defined from this creational perspective (Geivett 1995:18). It is natural that a stone lacks sight. But if a man cannot see, it is a problem. But evil can never totally destroy goodness. A human arm can be injured or a car may develop rust. The injury or the rust, however, cannot exist independently of the good thing upon which

it is parasitical. In other words, if evil appears to completely surround us, there is always some goodness present in its midst and this good thing should be our focus.

No evil is good *per se* but sometimes it may have a positive meaning. It is inseparable from the four grand acts of God. A physical pain can be a warning signal to the nervous system to prevent a more serious injury. People such as C. S. Lewis used this principle in the redemption context. In his *The Problem of Pain* he portrays pain as God's megaphone to warn a morally deaf person (Chapter 6). God may follow a certain purpose with all evil but we are unable to understand it. Following his suffering in Egypt, Joseph says to his brothers: "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives" (Genesis 50:20). Jesus fulfilled this revelation ultimately being afflicted by so much evil before he was able to redeem the whole of humanity.

God can recreate and even 'improve' things by means that are not always understood as positive. In the biblical historical framework, Scripture speaks about patience coming through testing (cf. Hebrews 12). God perhaps allows evil to exist for us so as to create something good out of it. Evil has paved the way for Christ's reconciliation, the Spirit's renewal, and a unique position of humankind in the fulfilment of all things where we have been granted a place in God's family.

Suffering may help people to develop their moral character and love toward God. Evil can bring us closer to God and the Holy Spirit. Irenaeus, one of the church fathers, maintained that humanity was created with a potential for perfection but this perfection had to develop and grow up (Engel, Soldan and Durand 2007:214). According to him, Adam reminds us of a child when he was newly created; perfect as a child, but not as an adult. Adam's character was not tested through a life-long social relationship with God. To get to know someone and mature morally and spiritually takes time. Just as a child is easily led astray, it should not come as a big surprise that the first man and woman failed, and sin emerged. Nevertheless, God counted on the role played by evil in His creation plan, even from the beginning, setting up a schedule for the other three grand acts, namely, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment.

Adam as the father of all people was considered God's friend but it was not before Jesus' sacrifice that humankind was transferred from the sphere of mere friendship into the realm of becoming sons and daughters of God. Because of sin and evil, it became necessary that Jesus,

the mediator between God and man, be incarnated into the world to become a man in order to redeem us. Through an unspeakable mystery, God not only reestablished human beings into their original position, but also upgraded their status through Jesus' incarnation to become a part of God's family. The seal of the promise has become the Holy Spirit. One can only wonder about how this could have been be achievable had not evil come into the world.

2.2.2 Reconciliation

2.2.2.1 Challenge

Under the heading of reconciliation, the challenge here is to strongly emphasize the links with God's creation and God's act of renewal through the Spirit, and fulfilment in the Spirit whilst keeping in mind that all God's acts play their part in our reflective activities when the attention is focused on one of the four grand acts.

The reflective discussion has to do firstly with how and where does Jesus Christ's reconciliatory work fit into the grand acts of God's creation; God's reconciliation encompassed in Christ's life, death, and resurrection; God's renewal through Pentecost; and God's fulfilment and consummation of all things, culminating in the new heaven and the new earth. Secondly, the important reflective discussion on reconciliation points in the direction of the Spirit's central act of ongoing enactment of God's creation, salvific renewal and all-encompassing fulfilment of our experience.

In this section a selection has been made from views on Jesus Christ in history that has made an impact on later Pentecostal movements. In terms of the ortho-experiential theological approach that is followed in the thesis, we do not want to reinvent the Christian tradition but want to point to the continuing under-emphasis of the dynamic ongoing work of renewal by the Holy Spirit in God's salvific work in global Christianity. In an attempt to outline a full gospel that comprises God's fourfold grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment in full and equal measure, we make use of everything that Creationologies, Christologies, Pneumatologies and Eschatologies from the past have to offer. The locus method of differentiating doctrinal loci in theology such as Christology, Pneumatology, Ecclesiology, etc is not directly followed here. The method of loci deriving from 17th century Protestant orthodoxy removes people's patterning of their experience that is their doctrines formed amidst their experiential involvement with the grand acts of God from their ongoing

experience within the ambience of the renewing Spirit of God. These doctrines receive a petrified character about which theologians have to reflect and speculate upon. In Christology, for many theologians the main speculative questions revolve around to what extent is Jesus Christ divine and to what extent is he human with the attendant questions as to how divinity and humanity coalesce and what that actually means for our salvation.

Concerning Christology, to counter the problem of views of Christ removed from people's experience an old distinction has in a renewed sense been emphasized in the modern era between the person (= divinity/humanity) and work (= life, cross and resurrection) of Christ. Theologians who began with the person of Christ reflect on issues such as how Christ's divinity and humanity fit together and whether there should be more emphasis on his divinity than on his humanity and vice versa. Christ's work or function as expressed through his life, cross and resurrection has been added as an appendix. But more and more theologians have begun from the side of Christ's work or function and these Christologies have been named functional Christologies. A good example is House's Christ-centred Pentecostal approach in his doctoral thesis *Theories of the Atonement and the Development of Soteriological Paradigms: Implications of a Pentecostal Appropriation of the Christus Victor Model* (2012) in which the Christ → Spirit reconciliation trajectory totally surpasses the Spirit → Christ renewal trajectory. Though House is departing from a functional Christology in which his Pentecostal experience plays a role, his allegiance to the locus or –logy approach prevents him from being constantly aware that salvation comprises reconciliation and renewal. One could not and should not be emphasized at the cost of the other. Not only is the distinction between Christ's being and his work but also unilateral emphases upon Christ's reconciliatory work and the Spirit's renewal work are no longer tenable in terms of a Pentecostal ortho-experiential theology.

2.2.2.2 Reconciliation, resurrection and the biblical historical timeline

The biblical historical timeline is a crucial witness to the events connected with the four grand acts of God because it provides objective data on the historical person of Jesus Christ and his work of atonement. More specifically, what is of importance here within the biblical historical timeline is the New/Second Testament's events and processes of the salvific and reconciliatory

simultaneity of the salvific *at-one-ment* and *at-other-ness* of God in creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment. It also concerns

human beings and nature narrated as a series of events of Jesus' death on a cross, the torn veil of the temple and Jesus being raised from the dead by the Holy Spirit as the first act and fruit of the renewal process in creation. The raising of the dead is affirmed and endorsed on the day of Pentecost as the negotiation process of renewal with human beings and natural universes as to how narrow and how broad, how deep and how high, and where and when locality and intensity of the interconnectivity and otherness of God, human beings and nature are to be experienced (Van Niekerk 2006: 340-341).

The death on the cross, the rending of the veil and the resurrection have been the effectuating, ongoing perpetual contact of the mutual relationship of history and time, creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment/consummation through the lingering and meandering process of the Kingdom of God. Reconciliation has been theologically understood from different angles when speaking about substitution, propitiation/expiation, ransom, redemption, forgiveness or justification. Generally, it expresses the idea that God cures His creation and purifies it from evil in the "already but not yet" concept of His Kingdom. It undoubtedly draws attention to the Second Person of the Trinity, namely, Jesus Christ as God's Son who sacrificed Himself for humankind.

The meaning of the cross is not just symbolic, but also very pragmatic in the biblical historical timeline. Christ chose to die for our sins once, for all (1 Peter 3:18). He was the uncorrupted Creator who offered Himself for the corrupted creation, affecting individuals, humanity and the natural cosmic environment.

Those things that had been separated were brought together by way of reconciliation. The mysterious ways of the presence of sin paved the way for it. Again, it was the ambience of evil that made necessary all four grand acts of God and not just the first, Creation. When Jesus died, God provided a remarkable act of rending the veil in Jerusalem's temple, which separated the "Holy Place" from the "Holy of Holies" – the dwelling of the presence of God. It was a symbol of God's ambience entering the world in a new way that would be manifested in renewal by the Spirit and would point to a new dimension of fulfilment (Hebrews 10:19).

Just as Christ's death on the cross was required for atonement, it would never be complete without his resurrection. His raising from the dead symbolizes the grand act of Renewal. If Christ was dead in sin for us but resurrected in purity, there is a tangible hope for our own

restoration. It goes far beyond a legal declaration of innocence in justification because it echoes transformation of the whole life.

The Nicene creed summarizes well the biblical historical timeline insofar as the reconciliation is concerned:

for us and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; he suffered and was buried; and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father; and he shall come again, with glory, to judge both the living and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

Christ's resurrection echoes the work of the Spirit. The Spirit raised Jesus from the dead as "the first fruits" and in turn also gives life to our mortal bodies (Romans 8:11). The Spirit that gave birth to physical Jesus and was with him throughout his life and death plays a pivotal role even in his resurrection that set the mark for our own renewal. The resurrection is "the actual beginning of this general epochal event" (Vos 1979:45). The Spirit is the indwelling Spirit. It is both Christ and the Holy Spirit who played a part in the reconciliation act, whilst marking the beginning of the new era of renewal. It is perhaps due to the fact that Christ became a human being on earth who spoke and acted that appealed to the human senses more effectively than the ambience of the Spirit, which tossed the perception of the Trinity into unbalanced one-sided views where the legacy of the Holy Spirit suffered damage.

2.2.2.3 One-sided emphases on the cross and the resurrection

Unilateral views usually centre around the personality and work of Jesus Christ. The Azusa Street revival had an impact on Christianity in the form of the Pentecostal movement and the focus on the person of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, since it was never properly reflected in a rise of some significant Pentecostal theology standing on its own with the centre in the Spirit, the traditionally Christological themes again took over. First, Karl Barth promulgated Christ as the centre of all history and reality despite the fact that the theme of the Holy Spirit was not hostile to him in the neo-orthodox approach. Secondly, the evangelical movement in scholars such as Carl Henry emphasized the historical biblical timeline as verbally expressed in the Bible, yet its dimension of the Holy Spirit as a significant agent in the scheme of creation,

reconciliation, renewal and consummation was considerably diminished and brought into a kind of captivity all Pentecostals who chose to dwell on evangelical theology featured by cessationist tendencies.

The four-fold gospel claiming Jesus Christ as Saviour, Healer, Baptizer with the Holy Spirit and the Coming King need to operate in a mutually effective relationship of not just Christ/Word → Spirit, reconciliation → renewal but also Spirit → Christ in order to avoid the one-sided “ditch”. Only then, can one promulgate a true *ortho-experientiality*. Niebuhr’s concept of ‘Christ and Culture’, possibly evolving from Barth’s understanding, became an important classic in the field, but it would also be desirable to transfer the typology beyond Christ and apply it to the concept of ‘Spirit and Culture’. The same is true also for the Reformed notions of ‘Creation and Culture’ and even Moltman’s view of a social Trinity (Moltmann 1967). In other words, the Christian theology of the last centuries have been living in Christ’s ambience at the cost of the Spirit.

It is important to view Christian doctrines in an encompassing stream balancing the one-sidedness. For instance, we should not talk about the theology of the cross and the theology of glory as two separate entities but as two emphases of the same Gospel. Van Niekerk asserts how Barth played down a theology of glory and heavenly things, which resulted in insufficient emphasis on the resurrective power of the Holy Spirit in the person of human Jesus and other believers (1984:189). We need to strive for purity and perfection realizing how much we have been forgiven through Christ and his work on the cross, but believers can also enjoy knowing that they are part of God’s eternal family and that the Holy Spirit is already present here and now to give us a taste of the heavenly blessings. According to Van Niekerk, the focus is not a *theologia crucis* or a *theologia gloria* but a *theologia crucis et gloria* that expresses best “the processes Word → Spirit and Spirit → Word” (Nigrini 2006:158). The aspects of ‘cross’ and ‘glory’ work hand in hand in the same way as Christology should always be connected to pneumatology.

2.2.2.4 Three approaches of the salvific reconciliatory experience of Christ in everyday experience

In this part, three approaches by Jesus Christ that had a direct impact on Pentecostal views of later centuries are discussed in an ortho-experiential sense. Our point of departure here is

people's daily experience of Christ within and outside the ambience of their churches. On the one hand, it is noteworthy that the theological views of a broad spectrum of theologians of a particular church tradition is, in the majority of instances, not a reflection of the experience of the people in the pews in the experiential ambience of their churches' doctrines, rituals, manners and patterns of doing things. On the other hand, through modern history a confluence and even blending of the three approaches of different ecclesial traditions took place.

The "practical theology" that is the experiential theology of the ecclesial community, and congregational and diocesan experience is expressive of how people perceive the grand acts of God, look at God, Christ and the Spirit and how they use the Bible and how the presence of God, the presence of oneself, the presence of the faith community and the presence of the natural environment is embodied in the day-to-day forms, rituals, habits, and prescripts holding sway in a particular church and faith community. Churches, despite minor and major changes in different global eras in general remain true to their ethos and their "practical theology" that derives from their everyday church experience concatenated with their past experiences within their traditional embracing sense-making approach.

In what follows here, the similarities are activated in our reflection on a particular church tradition's view of the Lord's Supper, the use and role of the Judeo-Christian Scripture and the practical approach of a church community's experience of Christ. A theology that looks at the everyday experiential patterns does not go outside its own demarcation area when the day-to-day forms, rituals, habits, and prescripts that form the whole body of a community are investigated in the light of the main absolute image that is apparent throughout such a community's experience. The concrete description of everyday ecclesial experiences of different church traditions' main absolute image that they live by, functions here not as a definitive description of these approaches but as reflective indicators to which we constantly attach our focus concerning the influence and impact these approaches had and still have on Pentecostal churches and movements.

The first ortho-experiential outline follows that of the *transformational trans-substantialist* experience of Roman Catholics, the second revolves around the *consubstantialist* experience of Lutherans and the third is linked to the *interactional substantialist* experiences of reformational Calvinists.

2.2.2.4.1 Roman Catholic trans-substantialism

The first approach of *transformational trans-substantialism* is well-known in the global Christian world and operates primarily from a notion that Christ's humanity is transformed sacramentally by his divinity to such an extent that he has become *the divine human being*. Contra to the intention of the approach, the humanity of Christ is diminished to be less than the creatureliness of being human.

The experiential settings of this view are found in Roman Catholic sacramentalist practices, in some Anglican and even Pentecostal practice. Jesus Christ was both a human being and the pre-existent divine Son of God, transforming Jesus' humanity through the virgin birth into a sacramentalised and sacralised divine human being. He passed through different stages from heaven to earth and back and was resurrected as the divine human being and the Son of God. His resurrection and ascension are the sign and evidence of his eternal life that manifests on earth in his body which is first and foremost the Church. Incarnation here means that the pre-existent and post-existent divine Son of God who received divinized human flesh while on earth. As a result, the risen Son of God, who now dwells with the Father, is essentially entirely divine. Though this view is not propagated in the majority of Roman Catholic theologies, the concept is still highly functional in the ecclesial practices of the Roman Catholic Church and its sacramental doctrines from baptism all the way to the Eucharist.

The history of the Roman Catholic church as regards the practices and rituals, mannerisms and conventions and precepts and creeds is built upon the idea of transformational substantialism which in ordinary terminology means that an ordinary everyday substance from the creaturely world is transformed into a holy, sacralised, and sacramentalised divine being or entity. Amongst the many sacralised and sacramentalised forms, the holy form of all forms is the holy embodiment of Jesus, the human being, transformed through the virgin birth by the blessed Mary into a holy, sacred, and sacramental sacrificial divine offer, Christ. In this sense, the holy, sacred, and sacramental divine human being, Jesus Christ is the prototype of all transformation processes in the church.

The transformational substantialist language of a divine supernatural entity changing a natural and human entity into a divine supernatural entity is, at times and in certain places, expressive of a two-level belief scheme which is employed throughout the entire Roman Catholic sense-making world. The two levels of belief operating in the changing of the substance or essence

of something while the observable features remain the same is applicable to Jesus Christ as a divine human being whose presence is presented as an archetypal example used throughout the cascading hierarchical structures of the church.

All the processes taking place through the holy sacred and sacramental hierarchical and cascading structures of the Holy See and office bearers, the pope and priests performing the sacred and sacramental offerings of the seven sacraments are different expressions of the prototype Christ whose human flesh was changed and is still changing into the sacrificial divine offer, Christ while in appearance remains radically human. Sustaining the level of the natural and the human within the ambience of the holy sacramental and sacred ambience of the church allows many Roman Catholics together with their theologians to speak about Christ as being such an ordinary human being that he could get hungry and thirsty, suffer from a cold, etc. There are hundreds of views on Christ in the Roman Catholic church and many church theologians differ on various points from the everyday “practical theology” of congregational and diocesan experience. It is not a typical Roman Catholic phenomenon. What is typical however is that when a Roman Catholic sense-making perspective is presented about something, one immediately has to ask from which level is he or she addressing the problem – from the supernatural level or from the natural level?

The notion of transforming the substance of ordinary human flesh into divine ‘flesh’ comes a long way in the Roman Catholic church. Since the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 the view that Christ’s body and blood were actually captured and contained in the physical bread and wine in the sense of the bread being transubstantiated by God into the body of Christ and the wine into his blood was in a broad sense embraced in the ambience of the everyday “practical theology” of the church. The well-known Thomas Aquinas (d.1274) affirmed “that once the consecration had been made, the actual bread and wine dissipated and the proper conversion took place, which is called transubstantiation” (Gonzales 1984: 272, 347-349).

Transubstantiation as the transforming of substances was declared an official doctrine of the Roman Catholic church at the beginning of the 15th Century by the Council of Constance (1414-18 A.D.). Moreover, the Council of Trent (1545-1563) strongly underlined the official doctrine in response to criticism by the Protestant Reformation. The Council of Trent in its thirteenth session on the notion of transubstantiation (October 11, 1551) declared:

And because that Christ, our Redeemer, declared that what He offered under the species of bread to be truly His own body, therefore has it ever been a firm belief in the Church of God, and this holy Synod doth now declare it anew, that, by the consecration of the bread and the wine, a conversion is made of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord, and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of His blood; which conversion is, by the holy Catholic Church, suitably and properly called Transubstantiation (Waterworth 1848, 78).

The event of transformation of the substance (= transubstantiation) in the Eucharist (= the Mass) means that by repeating the words by which the sacrament of the Lord's Supper had been instituted ("this is my body... and blood," etc.) the bread turns into the body of Christ physically, and similarly the wine transforms physically into the blood of Christ. This event is a miracle that can only be performed day after day and week after week by somebody who is authorized to do so – that is, the priest. The miraculous change is operationally brought about by citing the words used when the sacrament was first instituted. Out of the operation of citing the words – called consecration – the change flows operationally (*ex opera operato*). In this approach, one's belief that change takes place from the natural and ordinary to the extraordinary and supernatural operates on two levels of experience: firstly, you must believe on one level that the natural substances of bread and wine are now the supernatural "body" and "blood" of Christ. Secondly, you must believe that the "body" and the "blood" still has the appearance of bread and wine (Nürnberg 2005: 212). Christ as the divine human being who operates through the office bearers and consecrated icons within the church that rolls forth as the divine human ambience of the church is day-after-day enacted, employed, applied, and offered by the priesthood to the lay believers within the holy, sacred, and sacramental space of the church.

The practical process in the mass points to a demarcation point in the liturgical procedure when a bell is rung. It sets the time of the transformation when the substances turn into the body and blood of Christ. Subsequently, the elements must be handled with great caution. A second two-level experience of belief enters the operation of transformation of bread and wine. To minimize the danger that the "blood" may be spilled, lay members are given only the consecrated bread which is the "body" of Christ and not the consecrated wine which is the "blood" of Christ. The consecrated wine, the "blood" is only to be consumed by the priest performing the procedure because he is the conduit of performance at the end of the long holy, sacramental and sacred chain that flows from Christ himself. The underlying assumption is that the blood was contained in the body, so those who only receive the body miss very little. The

consecrated bread is safely stored in a cupboard near the altar. From there “it can be carried to the sick and used there without being newly consecrated. When believers enter the church or pass the altar, they bow down deeply because their Lord is physically present there. The “host” as it is called, is also sometimes carried through the streets in processions to present the presence of Christ to the public. This is done on a special day called the day of the Body of Christ (*Corpus Christi*)” (Nürnberg 2005: 212-3).

Thus, the transformational substantialist language which amounts to a simultaneous dual operational belief scheme is applicable throughout the entire Roman Catholic sense-making ambience of experience. The two levels of belief operating in the changing of the substance or essence of something while the observable features that stay the same to the naked eye is applicable to Jesus Christ as divine human being whose presence is presented through the cascading hierarchical ambience of the church, the presence-making of the divine body and blood of Christ in the consecration of the natural humanlike bread and wine, and the divine holy and sacramental rolling forth ambience of the Roman Catholic church through history in which concatenated intermittent divinizing and sacramentalisation of natural and human things and events occur and take place as a further evolving process in addition to the first (old) and second (new) testament.

2.2.2.4.1.1 Pentecostals and the transubstantiation approach

There exists an entire spectrum of Roman Catholic positions. But the central concept of the Catholic *transubstantiation* (incarnation approach) elaborates on the human Jesus who becomes a divine human being by way of transformation. This is what Roman Catholic views of incarnation through “the virgin birth” entail.

Superficially, it is not so difficult for Pentecostals to criticize the whole dual or two-prong scheme of supernatural and natural experience of Roman Catholics. However, in certain Pentecostal approaches the notion of Jesus Christ as a divine human being has been operational as the sole executor of the fourfold gospel. In addition, some Pentecostal experiences of speaking in tongues as divine human tongues as well as the praying and blessing over cloths and handkerchiefs amounts to a similar kind of practice as that of Roman Catholics in the Mass, albeit from a different sense-making ambience.

2.2.2.4.2 Lutheran permeating con-substantialism

A second position revolves around the concept of the humanity of Christ being permeated by his divinity – the so-called *consubstantialist* approach. This view had developed over the centuries of the church history, but was given its final shape by Luther and the Lutheran tradition where Jesus has been portrayed as *the human God*. This position is held by numerous present-day churches. Sections of the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches and a large section of the worldwide phenomenon of evangelically-minded people encountered in the Reformed/Presbyterian, Pentecostal, and also charismatic worlds ascribe to the view that Christ's divinity permeates his humanity. For example, the well-known evangelical and pietist view of "Jesus in the heart" or "Jesus acting through the heart" of someone is expressive of a view of a divine Jesus, without his humanity, permeating the humanity of the believer. The divine Jesus permeating and residing in the heart of the believer not only takes over the creaturely responsibility of the believer, but pushes the Holy Spirit to the periphery of a person's being. The greater majority of Christological views present within the Evangelical Christian world embraces the view of Jesus directly operating and dwelling in a human being with the Holy Spirit practically absent or modestly operating as an appendix and to whom is ascribed the task of being the one that opens up Jesus and Bible.

The pre-existent, divine Son of God permeated the humanity of Jesus to such a degree that he became Jesus Christ. After his resurrection, the human God is the omniscient human divinity permeating Scripture, the church, the faith of individuals as well as the sacraments of bread and wine.

The term, "consubstantiation," emerged in the history of the 16th Century Reformation from Luther's perception of how Christ's body and blood are related to the bread and wine used in the Eucharist. In a very interesting 1940 study, *Christologie. De Leer van het Komen Gods. Volume 1* the Dutch theologian F.W.A. Korff points to the remarkable "similarity between Luther's view of the humanity of Christ at the cross and his human bodiliness expressed in the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper" (1940: 220). Though Korff commented that one should not overexaggerate the similarity, I want to work with the assumption that in terms of an ortho-experiential perspective, one should add that Luther's view of the Judeo-Christian Scripture demonstrates the same remarkable similarity between Luther's view of Christ's humanity and divinity and his view of the bread and the wine in the Communion.

In terms of the many views shared by 16th Century Reformation advocates, Luther was very original in declaring the human body of Christ present everywhere, particularly at the cross, in the Communion bread and wine, in biblical verses and in the human/natural ambience of the church and in faith and belief. The similarity between Luther's view of *Christ*, the *bread and wine* in the Lord's supper, the *human words of the Bible*, the *church* and *faith and belief* revolve around an approach in which the human and natural sides of these remain human and natural while in each particular instance they are in a permeating way employed by the divine agent, Christ the Word. In Luther, the relationship of Christ's humanity present both everywhere and in a specific way and place carries along with it Christ, the permeating divine actor of his humanity.

According to Korff, Luther's approach of Christ being omnipresent, but also in certain instances specifically present, is curious. Korff shows by way of a quotation from Luther's works that while Christ's human body is present everywhere in all creatures such as in stone, fire, water, or a rope, Christ as divine acting Word "does not want us to grope for him in these things" and throw ourselves in the fire and the water or hang ourselves on a rope without the [divine acting] Word, Christ" (Korff 1940: 221).

At this point Luther's views are indeed curious if one cannot pinpoint in which realm the divine acting Word, Christ employs human and natural things in a permeating sense. Luther's realm as to where and through which of the human and natural things the divine actor, Christ the Word is in a permeating sense actively operating is only certain because it is circumscribed and found within the realm of Christ, the church and faith and belief as the realm of the 'kingdom of Christ' where Christ, as God, is directly experienced. Alongside and dialectically connected to the kingdom of God in an everyday way is found Luther's other realm the 'kingdom of the world', government, business and labour and reason and thinking where God is indirectly experienced because His acting is veiled (Ebeling 1975:175-192) – in the latter realm Christ the divine actor does not operate and could therefore not employ stone, fire, water, or a rope because they remain what they are – natural stone, fire, water, or a rope and human beings remain what they are, namely plainly human.

For it is only when the permeating divine actor Christ is in an active way present in stone, fire, water, or a rope that we have to cast about for him. While Christ is omniscient, we do not need to cast about for him everywhere, but rather perceive him properly where Christ the Word is

active in the ordinary daily things within the Kingdom of God, which insofar as Luther's definition relates, is more or less the church (Korff 1940: 221).

According to Luther, the human body of Christ is present everywhere, but specifically in the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper; was present specifically on the cross and in a similar sense specifically present in the biblical verses, which is the Word of God.

For Luther, there is a difference between whether God is "universally everywhere" and whether God is "there specifically for us." As Korff points out,

Luther appeals to the notion of God determining and ordaining the way by which Christ could be found and encountered at a particular place. The main factor of finding and encountering Christ at a particular place is Luther's use of the working of the Word of God, which permeates the concentrated particular spatial setting and embodiment in which God is present for us in the human body of Christ at the cross, in the bread and wine in the Holy Communion, and in the human words of the Bible. God can only be present in being there for us when the Word permeates the humanity of Christ, the bread and wine, and human words of the Bible. So, we do not find Christ in our everyday bread, although he is there, unless he says of particular bread: "This is my body" (Korff 1940: 221).

As to Luther's understanding of Christ's divinity and his humanity and their unity, Luther comes with a statement "the human being Christ is God." He states:

This is the sum total. This is the summary of salvation in which the church triumphs and elates: that a human being is the true God and that we only have, in this God and human being, eternal life (quoted in Korff 1940: 217).

Luther was significantly consistent while approaching the concept of the two natures of Christ in the history of the church. The divine and human nature of Christ were closely linked in his works. In this way, "when one says that God is present at this moment for us, one also has to say that Christ the human being is also present" (Korff 1940:216). According to Luther, we find in the person of Jesus Christ the true God and the true human in such a manner "*dass in dieser Person beide, die Gottheit und die Menschheit, Einers oder Ein Ding und Kuche sind, also dass man mit Recht sagt: 'dieser Mensch ist Gott'*" (that in this person, both the divinity and the humanity is one or a thing like a cake, so that one could justifiably say, "This human is God" (quoted in Korff 1940:217). Because of the latter reason, we are also to worship Christ's humanity. According to Luther, Christ with his divinity and humanity is the foundation and cornerstone of the church (Korff 1940:217). Christ with his divinity that permeates his

humanity is in the heaven that represents an omnipresent heaven (*coelum ubiquitarium*) rather than a particular place (*certus locus*).

According to Luther, Christ in his divinity and his humanity is present everywhere, although we have seen that this omnipresence is closely related to Luther's kingdom of Christ (God), more or less the realm of the church while God is omnipresent, albeit veiled in the adjoining kingdom of the world (Ebeling 1975:187-191; Korff 240:219).

Luther's view of the omnipresence of Christ's humanity brought about a strong reaction from Calvin who held the position that Christ's divinity along with his resurrected human body is in heaven, where he is continuously engaged in interceding for us as a mediating heavenly priest before God. For Calvin, it was the Holy Spirit who was the main link between Christ in heaven and us human beings on earth. Luther in his identification of the Holy Spirit and Christ regarding God's presence in our lives comes close to the formulation that the Holy Spirit is Christ present (Nürnberg 2005:226). But in conclusion, everything insofar as salvation is concerned, revolves around Jesus Christ.

Luther wanted believers to accept the words of Jesus, "This is my body," because it does not contradict Scripture or faith that these words were assigned to Christ's body in the first Lord's Supper by Christ himself. Neither does it contradict Scripture or faith that it should happen in everything following the Communion (Korff 1940:218). The Communion in Luther's understanding combined two elements—the divine body and blood that permeated the physical bread and wine. A parallel can be drawn to the cross where Christ's divine nature permeated his human body.

2.2.2.4.2.1 Pentecostals and the permeating consubstantialist approach

In the incarnation approach of the mainly Lutheran *consubstantiation*, the divine God constantly permeates the human Jesus from his conception onward. This unceasing permeation where the human being of Jesus is accompanied by his own divine character expresses Luther's view of incarnation in all other theological and ecclesial spheres. This view is also applicable to Luther's view of the human biblical words as being permeated by the divine word.

More than any one of the other two approaches, the prototypical Lutheran notion of Christ's divinity permeating his humanity was taken up by large segments of the broad Pentecostal movement of later years. Initially Luther's approach was taken further by Pietist movements

from the 17th Century into the late modern era. The broad Evangelical approach influencing the majority of churches today operates with a similar approach, namely that of Jesus Christ as the direct driving force of his own salvific work in people's lives, by his residing within the heart of the believer and thus in a permeating sense, working through the (reborn) believer's experiences.

Nearly all one-sided Christocentric Pentecostal approaches work with Jesus Christ as the one eventuating his own salvation, baptizing with the Spirit, healing, and driving his own second coming. To a certain degree the employment of the consubstantialist scheme by Pentecostals makes the Spirit against the broad turn to the Spirit in all experiences, a secondary operator of salvation. All the processes and events of God's Kingdom are unilaterally brought into this sort of Pentecostalist experience featuring the divine actor Jesus Christ, as the same yesterday and today and forever (Hebrews 13:8). In this way, Christ is the exclusive divine agent who completes the processes and events of God's Kingdom via the Pentecostal tools of the four/fivefold gospel as saviour, healer, baptizer (and sanctifier) and coming king.

The main reason is that the Spirit as the renewer of everything through an employment of the cross and the resurrection of Jesus within the ambience of our creatureliness has fallen at the wayside. The approach of S. D. House in *Pentecostal contributions to contemporary Christological thought: a synthesis with Ecumenical views* (2006) is to a large extent a confirmation of the widespread phenomenon amongst Pentecostals of the one-sided Christ-centric trajectory working with a strong consubstantialist undertone. In addition, not contrary, one has to emphasize that the Spirit in a renewing sense perpetuates salvation in a daily sense, baptizes us anew in the daily sense, heals and is the renewing continuator of the ambience in which we await the second coming of Christ.

2.2.2.4.3 Calvinist interactional substantialism

The third approach that has an impact on Pentecostalism is centred around the idea of *interactional substantialism*, meaning that the mystery of simultaneous dynamic and exchanging interactional concept of at-one-ment and at-other-ment of the divinity and humanity of Jesus Christ is expressed. The interactional inter-substantialist position has rather a minority status in global Christianity and the Christian churches. This view of an interactional operability of Jesus Christ in his divinity and humanity mainly derives from John Calvin and to a certain extent Ulrich Zwingli the Swiss reformer of the 16th Century.

In a different way than Luther's con-substantialist approach or the classic sacramentalist transformational views, Calvin brings the divinity and humanity of Christ very closely together without mixing them. In a real sense the mystery of being closely connected and radically different, the at-one-ment and the at-other-ment of the two natures of Christ is throughout Calvin's writing operational. Calvin is not a mixer of God and humanness. Christ firstly viewed as the combination of a duality of divine and human mediatory being interceding for us before God. Secondly, Christ is simultaneously placed within the biblical historical timeline at middle point of the Bible as the absolute example of divine/human mediation but Christ acts as divine/human mediator from creation at the beginning of time to fulfilment at the end of time. The reconciliation of Christ is central in the Biblical historical timeline – that is the well-known special and particular dimension of the Calvin's views – while Christ is simultaneously generally involved in God's acts of creation, renewal, and fulfilment at the end of time.

In this whole scheme of things Calvin depicts Christ from beginning until eternity as the dually glued together but not mixed divine/human being operating pivotally and prototypically between creation in the past and fulfilment in the future through a link to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit continuously links Christ to human beings and the created natural environment as the perpetual divine/human mediator who intercedes between God and human beings (Van Niekerk 2009b:42)

When Calvin specifically refers to the combined duality of the divinity and humanity of Christ, he states in his *Institutes* of 1559:

When it is said that the Word was made flesh, we must not understand it as if he were either changed into flesh, or confusedly intermingled with flesh, but that he made choice of the Virgin's womb as a temple in which he might dwell. He who was the Son of God became the Son of man, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person. For we maintain, that the divinity was so conjoined and united with the humanity, that the entire properties of each nature remain entire, and yet the two natures constitute only one Christ (Calvin [1559] 2001: 415).

For Calvin, the mystery of the person of Christ is concentrated around "how" the two natures of Christ's person existed in a co-existent closely combined way without being fused or mingled. He attempted to it through the example of soul and body he in the footsteps of Plato regarded as the two main components of which a human being consists: human being is a composite of a body and a soul, which as two natures cannot be mixed and fused into one

nature, a human being stays a single person while being composed as expressive of having two natures. Calvin used this as an undergirding for the way the Scriptures speak of Christ:

Thus, the Scriptures speak of Christ. They sometimes attribute to him qualities which should be referred specially to his humanity, and sometimes qualities applicable peculiarly to his divinity, and sometimes qualities which embrace both natures, and do not apply specially to either. This combination of a twofold nature in Christ they express so carefully, that they sometimes communicate them with each other, a figure of speech which the ancients termed *idiomaton koinonia* (a communication of properties) (Calvin [1559] 2001: 415).

In a similar sense, as Calvin's analogy of soul and body as components of one human being both the natures of Christ, divine and human, are expressive of the one person of Christ. At this point the analogy ends because Calvin is saddled with the problem that when the Scriptures speak of Christ Calvin the Bible reader had to point out where and when in which section the divinity comes to the fore and where and when the humanity comes to the front and where and when both natures come as in one solid person to the fore.

If we asked Calvin, what happened to Christ's divinity while he (Jesus) was weeping over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41-44), Calvin would propose that Christ's divinity was *resting*. If asking Calvin, similarly, where was Jesus' divine nature while his human nature was suffering beyond all limits at the cross? Calvin's answer would simply suggest that it was *quiet*. Christ's divinity was quiescent in his suffering on the cross so that his humanity was revealed in his death (Edmonson 2004:198).

There are many instances in which Calvin understands Christ divinity to have cloaked itself so that his humanity might manifest itself fully. In his Commentary on Matthew 14:23ff in which Mathew tells us that Jesus sent his disciples out on a boat while he went up on to the mountain to pray. Why Calvin asks did Jesus send out his disciples into danger while he went praying. Calvin's answer is very insightful regarding his where and when the divinity or the humanity of Christ came to the fore in Scripture.

[I]n discharging all the parts of his office as mediator [Christ] showed himself to be God and man, and exhibited proofs of both natures as opportunities arose. Though he had all things at his disposal, he showed himself as man by praying; and this he did not hypocritically, but manifested sincere and human affection toward us. In this manner his Divine majesty was for a time concealed, but was afterward displayed at the proper time (quoted in Edmondson 2004:198).

Another example is Calvin's reading of Luke's report that the young Christ "grew and was invigorated in his spirit" (Luke 2:40) as part of his development in which Christ's divinity was in repose so that it may be apparent that he shared the weakness of human ignorance and thus suffered under the burden of our humanity (Edmondson 2004:198).

What is Calvin's view of the Holy Spirit and whether Jesus has been born in sin? Calvin is very cautious and talks about an exception featuring a divine intervention of the Holy Spirit who *sanctified* Christ at conception. As a result, it would immunize him from being contaminated. This is how Calvin explains his view:

For we make Christ free of all stain not just because he was begotten of his mother without copulation with man, but because he was sanctified by the Spirit that the generation might be pure and undefiled as would have been true before Adam's fall. And this remains for us an established fact: whenever Scripture calls our attention to the purity of Christ, it is to be understood of his true human nature, for it would have been superfluous to say that God is pure (Calvin [1559] 1960b, 13).

Calvin's idea that Christ's resurrected humanity is still with him in "heaven" has been known as the *extra-Calvinisticum* and was not held by other Reformers of his era except Zwingli. The Lutheran scholars opposed the *extra-Calvinisticum* and rejected it. The heart of the doctrine of *extra-Calvinisticum* is that Christ still has his resurrected humanity with him where he is presently situated at the right-hand of the Father (Van Niekerk 1984:34,58-69). In his *Institutes*, Calvin describes the concept by explaining how the Word of God became flesh:

They thrust upon us as something absurd the fact that if the Word of God became flesh, then he was confined within the narrow prison of an earthly body. This is mere impudence! For even if the Word in his immeasurable essence united with the nature of man into one person, we do not imagine that he was confined therein. Here is something marvellous: the Son of God descended from heaven in such a way that, without leaving heaven, he willed to be born in the virgin's womb, to go about the earth, and to hang upon the cross; yet he continuously filled the world even as he had done from the beginning! (Calvin [1559] 1960b, 13).

The Lutherans had problem with the idea that Christ's (resurrected) humanity was with the Father now as well as they argued that it is the Holy Spirit how God is present in the natural world. However, Calvin was not dogmatic about how this would be happening concretely, referring to the figure of speech of the *alloiosis* that carries the communication of properties (se Edmonson 2004, 198-214). Calvin's hint on *alloiosis* basically expresses an idea of similarity rather than of sameness of the human and divine natures of Christ.

2.2.2.4.3.1 Pentecostals and the interactional substantialist approach

Calvin's intersubstantialist view is far away from the transformational substantialist view that something earthly and natural could be transformed into something divine and sacred. Calvin just as the other Reformers, for instance, rejected the view of the Lord's Supper to be a sacrifice to be given to God. People do not participate in the Mass to obtain a merit. Calvin also differs from the consubstantialist permeating approach of Luther in which the divinity of Jesus permeates his humanity making the human side of Jesus slightly something else than human.

One can again point to Calvin (and Zwingli) as a 16th Century reformer who presented us with the sufficient clues concerning the Christ-centred movement of Word → Spirit as unilaterally emphasized at the cost of the Spirit → Word movement. The notion of the *extra-calvinisticum* is of importance here from two perspectives: firstly, Jesus Christ's atoning work on the cross is being carried out by the Spirit in our era. Secondly, Christ is not 'omniscient everywhere through himself', as the Lutheran doctrine would suggest, but is present in our lives and churches through the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit that carries Christ's legacy in this world.

For Calvin, there is no transubstantiation process in which the bread would become the real body of Christ and the wine being turned into his real blood. Christ's resurrected body is in heaven and the Holy Spirit feeds the believers spiritually with Christ's heavenly body through the bread and the wine, but the substances remain physically bread and wine.

Though Calvin did not carry through with his view of the Spirit as the presence-maker of Jesus Christ in all regards he set the notion of the mystery around the 'coalesced presences' of God, conscious human selves, human beings collectively and the natural cosmic on track as the outlines of our daily experience. Though in Calvin sense God confirms his all-encompassing 'immanence' and 'transcendence' more or less within God's acts of creation and reconciliation with under emphasis of renewal and fulfilment God still remains God, human beings remain human beings and nature remains nature through God's engagement, involvement and movement as the Spirit, the enactor of the Kingdom of God. This does not indicate a divinisation, theosis or deification of anything within God's complexity and multiversity of universes. God is God, human is human and nature is nature – all through and by virtue of God self. The mystery of the at-one-ment and at-other-ment of God, our conscious human selves,

humanity as a collective and the natural cosmic environment in God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment points to the glory of God of a God at work and at home in his own multiversity of universes still being in the process of creation, reconciliation, ongoing renewal directed to its fulfilment.

2.2.2.5 Salvation as reconciliation through Christ and renewal through the Holy Spirit

Reconciliation as the salvific happening of at-one-ment and at-other-ment of God, human beings and the and the natural cosmic environment as God's creation in the cross and resurrection of Christ which is in an ongoing renewal applied by the Spirit of God in people's and nature's worlds directed to the fulfilment in the new heaven and the earth.

Reconciliation is not only the suffering and the death on the cross but is set forth in the ongoing renewal of the Holy Spirit. One has to admit that since the early years of the Pentecostal experiences the two trajectories of a pneumatic-centric Spirit → Christ and a nearly Christ monistic Word → Spirit approach were nearly always present in the same experiential context. It is as if there is a sort of a schizophrenic duality in Pentecostal circles regarding the simultaneity of Christ as the driving force of reconciliation (=the cross and resurrection) and the Holy Spirit as the driving force of ongoing renewal.

Many Pentecostal believers applied the Christocentric process without being aware that they basically followed the 16th Century reformer Martin Luther's view that Christ divinity is everywhere present. They implanted this approach on the four-fold Gospel where the divine Son of God Jesus Christ carries on his salvific work and is the saviour, the healer, the baptizer (the sanctifier) and the coming king.

At the same time, numerous Pentecostals attached themselves to evangelical movement so closely as to losing the notion that Scripture is simultaneously divine God and human Word in the way that the Spirit supernaturally revives its inspired text day by day. It was in the first half of the 20th Century when a large portion of Pentecostals while neglecting the Spirit → Word movement moved closer to the Christocentric approach, popularized the neo-orthodox and evangelical theologies of Barth, Brunner, Henry and others. The Reformed German theologian Jürgen Moltmann with the 'theology of hope' was later also linked to the Pentecostals. Even

Moltmann, however, stayed strongly in the Christ-centred mould with a strong trinitarian slant in spite of his fulfilment directed approach emphasis.

Karl Barth's mixture of Calvin and Luther's views of Christ dragged Pentecostals along in a strong Christocentric direction in the Lutheran tradition. Barth Lutheran side could have been captured with the traditional Latin formulation of *finitum capax infiniti*, meaning that that the finite can embrace the infinite. Regarding Christ it means that Christ's divinity permeated his humanity. Barth overemphasized the centrality of Christ in relation to the omniscient Trinity and thus undermined the other side of his Calvinist-Reformed notion of the *extra-Calvinisticum* in which Christ who is until eternity divine and human, is only been present through the Holy Spirit in human beings and the natural cosmic world. Barth Calvinist side could be captured with the phrase in Latin of *finitum non capax infiniti* which means that the finite cannot embrace the infinite. Regarding Christ it means that the Christ divinity and humanity do not mix and the one cannot permeate the other but they are into eternity very close together. "The heart of the extra-Calvinisticum is that Christ still has his resurrected humanity with him where he is presently been situated at the right-hand side of the Father" (Van Niekerk 1984:34,58-69).

In the 20th Century, the major contribution of Pentecostal experience revolves around the *simultaneity* of the *Word* → *Spirit* and the *Spirit* → *Word* trajectories. Van Niekerk states

The first trajectory is that of the Christ-directed movement from Word to Spirit (*Word* → *Spirit*) representing Jesus Christ, (yesterday and today and forever the same - Heb 13:8) as the *reconciling* saviour, healer, baptiser with the Holy Spirit and coming king through the enactment of the *renewal* work of the Holy Spirit. The second trajectory is that of the Spirit-directed movement from Spirit to Word (Spirit → Word) representing the Holy Spirit as the *renewing* saviour, healer, baptiser in the name of Jesus and enabling the coming of the future king through the enactment of the *reconciliation* work of Jesus Christ's cross and resurrection (Van Niekerk 2006:371-376).

The emphasis here in this section is on the reconciliation (Christ, Word) → renewal (Holy Spirit) movement. The renewal (Holy Spirit) → reconciliation (Christ, Word) movement simultaneously in action with the movement from Word → Spirit is described later in.

The more Pentecostal experience on the global scale moved away from the second important trajectory of the Spirit → Word experiential movement of the 1906-1913 period of Azusa Street with a unilateral emphasis on the Word → Spirit experiential movement, the more the trajectory

of Spirit → Word - part of actual events at Azusa Street, the historical happenings of the first decade of Azusa Street has been undermined. It is a paradox since the Spirit → Word trajectory would be considered as the uttermost Pentecostal emphasis if evaluated by an outsider observing the Pentecostal tradition. In this way, House, a Christocentric Pentecostal, in his Masters dissertation asserts:

While outside observers commonly assume that Pentecostalism is pneumacentric, in reality it is a strongly Christocentric tradition. The common symbol of faith of the classical Pentecostal movement, in all its variations, is the fourfold gospel: Jesus as saviour, healer, baptizer with the Holy Spirit, and coming king. This symbol is in fact a Christological statement that conveys the heart and mind of Pentecostal devotion, belief, and practice. The fourfold gospel succinctly but richly expresses the relationship between Christ and the believer and the all-encompassing work of salvation he performs in those who will receive it (House 2006:151).

In the view strongly advocated in this dissertation the fourfold gospel must be succinctly and richly reflectively embraced in the simultaneous two-way movement, expressing the dynamics between God's grand act of reconciliation in Jesus Christ and God's grand act of renewal through the Holy Spirit. The two-way movement can be observed in several aspects; not only as Jesus Christ ↔ Holy Spirit, but also as Word ↔ Spirit and Reconciliation ↔ Renewal. It points to the complexity of the simultaneous interconnectivity and difference between Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit both as executors of the fourfold gospel.

The trajectories in a dynamic two-way movement from Word to Spirit and from Spirit to Word are intertwined (Versteeg 1978:16). Versteeg in his dualistic pursuit of both the Spirit of Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ of the Holy Spirit observes the following:

“...that in the New Testament the relationship between Christ and the Spirit is not indicated with one line but with two lines. There is the line from the Spirit to Christ and the line from Christ to the Spirit. In the first line the Spirit is subject and Christ object, while in the second line – conversely – Christ is subject and the Spirit object. In the first line it seems – with the words of W. Kasper - that the Christology is nearly a function of pneumatology while in the second line – conversely – the pneumatology is nearly a function of the Christology. Both lines do not exclude each other or is not in opposition to each other. They find their unity in the ‘very concrete relations of the history of salvation’” (1978:17) (my translation).

We are living in the era of the Spirit and the Spirit-directed approach is desirable in the framework of God's grand acts. It takes into account both the Christ → Spirit and Spirit →

Christ lines as expressive part of God's work of reconciliation in Christ and his work of renewal through the Holy Spirit. Salvation comprises reconciliation and renewal. For the first, a Christ-directed process of Word → Spirit emphasizes Jesus Christ as omnisciently and actively present (yesterday and today and forever the same – Hebrews 13:8). He is viewed as the initiator of the fourfold gospel of being saviour, healer, baptizer with the Holy Spirit, and the coming king through the Spirit. (The 'divine Jesus and his name has always been a prominent concept for Pentecostal and evangelical worship and theology). Secondly, a Spirit-centric process of Spirit → Word emphasizes the Holy Spirit who is continuously operational in the framework of the fourfold gospel toward people's lives, practically applying the atoning work of Christ. The Spirit is also the healing actor employing the salvific energy of Jesus resurrection and the ongoing continuator of the Spirit baptism. Moreover, it is the Holy Spirit and his divine presence that forms the ambience in which we are awaiting the second coming of Christ.

In order to understand how a Pentecostal with an all-encompassing and embracing approach views the central ongoing role, work and actions of the Holy Spirit in the era of the Spirit in which we live, one has to continuously emphasize the Spirit as vitally placed in the centre of the ambience of God's grand acts of creation and ongoing creation, reconciliation as Jesus' life, his death, and his resurrection, renewal via the Holy Spirit of Pentecost and God's fulfilment and consummation of all things that precede the new heaven and the new earth. The all-encompassing scenario of God's grand acts is reflected on throughout the dissertation from a Spirit-inclusive ortho-experiential ambience of experience.

2.2.3 Renewal

2.2.3.1 The Holy Spirit as ongoing creator, reconciliator, renewer and fulfiller of God's acts

The Holy Spirit is the ongoing central renewing driving force of God's grand acts. Pentecost features vindication and affirmation of Creation, the life, cross and resurrection of Jesus and the fulfilment in the future. The resurrection of Jesus was affirmed through the Pentecost events when the Spirit appeared as the Spirit of Holiness and the driving force of the spiritual renewal. He navigates the sanctification processes in the world and constantly cooperates in its development. It is part of the dynamics of the cross, the torn veil and the resurrection of Jesus (Van Niekerk 2006:375). Van Niekerk proceeds:

The Holy Spirit embodies and participates, contributes and guides new pockets and packages, new contexts and localisations of at-one-ment and at-other-ment of God, being human and the physical-organic environment in the world. In this sense the Holy Spirit incorporates and embeds every atom and molecule in the physical-chemical world, every cell and organism in the biotic world, every emotion and feeling, every thought and belief, every love action, and every bit of justice in human experience. We do not know how and in what sense the Spirit of God incorporates and embeds thing after thing and being after being in the many universes. What we do know is that to have insight through a cosmic Spirit of the universes is far too meagre, lean and reductionist. Moreover, to pretend that we know through an omniscient human spirit in and amongst the many universes is been trapped in a similar meagre, lean and reductionist impasse. Finally, to been dragged into the quagmire of the modern notion of the domesticated Self-revelation of God in the human and the natural worlds, is to adorn oneself with holy certainty, obtained through theologistic speculation pretending to have insight into the self-acting side of God through the human and natural worlds. The closest and the furthest one can get to the Godness of God, the humanness of being human and the naturalness of nature is to experience and encounter God, oneself and nature through living one's life with the awareness of being in creaturely, reconciling, renewing and consummating mode (2006:375).

The Spirit endorsed the earthly activity of Jesus and while the biblical historical timeline always accounted for the Spirit and his irreplaceable role in sanctification, his mandate after Pentecost cannot be compared with anything else in the history of salvation. The Holy Spirit is both the major trinitarian agent in the work of renewal of people's lives and the natural cosmic environment and is the seal and guarantee of the eschatological consummation culminating in the last judgment and transformation of all things. It is desirable to compare the Spirit's work to the grand acts of God in creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment.

2.2.3.2 The Holy Spirit and the creation

In the historical biblical timeline as understood by the early church, the work of the Holy Spirit has always been inseparable from that of the other persons of Trinity. The third article of the Nicene Creed contains the phrase:

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets.

The role of life-giving is connected with what took place within the creation. Already in the Genesis account it can be seen that God created the universe and the Spirit of God was present there hovering over the face of the waters (Genesis 1:2). The Godness of *Elohim* signifies the

foreshadowing of the Trinity where the Spirit has a prominent place. Apart from the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit is a key figure in establishing the divine order in individual souls (God breathes his life in Genesis 2:7), human individuals and the natural cosmic environment. The arrival of sin and evil caused disruption to the pattern of the perfect creation but this could not change the fact that the rudiments of the cosmic establishment have always been permeated with the Spirit's ambience. Jesus Christ as the Messiah and reconciler was ultimately dependent on this pneumological concept.

2.2.3.3 The Holy Spirit and the resurrection of Jesus

Christ's resurrection served as a benchmark not only for the history of salvation, but also for the declaration of the Spirit as the agent of the Trinity who carries on the work of reconciliation and renewal. After Jesus' glorified humanity ascension into heaven, the human beings were pronounced God's sons and daughters, being brought closer to the relationship with God through Jesus as the human intertwining mediator. As Jesus became a heavenly figure, the salvific era properly introduced the operations of the Spirit echoing and applying the events of the cross and resurrection as instruments of renewal and God's intensified presence. The trajectories of the reconciling → renewing and Word → Spirit obtained a two-edged direction when God revived Jesus from the grave through the Spirit and declared his enhanced universal mandate after the Pentecost featuring the reconciling renewing movement of Spirit → Word.

Just as the Spirit was present at the creation of the old heaven and old earth, through the renewal rooted in Christ's reconciliation he brings the creation back to God culminating in the new heaven and the new earth. The Holy Spirit has become the genuine answer to the salvation calls of the people who began longing for renewal and a life with God, first through Christ's atonement but then also through the renewal of the Spirit. He is the tool renewing both human souls and the cosmic natural environment. Believers are called biblically the "temple" of the Holy Spirit, which means that they become co-workers of the Spirit in the renewing work on sanctification of the creation, bringing forth the message of Christ's atonement and resurrection.

2.2.3.4 The Holy Spirit as the perpetual sanctifying renewer

The Holy Spirit as the perpetual sanctifier is the renewer and executor of the cross and resurrection. This is to a great extent the heart of the notion of the perpetual experience of salvation of the fourfold gospel in Pentecostal groupings. The trajectory that we have discussed

previously as Christ → Spirit is here seen conversely as Spirit → Christ. In the latter sense the Holy Spirit is the renewer of everything and especially the ongoing and perpetual sanctifier of people through the fourfold gospel.

On the one hand, our description of Pentecostal ongoing and perpetual sanctification follows the line that the Spirit is the applicator of the power of the cross and the resurrection in saving, healing, baptizing and fulfilling – second coming – activities. The Spirit is not only the applicator and executor of the fourfold gospel, but is the opener and driver of God’s Kingdom through God’s grand acts. Conversely, we have earlier seen that the Christocentric approaches in Pentecostalism which work exclusively with the Christ → Spirit movement are not working with a full-gospel because the movement Spirit → Christ is totally underemphasized. In many instances there, is even a lacking of the overall embracing role of the Spirit in their approaches. House is exemplary in his unilateral Christ emphasis when he states concerning the whole of the Pentecostal movement regarding salvation:

the movement’s unifying symbol of faith is the “fourfold” (baptistic Pentecostalism) or “fivefold” (Methodistic) gospel of Jesus as saviour, (sanctifier), baptizer, healer, and coming king. The fourfold gospel is a form of functional Christology, confessing how Christ performs the work of salvation in the believer, and Christ is ever the central focus of the faith” (2011:99).

House is partially correct in terms of the Christ → Spirit trajectory but the lack of the Spirit → Christ trajectory in his reflection places him thoroughly in the fold of Luther and Calvin’s under emphasis of God’s grand act of renewal through the Spirit.

2.2.3.4.1 Views in history on perpetual salvific renewal and sanctification

2.2.3.4.1.1 Traditional views of renewal dynamics

Major Christians traditions approached the topic of sanctification differently based on the framework in which they understand the whole trajectory of salvific acts Father → Christ → Spirit and the doctrine of revelation in general. More details will be provided in Chapter 4. In the **Roman Catholic** tradition ongoing and perpetual sanctification means to be guided by way of the sacraments presented, provided and delivered by the ongoing holy mother church. In the **Lutheran** view, perpetual and ongoing sanctification meant the ongoing permeating spiritual presence of Christ in the believer continuously activating his cross and (secondarily) his

resurrection in the believer. Luther did not make a lot of the Holy Spirit because his consubstantial view of Christ's divinity permeating his humanity is the template for all Christ's workings in believers.

In **Calvin's** views ongoing perpetual sanctification was carried by the ongoing perpetual intercessory mediatorship of Christ as divine and human on the right hand of the Father in eternity until the day when Christ will deliver the Kingdom to the Father. Until the stage of the handing over of the Kingdom to the Father, Christ will be fully divine and human (**extra-calvinisticum**). According to Calvin, Christ in heaven is the perpetual mediator who gained dominion over heaven and earth and rules over everything. It is crucial to observe that Christ's mediatorship corresponds to the kingly priest. The concept of Christ's mediatorship in relation to his prophethood is de-emphasized in Calvin because this function is inscripturated in the Biblical Christ (Calvin 1961: 269).

The Calvinist tradition has long contested the dilemma of whether the nature of Christ's atonement is of limited or unlimited character. This problem is exacerbated by the question of determination, election and predestination in Calvin's views. The notion of limited atonement is not only important because of Calvin's failure to recognize the notion of universal atonement, but also because of the practicalities of uncertainty created in the lives of his followers in regard to their being on track in sanctification processes. In his book, *The Five Points of Calvinism*, Edwin Palmer contrasts the Arminian standpoint of "universal atonement" against that of Calvin's "limited atonement." (1980:41-42). The Arminians of the 17th Century propagated the view that Christ died for the whole world, which would also include e.g. Judas and Esau. This belief according to Palmer as a staunch Calvinist is problematic because it is a disjunction between what Christ did (he died for all human beings) and what Christ accomplished (not everyone is saved). Precisely at this point do we see the lack of any embracing of the Spirit in Calvin's and Palmer's reflective theologizing.

According to Calvin, there had to be an exchange between Christ and those who are saved. Jesus Christ had to become the Son of man in exchange for the believers being able to become sons and daughters of God. Calvin approaches the destruction of death and sin with the answer that Christ, through his human nature, effectuates the destruction of death and sin. That is how he appeased the Father's righteous 'anger' and indignation. As Kerr points out, Christ came

first and foremost to be the crucial mediator and a sacrifice to appease the Father on the behalf of those believers who are in the fold of grace (Kerr 1989:72f.).

For Calvin, Christ “ascended to heaven to fill everything”. The Kingdom that he spoke about during his earthly ministry was then truly inaugurated in connection with his ascension. Calvin understands Christ’s ascension as work for us rather than for himself and affords him the status of the priestly king.

Despite the strong emphasis he espoused on the Spirit in the immanence of Christ, Calvin lacks an ongoing renewal approach. In his *Institutes* of 1559 ([1989] 2001, 61), he points to the type of righteousness that is applicable to the individual believer. While he asserts that it revolves around a ‘a heavenly tribunal’, he simultaneously warns that we should not apply our inferior standards in measuring God’s perfect justice. The main question for Calvin, we should ask ourselves is, ‘How shall we answer the heavenly judge when He calls us to account?’ For Calvin this question is answered through an acceptance of a notion of a judge that comes from Scripture and is not created and catalysed by our own abilities ([1989] 2001, 62).

Calvin’s portrayal of God is usually that of a God of glory, immeasurable purity and holiness, who is brighter than the most immense light that we can imagine, outshining even the angels. Though such a God does not need to be appeased by merits and good works, it makes itself apparent in the history of the Calvinist approach that believers in whatever they did worked as hard as possible not to appease God and they obeyed the law out of so-called thankfulness for the grace of God. In practice, it created uncertainty as whether one is really elected or not. Though Calvin asserts that there does not exist anything that can commend us to God, not any single part of our being or merit can be accounted or credited toward God’s righteousness and his perfect righteousness is not to be applied by us to ourselves (Calvin [1989] 2001:62) Calvinists have the tendency for change in the world as a matter of the work of the Kingdom.

Early in the 16th Century Reformation, a pneuma-directed rectification and biblically meaningful addition to the main Christocentric trajectory which followed the Word → Spirit direction was received much more enthusiastically amongst Calvin’s followers rather than those of Luther. For adherents of Calvin and Zwingli the trajectory of Spirit → Word was particularly appealing, flavoured with the *extra-calvinisticum* and its notion that Christ’s divinity is not present directly through himself everywhere as the “same yesterday, today and tomorrow” as the Lutherans would put it. In Calvin and Zwingli’s view, Jesus Christ is present

through the Holy Spirit in the lives of people and the natural cosmic environment. Therefore, as Van Niekerk states, “the thrust of this notion reminds us that Christ was, is and will not be directly present everywhere thereby bypassing the Spirit of God as the one that makes Christ present” (Van Niekerk 1984:34, 2006/7:224). Mentioning the *extra-calvinisticum* was an important point for Calvin and Zwingli that “Christ after his ascension, still had his resurrected humanity, thus his full humanness with him” (Weber 1962:153; see also Van Niekerk 2006/7:224). In the sense of omniscience, Christ has been present through the actions of the Holy Spirit who carries on God’s major reconciliatory actions of the atoning cross and the glorious resurrection of Jesus. The Spirit is God’s saving instrument in this world, in churches and lives of individuals.

The trajectory of the emphasis on the Holy Spirit as the renewing Spirit of Pentecost so strongly emphasized by Calvin in his Institutes around the symbols of bread and wine in the ‘holy communion’ is underemphasized in many of his works as concerns the ongoing sanctification of the believer. Perhaps this is one of the more important reasons why amongst 18th Century Puritans, uncertainty about their salvation had been translated into ongoing hard work in daily life. Many works had been written on the uncertainty amongst Puritans in Britain and the USA in the 17th and 18th centuries concerning their assurance of being saved and on the road to God’s eternal fulfilment.

In the discussions of the **Protestant orthodoxy of the 17th Century**, evolved the term **ordo salutis** in which *justification* was followed by *sanctification*. “The order of salvation” also gave birth to the debates between the Reformed and Arminian theological systems. The Reformed tradition emphasized election, followed by accepting the gospel, regeneration, conversion, justification, sanctification, and glorification. The Arminian followers included the concept of faith more actively, followed by repentance, regeneration, justification, perseverance, and glorification.

Wholly rooted in Arminian thinking, John Wesley’s view of ongoing and perpetual sanctification in a person was borne by a mixture of Luther’s con-substantial and Calvin’s inter-substantial views of Christ. Wesleyan experiences in the later part of the 19th Century and the beginning of the 20th Century are important for the emergence of Pentecostalism. Especially the Holiness movement experiences around the notion of ongoing perpetual sanctification are crucial to his theological concept. As described in Chapter 4, the Wesleyan emphasis on a

foursquare approach of Scripture, experience, reason and tradition had an influence of the fourfold gospel of Pentecostals that are obviously different.

2.2.3.4.1.2 Excursus: Ellen G White's ongoing eternal tabernacle

In passing, it may be interesting just to mention Ellen G White of the SDA tradition whose views emerged in the same era of the second half of the 19th Century alongside Pentecostal views and which is similar to Calvin's views – albeit with considerable changes. Calvin's view of Jesus Christ as the kingly priest perpetually mediating and interceding for us on the right hand of the Father is replaced by White with an eternal tabernacle in which Christ as the priestly prophet is mediating and interceding for us.

Insofar as renewal is concerned, White believed in a profound transformation of the individual where God's divine and holy law is accomplished via Christ by the empowerment of the Spirit if he is trusted and believed in (White [1888] 1990a:478). Hence the basis for her 'tabernacle' ministry dwells in the Spirit who carries on the world activities of the kingly priest Christ and urges believers to comply with God's law. White's view of tabernacle is defined as follows:

...the tabernacle built by Moses as a pattern of heavenly things; and secondly, to the true tabernacle in heaven, to which the typical service ended. The true tabernacle in heaven is the sanctuary of the new covenant (White [1888] 1990a:417).

“Sanctuary” echoes the notion of sacredness, holiness, sanctification and renewal. It is an imminent part of the atonement to “cleanse” the sanctuary. While Calvin understood the concept rather in earthly terms, White goes further in claiming that both the earthly and the heavenly sanctuary must be cleansed. The heavenly one is more precious because it was Christ's blood that paid for the sins and superseded the animal blood of the earthly tabernacle. The supremacy of the New Covenant over the Old Covenant is expressed thus by White:

By this brightness God designed to impress upon Israel the sacred, exalted character of His law, and the glory of the gospel revealed through Christ. While Moses was in the mount, God presented to him, not only the tables of the law, but also the plan of salvation. He saw that the sacrifice of Christ was pre-figured by all the types and symbols of the Jewish age; and it was the heavenly light streaming from Calvary, no less than the glory of the law of God, that shed such a radiance upon the face of Moses. That divine illumination symbolized the glory of the dispensation of which Moses was the visible mediator, a representative of the one true Intercessor (White [1890] 1958a:330).

In this regard, White's approach is reminiscent of that of Pentecostals or the Holiness movement as regards the need for personal reflection on the atonement that Christ achieved on the cross. There is no life in Christ without living according to the law of God and inner purification. While the Christological themes remained dominant, the pneumological element hidden in the need for renewal becomes more intense in this period of history.

2.2.3.4.1.3 The modern views of sanctification and renewal

For the Pentecostal theological approach of *ortho-experientiality*, it is necessary to emphasize the a-trinitarian role of the Spirit permeating the grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment. It was mentioned previously that even solid Pentecostal analysis can fall into a unilaterally viewed overemphasized Christology. In the words of S.J. Land, "The waiting for Christ became waiting in Christ for his return" (Land 2010:31). A good ortho-experiential reformulation would be that it is an equally, if not more, important factor that the waiting for Christ becomes waiting in the Spirit for Christ's return.

Similarly, Land lists five motifs pertaining to the 'full gospel' where the Spirit should have the primary role by the filling of the saints:

1. Justification by faith in Christ.
2. Sanctification by faith as a second definite work of grace.
3. Healing of the body as provided for all in the atonement.
4. The premillennial return of Christ.
5. The baptism in the Holy Spirit evidenced by speaking in tongues.

(Land 2010:36)

The fifth point of the 'baptism' or 'filling' needs to be echoed across the remaining four motifs in order to maintain both the trajectories Christ→ Spirit and Spirit→ Christ. Land finds a connection between Baptism in the Spirit and sanctification:

Sanctification makes us holy, but the baptism with the Holy Spirit empowers us for service after we are sanctified, and seals us unto the day of redemption. Sanctification destroys the body of sin, the old man Adam... when a man has been saved from actual sins, then he consecrates himself to God to be sanctified, and so his body of sin is destroyed or crucified ... (Land 2010:169).

According to Land, sanctification has an inner value. He compares it to reconciliation themes. While justification means the manifestation of a radical separation from the world, sanctification is its practical expression in the sense that it concerns the concrete denial of the flesh and its carnal desires. “Entire sanctification, the complete inner cleansing, would be evidenced in an abiding joy, thanksgiving, and prayerfulness” (Land 2010:166).

Along the same lines S.D. House describes the necessity of the perpetual sanctifying process in a reborn believer’s life. He bases his analysis on the Methodistic holiness traditional thinking that avers there comes a second subsequent spiritual experience after regeneration. Similarly to Land, he views sanctification as vividly crucial to Pentecostalism and its different forms, observing that salvation can never be separated from personal holiness (House 2012:188). He discerns between a Methodistic Pentecostalism focusing on entire sanctification as a subsequent experience to salvation and a baptistic Pentecostalism that connects the second experience with the empowerment of the Spirit baptism.

But the Pentecostal theology is not without difficulties as it usually operates within the framework of penal substitutional theory and it may conflict with the mainstream Protestantism that developed the theory. It would perhaps reckon with the involvement of a more autonomic concept of the Spirit’s role in the atonement, but returns to the unilateral posit of traditional protestant theology, that avers that:

the reformation doctrine of radical depravity, which requires that salvation be accomplished wholly by God external to anything within the human person, is not matched by a correspondingly radical doctrine of salvation that expects, even demands, a real and tangible change within the individuals God graciously calls and accepts (House 2012:189).

Reconciliation and renewal should not be considered as two separate entities within the grand acts of God when the first has to do with Christ while the second with the Spirit but in both it is desirable to find the mutual connection Christ→ Spirit and Spirit→ Christ. The subjective (responsive) elements of atonement are as equally important as its objective (legal) counterparts. But in their one-sided views they are considered subordinate or even optional. As House points out,

The mission of God in Christ is not the satisfaction of an inner, legal requirement of God but the reconciliation of the world to himself. This redemption involves a

nullification and reversal of the effects of humanity's fall, not just the extinguishing of human guilt; not just limited to the cross, it begins with the incarnation and is actualized through Christ's death and exaltation. As a doctrine of the work of Christ, *Christus victor* thus unifies all the salvific moments of his life and unites them with his person; it similarly requires that salvation be also apprehended as all-encompassing—and that both experientially as well as theologically (House 2012:190).

The renewal process is a progressive component of reconciliation. House admits that the holiness movement went too far in claiming an immediate sanctification after obtaining the status of legal justification. Instead, sanctification is a process of growth and purification and can even include crises or inner struggles. He resembles it to the Eastern orthodox concept of *theosis*. It is a “gradual Christification, the steady replication of the life of Christ, by the working of the Holy Spirit, in the believer” (House 2012:195). The Spirit has his irreplaceable role in the concept of renewal, just as in the other grand acts of creation, reconciliation, and consummation. The Pentecostal mindset understands it as a continuous process culminating in the eschatological fulfilment.

2.2.3.4.2 The Holy Spirit's all-encompassing, embracing and ongoing perpetual sanctifying renewal

In an all-encompassing and embracing Pentecostal approach, the Holy Spirit is at work in an ongoing and perpetual sense as sanctifier through the divine operations of the fourfold/fivefold gospel creating a framework within which Pentecostalism operates. The ongoing and perpetual sanctifying power of the Spirit works against the background of the fourfold gospel as Spirit-directed in addition to Christ-directed.

2.2.3.4.2.1 The Spirit was present with Jesus at the cross and raised Jesus from death – in this sense the Spirit is the ongoing activator of salvation

Entering God's dimension, the corporeality of the resurrection and ascension means that Jesus Christ is simultaneously connected and differentiated in the world in the new era penetrating our everyday lives in the scheme ‘to the close of the age’ (Matthew 28:20).

In this study, the notion of the Kingdom of God meanders and swerves, inter alia, in the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus Christ as part of the embodiment of the encountering, communion and communication of God with human agents and the natural cosmic

environment in and through God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment. In particular, humans with the elevated status of sons and daughters of God are reminiscent of Jesus as the precursor of the human nature of these relationships. After the cross, the earthly person Jesus and the eschatological world fulfiller of the new heaven and the new earth merged into one, being resurrected by the Spirit who through the Pentecost events became the agent of the cross and the resurrection in the world. The divine mission had not stopped with Jesus' trial and death on the cross, the new spiritual movement Spirit → Word was authenticated and inaugurated by the Holy Spirit, the main actor of the Kingdom of God in the present age.

2.2.3.4.2.2 The Spirit as renewing healer embraces the materiality of our creatureliness couched in the resurrective power of Christ underscoring genuine healing

The Holy Spirit embodies and guides new movements of at-one-ment and at-other-ment of God and us, being part of the human collective and the natural cosmic environment. That concerns every atom in the chemical world, every cell in the biological world, every thought, emotion and belief in the religious-psychological world of human experience. We do not exactly understand how this happens, but the closest observation can be made by encountering and experiencing God and his Godness, oneself, other human beings, in an awareness every day in being steered, embraced, renewed and fulfilled by the creating, reconciling, renewing and fulfilling Spirit of God (Van Niekerk 2006:375).

The Spirit's work provides the context of everyday experience with an undergirding dynamic. The Spirit places in an entirely new light the origin of life and the presence of God in every piece of creation, through the final endorsement of Jesus' earthly activity, his raising of Jesus from the dead and through his ultimate claim to authority culminating in the second coming of Christ. Through the Holy Spirit, God enfolds both the events of the earthly activities in the past (the cross and resurrection of Jesus) and the future happenings resulting in the transformation of everything in the new age.

2.2.3.4.2.3 The Spirit as ongoing baptizer is thereby the sanctifier

In terms of renewal and holiness, the distinction between justification and sanctification has not been in balance by many Pentecostals who have had a tendency to 'overemphasize' the justification of Christ on the cross and apply sanctification in their lives on a more legalistic

basis. Thus, a tension is created within oneself being declared legally perfect but struggling with actual perfection in his or her life, and this also brings about an uncertainty with regard to the baptism of the Spirit when, how and at what stage it should happen and should the only tool to be used be extreme striving for purity and perfection.

In this dissertation, the continuous mystery of God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and future fulfilment has been emphasized, stressing the simultaneity of the two movements, the reconciliation and renewal. It features Jesus the Baptizer through and with the Spirit, and the Holy Spirit in his continuing renewal-directed 'in-filling' and 'filling-in' baptizing work in the name of Jesus Christ, hung on the cross and resurrected from the dead.

Van Niekerk elaborates on the concepts 'purity' and 'perfection' in the sense of their contribution to people's lives. It has not always had positive results:

On the one, hand the age-old emphasis on doctrinal, religious and spiritual purity and perfection, holiness and sanctification in faith and spiritual affairs as well as modern critical and rational pureness and perfection in philosophies and sciences, religions and churches, families and cultures, clubs and universities has contributed greatly to many people's lives, cultures and societies. On the other hand, however, the ideal of purity and perfection has bullied and disempowered more people than anything else I am aware of in modern history because people who were not adhering to, complying with and obeying the standardised rules, doctrines, dogmas, spiritual gurus' enlightenment and holy ancestors as prototypes of purity and perfection could not or were not allowed to work out the plans for their lives and to strive for the excellence they were capable of in terms of the irreplaceable uniqueness of their lives (2010:46-48).

The traditional concept of personal holiness prescribed by role models inadvertently linked to premature purity, caused a paradox of both depravity and depression in not achieving the perfect state of the holiness ideal. The Baptism of the Spirit by the initiating actor Jesus Christ in many Pentecostal circles created a one-sided scheme that it is a once-and-for-all event, as if the entire sanctification work of the Spirit has been enforced and funnelled through the act of the Baptism.

Another aspect of the one-sidedness is found within the doctrine of Law and Gospel. A theology of glory is emphasized non-proportionally in comparison with a theology of the cross. In the 'already-but-not-yet' Kingdom of God, there is justification and salvation but complemented with the process of sanctification and suffering. A straightforward faith can lead

to a belief of an ultimate fulfilment, which has not been accomplished yet, and the mindset can experience disillusionment, disappointment and discouragement as the physical non-regenerated elements are still present both in the form of 'old' human bodies and the natural cosmic world. The denial of the cross and the pursuit for perfection here and now can turn into legalism because it does not correspond with the reality of how the work of spiritual renewal operates progressively rather than instantly. Moreover, the teaching of premature perfection can push Pentecostals into demonic formulations that disregard the material world dimensions. A balanced view could be found in acknowledgement of the permeation of the 'already-but-not-yet' dimensions, working with all-round experience and not simply a 'faith confession' experience, embracing sanctification as a progressive process led by the Holy Spirit, culminated and being perfected in the new heaven and the new earth.

2.2.3.4.2.4 Waiting in the Spirit and not in Christ for the coming of Christ in the era of the Spirit

The overstatement of Pentecostal perspectives by viewing every happening and event in our world in the light of Jesus, God's Son who initiates his own *parousia* is more part of Pentecostal experience than what is generally acknowledged. In this type of eschatology and premature fulfilment process, Christ is working out and actualizing his own second coming thereby providing a temporary comfort zone for Christians of their being already taken up in Christ where they can find shelter until the coming King Jesus returns to take them with him to the heavenly places (Clark et al 1989:148-149).

Jesus is often portrayed as sitting at the right hand of the Father and being the ruler of the whole world. In a strong Christocentric position, this Lordship of Christ symbolizes the future Messianic rule that is already an existing reality in heaven (Pannenberg 1988:125-126). It corresponds generally to the Jewish view of the eschatological happenings by prophets such as Isaiah or Ezekiel that God's eternal authority and rule will be manifested on earth at the end.

The major problem linked to this notion of the Lordship of Jesus Christ lasting from creation to this eschatological end time is two-fold. Firstly, why is the dimension of Jesus Christ as being 'the King' overshadowing the other two offices of 'the Priest' and 'the Prophet' of God? Secondly, why is the Spirit as the main actor of the sanctifying renewal-holiness processes replaced with Christ the Lord as the major driving force of these processes in the Spirit's own era? This issue of the Spirit with his all-embracing renewal-holiness work in human beings and

the natural cosmic environment needs to be repeatedly emphasized at all Christocentric theologies in the world of Evangelicals, Pentecostals, and Charismatics.

The notion of an omniscient Christ and the centrality of his ruling position is captivating for numerous Pentecostals even today. Furthermore, a Christocentric reading of God's future completion and fulfilment as a futuristic eschatological experience in the classical sense, tosses the Spirit out of his own era that began on the Day of Pentecost.

S. J. Land points out that

Eschatological salvation as participation in the divine life of historical mission requires affective transformation. Salvation is not fundamentally an accomplished event, though it is grounded in what God has done for us. But the 'for us' is grounded in the 'in Himself', the *pro nobis* and the *in se*. Because God has a trinitarian eschatological presence in history, and because humans are made for love and fellowship with God and each other, what God has accomplished for us in Christ he accomplishes in us through Christ in the Spirit. Salvation is a passion for the God, who is at work in all things moving history toward the consummation (Land 2010:376-377).

In this ongoing passion and striving for properly living out our salvation, the Spirit has an irreplaceable role. Christ is not present everywhere as the 'same yesterday, today and tomorrow' in the Lutheran sense, but is present through the Holy Spirit within human beings and the physical natural environment. The Spirit applies the atonement of Jesus Christ, including the cross and the resurrection, and makes real the saving instruments of God in this present and ongoing world. The theological emphasis should shift from the Christocentric expectation on Christ's second coming to a Spirit-governed vocabulary of Spirit-filled waiting and hoping for Christ's return. The Spirit is the traction force that draws us into the future fulfilment of the end.

2.2.4 Fulfilment and consummation

2.2.4.1 Fulfilment and the grand acts of God

The grand acts of creation, reconciliation and renewal belong to the present (old) heaven and earth while the fulfilment and consummation stage is linked to the new heaven and earth where the reconciliation takes on its complete form.

In regard to fulfilment and reconciliation, Mascall (in Hooke 1976: 117) quotes a Russian writer and theologian Bulgakov to illustrate this point, “The glorified state inherent in the body of the risen Christ, will be communicated to the whole of creation, a new heaven and a new earth will appear, a transfigured earth, resurrected with Christ and His humanity”. Mascall comments, “Thus the resurrection of the body is not only the resurrection of the mystical body, it is also the resurrection of the world” (op. cit, p.148). That is the hope held by all believers, of their being transformed and having this overwhelming desire for oneness in Christ wrought by the power of the Holy Spirit, and its being available to all who will believe.

The grand acts of God culminate in the fulfilment of all things. It is the vivid manifestation of reconciliation in the plan of God extending from Creation after the fall into sin, through atonement and partial fulfilment of the “already-but-not-yet” renewal of the Kingdom in the lives of human beings and the cosmic-natural environment. Christ the Victor on the cross delivered the people held in slavery and the bondage of sin (Hebrews 2:14-15). While the cross can be linked to the reconciliation, the renewal stands out as the central motif of the restoration of all things and is connected to the Resurrection. It is no accident that the church decided upon Sunday as the Day of the Lord since his resurrection symbolizes the beginning of the Renewal and the symbol of the mankind’s ultimate hope. Jesus Christ comforts his followers in that because he lives, they will also live (John 14:19). Paul speaks about sowing the mortal body and reaping the immortal (heavenly, celestial) body (1 Corinthians 15:37). The theme of Christ’s Second Coming that is part of the fulfilment concept is mentioned more than 300 times in the New Testament. It is the ultimate goal that forms the hope and provides the joy to endure the objective (hostile world) and the subjective (Spirit-cleansing) challenges facing us during the renewal.

The current concept of ‘heaven’ is subject to interpretation. It stands for a sphere or environment marking the newness of the coming age. It is mythologically connected with something above the earth to which Jesus was taken after his resurrection and where the saints will join him at the end of time. It is a sphere where sin and evil no longer have space and people will live closely with the holy God. It is the consummation of the dramatic salvation history, an eternal age of peace and harmony.

In terms of going to heaven, many evangelicals and Pentecostals aver there is the precondition that one must be reborn to enter heaven. People need to be saved to have an eternal life with a holy God. It seems that in order to fully appreciate Christ’s reconciliation, one needs to be part

of the attendant renewal process led by the Spirit to its successful culmination in entering the heavenly gates where there is no sin or impurity. Just as by free will evil entered the world, by the same free will an individual must decide to pursue the sanctifying renewal process. It is expressed in personal faith and trust in God who legally made possible salvation through Christ and which is consented to by us as worth following whether or not we actually achieve that holy perfection here on earth. This is a logical conclusion based on the facts of the biblical historical timeline.

2.2.4.2 Fulfilment as God's completed work

There can be no perpetual sanctification if we do not choose it; which in turn would interrupt the line of the next grand act of God culminating in entering heaven. The chronological account of the final events is unclear and theologians usually submit themselves not to cross the line between reality and speculation. Somehow the fulfilment is the end of the time era as we know it or it would become an ongoing, infinite multiverse running into billions of years.

The current process of consummation is subject to interpretation since it is naturally more convenient to describe the things that happened in the past or are happening in the present rather than those that will happen in the future. In the biblical-historical timeline, it is the Book of Revelation that gives us the most concrete data, but not without the problems of mystical symbols and images. At least four different interpretations of Revelation evolved in the course of history. The most abstract approach may be observed in the *idealist* interpretation that illustrates spiritual principles via concrete events and the struggle between good and evil applicable to an all-encompassing human experience throughout history.

The *futurist* interpretation may be considered as the most literal within the framework of limited understanding and predicts events that will accompany the end of the physical world. Revelation, chapters 1-3 are generally seen as referring to the events of the author's own time (1st Century AD), and the rest of the book deals with the last things. Contemporary history is analysed using other biblical passages or prophecies to find the clues and proofs that the end is imminent or already beginning to take place. This view was popular in the early church and was revived with the rise of the Adventist and dispensationalist movements of the 19th Century. This view with some modifications was by no means hostile to the current Pentecostal movement.

The *historicist* interpretation considers the Revelation events as different stages of human world history in the past, present and possibly including even of future generations. The mystical symbols can be attributed to historical figures and happenings. The perspective arose in the Middle Ages, and was adopted by most of the Reformers of the 16th Century, including Martin Luther who, for instance, popularized the idea that the “beast” of the Revelation was the Roman Catholic Pope himself.

The *preterist* view reduces the events in the Revelation to the 1st Century church and its struggles. The symbols of the Book were drawn from ancient texts and their contemporary culture to give hope and encouragement to the believers in the troubled times during world persecutions. Thus, the “beast” would usually be linked to the Roman Empire or its emperor. The interpretation symbolically projects the first 1st Century experience into the future. It gained prominence in the 17th and 18th centuries when science came to possess more knowledge of the history of the early church and other apocalyptic writings from the ancient period.

One may pose the question as to whether there is really an end to everything or whether one should operate within the type of ‘preterist’ view especially espoused amongst Reformist theologians such as Moltmann that the end, the future, the fulfilment is the fuller and more complete establishment of the Kingdom of God. The possibilities are many and the issue is inconclusive. The ongoing process to infinite multiversums may still be couched in the renewal mode but, on the other hand, the view of Revelation 21:24-26 referring to the splendour of the kings and the glory and honour of the nations as being brought into the new heaven and new earth points to continuity, but also total discontinuity between the old and the new.

The Spirit is the pulling force that draws us into the future fulfilment of the end. What is the new heaven and the new earth? Along with the symbols and images of the Book of Revelation, there is no clear concept of the fulfilment ambience. The new heaven and the new earth will become a reality after the melting of all things by fire and which will either be destroyed or purified (2 Peter 3:10-12). It corresponds to a new creation when the circle of God’s grand acts will be concluded. The new earth will abide forever, cleansed of sin and impurities. The spiritual renewal will be completed and crowned together with the physical renewal of the bodies and cosmic-natural environment. The “already-but-not-yet” Kingdom will forever remain as “already”. There is no temple as God Himself will dwell among His creation and His

people, the Church and Bride (Revelation 21:9). It is an ultimate state of happiness where there is no place for pain and tears and the Church as co-heirs with Jesus has heaven in its entirety as its inheritance (Romans 8:16-17).

2.2.5 The presence of the Spirit and our experiential involvement

In the sense-making approach as followed in this dissertation, the Holy Spirit acts as a vitalising agent, who is making His Presence continuously felt in our lives. The Spirit opens our eyes to understand, gives us an inner wisdom, and leads us into fellowship with God, with ourselves, with our fellow human beings and with the natural cosmic environment. John Calvin emphasised the Spirit as the presence-maker of Christ in the Lord's Supper:

And there is no need of this for us to enjoy a participation in it (bread and wine – PH), since the Lord bestows this benefit upon us through his Spirit so that we may be made one in body, spirit, and soul with him. The bond of this connection is therefore the Spirit of Christ, with whom we are joined in unity, and is like a channel through which all that Christ himself is and has, is conveyed to us” (Calvin, J [1559] 1960b:1373).

Furthermore, the term ‘spiritual presence’ is made significant in the concept of Christ's presence through the Spirit. Whenever the Spirit of God causes an encounter with us, Christ is experientially present as well (Clark & Lederle 1989:58-59). Importantly, it is the believers who have heard the call of God through the Spirit, obtained forgiveness in Christ's name and a new, heavenly citizenship. These are those who become the temple for the Holy Spirit (Horton 1991:6-10; Williams 1972:47).

The status of believers in the proper sense is that they are ‘born of the Spirit’. The old life resulting in death (i.e. estrangement from physical realities and especially from God) has been exchanged for a new life through Christ's own death on the cross and His resurrection. This new life was publicly inaugurated on the Day of Pentecost, introducing the era of the Spirit taking a decisive role in both the renewal process (people's salvation) and the empowerment for Christian ministry. The intra-divine, intra-human and intra-natural ambience of the Spirit plays a crucial role within the grand acts of God's creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment of all things, and the entire human existence depends on it

The all-embracing work of the Spirit points strongly to *creatio continua* – through Word and Spirit and Spirit and Word, which the multidimensional (Triune) one God creates, redeems, renews and guides to fulfilment. The Holy Spirit is experienced in believing, thinking, verbalising, justifying and loving in the enhancement of the believing, thinking, justifying and loving experiences in a quadruple sense by continuously experiencing the presences of God, one's conscious self, other human beings and the surrounding natural world. All our fields of experience are taken up in an all-encompassing sense in the experience of what God has done in the cross and resurrection of Christ Jesus as wonderfully applied and employed by the Spirit of God. By way of implication, when a person has heard the gospel while appropriating it via any level of experience (such as believing, thinking, imagining, justifying and loving) – the Word of the crucified and resurrected Lord, through the Spirit, brings a conviction of sin, guilt and repentance from evil, and this produces repentance. The Spirit then indwells the inner being and guides the sanctification process as both an inward and an outward actuality. In this sense Paul writes

“...we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who possess the Spirit.” (1 Corinthians 2:13)

As the following chapters demonstrate, one can assert that there is a near impossibility of constructing doctrines of God's concrete acts while we are partaking of them through our experience in them. For this reason, we do not want to place a focus in the direction of speculative theology extending beyond the biblical-historical timeline within which the grand acts of God are attested to in the Judeo-Christian Scripture.

This section closes with the foundational assumption that we began with above, which is that while in our daily experience and activities, we are part of God's grand acts it is just impossible to treat one of God's dynamic actions in which we are involved as a totally separate entity as did the speculative doctrinal themes or dogmas that might have emerged from people's experience centuries ago. Our ongoing dynamic experience with the embracing presence of the Spirit of God as the driver and continuator of the Kingdom of God could be described in dynamic ortho-experiential patterns. The Holy Spirit has the central revelatory role in the disclosure and communication of the four grand acts of God via the Bible and via our experience of the grand acts of God in our daily lives.

CHAPTER 3

Experiential versus Speculative Theology

3.1 Experience and Speculation

3.1.1 Experiential faith patterning versus speculative theology

The early Pentecostal emphasis on the all-embracing work of the Spirit is to a large degree a precursor of a real unlocking of a biblical historical reflective way of theological discourse.

The question as to whether theology is biblical is usually put forward by people who, through their experience, are objecting to speculative theology in which talk about God is based on reflective activities about His actions outside the biblical historical timeline. In the history of the church and theology, these formal abstract notions about God's actions outside the biblical historical timeline have ended up in a doctrinal corner with very little practical applicability for people in their everyday experience. In such a sense the question as to whether theology is biblical becomes problematic.

The follow-up question as to whether we can understand God with theology is just as problematic as the first because God is only to be 'understood' within the ambit of the four presences; namely that of the Spirit of God, that of my consciousness, that of other people and that of the natural physical environment.

Furthermore, a more appropriate follow-up question is whether we, in all our daily experiences in the presence of the Spirit of God, are constantly aware of our having been created, aware of our ongoing proneness to sin, aware of our having been reconciled in Christ, aware of our being under the process of renewal through the Spirit and aware of our being on our way toward God's fulfilment and consummation of all things. The follow-up question then becomes whether we are aware that what we experience in our fivesome awareness is dynamically enfolded and moulded in what the Bible attests about God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment.

3.1.2 Theology and Faith Studies

Theology revolves around God with the statement: *I (we) believe in God* as an underlying basis. Faith Studies revolve around God, the unique conscious human self, humanity as a whole and the natural cosmic environment with the statement: *I believe God and I believe myself and I believe in my neighbours and I believe the natural cosmic environment* as an underlying basis.

The relationship between faith and science has been puzzling people for many generations. During the last centuries and decades, science has tended to exclude everything that cannot be rationally understood, including Christian experiential faith. This is worthy of note if we claim that the approach of this thesis is orthoexperiential. In this regard, it has been encouraging that while the modernist mindset was ready to eliminate faith once and for all, it basically failed as our preceding postmodernism heralded experientiality in again. In 1966, Time magazine published an article entitled “Is God Dead?”. With the rise of postmodernism in 1980, the same Time magazine published a new article entitled “Modernizing the Case for God” (Craig in *The Resurrection of Theism*).

Modernism in the form of ‘rational’ ideologies, such as atheism, lays claim to the thought that it has a monopoly on truth and refuses the rationality of other positions, including religious systems. Modern culture and civilization have drifted away from anything that would question a random creation of the universe and physical laws. Since western civilization has evolved in this material environment, it has become the predominant presupposition because, in the final analysis, the arguments and discussions concern presuppositions rather than facts. The conviction stated here is that if one is a free thinker, freed from the environmental bondage of cultural ideas and beliefs, he or she can be drawn to either atheism or the Christian faith on an equal basis. Perhaps Christians have been unnecessarily too defensive while trying to prove the existence of God instead of demanding that atheists provide evidence for their atheism. As Dante Alighieri, in his *Divine Comedy*, once said: reason has ‘short wings’ (Alighieri [2003]: 9).

Different positions need to be respected and given space in society, including approaches to theology and knowledge of God and the Spirit. The principle ‘Your freedom ends where my freedom begins’ should be applied even to liberal theology that with insufficient evidence largely disregards the biblical historical timeline and spiritual experientiality, making effort to

stand out as the only valid ‘scientific’ approach. However, Immanuel Kant as well as the “father” of modern atheism David Hume were deeply sceptical about the capacity of reason to solve metaphysical problems (Wiley 2012:27ff.). True human wisdom knows its limitations, and alternative positions should also be respected.

The 20th Century philosophers Alvin Plantinga and Richard Swinburne acknowledged the rationality of faith within the context that faith in God is perfectly rational until someone can ultimately exclude it as an option. If we cannot prove the existence of God, we cannot prove the existence of ‘other minds’ either (Craig in *The Resurrection of Theism*). The atheistic start-and-end-point is many times inferior to the actual rational method leading to such a conclusion. Considering the complexity of the design of the natural cosmic environment or the human DNA, many universal questions remain unanswered, and somewhat ironically one might ask: Who has great faith, actually – atheist or Christian? since atheistic scholars offer very little evidence for their theory of a non-designed creation and the transition between non-living stones and living organisms.

Some recent atheists such as Christopher Hitchens, in line with 18th Century rationalism, went so far as to attack the whole substance of religion – as if certain naïve human beings invented God who should be blamed for all the evil in the world. They use examples of a bloodthirsty God of the Old Testament, an oppressive inquisition of the mediaeval church or acts of Islamic fundamentalists. However, these observations are based on experiences that are believed rather than rationally explained. Cavanaugh states that there is no proof that ‘empty’ religion causes violence. If God is a delusion, then He cannot be held responsible for human acts (Cavanaugh 2009:17ff.). Only humanity alone can be responsible for a made-up God and the consequences that follow.

Faith transcends reason rather than contradicts it. The atheists may blame God for all the evil in society to divert attention from their own responsibility. In this context, it is important to note that the two bloodiest conflicts in history (World War I and II) occurred under the rule of cultural modernism and reason. Another example is Karl Marx who became well known for resembling religion to the ‘opium of the people’, but his materialistic socialist thoughts gave rise to a political system that paradoxically turned out to be very harmful and disastrous. This paradox can happen only if the ultimate reliable source of authority (reason) cannot be verified. It comes as no surprise that postmodernity is not a symptom of irrationality, but rather a protest

against the existential inadequacy of rationalism and its authoritarianism. Reason has the capacity to imprison and entrap just as does an imperial religious fellowship.

For our ortho-experiential approach is vital so that not even reason can be used to establish its own authority and competence. Mathematician Kurt Gödel posed the question of how a person operating within a certain system of belief can get outside the system to determine whether it is rational or not (Rosario 2007). Our beliefs transcend our rationality. If the system becomes infected by sin and evil causing God to become hidden, it is impossible to eliminate the infection within the system by mere rational thinking (see Wang 1997:316). The experiential kind of Christianity may not conform to the dogmatic notions of rationality on the part of liberal theologians, but there are still plenty of rational options, including the experiential belief in God and legitimate faith studies.

3.2 The Notion of God as a Trinity

What is being looked at in this section, is firstly whether there is any alignment between the doctrine of the Trinity and the grand acts of God within the biblical historical timeline. This challenge has been there from the first days when the notion of the **unus est tres** formulation took shape in the first millennium. The Trinity is a first millennium construct emerging from within the main sense-making approach of those days when everything from God to human beings were described as having three co-entities. According to the great Karl Barth and others, the notion of the Trinity is not biblical, but because it is a good doctrine it could function at the heart of one's church theology. That is precisely what Barth did, but what happened in the developing of his *Church Dogmatics (Kirchliche Dogmatik)* is a totally one-sided concentration on Christ who functions as the operational spearhead of both Barth's view of the Trinity and his views on the doctrines of creation, reconciliation and renewal that followed the biblical historical timeline in the footsteps of Calvin, his Reformed predecessor.

The problem of the practical applicability of the Trinity in people's daily experience is determinately caused by the second millennium's binary or twofold approach to the Trinity. The Trinity worked immensely well in the first millennium in people's lives where it emerged. However, it was riddled with problems from the start. The principal example of this is to be found in the schism between the Eastern Orthodox and the Western churches which revolved mainly around the doctrine of the Trinity.

The main problem besetting the concept of the Trinity in the second millennium was the alignment of the Trinity, in particular the perspective of the so-called 'ontological Trinity' more so than the 'economical Trinity' with God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment enacted in the biblical historical timeline of the Judeo-Christian Bible.

It is interesting to note that this same concern arose in the 20th Century within Reformed-Presbyterian circles from Europe to the United States and from the northern to the southern hemisphere where almost every mainline church theologian had a tendency to operate with binary or twofold approaches of the Trinity, despite claims to the contrary. This usually amounts to a doctrinal approach of the Trinity in which the Holy Spirit is viewed as either the glue between the Father and the Son or as a secondary actor to the main drama unfolding between the Father and the Son.

James White in his book *The Forgotten Trinity* works with a typical binary or twofold approach in which he dedicates only one chapter to the Person of the Holy Spirit. He came up with the wonderful statement:

There is a reason why the Holy Spirit does not receive the same level and kind of attention that is focused upon the Father and the Son: it is not His purpose to attract that kind of attention to Himself (1998:139).

How, with all the biblical evidence of the foremost operational activities of the Holy Spirit throughout the biblical historical timeline depicted in the Bible, is it possible that White could make such a statement? The only reason possible is that he is forcing his church theological underemphasizing of the Spirit into his binary or twofold approach to the Trinity. White's awe-inspiring view of the doctrine of the Trinity which he describes as the capstone, the summit, the brightest star in the firmament of divine truths, is hung on the typical modern row of binary, twofold doctrinal pegs to dry by not only underemphasizing the Holy Spirit, but also allowing his trinitarian doctrine become ineffective for the experiential worlds of people's everyday experiences. (White 1998:14).

White identifies the question of the significance of the Trinity as a foundational doctrine of his approach in his final chapter. His reasons for the significance of the Trinity are that it has a central place in worship, is central in the Gospel message and it expresses the truth that it is the very essence of who God is. The more important questions regarding what impact the Trinity

has on our experience of being created by God, how the Trinity has an impact on our reconciliation and salvation, how it is fitted into God's daily work of renewing us and evocation is in our hope for the future, of fulfilment and especially the second coming of Christ receives the "silence treatment" from White. For example, I can see the cross and the resurrection of Jesus as necessary for our salvation, but is the Trinity necessary for our salvation and ongoing renewal and sanctification?

Perhaps the placement of White's Trinity above God's acts of creation, reconciliatory salvation, renewal and fulfilment in which we are involved in our daily life is the reason why White in his book makes a heartfelt plea that we should love the Trinity since it has become no longer a part of people's lives. He laments the fact that the majority of Christian congregations are in actuality operating with the old heretical position of modalism and only retain the name "trinitarian" as expressive of three separate acts or processes of the one God.

White's book is a very good example of both the second millennium problem of the Trinity being spelled out in dualities and the problem of the very low level of practical applicability of the doctrine of the Trinity in people's everyday lives. In his book, he very strongly emphasizes that just as believers love doctrines such as justification, the deity of Christ and – for him – a doctrine such as the second coming of Christ, they should love the doctrine of the Trinity (White 1998:13-14). It is of interest that he omits the love for the humanity of Christ in his list of doctrines – something Calvin, for instance, would never have done. White, in love with the doctrine of the Trinity, is clearly following the Lutheran con-substantialist approach which, with far more ease, divorces Jesus divinity from his humanity and so opens up, without any problem, the reflective ambience of a Trinity of three divine persons. Calvin's stance that Christ's humanity is combined with his divinity into eternity at the right-hand of the Father made his entire approach unworkable as a trinitarian perception of the classical **unus est trinitas** kind.

Calvin's view, if expressed in a trinitarianism, is: God the Father, Jesus Christ as the divine and human Son of God and God the Holy Spirit. Only someone who is wilfully pernicious could read the classic formulation of **unus est trinitas** into Calvin's basic sense-making approach. The majority of Calvinists though they ascribe strongly to the doctrine of the **unus est trinitas** have a struggle with the classical view in their reflective heart of hearts and that is to reflect theologically upon the Trinity within the parameters of the biblical historical timeline. What

they do is to ascribe to it and then place it to one side and go on as if it were not really effective and place a one-sided emphasis on either God's act of creation (the majority of Calvinists since Calvin) or on God's act of reconciliation/redemption in Christ (Karl Barth and his followers) or even on the Holy Spirit (in the sense of Noordmans and Van Ruler).

What follows below revolves around the alignment of different views of the Trinity with God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment in which we are involved in our daily lives. As human, we are to such an extent involved in our daily lives through God's grand acts, that we are also unable to draw a distinction between setting these grand acts apart in a doctrine such as that of the Trinity that revolves mainly around God. Having said that, our view is not anti-trinitarian or pro-trinitarian fervently advocating the doctrine of the Trinity, but an attempt at creating a meaningful fusion between the concept of the first millennial notion of the Trinity and the second millennial emphasis of the Reformation of opening up the biblical historical timeline as our main exploration ambience for theological reflection.

3.2.1 The first millennial background to the Trinity

Every millennium contains mixtures of broad sense-making views, orientations and approaches. It is worthy of note that the main sense-making orientation of the first millennium of describing everything by way of trialisms was followed by a sense-making approach of dualistic dualisms. Sometimes the orientations of trialisms and dualisms were mixed and at other times they operated separately.

The main sense-making logic of the first millennium in the Latin Roman-Christian Western and Eastern Empire was spelled out in trialisms. While the principal sense-making spirit of the age worked mainly in trialisms, a widespread influence of Mani the Persian philosopher with its overbearing emphasis on dualisms of light and dark played an important role in the Christian Roman Empire, especially in the first part of the millennium before the arrival of Islam. In particular, the Abbasid Dynasty of Muslim-Arab making established in 750AD had a strong impact on the so-called Christian West, and various Muslim philosophers opposed Mani very strongly.

In the 2nd Century, impregnated with a myriad of influences from all parts of the world in the Roman Empire, it was no wonder that the dynamic Christian movement spread over many

places in the Empire underwent significant changes. On the one hand, according to some historians, the physical places where they gathered were beginning more to take on the shape of many of the religious practices and physical styles of the temple cultures found throughout the Empire. On the other hand, over the three centuries that Christians had been able to convert their community from a small, and for the most part, insignificant minority within the Roman Empire into its dominant force; they had ultimately become its overwhelming majority (Ostler 2007:107).

They became the overwhelming majority because the other movements such as the Mithraic, Manichean and Jewish ones according to Ostler, had never been able to grow in size, and to acquire a status, by which they could command the loyalty of an emperor, and through him to build a congregation in the Empire as a whole (2007:107).

Christianity achieved a double religious triumph: not only did it supplant Rome's traditional religion (centred on worship of the emperor), but it had also swept away Rome's traditional tolerance of variety in people's personal devotions. Christianity was first encouraged, and later – from the 5th Century – enforced (Ostler 2007:107)

The great sense-maker of the trinitarianisms of the first millennium was actually **Plotinus (d.270)** the Neo-Platonist philosopher whose works in summary, actually described the trinitarian approach the best. The trinitarian sense-making approach by Plotinus (who was not a Christian) as well as by Numenius of Apamea operated with a Trinity of 'three divine hypostases' before anyone in the Christian world thought about it and discussed it so explicitly.

Some writers also accuse Plotinus of plagiarism of Numenius' view of the Trinity of 'three divine hypostases'. Plotinus more than anyone in the first millennium, blended the views of the Pythagoreans, Plato and Aristotle (of the millennium before Christ) more or less evenly in spite of his strong criticism of Aristotle (Oosthuizen 1974: 24f.). While Plotinus also took eclectically many clues from his contemporaries, he was unmistakably one who stood on the shoulders of the classic Greek views of the great schools of philosophy whilst reformulating his whole mix in such a way that he became the most influential trendsetting philosopher of the mediaeval period stretching from around 400-1300 AD. The long history of scholasticism from the early period with Augustine to late scholasticism is unthinkable without Plotinus.

Even Calvin's deterministic trajectories, in particular regarding God's will and actions, are permeated with some of Plotinus' views (Van Niekerk 2009:33-55).

The teachings of **Mani**, who originated from Bagdad and died in 274 – a few years after Plotinus – is designated as succeeding and surpassing the teachings of Christianity, Zoroastrianism and Buddhism. Mani placed emphasis on an unchanging dualism with a strong dualistic nature of good and evil and locked in an eternal struggle. Mani's main operating principle was an embracing dualistic cosmology and theology which he shared with Mazdakism, a philosophy advocated by Mazdak. Within this dualism, there were two original principles of the universe: Light, the good one; and Darkness, the evil one. These two had been mixed by a cosmic accident, and man's role in this life was through good conduct to release the parts of himself that belonged to Light. Mani saw the mixture of good and evil as a cosmic tragedy, while Mazdak viewed it in a more neutral, even optimistic way. Manichaeism was influential from North Africa in the West, to China in the East not only during the years of Mani's life but it continued to play a role through the middle ages in many theological and philosophical approaches revolving around God, human beings and the natural cosmic world.

+**Augustine** (d.430) is exemplary in his capturing the spirit of the age. Augustine was living and working within the spirit of the age where nearly everything worthwhile was constructed in trialisms with the undercurrent of dualisms. The trialisms he mainly took from Plotinus permeated by a dualistic secondary dualism of good and evil. Before his turning to Christianity, Augustine was in the fold of the philosophy of Mani the Persian.

Augustine's ambience of the everyday lives of human beings as being described as threefold correlated with the three persons of the Trinity in a neo-platonic way. If we jump 1,500 years to our era, it is precisely because the second millennium's sense-making schemes changed so radically that the rigid advocates of the Trinity, one after the other, began to bemoan the fact that the Trinity has no practical applicability for day-to-day life.

The ecumenical councils of the first millennium denote milestones in the emergence of the Trinity in the first millennium because their sense-making language is expressed amidst the three- tier or trialism sense-making approaches that characterized the sense-making spirit of the first millennium. In that sense, the sense-making 'doctrine' of trialisms was very close to people's everyday experience. The Trinity had practical applicability in that era because

people's everyday experiential contexts, boxes or bubbles of experience were divided into threes.

The three-tier stationary earth view with its accompanying views of God, humanity and nature cuts right through the scholasticism of the Middle Ages from Augustine until the 14th Century. In the three-level God, humanity and nature approach, God was positioned at the top in the Christian neo-platonic sense, the *ens realissimum* (the most real) and the Christian neo-Aristotelian sense, the *ens perfectissimum* (the most perfect) of the most realness and most perfectness cascades downwards to human beings as the lesser real and lesser perfect of creatures on the second lower level while the cascading carries on through to nature, to matter as the material on the lowest level as the least real and least perfect compared and measured against God at the highest level. The cascading three-tier approach happened to be the way people made sense of nearly everything from books, events and happenings they were involved with, i.e. from the sacred scriptures with sacred theology, sacred events and sacred happenings as belonging to the highest level. On the second level, belonged humanly written books with their philosophies, human events and happenings as not carrying the same weight as the top-level sacred business, and at the lowest level belonged the sphere of nature with natural events and happenings as the least meaningful, whilst being the most fearful and darkest of the three levels. A religious/philosophical smorgasbord of Christianity, Plato, Aristotle and Mani espoused the main sense-making ambience of the first millennium.

3.2.2 Ecumenical councils and the emergence of the Trinity

The ecumenical councils of the first millennium played an important role in the emergence of the notion of the Trinity. For this reason, the political and societal sense-making nature of these councils against the background of the main sense-making approach of the trinitarisms in the first millennium is very important to be described here.

The problem of the ecumenical councils revolves around the fact that they are regarded as infallible ambiances by the Roman Catholic church, as determinative councils by the Eastern Orthodox churches and as authoritative feeder sources from the past by Protestant churches in general. Regarding the Trinity, the Reformational ancestors of the 16th Century struggled to fit the Trinity into their newly-found exploration area of the biblical historical timeline which was

easy to present as from where people should draw their impulses and even prescriptions for daily living.

The concept of the Trinity faced two problems, and perhaps, that was also one of the reasons for the schism and split between the Western and the Eastern church in 1054, based on their speculative reflection of how the “Three-in-one” operated both as persons and agents of salvation. For the first, the framework in which the three persons of the Trinity connect with the four grand acts of God in the biblical historical timeline is ambiguous in the theology of the first millennium. The acts of creation, reconciliation and renewal, let alone consummation, were pushed into the background to give space to the rising traditions of the first millennium church with its speculative trinitarian character clashing with the biblical historical pattern. The notion of a “three-in-one” Godhead was expressed in the form of equal persons, modes, or operations, and whilst doing this, diverted somewhat the focus from Scripture and its message.

For the second, the major challenge was how these three Beings in the minds of church leaders and thinkers corresponded to an equal ontological quality that would qualify them to be referred to as One God. The struggle between the concepts “Three-in-One” and “One-in-Three” reached its early focal point in the early ecumenical councils between 325 and 553 AD. The first one, the Church Council of Nicea in 325 AD, was authoritatively led by the dubious figure of the Emperor Constantine who was more a politician than a Christian. It shaped the prospectus for the future of trinitarian speculation with a focus on the Second person of the Trinity being officially approved as God by a minority of participating church leaders (Heussi 1971:96). The Council of Constantinople in 381 AD then added the Holy Spirit as God into the Trinitarian framework of the Triune God (Heussi 1971:98). However, the doctrine was rather fragile and not without problems as demonstrated at the following three councils in Ephesus 431 AD, Chalcedon 451 AD and Constantinople 553 AD that struggled with the emergence of Christological heresies and other problematic notions around the Trinity (Bakhuizen van den Brink 1965:227). To avoid further problems, the Second Council of Constantinople eventually aligned the ‘Holy Fathers’ and their four ‘Holy Councils’, who possessed a special status on the ecumenical scale extending their dogma over the whole church of that period. The pope Gregorian around 600 AD elevated those four ecumenical councils to the same level as the New Testament Gospels to become rudiments of Christian orthodoxy. As it happened, nevertheless, politics was involved in the dogmatical decisions and the emperors governed the

outcoming doctrines of the councils so that the doctrinal peace among different geographical parts of the church was rather fragile.

3.2.3 Eastern Orthodox trinitarian approach

The first cracks in the edifice of the first millennium sense-making approach of the rigid trinitarisms applicable in the notion of the Trinity, were the underlying reasons for the event of the Eastern Orthodox break away from the Western church in 1054 AD.

The well-known *filioque* approach of the Western church, which is not accepted by the Eastern Orthodox church, revolves around the way the Orthodox approach views the distinction between the *essence* of God that is incomprehensible for us – God’s deep essence and the *three existences* or hypostases of God that are comprehensible to us – God’s outer ‘essences’ in being the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Spirit does not flow through the Son from the Father as in the Western church’s view, but rather the Son is generated (begotten) from the Father and the Spirit proceeding (procession) from the Father.

Lossky, in his work *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, asserts that there is in the tradition of the Eastern Church no place for a theology, and even less for a mysticism, of the divine essence. The goal of Orthodox spirituality, the blessedness of the Kingdom of heaven, is not the vision, but, above all, the participation in the divine life of the Holy Trinity; the deified state of the co-heirs of the divine nature, gods created after the uncreated God, possessing by grace all that the Holy Trinity possesses in its nature (1976:65).

For Orthodox theologians, God’s essence or *ousia* is not in need of anything outside of God or dependent on anything else than God’s self. God’s essence or *ousia* as uncreated is therefore incomprehensible to created beings such as humans. Thus, God’s essence goes beyond any metaphysical doctrine or scheme of being. The source, the origin of God’s *ousia* or incomprehensible essence is the Father *essential hypostasis* of the hypostases of the Trinity as One God. The One God in one Father is simultaneous as Father, Son and Holy Spirit God’s energies and existences as “unbegotten” and “uncreated”. Uncreated as the incomprehensible essence of God, but distinct as the existences of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God’s existences and energies though they participate as energies uncreated in a similar sense as

God's incomprehensible essence, are able to be experienced and comprehended by human beings.

The big challenge for Orthodox theologians is not to deny the real distinction between essence and energy and, while they work with the distinction, not to let it slip into a dualism on the other hand. The very clear borderline between the procession of the divine persons and the creation of the world must be sustained while both the procession of the divine persons and the creation of the world are in an equal sense, acts of divine nature. The being and the action of God appear to be identical and, of necessity, having the same character. In distinguishing God in his nature as one and three hypostases as uncreated energies which proceed from and manifest the nature from which they are inseparable, the essence and energies of God are used in the same theological sentence as two words that cannot be placed in a dualism. If we as human beings participate and are involved in God's energies because our capacity is to be human, does not mean that God does not manifest himself fully in his energies. According to Orthodoxy, God is wholly present in each energy, each hypostasis of his triune divinity. He is wholly present in each ray of the sun manifested in his divine energies and existences (Lossky 1976:73-75).

In summary: On the one hand, the Trinity is for the Orthodox Church the unshakeable foundation of all religious thought, of all piety, of all spiritual life, and of all experience. When we are seeking God, it is the Trinity we are seeking. When we search for the fullness of being, for the end and meaning of existence, it is the Trinity that we are searching for. Primordial revelation, itself the source of all revelation as of all being, the Holy Trinity presents itself to our religious consciousness as a fact the evidence for which can be grounded only upon itself (Lossky 1976:65).

On the other hand, the Orthodox church is built on a twofold divine economy: the work of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit. This is the underlying dynamics of why Orthodox theologians such as Lossky speak of the church as the *body of Christ* and the *fullness of the Holy Spirit* (1976:157,174). In summarizing the very unorthodox ring for Westerners' ears Lossky writes about the Orthodox twofold emphasis on the Son and the Spirit, the Word and the Spirit as two rays of the same sun or rather as two new suns inseparably showing forth the Father while they are ineffably distinct in their proceeding as two persons from the same Father (Lossky 1976:61).

The permeation of everything by the Spirit is central in Orthodox reflection because it sets the true aim of Christian life as the acquisition of the Holy Spirit. This double-sidedness of the same coin of the permeation of everything by the Spirit and acquisition of the Spirit by Orthodox believers is one of the central emphases in the sense-making approach of the Orthodox Church. One of the many reasons why the Orthodox story is set up against the filioque notion in which the Spirit proceeds through the Son from the Father, is they see in it a tendency to subordinate and neglect the Spirit.

The permeation by the Holy Spirit and the acquisition of the Holy Spirit by a human being amounts to deification and that is the aim and goal of the way in which the Orthodox travel through life. In the well-known Eastern Orthodox accepted revelation by Saint Seraphim of Sarov (in a conversation with Motovilov), the whole purpose of the Christian life is briefly described as nothing other than the acquisition of the Holy Spirit. In the beginning of the conversation with Motovilov, St Seraphim says:

‘Prayer, fasting, vigils, and all other Christian practices, however good they may be in themselves, certainly do not constitute the aim of our Christian life: they are but the indispensable means of attaining that aim. *For the true aim of the Christian life is the acquisition of the Holy Spirit of God.* As for fasts, vigils, prayer, and almsgiving, and other good works done in the name of Christ, they are only the means of acquiring the Holy Spirit of God. Note well that it is only good works done in the name of Christ that bring us the fruits of the Spirit.’

In commenting on this description, Vladimir Lossky says that “while it may at first sight appear oversimplified, (it) sums up the whole spiritual tradition of the Orthodox Church” (Lossky 1976:196).

Kärkkäinen in a very insightful and compassionate description of the Orthodox goal of ‘deification’ in conjunction with the strong Western notion of ‘merit’ writes:

Prayer, asceticism, meditation, humble service and similar exercises are recommended for the attainment of the noble goal of deification. The notion of merit, though, is foreign to those of the Eastern tradition. In general, their attitude towards grace and free will is less reserved than that of their Westerner partners. In the East, the question of free will never had the urgency that it assumed in the West from the time of Augustine onward. The Eastern tradition never separates grace and human freedom. Therefore, the charge of Pelagianism (that grace is a reward for the merit of the human will) is not

fair. It is not a question of merit but of cooperation, of a synergy of the two wills, divine and human. Grace is a presence of God within us that demands constant effort on our part (2002:70-71).

According to Lossky, in the tradition of the Eastern Church there is no place for a theology, and even less for a mysticism, of the divine essence. The goal of Orthodox spirituality, the blessedness of the Kingdom of heaven, is not the vision, but, above all, the participation in the divine life of the Holy Trinity; the deified state of the co-heirs of the divine nature, gods created after the uncreated God, possessing by grace all that the Holy Trinity possesses by nature (1976:65).

The problem of the Orthodox approach to the Trinity appears in the scheme in which the three hypostases of Father, Son and Spirit flow from God as Father. The problem is that the Father as the deep essence appears again as energy amongst the three energies Father, Son and Spirit. The different emphases of the Western and the Eastern trinitarian doctrines are viewed by Orthodox theologians in this sense that the East has always defended the ineffable, apophatic character of the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father as unique source of the three persons Father, Son and Holy Spirit against a more rational doctrine which construes the Holy Spirit as a common principle of Spiration in the making of the Father and the Son. It thereby places the common nature of God above the persons which cascade in a relational rational analogical process downwards from the Father via the Son to the Holy Spirit. In one sense, the Holy Spirit is neglected after it is given its main operational task of the compounding of the persons of Father and Son in the natural act of Spiration while the secondary task is that of playing the connective role between the two (Lossky 1976:62).

The difference between an Eastern defined apophatic generative character of the procession of the Three Persons forming the essential source, the nature of God the Father and a Western defined relational rational analogical character of the Spirit's processual flowing from the Father and the Son could be broadly related to the Eastern more platonic mirroring procedure and the Western more Aristotelian relational processual procedure. Apophatic describes the difference in relation to the origin – the Father – of the Three Persons but does not indicate the manner of the procession of the Three Persons – Father, Son and Spirit form the origin – the Father. The Relational Syllogistic allows Son to processionally flow from the Father and then allows the Spirit flow from the Father and the Son (Greek: filioque = “and son”). The way that an apophatic or negative theological approach is used in Orthodox reflection is as a means of

dispelling misconceptions about God, and of attempting to dispose of the speculative tendency of affirmative theology to go beyond the limits of human experience with speculative human reasoning. The apophatic character of Orthodox theology is to be involved in positive claims about God – for instance, that God exists with certain positive attributes, even if those attributes are only partially comprehensible to us.

Only a person sharing the same jump in sense-making ‘logic’ makes sense of such a scheme. The Orthodox view of the Trinity fits in wonderfully with the three-tier sense-making world of the stationary earth-centric approach, but is far removed from God’s grand acts of the biblical historical timeline. Ware asserts that the Orthodox Church is not only hierarchical, it is charismatic and Pentecostal (Ware 1993:249). The hierarchical part is highly problematic in the way that Pentecostals experience the Spirit as equals and as peers. The Orthodox approaches, in spite of the deification tendency, present various useful clues to an ortho-experiential Pentecostal approach in a time span that is more construed as of multiversity than with speculative reflective drawing of trinitarian schemes.

The permeation by the Holy Spirit and the acquisition of the Holy Spirit by a human being amounts to deification and that is the aim and goal of the way in which the Orthodox believer travels through life. *Theosis*, deification through the Spirit in an increasing and accelerating sense is a different process, than is deification through incarnational embodiment in its exemplary form in Christ overflowing in the lives of believers in their Roman Catholic way of travel through life with the church and the sacraments.

3.2.4 Augustine’s approach to the Trinity

From the perspective of the early church history, it is necessary to mention Augustine’s view of the Trinity. Augustine was living and working within the spirit of the age where nearly everything worthwhile was constructed in dualisms and permeated by a dualistic secondary duality of good and evil. Before his conversion to Christianity Augustine was in the fold of the philosophy of Mani the Persian, although he passionately denounced Mani’s writings.

Augustine’s ambiances of everyday living of human beings as a being differentiated in a dualism correlated with the three persons of the Trinity in a neo-platonic way. If we jump 1,500 years to our era, it is precisely because the second millennium’s sense-making schemes

changed so radically that the rigid advocates of the Trinity, one after the other, began to bemoan the fact that the Trinity has no practical applicability for day-to-day life.

Augustine *correlates mainly in a mirroring platonic sense* the trinitarianism of the Trinity with the anthropological trinitarianism of human beings placed in the dualistic world of the kingdom of God (the city of God) and the kingdom of the world (the city of the world). Augustine could make practical sense of the Trinity in daily life because of his experience couched in trinitarianisms.

In terms of the three level God, human and nature approach Augustine's view was more platonic than Aristotelian because God was positioned at the top in the Christian neo-platonic sense as the *ens realissimum* (the most real) of what is real, cascades in a mirroring sense downwards to human beings as the lesser real creatures on the second lower level while the cascading continues in a mirroring sense to nature, to matter as the material on the lowest level as the least real when compared and measured against God at the topmost level. The key words are 'real' and 'mirroring' in the Augustinian platonic sense.

The three level cascading edifice of downwards mirroring from the most real at the top was also the structure for Augustine's approach to the Trinity. The Father is the initiator of the biblical-historical timeline. He begets the Son with help of the Spirit, creating everything that is through them. He is careful, however, to avoid hierarchical tendencies among the persons of the Trinity. Instead, Augustine asserts that "Here, then, is the Trinity who is my God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, creator of the whole created universe" (*Confessions*, Book XIII, Chapter 5, 1997:346). He takes the verse from Genesis 1:26 "let *us* make man in *our* image" rather literary as the whole Trinity is involved in creation on equal terms.

The persons have different functions as Christ is the mediator of what the initiator (the Father) promoted. The reconciliation with God happens through a living relationship with the Son who paid for the sins of humankind. As a contrast to Neo-Platonists, Augustine claims that since God in Christ descended to earth to remove people's guilt of disobedience, there is no space for arrogance. The Son gave us a model of humility before God to follow and the salvation can hardly be achieved by human means. Here comes also the irreplaceable role of the Spirit as the unifier who dwells within the saints and unifies them with the Trinity. Its value is intrinsic rather than a disposition of the will.

Once our heart had conceived by your Spirit, we made a fresh start and began to act well, though at an earlier stage we had been impelled to wrongdoing and abandoned you; but you, O God undivided and good, have never ceased to act well . . . we shall rest in your immense holiness. But you, the supreme Good, need no other good and are eternally at rest, because you yourself are your rest (*Confessions*, Book XIII, Chapter 5, 1997:379-380).

The Holy Spirit is the sanctifier. The unbelievers are unable to perceive the grandiose acts of God because these things are hidden to them without the Spirit. To know or love God is possible only through receiving the Holy Spirit.

3.2.5 Thomas Aquinas and the Trinity

Thomas Aquinas operationalizes in a mainly processual Aristotelian sense the trinitarianism of the Trinity with his view of human beings in mind. The Trinity and human beings were couched within the duality of a sacramental sacred ecclesial sphere and a worldly secular sphere. It is clear that centuries away from Augustine and with different influences though Thomas Aquinas' duality was less of a dualism than that of Augustine it emerges that it has become more difficult to operationalize the Trinity as a working doctrine in daily life. The exception is the ecclesial sphere of the church where it acquired a hierarchical top-down cascading trajectory.

In Thomas Aquinas' sense-making approach one has to recognize that the doctrine of the Trinity is the linchpin of his theology. Thomas Aquinas describes his theology in terms of the **exitus-reditus** model, seeing all created reality flowing from the triune God and, by salvation, returning to God through Jesus Christ and the Spirit, grace and the theological virtues, the church and the sacraments (Farrelly 2005:118). Thomas describes everything regarding the Trinity in *trinitarianisms* - three that is one - emerging from a divine speculative theological drama that did not relate to God's grand acts specifically but take up the *dualism* acts of creation as nature and reconciliation as supernatural into the theological mould as expressive of the of the Trinity belonging to the mystery of faith which is strictly supernatural and is only to be known through revelation by God. Alongside faith is reason philosophy that could not go higher than the level of the natural. Thus, the biblical historical timeline expressing the grand acts of God through the meandering character of the Kingdom of God and the modern historical consciousness is totally lacking in Thomas's Trinity.

The approach of *exitus-reditus* as a trialism and tripartite departure of the trinitarian God proceeds through creation and reconciliation as dualism and bipartite procession into what reason can attain, and that which only faith can make known to us into a return to eternity when human beings see God face to face – *visio beatifica*.

One of the most insightful works written on Thomas Aquinas' trinitarian theology is by G. Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas* (2004). Emery explains the way one should enter into Thomas' Trinitarian theology. Emery points to Thomas' practice in the *Summa Theologiae* in which the secondary reality (our salvation) is explained from the primary reality (the divinity of the Son and the Spirit):

the Son deifies and the Spirit gives life, because the Son and the Spirit are God; such is the order of doctrinal exposition which one habitually encounters in Thomas' synthesizing texts. But his biblical commentaries, in close contact with his patristic sources, also follow the opposite order: Thomas establishes the primary reality (the divinity of the persons) *on the basis of* the secondary reality (our salvation). He starts off from the faith-experience of salvation, that is, the authentic re-creation (divinization) of believers, to show the divinity of the persons: only the true God can divinize and re-create. Here he follows the order in which we discover the mystery: the action of the persons in the economy leads to the discovery and disclosure of a truth concerning the Trinity itself. This shows that, behind the *ordo disciplinae* of the *Summa*, Thomas was seriously concerned to recapture the patristic roots of Trinitarian doctrines and their foundation in the economy of salvation (2004:13).

Emery describes in passing transformational substantialism, which we have described earlier in the dissertation, meaning that ordinary terms and ordinary everyday substances from the creaturely world is transformed into a holy, sacralised, and sacramentalised divine beings or entities. This precisely what happens with the many trialisms and triadic structures Thomas employs in his Trinity. His scheme is so contracted into itself that any argument brought against faith resting upon infallible truth - of which the contrary can never be demonstrated –are not demonstrations by virtue of faith are only arguments that can be solved (Emery 2007:29).

Whether Thomas puts forward scriptural arguments or speculative and contemplative arguments he makes use of 'similitudes', that is, the analogies which allow one to give an account of faith in three divine persons, in the main, the Augustinian analogy of word for Christ and love for the Spirit (Emery 2007:29). These 'similitudes' constitute arguments from

congruity or fittingness which boils down to Thomas as ‘persuasive arguments which show that what the faith proposes *is not impossible*’ (Emery 2007:29f).

Thomas speculative theology aims to seek out the root of truth, with the ultimate purpose of discovering how one can know the truth of the revealed texts and the teaching of the Church. The trinitarian tripartite processions, relations, persons of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit proceeding through the Trinity’s own dualism bipartite effectuated mould of (natural) creation and (supernatural) reconciliation are in Thomas’ speculative **exitus-reditus** pathway engraved theologically and philosophically as speculative activities operating side by side. In a speculative and contemplative processional unfolding of the trinitarian truth Thomas’ trinitarian theology provides believers with a foretaste of that which they hope to contemplate in the beatific vision of God (Emery 2007:30). Thomas’ goal is:

‘To disclose this kind of truth [truth which belongs to faith alone], it is necessary to propose likely arguments, for the exercise and support of the faithful’ (quoted in Emery 2007:30).

Aquinas, in line with his speculative theological approach, following Augustine but in a slightly different way, contemplates that the Trinity reflects the same sort of relationship of self-knowledge and love going on in God. God the Father represents God. Proceeding from God is God’s concept of himself, or his self-knowledge; the self-knowledge of God Aquinas views as God the Son. The Holy Spirit is the relationship of love between God’s self-knowledge and God.

The relationship between of love between the Father and the Son is viewed by Aquinas as the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is love. In the Trinity, the Father and the Son are known and loved by each other, and the love that proceeds from that relationship is the Holy Spirit. Therefore, Thomas asserts:

the Holy Spirit is called the bond (*nexus*) between Father and Son, in that he is Love, since the Father loves the Son and the Son loves the Father by the one single love; and thus the name of the Holy Spirit as Love implies a relation of the Father to the Son, and vice versa [a relation of the Son to the Father], that is to say a relation of the one who loves to the beloved one (quoted in Emery 2007:237).

Thomas also says about the mutual love between Father and Son:

But the fact that Father and Son love one another mutually requires that their mutual love, who is the Holy Spirit, proceeds from both. Therefore, so far as his origin is concerned, the Holy Spirit is not a 'medium' (*medius*), but a third person in the Trinity (quoted in Emery 2007:237).

It is clear that the filioque question is settled in the sense of the Holy Spirit in the processional movement from Father to Son is so strongly connected as the expression of the mutual love between Father and Son that the Spirit proceeds from both. No Eastern Orthodox bypassing of the Son for the Spirit in a direct procession from the Father to the Spirit.

In terms of the three level God, human and nature approach Thomas' trinitarian was far more Aristotelian than platonic because God was positioned at the top in the Christian neo-Aristotelian sense as the *ens perfectissimum* (the most perfect being) with the most perfect mind or thought like activities in the trinitarian God self which cascades in a processual way downwards to human beings as of lesser perfect nature as creatures on the second lower level while the cascading continues in a processual way to nature, to matter as the material on the lowest level as the least perfect when compared and measured against God at the topmost level, the most perfect being. Thomas deifies human beings halfway down and takes them through the church and the sacraments to the end of beatific vision. A good example concerning the middle level is the description by Emery of a rising vector in regard to the image of God in human beings (Emery 2007:397). Thomas describes this rising vectorial process from the lowly image of God in humans in creation rising more to grace and then its fulfilment in glory to the level of a human being's likeness with God in glory:

the glorious God by the mirror of reason, in which there is an image of God. We behold him when we rise from a consideration of ourselves to some knowledge of God, and we are transformed. For since all knowledge involves the knower's being assimilated to the thing known, it is necessary that those who see be in some way transformed into God. If they see perfectly, they are perfectly transformed, as the blessed in heaven by the union of fruition: 'When he appears we shall be like him' (1 Jn 3.2); but if we see imperfectly, then we are transformed imperfectly, as here by faith: 'Now we see in a mirror dimly' (1 Cor. 13.12) (quoted in Emery 2007:401).

The key words are 'perfect', 'processual' and deifying of Christ's humanity and human beings (believers) humanity to the end. The deification process finds its concentration locality in the incarnation of the Son of God in Jesus Christ the divine human being which is the exemplary tool with which believers are set on the road to their own deification. We have seen above that

the deification process, the *theosis* in the Eastern Orthodox trajectory is through the permeation of the Holy Spirit in human beings.

3.2.6 Trinitarian Views following the Reformation

Martin Luther's approach to the Holy Trinity derived from the traditional teaching of his day even though he was a critic of some Roman Catholic doctrines and practices. Luther's thorough dialectical sense-making approach of 'law and gospel' signified a strong involvement with the Old Testament as the era of the 'Law' and the New as the era of the 'Gospel'. One could get a grip on Luther's views in spite of his seemingly strong contradictions in different contexts in which he had to operate through his life. Central in Luther's approach is his duality of the era of the Law and the era of the Gospel with strong emphasis on the Gospel. The emphasis is so unilaterally strong that one could speak of a mystic unity of us as believers with Christ (**unio cum Christo**).

Luther's view of the Trinity has to be approached from the centrality of the mystic unity between Christ and a believer as expressive of his emphasis on Salvation and the Gospel side, the faith or belief side of the duality while the other side of the duality of the same believer's everyday experience is the Law side, the reason and rational side within the realm of being created by God. He accepted the Trinity, but this also does not really agree with his emphasis on creation and reconciliation as salvation – the fulcrum of his approach. Luther underemphasizes God's grand acts of renewal and fulfilment. As concerns Luther's attitude to the Trinity, Farrelly asserts that "Luther did not deny the Trinity, but it was secondary to the question of justifying faith" (Farrelly 2005:110).

In a similar vein, John Calvin's underemphasis of renewal and fulfilment was of a similar ilk. Calvin's view of the Trinity was contra to his emphasis on God's grand acts of the biblical historical timeline, wherein he overemphasized God's creation and reconciliation at the expense of God's acts of renewal and fulfilment. Calvin's solution for the ongoing dynamics of God's acts of reconciliation through renewal and fulfilment was to bypass the latter two with Christ as the perpetual and eternal One in his divinity and humanity, interceding for us at the right hand of the Father. The grand acts of God according to Calvin have practical applicability in people's lives because humanity and the natural world have an involvement in each of the grand acts of God, while reflection upon the Trinity revolves solely around God in the 'three-

in-one' sense of the phrase. Social historically Calvin's views were co-creation and trendsetting of the middle classes, the bourgeoisie of the European world.

The belief in the Trinity held by Luther and Calvin were contested in varied ways by the radical reformers or Anabaptists. Generally, Luther and Calvin held that the Spirit was bound to the word of Scripture, so that an interpretation of Scripture contrary to the word could not come from Scripture. Some radical reformers had more confidence in the illumination that came from the Spirit than from the words of Scripture.

Many of the radical reformers—also known as Anabaptists—applied the principle that the Bible is the last and final authority in the sense of *sola scriptura* as employed by Luther, Calvin and Zwingli. With the Bible as their principal authority, they resisted church tradition apropos infant baptism with the view that one could accept the baptism of believers only as it seemed to them to have been practiced in the apostolic church. The principle of the Bible as the final authority had been used to undermine the Nicene-Constantinople articulation of the Christian trinitarian belief. Though some Anabaptists of the Reformation era refused to draw this conclusion (e.g. Menno Simons and Balthasar Hubmaier), but Hans Denck said nothing about the Trinity when he wrote a doctrinal statement on the Christian understanding of God (Farrelly 2005:111; Pelikan 1984:321).

Concerning the way some radical reformers viewed the relationship of Scripture and the Holy Spirit, Jaroslav Pelikan writes:

It was, above all, the radical Anabaptist Hans Denck who pushed the antithesis of Spirit versus structure to the point of setting the Spirit into antithesis also with the “false literal understanding of Scripture.” Anyone who did not have the Spirit but sought to understand Scripture, he insisted, would find darkness rather than light, conversely, “anyone who genuinely has the truth can take account of it without any Scripture (Pelikan 1984:321).

While some radical reformers claimed the Spirit as the source of truth, many claimed the Spirit to justify the congregational principle, that is, the Spirit as illuminating the local Christian community and as a principle of appropriation of the truth (Farrelly 2005:122). This approach found sympathy with Christian theologians who emphasized the role of the Spirit over the formal ecclesial structures. Hans Küng asserts that believing in the Spirit enables us to trust God's presence in our innermost being. It brings us "new courage, comfort and strength again

and again in all the great and the small decisions, fears, danger, premonitions and expectations of life” (Küng 1979: 115-116).

John Wesley later reemphasized the inevitable role of the Spirit in Christian trinitarian theology. Even though his view of the Trinity suffers from the same contradictory ailment as Calvin’s, their approaches are considerably different. Currently in contextual historical studies, the strongest influence on Wesley is viewed as from the theological Calvinist ‘left side’ of the Remonstrance in Holland at the beginning of the 17th Century revolving around Dutch Calvinist Gomarus. Wesley came into contact with these views in the 1730s through the Moravians. Luther’s view of the almost mystic unity we have with Christ (**unio cum Christo**) also played a significant role in Wesley’s views.

John Wesley with his quadruple or foursquare approach of ‘experience, reason, Scripture and tradition’, firstly placed ‘experience’ at the centre of the experiential ambience of Christians, and secondly as it emerged in the problems of all holiness movements, Wesley struggled to obtain the right dynamics for God’s ongoing act of renewal (sanctification) that is supposedly to further propel reconciliation (justification) in Christ on a daily basis. The problem for Wesley was whether it was Christ himself who continues to sanctify us daily or was it the Holy Spirit as the ongoing sanctifying renewer of our lives. In one sense, precisely because of the total underemphasis of God’s act of renewal as application of God’s act of reconciliation, Pentecostalism emerged in the context of the Holiness movements. One could say that Wesley in a similar, albeit different sense to Calvin, underemphasized God’s grand acts of renewal and fulfilment but because of his emphasis on people’s experience, he failed to make the extension of Christ as our daily intercessor into eternity. Social historically Wesley’s views were the co-empowerment of the working class in its initial stages and later as also setting the trend of free churches amongst the middle class in British society (Thompson 1966:368f.).

3.2.7 Barth’s Christocentric Trinity

Karl Barth is known as one of the most influential theologians of the 20th Century with his neo-orthodox approach and complex theological framework emphasizing the revelatory nature of the Word of God. Though Barth devised the methodology of his pivotal work, *Church Dogmatics* to be thoroughly trinitarian, the structure is an extreme Christocentric approach in

which the grand acts of creation and renewal is Christocentric, formatted as a Christocentric structuring of God's renewal in the Spirit and God's fulfilment to the end of the world.

Barth emphasized the person of Jesus Christ as the ultimate revelation of God. In Barth's view, Jesus Christ is the fullness of God's revelation rather than merely a part of it. Scripture is then the mediator of the "Word of God" incarnate, the divine revelation through which God speaks to people in a personal and direct way. This Christocentric approach is reflected in Christ's primacy in the Trinity. Christ is the focal point where both the Father and the Spirit need to be understood in relation to the Son. As for the Spirit, he cannot act independently but his acts are always related and point to the work of Christ. There is a plenitude of dynamics among the persons of the Trinity and their economic functions.

In all Barth's practical actions in his life especially his influence in the Bekennende Kirche in the time of Nazism from 1933-1945, the Trinity played a practical role in his life. Morning, day and night, it was the typical Barthian view that everything is revealed in Christ, the Word of God. Barth even drew practical analogies for political life from the cross and the resurrection of Christ.

The strong emphasis on the revelatory nature of Scripture as the "Word of God", nevertheless, has been appreciated by Christian streams, such as the Pentecostal tradition that naturally leans toward the prominent role of the Spirit and to the dynamics between the Persons of the Trinity where they earnestly seek a dynamic and direct relationship with humankind and not a distant, entirely immanent "object". The only concern has been Barth's minimised role of the Spirit in relation to personal experiences with God, whereas Christ plays a dominant role, and that Barth's complex Christology may overshadow an experiential approach to understanding the Trinity. But the dynamics, the encounter with nature, and the possibility of a personal relationship with God have always been an appealing part of Barth's theology as held by the followers of the experiential Christian streams.

Barth himself, towards the end of his life, seemingly realizing that the time of the era of the Spirit caught up with his extreme Christocentric theological emphasis, called the theology of the Spirit "the future of Christian theology" (quoted in Lee 1994:200). In a postscript to a book with selections from Schleiermacher, Barth wrote in his last years the following often quoted programmatic words:

“Everything that one believes, reflects and says about God the Father and God the Son...would be demonstrated and clarified basically through God the Holy Spirit, the *vinculum pacis* between Father and Son. The work of God on behalf of creatures for, in, and with humanity would be made clear in a teleology which excludes all chance” (Barth 1968:311- my translation).

3.2.8 Moltmann’s Social Trinitarianism

The German reformational theologian Jürgen Moltmann has been known for his contributions in the field of eschatology and the relationship between theology and social issues. Elaborating on the trinitarian pattern, the emerging concept based on his view is sometimes called “Social Trinity”. According to him, the Trinity needs to be approached as a community of the three Persons who are engaged in mutual love and eternal relationships. Human beings, reflecting God’s image, should adopt the trinitarian social model as the ideal for how human society is supposed to be structured.

The trinitarian relational dynamics function in the way of *perichoresis*, that is, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit interpenetrate each other mutually. They may indwell each other dynamically and reciprocally.

The Father exists in the Son, the Son in the Father, and both of them in the Spirit, just as the Spirit exists in both the Father and the Son. By virtue of their eternal love, they live in one another to such an extent, and dwell in one another to such an extent, that they are one. It is a process of most perfect and intense empathy. Precisely through the personal characteristics that distinguish them from one another, the Father, The Son and the Spirit dwell in one another and communicate eternal life to one another. In the perichoresis, the very thing that divides them becomes that which binds them together (Moltmann 1993:173-174).

This interconnectedness is nothing that the human agents could not imitate to a certain degree. Moltmann was highly desirous that Christians should engage in political and social issues, contributing to communal solidarity, peace, and justice (Moltmann 1993:192). The whole world should be orientated toward social justice and reconciliation wherein the social trinitarian model serves as a source of hope (Moltmann 1967:33ff.).

Since Moltmann tended toward a grand view of social trinitarianism, in the later part of his life he also established contacts with Pentecostals in the USA due to the emphasis he placed on the trinitarian dynamics aligning with certain features of Pentecostal theology. Moltmann's understanding of the Spirit, however, challenged Pentecostal theology by extending it beyond its traditional paradigms of the experiential expressions of the Trinity. He viewed the Spirit within the framework of Christ's resurrection and Christology in general rather than in what took place at Pentecost and within the Luke-Acts framework (Machia 1994:32).

3.2.9 Oneness Pentecostalism and the Trinity

A spiritual movement that needs to be mentioned as providing an alternative view of the Trinity is Oneness Pentecostalism. In contrast to mainline Pentecostalism, it is characterized by a rejection of the traditional tenets as regards the Trinity and leans toward a modalist version of how the Godhead can be understood. The Father, the Son, and the Spirit are seen as different roles or manifestations of the same God rather than distinct Persons. Accordingly, Father, Son and Holy Spirit are mere designations or titles of the different personal manifestations of the one true God in the cosmic world whereby "Father" expresses a parental relationship, "Son" of God expresses God incarnate in human flesh. This is, in the oneness view, the Son espousing either the humanity and divinity of Jesus combined, or humanity alone but never the divinity of Jesus alone (Bernard 2000: 85ff.).

The sincere idea behind this theological concept is to preserve the unity of God. In rejecting the idea of distinct conscious divine existences as Beings in the one God of the bible. However, they thus reject a co-equal "Trinity" or "duality" conceptual expression of the Trinity, which is seen as a dilution or distortion of true biblical monotheism of One God. The Oneness doctrine decries any notion of "plurality of Persons in the Godhead" as un-Scriptural and possibly even pagan. As David K. Bernard, a prominent representative of the United Pentecostal Church, puts it, "It is important to note that the name of the Father is Jesus, for this name fully reveals and expresses the Father" (Bernard 1983:126).

The Oneness view has been criticized that it intrinsically oversimplifies the divine nature and the traditional mysterious concept of God as "three Persons in one essence". Many scholars see this as problematic. The Oneness theology can undermine many biblical passages where two or three Persons of the Trinity are mentioned together, such as the Great Commission in

Matthew 28:19-20: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Burgos 2020:120). Similarly, Matthew 3:16-17 reads, “And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased’” (Osborne 2010:124-125).

While the Oneness approach works with the basic assumption that God is a singular spirit who is *one* person, not three divine Persons or three individual minds as Father, Son and Holy Spirit they struggle to fit their new found oneness view into the biblical historical timeline of the grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment. It is as if they are still working within the first millennium trinitarian ambience moulded into an extreme unitary doctrine. The expression by advocates of the oneness approach and used by early pioneers of the movement that God was manifested as the Father in creation, the Son in redemption, and the Holy Ghost in emanation fits into some of the versions of the Eastern Orthodox doctrine of the Trinity or one of the many modalist mirroring or Sabellianist processual views of the Trinity.

The Oneness Pentecostal approach with respect to strict biblical monotheism and the problems it incurs with the belief that God is uni-personal, one single divine eternal Person, although manifesting Himself in various modes or facets, in given contexts, for various reasons, on different occasions, and in various times in history can also pose problems for the richness of Pentecostal experience. The missing element is the dynamics between the distinctive Persons of the Trinity and their specific roles in the theological framework of creation, reconciliation, renewal, and fulfilment. It reduces the potential on the part of the believer to experience each Person of the Godhead in multifaceted ways. God’s self-revelation of the Three Persons is essential for the all-encompassing fullness of Pentecostal experience, balancing sound traditional theology with the dynamics of the spiritual life.

According to the Oneness view, the Holy Spirit refers to God’s activity as Spirit. The problem with the latter is that the real activities of God as the creator and God as the saviour are fused with God the Spirit as His activity. It is as if the Spirit in the biblical historical timeline is not the renewer and, in that sense, is the applicator of God’s work of creation and the cross and the resurrection of Jesus and the one drawing God’s fulfilment of the future closer to us in the

second coming of Christ. Another problem is that all the fullness of God resides fully in the Person of Christ in line with their interpretation of Paul's description in Col 2:1-10.

To call the Oneness denominations a cult as happened in certain publications of the Assemblies of God in the USA and to refute it using references from the bible and from history, does not help us further in what Oneness advocates are saying. A problem needs to be tackled at the core of its sense-making assumptions. One of the problems is the way Oneness theologians depict Jesus as the Son of God in a very con-substantialist, Lutheran way which removes much of their strong arguments against the classic **unus est trinitas** formulation of the Trinity. Oneness reaction against the Trinity, which is problematic in itself, does not help us in understanding how any view of the Trinity is to be operationally effective whilst being fitted into the grand acts of God's creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment espoused in the biblical historical timeline.

3.2.10 The Trinity and God's grand acts within the biblical historical timeline

The approach of this dissertation is neither strictly anti-trinitarian nor fervently pro-trinitarian, but rather focuses on the difficulty found in the aligning and fusing of the many approaches that have emerged concerning the Trinity with God's grand acts of the biblical historical timeline. Thus, the view is rather a-trinitarian in the sense of a Luther, Calvin or a Barth in which our approach to the Trinity is embodied and embedded in the biblical historical timeline. Thus providing the explorative and reflective ambience of God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment conjunctively expressed in our experience of being involved in God's ongoing creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment of ourselves, human beings in general and the natural cosmic environment. That means that any of the operational views of the Trinity may be blended in with the biblical historical timeline, but we do not wish to place a trinitarian template with a Christocentric spear point, like Karl Barth's, onto the Bible with a secondary emphasis on God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment.

Our view carries the stamp of a greater interest in our earthly experience with God than in heavenly speculation about the essence of God as a trinitarian God. In any case, we do not know God's essence in the deepest sense, except through His disclosure of Himself through the Spirit who opens up our creatureliness, reconciling salvation, renewal and fulfilment by

God. Perhaps we have a similarly gentle leaning in our use of the Trinity as have Luther and Calvin as expressed by Farrelly. Farrelly asserts that while Luther and Calvin held on to the Nicene-Constantinople formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity “they proclaimed the Trinity more as it was operative in the economy of salvation than as it was in itself.” (Farrelly 2005:110).

Conversely, we should not go in the direction of creating doctrines of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment but should see them rather as the power and energy drivers of the Holy Spirit in our daily experience. After all, we live in the time of the Spirit and we are involved in all God’s grand acts from start to finish. It is remarkable that we as human beings and the natural environment are not involved in any grand scheme of the Trinity in any of its classical formulations. These first millennium sense-making schemes revolve around God and God alone. While God’s intrinsic involvement with us as human beings and the natural cosmic environment is not in the first instance part of the Trinity, the grand acts of God operate in the first instance as impulses of the Spirit pushing, embracing, renewing and pulling us in our daily experience towards God, ourselves, our fellow human beings and the natural environment within the all-encompassing ambience of the Kingdom of God.

3.3 The essential status of pneumatology in the trinitarian framework

3.3.1 In pursuit of proper balance between Christology and pneumatology

It has been suggested even by non-western theologians that with the rise of Pentecostalism, the classical *Logos* Christology would benefit from being complemented by Spirit Christology that lays emphasis on the trinitarian function of the Spirit worldwide (Mofokeng & Madise 2019:2). As Kärkkäinen points out, the *Logos* Christology was established as classical theism in the fourth and fifth centuries as a Council response to 117hristological controversies and in the effort of contextualizing patristic theology to reach the Graeco-Roman audience (Kärkkäinen 2017:38).

It is understandable that the focus on Christ as the Redeemer should not be neglected, and that Christology was the primary focus of theological discussions in the first centuries concerning his person, function, and role. His functional atoning work was theologically overshadowed by debates about his ontological status, namely his divine and human natures, in pursuit of

understanding the deeper soteriological meaning of the Cross in relation to us, human beings. Different groups emerged to question or debate Christ's person.

Looking into history, the theological world hovering between the Jewish segment of Christianity and the Christians of the Graeco-Roman culture was in constant tension. At the end of the first century and in the early second century, a Jewish group of Ebionites being keen on keeping Mosaic Law within Christianity compromised Christ's divine status and argued that Jesus was born human but was adopted by God at his baptism. Consequently, Christ could not exist before his incarnation thus making the virginal conception by the Spirit impossible (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical history* 3.27.2).

Under the influence of Gnosticism, on the other hand, the early church was simultaneously challenged by Docetism, a view that sharply emphasized Jesus' divinity and did not accept his full humanity. Many early theologians pointed out this error as Jesus being fully human was an important soteriological concept within the work of atonement for his 'fellow humans' (cf. 1 John 4:1-3). Ignatius of Antioch addressing the Ephesians warned against error affirming that Christ was "both flesh and spirit, born and unborn, God in man, true life in death, both from Mary and from God, first subject to suffering then beyond it" (Ignatius of Antioch, *Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians* 7.2). The Gnostic culture was widespread in the second century and it did not favor the biblical concept of Jesus' humanity, as it distinguished between Christ as a divine being and Jesus as an earthly human. Irenaeus (130-202 CE) and an African theologian Tertullian (155-240 CE) defended biblical Christology against e.g. Marcionites.

On the way toward the third century, the focus shifted to a larger framework of trinitarian discussions where the nature of Christ was discussed together with the concept of how the sovereign God can be one but coexisting in three persons. The view of adoptionism, similar to the ebionism, inclined to conclude that God adopted Jesus to become God's Son at his baptism. In describing a possible interaction among the persons of Trinity, two different forms of so-called Monarchianism appeared. Dynamic monarchianism promoted the idea that the sovereign God was dynamically present in the person of Jesus that would make him superior to other human beings. Modalistic monarchianism, in turn, maintained that the Father, the Son and the Spirit referred to modes or ways of appearance rather than to distinct persons (Kärkkäinen 2017:46-47). Tertullian defended God's oneness and Christ's divinity against these heretical views in *Against Praxeas*, confirming that the three entities of the trinity are three persons "not

in condition, but in degree, not in substance, but in form, not in power, but in aspect; yet of one substance, and one condition, and of one power” (*Against Praxeas*, 2).

A new round of Christological controversies found its beginning in the fourth century in the dispute between Arius and the African theologian Athanasius. The Council of Nicaea (325 CE) eventually addressed Arianism squeezing it out of the theological mainstream as a view compromising Christ’s divinity and declared belief in “one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, the only-begotten, that is, of the essence of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of the same being as the Father” (<https://www.fourthcentury.com/urkunde-24/> Accessed 26 June 2024). It used the term *homoousios* (“same substance”) to describe the ontological relationship of between Father and Son. As to the Holy Spirit, he had become the *theos agraptos*, the “forgotten God” in terms of Gregory of Nazianzus (Kärkkäinen 2018:7).

Later controversies focused on the constitution of Christ as a being. At the end of the fourth century, Apollinaris of Laodicea taught that Christ was in the body but lacking a human soul that was replaced with the divine Word. The Council of Constantinople (381 CE) denounced this position and emphasized that a middle way between Christ’s full divinity and the full humanity is no option. As a consequence, this would imply that Christ was either a half-god or a super-man (Nürnberg 2017:4). In the fifth century, Nestorius of Constantinople (386–450 CE) brought this view even further and proposed that Jesus was eventually two distinct persons. His humanity and divinity functioned independently, switching and alternating as Christ pleased. This speculative position was later denounced as heretical by the Council of Ephesus (431 CE).

In the last well-known controversy, Eutychus of Constantinople in turn addressed these tendencies to split Christ into more personalities. Unfortunately, he overreacted in his view where he overcombined the two natures of Christ into a third single nature (monophysitism). He held that the two natures existed before the incarnation, but one blended nature appeared after the birth of Christ. This would make him different from other humans. The mainstream church addressed this issue at the Council of Chalcedon (451 CE) where this view was rejected and the two natures of Christ were affirmed: “the same perfect in divinity and perfect in humanity, the same truly God and truly man ... consubstantial with the Father as regards his

divinity, and the same consubstantial with us as regards his humanity; like us in all respects except for sin” (http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/03d/04510451,_Concilium_Chalcedo-nense,_Documenta_Omnia,_EN.pdf Accessed 26 June 2024).

As the historical heritage of the western churches, the focus has traditionally been placed on the nature of Christ and on the persons of the trinity in their mutual relationship. Christology dominated approach to Christian theology while pneumatology was trailing behind. The prominent status of Spirit Christology where the Spirit was basically identified with the Son of God and his acts in the Shepherd of Hermas and the works of Theophilus of Antioch, Irenaeus, or the Syrian church of the early centuries vanished (Schoonenberg 1977:354; Rosato 2006:169-170).

When the Apologists of the second century felt pressurized to provide rational defense of the gospel within the philosophical arguments of the culture, the incarnated Logos and the corresponding Christology prevailed to become the standard of the traditional churches (Kärkkäinen 2017:41; Macchia 2018:13). The clear indications of the Spirit as being present at the incarnation according to the Matthew’s and Luke’s accounts were laid aside and the emphasis was put on the Johannine account about the incarnated Logos. Along the same lines, the influence of the Holy Spirit on Jesus became rather accidental in comparison to the influence of the Logos (Schoonenberg 1977:355). The ontological and functional aspects of the Spirit were played down.

Since the nineteenth century, nevertheless, there have been theologians who reacted against the weak position of the spiritualized version of Christology that would fit the needs of the faith community within their hermeneutical context (Rosato 1977:433). Some had tendencies to replace classical Christology by new trinitarian or post-trinitarian models while others were ready to maintain the traditional trinitarianism but regarded it as necessary to complement classical Christology with proper pneumatology.

The former approach was an overreaction in the sense it promulgated paradigm shift by rejecting Chalcedon creeds with the incarnational Christology as there cannot be any ontological distinction between the Spirit and the risen Christ (see Nürnberger 2009:102). Dunn noticed the dangerous modalistic implication if this concept in which we lose two separate and

active persons where the Son is now experienced as Spirit, and the actual role of the Spirit is reduced to an active God's presence in the world (Dunn 1975:325-326).

The latter approach searching for harmony between the classical Christology and enhanced pneumatology is more faithful to the Pentecostal tradition. Jesus is the "anointed" Christ by the Spirit in different incarnational stages of his work. God has a direct communication channel to Jesus because he is full of the Spirit. The Spirit's side assist Jesus to abstain falling into temptation to sin and leads him into complete obedience to the will of the Father (Harris 2017:11).

Pneumatology seems to always reach its limits when one starts discussing Godhead in the trinitarian terms. But it does not have to be such a challenge if we interpret the trinity in economic or functional terms rather than focusing on its ontological concept. The functionality refers to the roles and activities of the three persons regarding creation, redemption, renewal and fulfilment. "It is the Father who sends the Son into the world for our redemption. It is the Son who acquires our redemption for us. It is the Spirit who applies that redemption to us" (Sproul 2014). In classical Christology, the Father and Son play their active functional roles—hence also the popularity of the *filioque* view—while the comprehensive identity of the Spirit is denied by ascribing him the role of being just a gift shared by the other two persons of the Trinity. Habets suggests, however, that the Trinity must be understood as a simultaneous cooperation of three agents who subsistently define themselves and also the other two (Habets (2003:230-231). Welker speaks about a mutual co-inherence or *perichoresis* of the three persons acting in mutual participation, interpenetration and unification but still being distinguishable entities (Welker 2010:91-92).

A need for a proper balance between Christology and pneumatology has been suggested by African Pentecostal theologians in line with hermeneutical concerns to meet the challenges of the contextual culture of spirit-possession and the needs of faith communities (Mburu 2019:10; Quayesi-Amakye 2016:293). The concept of classical Christology is too limited in meeting the spiritual needs while a Pentecostal pneumatology contributes to the current debate connecting Jesus' identity with the Spirit's presence in him. As it is discussed in Chapter 5, Pentecostal biblical hermeneutics in theological discourse departs from and lands in the theology of God's power and God's presence experienced through the Spirit both in the church and the world.

3.3.2 Modern views on the role of the Spirit within the Trinity

In the recent years, as the Pentecostalism has been growing, different Pentecostal scholars emphasized the role of pneumatology in their pursuit of Christian theology and Christology in their dialog with theologians of other Christian streams who still consider Pentecostalism controversial. The hope is that serious studies of the Holy Spirit take place and be more embedded in the mainline Christianity and that the statements of the Holy Spirit mentioned in the Nicene and Apostle's Creeds will become more definitive. Pentecostal scholars such as Allan Anderson, Walter Hollenweger, William Menzies and Frank D. Macchia have been leading in the inter-denominational dialogue from different continental perspectives.

There have also been theologians from other denominations who paint a plausible picture of the Pentecostalism. Harvey Cox, a Harvard scholar with roots in the Reformed tradition, launched a dialogue between Pentecostal and Reformed theology in his work *Fire From Heaven* where he respectfully attempted to reflect on the Pentecostal doctrines and experiences of the movement. He elaborated on the gift of speaking in tongues and correctly placed it alongside the evangelistic efforts as the Pentecostals believed that the coming of Christ would happen soon (Cox 1996:95).

Walter Hollenweger reviewed *Fire From Heaven* and wrote, "Cox's book is in fact a theological testimony of his Christian pilgrimage, including its detours and cul-de-sacs. In its honesty this testimony is solid and moving. In its intellectual grasp of Pentecostalism it has weaknesses and strengths." (Hollenweger 1998:197ff.) One of the weaknesses would be reducing Pentecostalism to a crowd of enthusiastic Christians who 'merely' sing and pray. Nevertheless, one could not expect Cox to take on more in-depth discussions with Pentecostalism when he looked upon it rather from outside.

The most typical and sometimes heated dialogue on pneumatology takes place between the Pentecostal and Evangelical scholars as the two movements agree on most other areas of Christian theology. It is noteworthy that the two theological groups generally agree on the Spirit's role in the Grand Acts of Creation but mutual disagreements flow from the fact how the Protestant-evangelical scholars view the role of the Holy Spirit as the Reconciler, Renewer, and Consumer within the trinitarian framework. Thus the theology of the Spirit becomes very immanent rather than transcendent, which stands in a sharp contrast to Pentecostalism.

One explanation was earlier provided by Lewis Sperry Chafer (1871-1952). While having dispensational tendencies estranged from the core of Pentecostal doctrines, he acknowledged the importance of the Spirit as a vital part of the Trinity as his function cannot by any means be overlooked. He finds the reason of why we do not have better definition for the Spirit in the fact that the Holy Spirit does not speak for himself in the Bible. It reduces traces of his personality. According to Chafer, this may be the reason why the creeds and other material on the Spirit is not elaborated in a proper detail and the Spirit ends up as a mere “emanation from God” (Chafer 1930:68-69).

A welcome asset to the present discussion is the contribution of Clark Pinnock who asserted in his work *Flame of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit* that “redemption through Jesus is an action of the Spirit” (Pinnock 1996:83). He argued that theology exalting Christ over the Spirit falls short. The Spirit is the true initiator of the Four Grand Acts of God, namely the Creation. The Holy Spirit is the source of creation.

Nevertheless, the general Pinnock’s definition of the Godhead’s roles in the Trinity is problematic. The Holy Spirit is elevated at the expense of the Father and the Son. If the traditional pneumatological views should be criticized for overly emphasized Christology, Pinnock goes on the other side of the spectrum and places the Holy Spirit in a supreme hierarchical position within the trinity. The present thesis has ambition to show primacy of the Spirit in the Grand Acts of Creation, Redemption, Renewal and Consummation but without questioning the traditional trinitarian themes where all three Persons possess the equal ontological and economic status.

One also needs to mention Wolfhard Pannenberg in this context for his prolific writings on different theological doctrines even though he did not handle pneumatology as a separate theological unit. His general conviction centers around the idea that the gift of the Holy Spirit is given with the aim of building up the fellowship of believers and not just for individual Christians (Pannenberg 1997:12).

The benchmark of his distinctive pneumatology may be his notion of The Spirit as a force where he follows the intellectual heritage of Moltmann. Along with same lines as Pinnock above, the Spirit has the description of the life-giving principle. God created the first human

and “breathed-in” life into him. No life is then possible without the Spirit, his prominent role on the Grand Act of Creation is unquestionable. The Spirit as the all-encompassing force holds the created universe together (Kärkäinen 2004:17ff.).

3.4 The Holy Spirit, Scripture and Revelation

3.4.1 The four grand acts of God as revelatory acts

Our relationship is with the Spirit as Living God via His grand acts with which we are involved by way of our experience, and attested to by the Judeo-Christian Scripture, the Bible. It is here that people who are one way or another attached to the Protestant tradition, in particular, should take Karl Barth’s view to heart in that they should regard the Bible as a paper pope (*papieren papst*) with infallible and inerrant qualities. The Bible is a reliable, trustworthy witness attesting to the grand acts of God taking place physically ‘outside’ the Bible in the assembled events and processes from the beginning to the end of time, of and in a multiplicity of environments. And the grand acts of the Living God through the Holy Spirit are carried out in my experience of everyday life. It was John Calvin who put forward the notion that within the Bible, the acts and doings of God are attested to especially for our faith experience, and outside the Bible in a general way more acceptable to our ability to reason.

As Pentecostals would say, our everyday experiences are not general and common, but very special and specific Spirit-directed ones. Pentecostal Faith Studies or theology revolve around the fourfold dynamics of experientially believing in God, believing in oneself, believing in other human beings and believing in the natural environment and these are also encapsulated in the dynamics of the Kingdom of God. Healing and the Baptism of the Spirit. In this sense speculative theology, which is the baseline of nearly all classical and traditional theologies is revamped in the approach of conscious reflective patterning of faith and belief of the Pentecostal experience.

3.4.2 Revelation since the Reformation of the 16th Century

The theological emphasis changed during the Reformation in the 16th Century when Martin Luther (d.1546) and John Calvin (d.1564) shifted the primary scope of theology from a sacred, speculative and contemplative science (*scientia speculativa et contemplativa*), expressed

primarily by Thomas Aquinas (d.1274), the major theologian of the 13th Century, to a practical science (*scientia practica*). This concept of a *scientia practica* or practical science means that the Reformers took the biblical historical timeline from Genesis to Revelations as the field, scope and source which determined their statements and views and from which they determined the guidelines for people's lives in general. They loosely maintained the notions of differing theological doctrines, but the main focus in the development of their "theologies" and doctrines was placed upon the Bible as the determinative field, scope and source which they explored and within which they undertook their theological reflection and contemplation.

Since the Reformation of the 16th Century, the Bible as the broad divine-historical field in which people with a Protestant or Reformational stance are involved has increasingly become known as *the Word of God losing to a large extent its image of being also the word(s) of humans*. The Bible played an important role in Roman Catholic circles in the 16th Century, even during the Counter Reformation by viewing the church itself with its guiding leadership and rituals as part of the ongoing divine-historical process beginning with the first (Old) and second (New) Testaments partaking in the ongoing divine-historical process of the church with its divine-revelational entity known as tradition. The present-day Roman Catholic church is still part of the ongoing process of the enfolding of the divine-historical process that begins with Genesis.

During the 17th Century, a couple of old terms from the past, "natural" and "supernatural" emerged under the headings "revelatory" and "miraculous". The term "natural" had been used to describe God's acts in nature (including human nature) as expressive of God's creation, and "supernatural" to describe God's ongoing actions, together with those by which He continuously permeates and intervenes in His own acts of creation in order to save nature and the people on earth. In 17th Century Europe and the emerging American colonies, people started talking about "natural religion" and "revealed religion", or "natural theology" and "revealed theology". The old terms "natural" and "supernatural" were applied in a new way to the modern concept of revelation, which means that God imparts knowledge and truths about Himself to humans through revelation.

More recently, especially since the 18th Century when the new idea of "revelation" became more persistent, "revelation" has increasingly come to mean the self-revelation or self-disclosure of God and no longer refers to knowledge and truths about God. In many theologies

employing the concept of “revelation” as their main emphasis, there is a complete blending of the two concepts of revelation, namely, firstly as the presentation of truths and knowledge about God and, secondly as self-disclosure by God.

Wilfred Cantwell Smith points to the emergence in the 18th Century of the concept of revealed religion (Smith 1962/3:128). The one question which haunts all modern views of revelation is that of the instrument or medium that is used for God’s revelation. Some will say the Bible is the sole medium of God’s revelation, or the only true medium through which God speaks. Others add nature, history or tradition as secondary mediums of revelation. There are theologians of revelation who downplay the Bible’s function as the primary instrument of God’s revelation. They see the modern idea of revelation, namely as the self-disclosure of God, as an ongoing process through history and tradition wherein the Bible merely plays a role.

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries have seen the most extreme forms of theologies which rest on the idea of God’s one and only revelation, the Bible and/or Jesus Christ, or of God’s many revelations through the words of the Bible. Many modern theologians of revelation followed the statement made by Karl Barth (d.1968) that God’s total self-revelation is to be found in Jesus Christ. To many Christocentric modern ears this statement sounds fine and biblically correct. The view that this statement is based on a modern theological construction of revelation which can only with difficulty be detected in the Bible really upsets extreme Christo-centrists.

Another form of these "revelational theologies" which concentrated solely on the Bible has seen the light since the 17th into the 20th centuries. It is based on the concept that every word or verse in the Bible is inerrant and infallible as a “word or little revelation of God” to the person reading the biblical text. In these circles the “interpretation” approach is completely rejected if it is used in the sense of studying a portion of the biblical text in its socio-historical context and from the meaning which emerges through the present contextual experience of the mind of the interpreter of said biblical text. Both these approaches delivered their quota of problems, but the main problem of both the fundamentalist revelational type of theologies and the theologies wherein the mind of the interpreter has stamped on the biblical text that the embracing role of the Holy Spirit is the main discloser of God’s working in our daily experience in alignment with God’s grand acts expressed in the biblical historical timeline of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation has been lost.

3.4.3 Revelation as the sense and meaning of the disclosure of God's grand acts

The furthest one could go is to state that the mystery of revelation has to do with the Spirit of God disclosing the deep things of God (1 Corinthians 2) through the four grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment, in which we are involved together with the natural cosmic environment. In this sense, an all-encompassing Pentecostal approach is emphasizing in an ortho-experiential way that the Spirit plays a central role in our experience of salvation, baptizing, healing and sustaining the presence of Christ in our current experience as well as keeping the hope awake of his second coming.

When it comes to Experience, the Bible and the Holy Spirit, it is questionable whether the idea of "revelation" originates in the Bible. It comes as a rude awakening for many, to learn that there is, for example, very little correlation between the many New Testament terms that can be translated by "revelation", "to reveal" or "revealed" and the way in which these terms are used in modern theologies (Wilckens 1979:57). A fourfold act-directed faith reflective approach could be suggested as the mystery of the 'coalesced presences' of God, conscious human selves, human beings collectively and the natural cosmic environment as the 'material' of revelation through which the intra-divine, intra-human and intra-natural connection (immanence) and difference (transcendence) of God, human beings and the natural cosmic world are revelatorily being disclosed. God affirms his all-encompassing 'immanence' and 'transcendence' within His acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment. For, while remaining God as God, through His activity as Spirit, he claims, affirms and infuses the depths and widths of our existence enfolded by his grand acts.

This does not indicate a divinisation, theosis or deification of anything within God's complexity and multiversity of universes. God is God, human is human and nature is nature – all through and by virtue of God Himself. The mystery of the at-one-ment and at-other-ment of God, our conscious human selves, humanity as a collective and the natural cosmic environment in God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment points to the glory of God, as a God at work and at home. Moreover, this is the inauguration of the transformation of all things in which mutual cognisance and affirmation of our identity as being created and driven by the cross and the resurrection of Christ, under renewing, sanctifying construction through the Holy Spirit and on our way to the embracing fulfilment of God when He will be all in all. These are the new directions and signposts that we have to follow.

3.4.4 Concluding comments on the Trinity

Talking about the Trinity, the effort of this material is to show the immeasurable importance of the Spirit as related to the Father and to the Son. The framework of this, nevertheless, is economic or functional as it stretches toward the four Grand Acts of God. It is by no means suggested that there would be an ontological difference in essence among the three persons of the Godhead. Functionally, however, the Spirit gains prominence whenever Jesus is absent, as identified by the teaching of the book of Acts that sets the garden for the course of the church history and the present age we live in (Warrington 2008:53). And even when Jesus is present, Christology must be defined as pneumatological Christology since the Spirit accompanies Christ at his work of atonement. Jesus' incarnation is connected to the conception by the Spirit. Jesus' baptism when he possibly received his legitimate mandate and anointing for the ministry is also witnessed by the Spirit. After Jesus was tempted in the desert, denounced the devil and came to Nazareth, he commences his ministry by entering the synagogue and begins to read from Isaiah 61:1-2 with the words 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me' (Luke 4:18). Thus, the Spirit played a crucial part in Jesus' earthly life from the birth until his death and resurrection.

CHAPTER 4

The Doctrine of Revelation in the Light of Scripture, Tradition, Experience, and Culture

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The problematics of revelation and its reception

The Christian world consists of various denominations, churches, and movements. These are not just local branches of the same homogeneous Body of Christ. They encompass many doctrinal differences, and unfortunately, this weakens the status of Christ's Bride on earth. How is it possible when all believe in the same God? It has to do with an understanding of how God communicates and reveals Himself to us. As Avery Dulles puts it, "The great theological disputes turn out, upon reflection, to rest on different understandings of revelation, often simply taken for granted" (Dulles 1992: xix).

William Abraham developed a model of the unfolding story of revelation, stating at least four phases that follow one another. The first of these is *Preservation* that has to do with Creation, the Fall and the restoration in Noah (Noahic covenant). The second is *Action* when God selected Israel as His special nation in His plan of salvation which culminated in the Incarnation of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. The third is *Inspiration* when God's revelation was divinely transmitted to and written by God's apostles and prophets (The Scriptures). And for the fourth, it is ecclesial *Illumination* as Christ sent the Holy Spirit to be with the church to the very end (Abraham 1982:13ff; Gunton 1995:112f.).

This historical development is undisputed in churches thanks to the information we find in the Bible. But the intriguing part comes when we cannot understand clearly the spiritual God with our five physical senses. It brings about much drama in the inner man, that is, between human rationality and intuitive faith. In this inner struggle, some Christians incline more to reason, others to faith. What basically happens, then, is that different believers understand the importance of the above-mentioned phases in different ways. As a result, they usually place their trust on one of the phases as normative and authoritative for their personal life and interpret the remaining three phases accordingly. This has a huge impact on a successive set of Christian doctrines that come as an outcome of this particular mindset.

4.1.2 The story of four friends

For better clarification, let us consider the following story.

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In a small town there was a high school. It became quite a prestigious institution compared to the same kind of schools in the area. The fact that contributed to the good reputation of the school was its efforts in persisting to invite professional guest speakers who shared with the students their knowledge on particular subjects of interest. At that time, four senior classmates were touched by a sermon that was presented to them by a guest-speaking preacher in their Humanities course. They did not even know what church he had come from since—hand on heart—their knowledge of Christianity was terribly poor. Now, however, they felt the desire and need to obtain a Bible and start studying God's Word. They remembered the preacher urging the class to do this. And so, they scheduled some bible study hours and shared God's Word together. They were experiencing marvellous spiritual moments. When they also began praying together on a regular basis, they became closer, giving thanks for what God was doing in their lives.

That was about how it went during the rest of their high school studies. After the final exam, each of them followed his own destiny. Martin went on with technical studies because he was keen on computers. Charlie was more of a humanistic person and was accepted to study a philosophical major at the regional university. Spontaneous behaviour was natural to Peter. Soon he started a family and joined a local charismatic church. Samuel longed to know God in a deeper way and moved to a city where he could study theology.

Some time passed and our friends met at their high school reunion. They could not wait to see each other and planned how they would share their spiritual testimonies as they had done years before. When the meeting came to a close, however, disillusion came over all of them on their way home. It turned out that they had had problems in their communication. They had come together from different environments, but what was most striking, they completely differed in their views of Christian faith. This was even more of a shock in the light of their allegations that they all studied the Bible, quoting it to prove their arguments.

For instance, it had been difficult for them when they discussed Salvation. Charlie was inspired by reading Romans 13: “Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God... Therefore, whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God” (v. 1-2). His philosophical way of thinking led him to the belief that God decisively reveals Himself to man in the surrounding culture. He perceived that God was using many “worldly” things to achieve His purpose and in His love, He would save not only all Christians, but also “decent” people from other religions and perhaps the atheists who were like this as well.

Samuel argued that this was not the case. Jesus promised to be with His church until the end of time (Matthew 28:20). God put all power into the hands of the Church, represented by the apostle Peter and his followers. The Church decides what is good and bad, and whatever is bound on earth, has been bound in heaven, too (Matt 16:19). The Virgin Mary says in Luke that “henceforth all generations will call me blessed” (1:48). Therefore, her intercession is necessary for the salvation of believers.

Peter refused to get involved in these disputes. He considered both Charlie and Samuel as backsliders and eventually made an effort to prove them wrong. He believed that the most important verse in this debate would be from 1 John 2.27: “the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you.” The Holy Spirit is the best teacher. Peter began to name all his personal experiences with the Holy Spirit, as well as the miracles he had already seen. In his opinion, only an individual that takes prayer seriously, forgetting the world around, can be saved. Whoever just reads the paper or watches TV becomes a sinner. Peter prayed for the rapture of the church away from the worldly abominations.

Martin did not say much, but then he decided to quote Romans 10:9-10: “if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” According to Martin, when it comes to salvation, it is important to confess Jesus, ask for forgiveness of sins, and believe that He is your Lord and Saviour. The other issues should be judged in accordance with the concrete circumstances. For the main, it is crucial not to neglect prayer and worship, reading the Bible, fellowship with other Christians, and spreading the faith to others who do not know the Lord yet.

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What is so puzzling about this story is that all the friends mentioned above had studied God's Word, but they had all understood it quite differently. The problem centred around how they each perceived the major source of normative authority for their lives. The Bible is not just text; what is important is its interpretation. And as we can see here, they had all interpreted the Word of God differently and in accordance with their own norms. The first of William Abraham's phases of the biblical story appealed to Charlie, and according to him, God speaks to us mainly through Reason or culture. The second phase was normative for Peter who enjoyed immanent divine Experience with Christ and the Holy Spirit. The third phase was crucial to Martin who believed in Scripture and its divine inspiration as the major authoritative source. Samuel, on the other hand, extended the biblical inspiration further to the fourth phase, the church era, where the church received a mandate to create Tradition alongside Scripture.

John Wesley used William Abraham's model with its four sources of revelation as the foundation for historical and theological development. It became known as the Wesleyan Quadrilateral. These four parts of revelation, namely, Reason, Experience, Scripture, and Tradition have been quoted numerous times as being complementary and allegedly co-form the ultimate revelation. But the rise of many theological disputes in the history of the church forces us to look at each of them in greater detail. For this purpose, we will take a historical excursion into how some important church figures viewed the problematics between faith and reason and then spend the major part of the study on the modern scholarship as presented by four different prominent theologians of the 20th century, namely, Paul Tillich (defending Reason), Karl Barth (defending Experience), Carl Henry (defending Scripture), and Karl Rahner (defending Tradition).

4.2 The Cultural Aspect of Revelation

4.2.1 Purity of God's Creation

If we look back to the point where the diversity started, we need to retrace our steps right the way back to the doctrine of creation. When human beings deal with a spiritual reality that they cannot perceive with their five physical senses, they are forced to utilize a blend of other auxiliary tools for understanding it, such as their own reason and intuition. These are, unfortunately, filtered through knowledge and presuppositions obtained by living in a certain

environment. There is nothing wrong with the objective spiritual reality *per se*. The problem lies in human imperfection.

As Fackre points out, if there are three dimensions to the creation—nature (physical order), human nature (inner being) and supernature (God)—it is understood only through the human perception of nature and reality (Fackre 1996:66-75). God created the order with a particular objective of communicating with human agents and He made available the tools for doing so. He placed us on planet Earth where days and nights change, where birds sing, and where plants are both beautiful and nutritious. At the same time, He created us in His own image, a fact that is an anchor-point for the basic idea about God, no matter whether we talk about creation before the Fall or after. The so-called *imago Dei* became a general concept where every human reflects part of God’s glory and character, at least on the creational level when we filter out the effects of the Fall and of sin.

The intention of God’s knowledge initially designed for us must have been one of harmony. Thus, the four friends Charlie, Peter, Samuel, and Martin should have had access to the same perception of God and His will. But the ability to know Truth was dimmed after the Fall and will not be perfectly recovered until humankind, or the faithful remnant, come to the full knowledge of God in heaven where “God will wipe away every tear from their eyes” (Revelation 21:4).

4.2.2 The Fall

The Fall can be defined as a deliberate rejection of the relationship with God on the part of humanity. This gave rise to decay in a variety of ways, the ultimate end of which is death. As we read in Scripture, “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). This disastrous decline was signified by a separation from God and eternity, a distortion of harmonious physical nature, and finally, an alienation of humans from one another. The fatal paradox embraces the idea that it was the pursuit of knowledge in Genesis 3:6 that brought about the Fall and in turn resulted in an utter lack of true knowledge. What at the outset appeared good as an upgrade of one’s knowing, resulted in the pieces of a broken glass, i.e., an abrupt break with the divine principles and resulting in separation from the ultimate Truth, which is God. The devil has once again proved that he is “the father of lies” (John 8:44) and the master of deceit.

From this calamitous point in history onwards, we can trace a long human journey striving for reconciliation with God. Since our senses lost the perfect perception of *imago Dei*, it is as if we have been walking in fog and darkness. There are, nevertheless, several tools for reconstructing parts of divine knowledge, or at least, *saving* it. As a matter of fact, salvation as reconciliation with God has become the central point of human religious history. Charlie, Peter, Martin and Samuel attempted to recover the divine knowledge, but their conclusions were utterly different because when we walk in a fog, we do not see clearly. We are estranged from one another while trying to reconstruct our proper image of God; tossed between Scripture, church tradition, surrounding culture, and subjective divine experience.

4.2.3 Faith and reason in church history

The role of church tradition as well as rational culture was popularized by Augustine. For him, the beginning of all sin was pride. (Augustine [1952]:380). People exalt themselves and ignore God. After the Fall, this ignorance can only be remedied by Jesus Christ as revealed in Scripture and tested by a magisterial church that can bring together the missing pieces of knowledge. The office of the church gained importance in the interpretation of the Bible under the influence of Augustine. At the same time, human beings maintain part of the *imago Dei* in their reason, which is thus deformed but not destroyed. (Augustine [1963]:417) A logical consequence is, therefore, that one can reason and tentatively understand some pieces of the divine revelation through rational thinking, manifested in human society or culture in general.

Thomas Aquinas adopted the same idea and tried to partially synchronize faith and reason. He claimed that the cause of all sin was narcissistic man preoccupied with himself, losing focus, and turning away from God. (Aquinas [1968]:173) The saving knowledge can only be gained by an act of special revelation of what Christ did for us on the cross, communicated in the Scriptures and interpreted by the office of the Church. As with Augustine, for Aquinas the loss of the divine relationship did not result in a destruction of reason. By way of rational and empirical observation, we can even construct a “natural theology” that can lead us back to God, at least by understanding that He exists. Aquinas developed “five ways” by which he presented rational arguments for the existence of God by way of general revelation (McGrath 1995:10-12).

For both Augustine and Aquinas, the origin of sin was human self-centeredness, either in the form of pride or of self-love, that caused the Fall. Nevertheless, the image of God did not vanish completely and could still have been traced in the creation. Humanity has a certain capacity to recover it. This has become a foundation stone in the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.

This view was opposed by Reformed theologians and their followers, such as Karl Barth who stated pointedly that “even if we only lend a little finger to natural theology, there necessarily follows a denial of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ” (Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* II/1 1957:173). Also, biblical passages, such as Romans 1 and 2, when they refer to “heathen” knowledge are only set to one side and should not be understood as revelation apart from the Word Incarnate (Christ), who always comes first.

G. C. Berkouwer, a Dutch Calvinist, tried to balance the view by crediting the first two chapters of the Book of Romans with the disclosure of an objective revelation for us. Without it, for instance, we would not even know that we should be responsible for our rebellion against God and His orders. But we are “without excuse” (Berkouwer 1983:228). He adds that this inner motivation from longing to know the higher reality in a quest for transcendence is also manifested in numerous philosophies depicting the rudimentary principles of existence that have emerged over time. Finally, the sense of guilt that presents itself when we sin, which may be called *conscience*, is also part of this general revelation that we actively experience (Berkouwer 1983:309).

An even more positive view of general revelation is taken up by evangelical scholar Bruce Demarest who pointed out that the Spirit’s work is implied in three spheres: the inner life of one’s self longing for God (*sensus divinitatis*) and the external spheres of nature and history. It has both a horizontal and a vertical reality when we try to interact with God, with physical nature, with our conscience, and with one another. Even though Demarest criticized Aquinas for promoting too much confidence in human rationality and playing down the tragedy of the Fall, his presumption is that natural theology is a worthy attempt to understand the objective reality (Demarest 1978:240). There is a common grace available to everyone. It was once manifested when God destroyed the world because of sin, but led Noah to build the ark and thus preserve the human race. Contrary to Berkouwer, there is a light that connects the initial Adamic creation and Noahic stage of restoration. The link between the original creation and the state after the Fall has been dimmed, but not completely destroyed.

4.3 The Covenant with Noah, Preservation, and Paul Tillich

With Noah, God decided to make a new covenant with humankind in His plan of divine restoration and reconciliation. The Bible reports that a preceding factor had been the great wickedness on the face of the earth that was punished by the great flood (Gen 6 and 7). Noah was counted a righteous person and together with his family avoided the fatal consequences by being instructed to build the ark. This was the third major covenant made between God and his physical creation, counting the creation itself, Adam and then Noah. A series of covenants that built upon each other was clearly an important concept for God to build His relationship with people, echoing a pre-existent relationship between Father and Son through whom the whole creation took place. The covenants would include those with Noah, Abraham, Moses, Aaron, Phineas, David, Jesus and the church (Fackre 1996:62). The Son was the divine *Logos* (John 1:1ff.). He was functionally bound to the creation and also served as the primary salvific agent brought about by the occurrence of sin and evil.

This was the first covenant made after the world-wide punishment, and it demonstrated that God cares for the Creation and wants to preserve it. He committed Himself to further maintain the relationship with humankind until the End. It can be noted, therefore, that God has always actively intervened with the physical world and humanity during the life of the world. He did not just create, then take a pause from doing anything, and finally step in as judge at the end – as the deists would suggest. There is no evidence in the Bible or anywhere else to say that God would purposely actively deprive Himself of sustaining the world. Hence the doctrine of revelation is important to be understood in terms of an ever-developing interaction with human agents.

The rainbow was created as symbolic of the irrevocable covenant between God and mankind that no more apocalyptic floods would be made to take place on the earth. Whenever it appears physically, therefore, it speaks symbolically about God's common grace of preservation. It demonstrates that God is active in the creation and is in control. The Noahic covenant is not salvific in biblical terms, but it shows that God has His fingerprints everywhere. It is what we call the general revelation of God. God manifests Himself to all people and in all places through the pattern and design of His creation. In other words, it is an objective reality, visible and

recognizable by all humans equally. It is not surprising that we can trace the appearance of various religious streams in history because to everyone has been given the possibility of acknowledging the supernatural design of our universe.

The Noahic covenant with its emphasis on the basic elements of world restoration has its roots in human culture. Paul Tillich, a systematic theologian focusing on finding God in the creation, analyses the relationship between reason and revelation. Of particular importance to him was whenever the human *logos* meets the universal divine *Logos*. The contact point is “ontological reason” that gives us insight into how the whole reality is structured, as ontology deals with the actual existence of things. Rather than giving us concrete information about a Supreme Being, it opens up for us a mystery and the potentiality of getting to know God. But perception of revelation needs to be supported with a simultaneity between the subjective and the objective elements. To say, for instance, that God is omniscient is merely a symbolic statement helping us to approximately understand God’s nature because in actual reality the concept of omniscience falls outside the object-subject framework. (Van Dusen 1945: Tillich’s chapter “The World Situation”) According to Tillich, the objective part of revelation is a “miracle” coming from God while the subjective part (the human response) is called “ecstasy.” Ecstasy has nothing to do with emotions on a psychological level. It is rather a rational “marvelling” response to an experience when one realizes the “abyss” of God’s mysteries with all its depth, width, and height.

Reason is a very important part of understanding God’s revelation even though it has limited capacity to fully unveil God’s mystery. Tillich asserts that “knowledge of revelation is knowledge about the revelation of the mystery of being to us, not information about the nature of beings and their relation to one another” (Tillich 1955:129). Since it is ultimately very difficult to reconcile reason and classical Biblical teaching as being the highest norm of divine authority for a Christian, it is interesting that for Tillich, the Bible is still considered the basic source of his theology; the original document of Christian events (Tillich 1955:129). The biblical documents are reported by eye-witnesses and thus fall into the category of original revelation. But contrary to the principle of *Sola Scriptura* and evangelicalism, theological interpretation of the Bible requires church history as an additional resource because critical scholarly thinking is needed so as to evaluate it in different eras. Nevertheless, Tillich criticizes the Roman-Catholic Church, the prominent bearer of Christian tradition, that it gave too much authority to its popes and councils to decide the exact doctrinal content. The entire history of

general Christian theological thought is needed to assess the Scriptures and not just the Church's *Magisterium*.

Tillich takes this concept a step further and returns to ontological reason, asserting that a third source of authority is broader than the Bible and the Church and consists of the history of religion and culture (Tillich 1955:38). We are born and raised in a certain religious-cultural context that decisively shapes our thinking in the society in which we live. The culture is, therefore, co-responsible for interpreting Scripture properly.

He draws a distinction between the original and dependent revelation. The incarnation of Jesus was part of the original miracle to which the apostolic community ecstatically responded. The era of the subsequent church is then dependent on the original revelation whenever the (Holy) Spirit interacts with the human spirit because it builds upon the revelation of Christ (Tillich 1955:127). Prayer, for instance, is thus part of dependent revelation.

There is no understanding of revelation without the use of intellect if it is to be perceived as truth. The terms such as "Word of God" or "The Kingdom of God" bear some cognitive truth, but due to our incapacity to understand them properly, they serve rather as *symbols* in this pursuit to understand the universal mystery of the ultimate divine reality.

At the same time, history is also an important witness to revelation, according to Tillich. It helps us to ground the universality of the revelation. Israel's election or prophetic movements all aroused anticipation that the final revelation in the form of Messiah would come. Without this as a context, the message of Jesus would not be understandable. But thanks to the historical anticipation of the Jewish people and Jesus' ultimate self-surrender and commitment to his salvific mission both in his life and his death, the message came through and the final revelation took place.

Tillich's disclosure of revelation follows the usual trajectory: originated in the being of God, unfolded in nature and history, attested to in the actions of prophetic Israel, expressed ultimately in Jesus Christ, witnessed in Scripture, accommodated in the church and its traditions, and culminating in the infinite realm of God (Fackre 1997:80). But simultaneously, it is vital to *correlate* traditional theological terms with general human experience, the "World." Thus, his emphasis resonates with the Noahic covenant that came before the other 'salvific'

covenants in the Bible – those that had to do more with actual faith rather than rational understanding of basic principles on which the world is built with its intellectual, moral, and aesthetic dimensions.

The problem with the Tillichian system dwells in the fact that the crucial terms used in Christian theology, such as grace and sin, are presented as symbols without the actual depth of the concrete meaning because Tillich gives up on the idea that these concepts could be understood tangibly. They are only part of the Great Mystery. This concerned Robert C. Johnson who raised an important question as to whether such a vague concept of God and Christianity in general can suffice to be authoritative and normative for the lives of individual Christians when so much of the content is eliminated (Johnson 1959:139). Indeed, the work of Christ as human Redeemer is replaced by the mere notion of his self-surrender and finitude. This is incompatible with the biblical account of Jesus. In Tillichian thought, he is portrayed philosophically either as the symbolic Messiah (detached from the historical Jesus) or as a human self-surrendering genius (detached from the real Person of Christ). This happens when the universal understanding of revelation weighs more than the special biblical revelation. Christ becomes too transcendent to be really part of human salvation history. As George Tavard puts it, “The notion of faith, the notion of original sin, the notion of revelation, have been stripped by Tillich of their specifically Christian elements and made into universal philosophical concepts” (Tavard 1962:51).

Thus, Tillich comes to a set of conclusions, such as “God is not a person, but is not less than personal” (Tillich 1955:245). Such a puzzling statement can possibly satisfy a philosophical mind but not a church that tries to create a concrete program or agenda for its own existence. His argument undermines the “ordinary theism” of classical Christian teaching:

Ordinary theism made God a heavenly, complete person who resides over the world and mankind. The protest of atheism against such a higher person is correct. There is no evidence for his existence, nor is he a matter of ultimate concern. God is not God without universal participation. ‘Personal God’ is a confusing symbol (Tillich 1955:245).

The Noahic covenant and the concept of Christ as the creating and restoring divine *Logos* may help us understand the world being created and sustained by a supernatural Being. But it cannot give us concrete information about God as person, his plan, and the way we can approach him.

The universal, also called general, revelation is strictly based on human rationality and physical senses, which limits us in pursuit of knowing God's personal character and intention. The ontological reason keeps the boundaries within the spheres of cognitive rationality, justifiable morality, and aesthetic beauty (Fackre 1987:133ff.). Therefore, general revelation gives us insight into God only through (1) *nature* because of the intelligent design of the universe, (2) *history* because of the existence of the nation of Israel and other physical events, and (3) *moral conscience* as an embedded personal navigator between right and wrong. For the first two, Paul the Apostle makes a remarkable statement in the Book of Acts, 17:26-27: "And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their pre-appointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us." For the third, the German philosopher Immanuel Kant made his famous quote on the topic in his work *Critique of Practical Reason* ([1788]:162): "Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the more often and steadily we reflect upon them: *the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me.*" The statement is even found on his tombstone in Kaliningrad.

The ontological reason embedded in *Logos* and the world may serve as a common ground and starting point in discussions about the relationship between the divine *Logos* and the human world, where Christian faith and dogma also belongs. It became popular through natural theology as a 'point of contact' between God and culture. However, natural theology cannot create a set of particular beliefs about God. If we want to move further in understanding God's character, the other side of the revelatory coin needs to be considered, namely, special revelation.

4.4 The Covenant with Christ, Action and Karl Barth

General revelation helps us to realize that the world is designed and preserved by God. But that is just a very vague perception of the whole revelation that God has prepared for us. A very small proportion of Scripture is devoted to creation and preservation, while the vast majority of its content speaks about more particular events. The events feature the unique election of a nation when God made the covenant with Abraham and subsequently Israel. Universal revelation cannot give further answers on such an election and we need to start talking about

the special revelation instead. In this regard, God disclosed his revelatory plan of reconciliation, not just preservation of the universe and natural principles as the Noahic covenant demonstrated, but also the concrete salvation of humanity. This salvific covenant culminated in the incarnation of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. This act surpasses Tillich's teaching about the Word as cultural *Logos* and stretches further to every individual.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:14).

Christ is manifested and revealed in Scripture in his three-fold office, i.e., Prophet, Priest, and King, which is the core of modern Christology. This Christological perspective on revelation, creation, and theology in general was predominant for Karl Barth, another prominent theologian. In his multivolume work *Church Dogmatics*, he describes revelation that has to do

with Jesus Christ Himself in His prophetic office and work, as He confesses and makes Himself known as the humiliated Son of God and the exalted Son of Man, and therefore as the Mediator between God and man, and therefore as the One who restores fellowship between them and accomplishes the justification and sanctification of man (Barth, *Church Dogmatics* IV/3/1 1957:180).

For Barth, the revelation is objective, reveals the Word of God incarnate in the person of Jesus of Nazareth (the self-revealing God) and is related to his reconciliation, whether human beings accept the offer or not. It does not depend on our subjective response. Barth is quite radical here and claimed that there is only one outstanding relationship, Jesus Christ as the sole prophet. He plays down the Tillichian notion of Christ as the cultural *Logos* and basically rejects natural theology as a way to discover God. The other modes of revelation, such as the Bible, the Church, and the World are realities but are used by God only as 'free communications' toward the events in human history, cosmological nature, or the moral nature of human beings. They do not provide the true enlightenment that is found entirely in Jesus Christ. They may hold physical things together, but they simply do not speak about grace, judgment, and salvation (Barth, *Church Dogmatics* IV/3/1 1957:155f.).

One may raise a question of how, for instance, the Bible can be only a subsidiary 'communication' for God when all we know about Jesus Christ is found in it. To solve this discrepancy, we must understand how Barth perceives the role of Scripture. For him, the Bible is a collection of canonical books. The Church recollected it as God's past revelation. Its focus

is the prophetic and apostolic testimony about Jesus Christ with an expectancy of future revelation of his eschatological return that is yet to come. But the words of Scripture have been written by humans and are subject to possible error. It is pointless to attempt to prove the Bible scientifically and Barth has no problem with textual criticism that certain biblical passages circulate in different manuscripts and versions.

The Word is threefold: The Revealed Word (Christ), The Written Word (Scripture), and The Proclaimed Word (Church). But the Bible *is not* the Word of God in the evangelical sense. It only *becomes* the Word of God as Christ reveals himself to us here and now. The Word is actualized in its reception by a Christian or the community of believers through the power and authority of the Holy Spirit. Barth asserts that “for me the Word of God is a *happening*, not a thing. Therefore, the Bible must *become* the Word of God, and it does so through the work of the Spirit” (Barth, *Church Dogmatics* IV/3/1 1957:165).

The focus of the revelation is Jesus Christ and his atonement. This act must be understood in the broader perspective of the special covenant with Israel and the prophecies in the Old Testament. But Scripture itself must be interpreted through Jesus Christ who is the centre of the biblical story. *Solus Christus* stands above *sola Scriptura*.

As for the Church, the Holy Spirit established the communication between God and humans. This happens in every generation of the church era that gains an experience with God. One result of these divine encounters is the church’s confessions and dogmas, once they are not ecclesiologically bound into to such an extent that God would lose the ability to move freely by his Spirit. The Church gives hope to the Word that it will be properly used under the influence of the Spirit’s illumination in the community of faith (Barth, *Church Dogmatics* IV/3/1 1957:322).

It seems that Barth was influenced by his Reformed ecclesial background on at least two points. For the first, the sovereignty of God is a crucial concept, and therefore, He can by no means be controlled by Scripture or the Church. Jesus Christ is free to initiate divine encounters in the lives of people apart from the biblical text, and the same is also true for the Church that is supposed not to tie up doctrines with narrow traditions. Secondly, the inner testimony of the Holy Spirit has a prominent place in his theology. The Calvinistic *sensus divinitatis*—a concept of a certain natural human capacity to perceive God without the special revelation—could have

been modified by Barth and applied to the Holy Spirit actively revealing God's mysteries about Christ to individual believers (Fackre 1997:137). The mystery of the Christian life dwells in these spiritual dialectics taking place instantly. It cannot be accurately replicated in the life of the church. This view was subject to criticism from Dietrich Bonhoeffer who depicts the dangers of Barthian subjectivity: "Revelation is interpreted purely in terms of action. It is something happening to receptive man, but within God's freedom to suspend the connection at any moment" (Bonhoeffer 1961:81ff.). In such a situation, there is no control over what God actually says, as everything is filtered through the imperfect nature of man.

The lack of such control in the subjective human experience can be demonstrated in the other three areas of the Bible, the Church, and the World. Within his intention of avoiding an idolatrous focus on one of the other three modes, Barth perhaps exaggerated the importance of the "happening" that comes directly from above. As for the Bible, the dialectical connection between Incarnation and Inspiration should not be based on an instant pneumatological happening. Scripture was attested to in Christian communities under the long-term influence of the Holy Spirit to enhance its authoritative status. As with the Church, Christians can be assured that Christ is leading the church "to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20) and even though different historical excesses are unavoidable due to the human factor, the Spirit brings continuity and remains present in the teaching of the church. As for the World, Paul the apostle speaks about rudimentary cultural principles seeded in the hearts of both believers and unbelievers (cf. Romans 1-2) in line with the Noahic covenant. These principles continue from generation to generation in the form of a common grace, accessible to everyone everywhere and not just happening here and now.

4.5 The Bible, Inspiration and Carl Henry

Barth's theological concept of Scripture blurs the distinction between its inspiration and its illumination. The Spirit enlightens Scripture through a happening rather than being responsible for inspiring the whole text as it stands. This is contrary to the biblical acknowledgment that "All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16). The Greek word *Theopneustos* used here means "God-breathed". It was evangelicalism, a Christian movement of the 20th Century, that revived the interest in studying Scripture as the main source of Christian authority. The prominent scholar who helped to define evangelicalism was Carl Henry in his

multivolume work *God, Revelation, and Authority*. In this work, he extensively investigates the inspiration of Scripture and correlates it to its inerrancy. He defines biblical inspiration as

a supernatural influence upon divinely chosen prophets and apostles whereby the Spirit of God assures the truth and trustworthiness of their oral and written proclamation. Historic evangelical Christianity considers the Bible the essential textbook because, in view of this quality, it inscripturates divinely revealed truth in verbal form (Henry 1979:136).

According to Henry, the verbal inspiration is “plenary,” that is, the Spirit breathed out the whole biblical canon—not just ideas but every single word (Henry 1979:145). Analogically, it makes the Bible to be the highest authoritative document for the Christian, superior to the church and its tradition, instant divine experience, and the world with its culture. The Bible is truly inerrant in all aspects and not just ‘infallible’, which would mean its trustworthiness only in doctrinal and moral statements. On the other hand, the Bible was not mechanically dictated to the authors (Henry 1979:137f.). They were inspired word by word through the supervision of the Holy Spirit whilst writing with their own mind and will.

Henry encourages studies in textual and historical criticism to understand the Bible better but warns against the prejudices that affected these methods from the time of the Enlightenment (Henry 1979:402f.). The common ground must be Christ as the second person of the Trinity, who is the *Logos*, which means that God is rational and His message can be understood. The biblical inspiration comes from God who makes “intelligible disclosure and rational concepts that qualify man—on the basis of *imago Dei*—to comprehend the content of God’s logically ordered revelation” (Henry 1979:118f.). Therefore, the biblical revelation is objective, free both from Tillichian modernist universality and Barthian neo-orthodox tendencies of subjectivism where Scripture serves an expressive purpose but lacks a serious cognitive ground. He criticizes Barth:

For Barth, Scripture is not truly the Word of God, but becomes the Word of God only in some mysterious divine confrontation. The Bible plays only an instrumental role in relation to revelation; it is the framework through which God’s voice may be heard (Henry 1979:200).

Henry’s view on inerrancy was moderate. While biblical doctrines and ethical teaching are timeless and authoritative, he would allow for some mistakes in historical accounts or science,

as the writers were not culturally equipped to transmit such information properly. At the same time, however, these errors would be very scarce and as archaeology and new sources revealed fresh information about the Bible, it actually solved many of the formerly alleged errors. As such, Scripture can contain errors not only in science or history, but also in morals and doctrines. Henry is opposed to this view, asserting a full trustworthiness of Scripture. The important point is that if Scripture is truthful and trustworthy, it underscores its high authoritative status even though it relies on its own testimony.

Henry's teaching about biblical inspiration is echoed in the evangelical movement. The distinguished feature is that it views biblical passages as literally as possible and creates a scope of doctrines not found in those Christian traditions that place more focus on the role of culture, church tradition or instant divine encounter—for instance, the need of personal conversion. The emphasis on the born-again experience in John 3 could readily be a key passage of the Gospels when it comes to human salvation.

The teaching about divine grace saving a sinner through Christ without any personal merit is another example. Here, comes a common objection of other Christian traditions that the evangelicals (and in that sense also Pentecostals and charismatics) take some kind of “spiritual shortcut” and do not give the teaching about sin and sanctification its proper place in the life of the church. The Lutheran doctrine *simul iustus et peccator* (the righteous and sinful at the same time) is simply suffused with too many graces in their opinion. Human rationality is opposed to the concept of ‘passive’ acceptance of salvation by grace without active participation because—in the literal biblical context—such a grace needs to be received by faith.

This reasoning has a tendency to operate on salvation and elimination of sin, which does not work well in the context of literal biblical teaching. The criticism arises due to evangelical claims to exclusivity, where salvation is built upon simple biblical doctrines centred around Christ's atonement on the cross and there is allegedly no other way of being reconciled with God. Furthermore, the reconciliation is accepted by faith and human reason is not involved in the process.

The reasoning behind the role of Scripture versus Tradition is also intriguing. The ever-recurring question from as far back as the Reformers is: what came first, the Church or

Scripture? The Church is based on Scriptural teaching, but it was the Church that collected the biblical books in the canon. What is the role of the historical illumination (church tradition) in relation to revelation (Christ) and inspiration (Bible)? Henry sees the difference between inspiration and illumination, just as there is a distinction between the apostolic age and the post-apostolic, after the original eyewitnesses passed away. But he uses the term “Trinity,” a term that is not mentioned explicitly in the Bible, but was created as an ecumenical doctrine by the church. Similarly, the penal substitution of Christ as an evangelical view of atonement also evolved under specific circumstances in the history of the church (Fackre 1997:171).

Scripture is the starting point for all Christian traditions, but the critical question has to do with what tool we use for its interpretation in post-apostolic times. In traditional mainline churches, it is the ecclesial authority that interprets Scripture. Henry and the evangelical tradition, on the other hand, interpret Scripture in line with its divine inspiration, aided by common rational capacity that is a heritage of the Noahic covenant. As the culture and needs of people change from generation to generation, there is always the danger that reason drifts away from biblical truth. Nevertheless, if it is kept close to the concept of biblical inspiration, it can serve a positive purpose of “faith seeking understanding,” as Fackre puts it:

Such ‘faith seeking understanding’ will meet and acknowledge the paradoxes of the election of Israel, the incarnation of the Word and the intellectually inscrutable divine-human antinomies found everywhere: Scripture, church, sacrament, grace and faith. It will be able to *explore* but not *explain* them (Fackre 1997:175).

Reason takes a back seat within the framework of special revelation. It does not dominate to the same extent as it does within general revelation and Christian traditions based on the Tillichian philosophical construct.

4.6 The Tradition, Ecclesial Illumination, and Karl Rahner

The world was restored after Noah with its rudimentary rational principles that form the basis of our culture (Tillich). Then, God revealed his plan with Israel culminating in the Messiah, Jesus Christ, as the ultimate revelation (Barth). Scripture was inspired as the guide on the way to reconciliation with God (Henry). Now we live in the era of the church founded by Jesus and preserved by the Holy Spirit by way of (ecclesial) illumination, starting on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2) and taking us all the way to the consummation of the present age.

To understand historical-ecclesial illumination, one needs to dive into the thoughts of traditional mainline churches that complement the picture about revelational authority. Karl Rahner, a prominent Roman Catholic theologian, explains this view in his work *Foundations of Christian Faith*. In spite of his faithfulness to the magisterial teaching of his church, he honoured the view of biblical inspiration and led an ecumenical dialogue with evangelical Christianity.

The bottom line of his doctrine of revelation is the Noahic covenant featuring general revelation and common grace. Natural law and natural theology are realities that belong to the dialogue between various Christian movements. But the crucial part comes with special revelation, that is, the covenant with Abraham, Israel, and ultimately with Christ. The Incarnation of the Word is the focal point.

The Second Vatican Council described the connection between Scripture and Tradition. Scripture is divinely inspired and focuses on morals and faith. It contains no errors, but at the same time, it was transmitted in a human way (*The Dogmatic Constitution* 1966:73). The inerrancy is not a focal point of Scripture—as it is the case with the evangelicals—and it is accompanied by ‘Tradition’, a companion to the Scriptures. As with Scripture, Tradition is considered to have apostolic origins and brings a trustworthy testimony to the Gospel, as God never ceases to talk to His church. Tradition is faithfully handed down by the successors of the apostles, the so-called *Magisterium* (*The Dogmatic Constitution* 1966:65f.). Scripture and Tradition are placed at the same level, with the tendency that the latter interprets the former. This is a stumbling block for Protestant Christians even though the Roman Catholic church makes an assurance that tradition is never a source of new revelation and is accountable to the Bible. It needs to be added, however, that the Roman Catholic biblical canon contains seven extra books as compared with the Protestant canon, which may lead to creating new specific doctrines (e.g., the Catholic teaching on purgatory has support in 2 Maccabees 12:41-46).

Rahner analyses this complicated relationship between the Bible and the tradition. The revelation is Christ and it is shared in the church. Thus, any church is forced to create a certain kind of tradition to preserve its teaching. The Scriptures are also the product of the apostolic community heading into the 2nd Century and onwards with a mandate to create a normative

teaching for the church, as Christ had promised to be with his church through the Holy Spirit to the very end of the church era.

The church objectifies its faith and its life in written documents. And it recognizes these objectifications as so pure and successful that they are able to hand on the apostolic church as a norm for future ages (Rahner 1978:373).

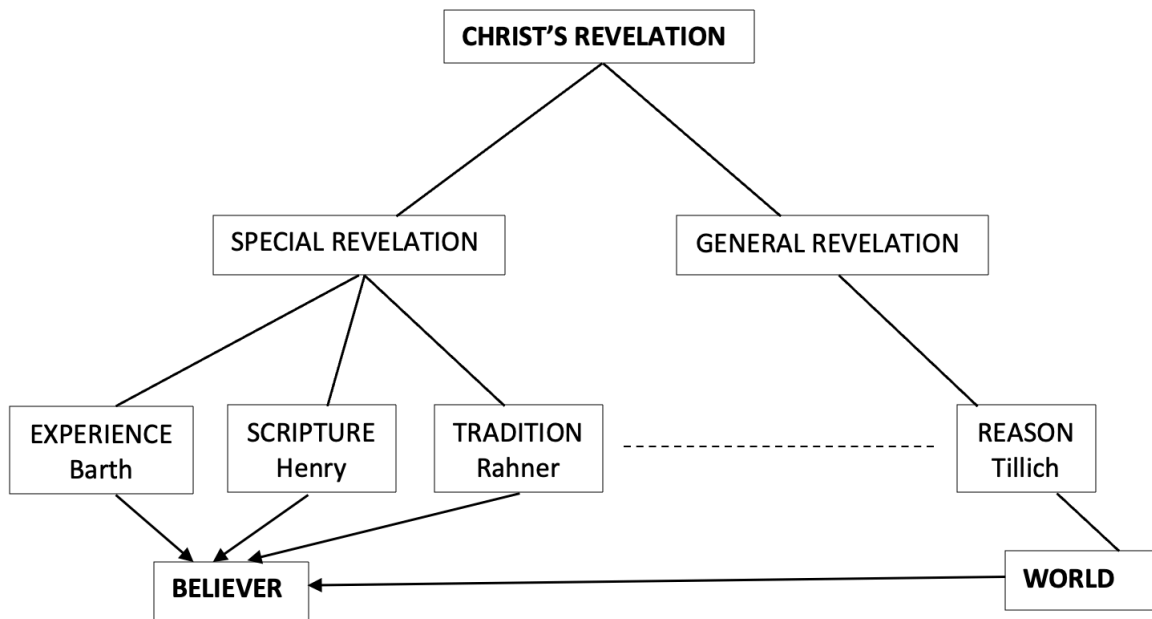
Since the Roman Catholic church is the faithful transmitter of the apostolic succession—from the formation of the Bible to the apocalyptic dissipation—it has the mandate of legitimate Christian tradition through this ecclesial illumination. Rahner has a problem with evangelicals who come ahistorically “from the middle of nowhere” many centuries after Christ’s resurrection and claim the authority to interpret Scripture better than other traditions. An individual Protestant believer or a movement cannot have such an ambition. For Rahner, it is to sever the connection between Jesus and the church due to the time gap to the biblical times (Fackre 1997:194). As a fruit of the shaky evangelical foundations, it is no accident that evangelicals co-exist in the form of thousands of different streams and movements because their doctrines subjectively change too often. By way of contrast, the ecclesial illumination secures that the church stands stable and strong against the winds of modernity and postmodernity and is not susceptible to the culture as mainline Protestantism. The Roman Catholic church has a very conservative teaching as regards biblical ethics, which stands in sharp contrast with e.g. the Lutheran Church in Sweden that was influenced by the cultural understanding of revelation.

On the other hand, there are also problems with ecclesial illumination. There is a consensus that Christ was the ultimate revelation. For Tillich, He was the creating *Logos*. For Barth, Christ was the experiential reality descending with instant illumination through the Spirit. For Henry, Christ was attested by biblical inspiration. For Rahner, Christ reveals himself through the historical-ecclesial illumination. In the Special Revelation sphere, it is a reductionist approach with a set of particular doctrines that cannot be fully justified by biblical text to which it appeals (the teaching about purgatory, sacraments, and others). Henry’s dimension of biblical inspiration is lacking the concept. One needs to have “faith” in the ecclesial illumination, just as evangelicals have faith in the Bible. However, it is easier to have faith in Scripture because it is a single book divinely inspired, once and for all ages, whereas the church councils and popes add new dogmas spanning many centuries to the point that it may become difficult to

follow. Neither, can one be ultimately sure as to whether all subsequent dogmas are being pronounced under the influence of the Holy Spirit or the spirit of the momentary culture.

A subsidiary problem is that the Barthian concept of instant illumination has also been rather neglected. The ecclesial system becomes so hierarchical that it undermines the role of a single believer with individual assets and spiritual gifts in the Body of Christ. The liturgy and prayers are prescribed, and the Christian depends on clergy and rituals more than on individual access to the Holy Spirit. Just as Fackre puts it, “The fullness of the truth is linked to the wholeness of the church. Where the universal priesthood has been reduced to the teaching office of the Roman Catholic Church, the catholicity and freedom of God’s revelatory grace are restricted” (Fackre 1997:199). Among other things—considering that all Christians believe in the same God—the frail flexibility of the church makes their potential contribution to ecumenical dialogue very limited.

Graphical summary of the revelatory views



4.7 The Way of Personal Illumination

We have seen four different models of revelation that God uses as a channel of communication with us. They all complement each other, yet not in a perfect sense as Charlie, Peter, Martin, and Samuel demonstrated in their discussion. It all comes down to our personal illumination as

to how we as individuals understand the divine authority: Which divine voice is the strongest? Paul the apostle, possibly aware of the problem, prays prophetically

... that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power (Ephesians 1:17-19).

General revelation in the form of culture is the weakest voice. It only assures us that God created the world and sustains it, but unless we are satisfied with some sort of epistemological agnosticism, it is impossible to build a personal relationship with our Creator based purely on reason without adding some elements of the special revelation. In one way or another, every believer needs to experience a touch of the Holy Spirit.

H. Richard Niebuhr tries to see the doctrinal differences among Christians occurring naturally as part of a process created by the particular environment in which people are brought up. He says that “We can speak of revelation only in connection with our own history without affirming or denying the history of other communities” (Niebuhr 1941:82). He is very ecumenical and understanding of respective Christian traditions. Even in his classic *Christ and Culture* where he typologically lists five Christian approaches to culture, he favours the last one position “Christ transforming culture”, yet with the acknowledgment that this view hopefully includes the insights of the four others leading us to a “fuller” understanding of truth (Niebuhr 1951:43).

Against this background, it is clear that all our claims to objectivity in our own perception of revelation must be approached with great humility. Karl Barth claimed the objectivity of his revelation based on *solus Christus*, but in practical reality his model of divine encounter works only as a subjective experience. Similarly, Karl Rahner’s ecclesial illumination turns out very reductionist if one does not have enough “personal faith” in the historical revelation being shared by the Spirit with the popes and councils in the era of the church. Henry’s biblical inspiration can also seem to many as exclusivist. None of the other traditions is so radical in claiming the necessity of the born-again stage, regardless of how much the Bible seems to be clear on the subject.

We need to be sensitive to what God does in our culture to avoid living in a bubble and be able to effectively negotiate with others. It is also necessary to study church history and see how Christ, through the Spirit, protected the biblical doctrines of the church over the span of two thousand years. For the benefit of the historical-biblical timeline, however, it is the combination of Henry and Barth that seems to be the most plausible, the Word written and the Word revealed which may be modified as the illuminative Spirit interprets Scripture for us. Henry's insistence on biblical inspiration and inerrancy is not incidental. If the biblical inspiration is plenary, it makes Scripture the most authoritative source of information about God's revelation and the other three modes, tradition, experience, and reason, must always be interpreted in light of the Bible. After all, the other three are dependent on it in any case because they would not have much to say about God if Scripture did not exist.

4.8 Denominational Groups Encompassing the Globality of Divine Revelation

Various denominations and theologies arose as a result of the different interpretations of the concept of divine revelation whether based on Culture, Tradition, Scripture, or Experience. Culture represented by liberal Christianity would reflect the ethical rather than the spiritual-ecclesial dimension and will be dealt with later. The last three can then be represented by concrete denominations having a certain attitude, teaching, and work ethos toward the secular world. All three are crucially important for understanding the complexity of Christianity as a whole. Gabriel Fackre suggests that the Christocentric revelation reaches us through the Gospel indwelling Scripture as its source and substance, is transmitted through the Church and tradition as the resource and guide, and is manifested in the world as its posit with the signs as an aid (Fackre 1997:14).

To be fair, of course, it must be categorically stated that no solid denomination is one-sided. All three aspects are usually present to a greater or lesser degree in all of them. For the study of the Christian maximal impact of globalization process, however, it would be valuable to examine the three modes of revelation independently, with relation to respective Christian nominality characteristics for each of the modes. The typology chosen here is that of Catholic (Tradition), Evangelical (Scripture), and Pentecostal (Experience). As the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences asserted, "Every step toward a better mutual understanding between

Christians will foster in a reciprocal way a better understanding between the countries that now make up the European Union” (COMECE 2007:55).

4.8.1 Tradition and the Roman Catholic Church

In the pursuit of affecting the globalization process, the place of prominence pertains to the role of Tradition. Men and women need to look to the past in order to secure a prosperous future. Western society as a whole is no exception. The Federalist Party of America centred around Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay was very cautious to apply the historically plausible European principles while founding the New World (Hampsher-Monk 1992:205). It secured the United States of America for the centuries ahead. In his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, Edmund Burke, urged the French society not to ignore the historical complexities of the universal human nature and community in order to prevent disastrous results (Burke [1790]:144).

The rational mind of people enjoys learning lessons from history for contemporary application of some of the ideas. Christians need to avail themselves of what history offers by its emphasis on the Judaeo-Christian roots of western communities. Continents such as Europe “cannot be understood without acknowledging the founding role which Christians have played in its history” (COMECE 2007:63). Furthermore, the secular world never deliberately abandoned Christian doctrine. If some speak about a “post-Christian era” in Europe, it has to do with a focus shift following the tremendous boom of natural sciences in modern times, not with any sharp conflict with Christian orthodoxy (Pannenberg 1996: 27).

It is the Roman Catholic Church together with the Eastern Orthodox Church that is to play the predominant role in the acknowledgment of the traditional Christian values and history of the West. Traditionally, the Catholics have excelled in reconciling the Christian heritage with the wisdom of the world. Speaking about its relationship with society, instead of choosing the division ‘Christ and culture’, the Catholic Church usually prefers the term ‘Faith and culture’, as “it may signify both God’s revelation and the existential response and commitment of human beings” (Lundström 2006:24). The Vatican Council II reinforced the fact by popularizing the term *Aggiornamento*, which enables the church to become more engaged in contemporary issues.

A certain dynamic can be observed in the 'formal' principal of Catholic theology, which is the church, as an agent or entity transmitting the gospel. The church as an institution seems to play a more important part in the lives of Catholics than it does among their Protestant counterparts. The advantage of this factor is that the European Union is highly institutionalized, and as such, it may have tendencies to negotiate more easily with other solid institutions.

The 'material' principal of the Catholic nature of salvation is complex, but usually is to be found in Incarnation, i.e., in the visible and tangible elements of the grace of God (John 1:14). The way of redemption is expressed in a sacramental and liturgical way. This brings an opportunity to view the world as another resource of God's blessing. Basically, no other denomination in the West has been so skilled in assimilating human knowledge and the arts into the life of the church.

Both the aspects of institutionalization and Incarnation enable the church to be an efficient messenger of the Christian doctrine in the contemporary world on both the social and the political level. Some ideological concepts popular in today's society have been present for just a couple decades and their eventual functionality is yet to be tested. However, the Catholic Church has been influential for two thousand years and still appeals to a large proportion of lives and minds. This fact must serve as a point of contact and confidence for the Christian in communicating with the so-called secular world.

4.8.2 Scripture and the Evangelical Movement

Another important element in the possibility of impacting society globally is the Word of God. Our Christian faith rests upon the person of God who has revealed Himself to us. The Protestant movement based their primary theological emphasis on Scripture and the Resurrection of Christ, thus contributing to the common Christian heritage and influence. The Lutheran theologian Robert Kolb states that

Our faith rests upon who he is and upon what he has said to us. We have his revelation of who he is and his message for us in the Holy Scriptures. He gives our life meaning and a sense of security. He has established our identities anew by planting his mark, the cross, on our heads and on our hearts. He gives this new existence reality as he sustains us with his Word of promise (Kolb 1993:10).

The distinguishing element of his statement dwells in the fact that the divine comfort does not concern only the Christian community, but also that God is willing to work actively in the rest of mankind, as His plan is universal. God wants to be manifested in the values shared by a globalized society, pointing to the true meaning of life and morality. In this way, the Christian message and theology as such can never become obsolete. Faith is created by the Word and is expressed in our words. Christians are the agents of transmitting God's message to the world. The more effectively this is carried out, the greater the impact the Church will have on the surrounding community.

The problem dividing the community of Christians and weakening their influence is the different hermeneutics applied to Scripture. If we exaggerate a bit, it can be said that meeting two random theologians will result in three different theologies. When Rudolf Bultmann was asked whether it is possible to perform exegesis set free from presuppositions, his answer was a steadfast No (Fee 1991:70). Even though Bultmann spoke only against the context of historical positivism, it is a fact that both our culture and tradition basically exclude a neutral kind of exegesis. All facts are interpreted facts, our knowledge is not neutral but fiduciary, as Polanyi would put it. Gordon Fee, the New Testament exegete, further asserts that "If that is true for the more purely historical task of exegesis, how much more do our presuppositions play a key role in the larger hermeneutical endeavour of theological relevance and application" (Fee 1991:70).

In spite of this perhaps natural, yet unfortunate phenomenon, however, we need to look at the issue from the perspective of globalization. The society that integrates does not favour partialities and fractions. The global mindset is affected by universal or unifying thinking. Furthermore, it is a problem that effectuates a clash among large theological schools, and unfortunately, cannot be solved by pure research for the reasons above. The Baptist scholar David S. Dockery would define the scriptural authority and inspiration in the following way:

We acknowledge Scripture's literary diversity and affirm that it is more than a historical accident or decorative device. This recognition of literary diversity brings a healthy realization of the divine-human authorship of the Bible. Inspiration is thus concursive and plenary, meaning that all Scripture is inspired. We affirm verbal inspiration, meaning that the Spirit's work influences even the choice of words by the human authors, while remaining cognizant of contemporary linguistic theory that suggests that meaning is located at the sentence level and beyond (Dockery 1995:55).

Such a definition could be a stumbling block to many scholars from other Christian traditions. Nevertheless, this view represents millions of Baptists and Methodists forming the two largest North American denominations, as well as many other evangelical Christians, whose belief has been summarized by the Oxford scholar Alister McGrath in the following way: belief in the ultimate authority of Scripture, the unique salvation through Jesus Christ, the need of personal conversion, and the urgency of evangelism (McGrath 2007:80).

A neutral mind, a secular citizen whom Christians will try to reach, observing these vast differences in doctrine, may not feel comfortable to convert and will seek other religions or ideologies instead. He or she, nourished by globalization, will search for a universal system of thought of a New Age type rather than the schisms found within one religion. It is probable that the efforts of ecumenism will get reinforced under the influence of globalization and the hermeneutical problem will be one of the particular issues to discuss.

Along ecumenical lines, the Word of God as the prominent tool of Protestant theologies finds common ground with the Catholics when it comes to ethical values. If we neglect certain exceptions such as European Lutheranism, both the Catholics and evangelicals excelled in preserving the traditional moral values of Scripture (i.e., the Decalogue type of ethics). The view on the bioethical issues, such as abortion, homosexuality, or euthanasia, has been consistent within the greater part of the Christian body and should perhaps be utilized as the starting point whenever believers as a whole demonstrate their faith convictions to the society into which they have been assimilated. If globalization is driven by unpredictable economic forces, it has no guaranteed ethical dimension. Hence, Christians ought to step up to balance the market with their ethical dogma and social work.

4.8.3 The Role of Experience and Pentecostalism

While among Protestants in general can be found various views as to the relationship between Christianity and culture, from the most conservative to the most radical, there is a specific segment that has been somewhat sceptical about the involvement of Christians in the political arena, characterized by sin and secular thinking. This has been the traditional Pentecostal movement with its pursuit of experiencing God's presence and power in the lives of both the individual and the community. Pentecostalism that began as a movement in Los Angeles a few years before the 1906 Asuza Street Revival was neglected for a long time by the rest of the

Christian body, for at least three reasons: (1) the movement was too recent to evaluate properly, (2) most of its believers were recruited from the lower classes, (3) there was persistent hostility towards ecstatic phenomena and the participants' withdrawal from society.

Since then, however, Pentecostalism has experienced dramatic growth and can be considered one of the two major Christian events of the 20th Century, next to ecumenism. If we count on there being about one billion Roman Catholics in the world, and Pentecostals are usually attributed numbers approaching half a billion (together with their charismatic counterparts). That would make them the second largest resource of popular Christian faith. The major locations of growth were traditionally North America, but recently especially in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. According to the Barrett and Johnson statistics (2002:287), if present growth rates continue, some countries in Latin America would have a majority of evangelicals by 2010, of which most will be of Pentecostal origin. In 1996, the reputable Harvard scholar Harvey Cox wrote a book with an apt title *Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-first Century*. The British scholar Allan Anderson adds that "Whatever our opinion or particular experience of Pentecostalism therefore, it is a movement of such magnitude that Christianity itself will never be the same" (Anderson 2004:279).

Pentecostal doctrines are predicated upon an evangelical understanding of Scripture, with the prominent role given to the manifestations of the Holy Spirit. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit comes into the life of a Christian individual within a certain period of time and empowers him or her with the spiritual gifts for ministry. This Baptism is evidenced by the gift of speaking in tongues. In contrast to the traditional Catholic list of spiritual gifts according to Isaiah 11, Pentecostals recognize nine gifts according to 1 Corinthians 12: the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, different kinds of tongues, and interpretation of tongues. Believers attempt to personally experience God both in the church service and their private life. They are open to divine miraculous operations of prophesies and healing.

The movement also infiltrated traditional denominations from the 1960s, with the difference that speaking in tongues is not necessarily considered as an evidence of the Baptism but rather one of the nine gifts (hence the title 'charismatics'). In the Catholic Church, for instance, the Catholic Charismatic Renewal became popular after the Second Vatican Council by the decree

Unitatis redintegratio which acknowledges the presence and work of the Holy Spirit in other Christian denominations (Hocken 1998:151). The Catholic theologian Peter Hocken believes that Catholic charismatics will largely contribute to the ecumenical movement, a fact that is interesting to us from the perspective of globalization (Hocken 1998:157).

Needless to say, there have been some shortcomings of the Pentecostal doctrine. Traditional theologians may point out that it sounds very plausible to ‘play with’ and receive divine manifestations, but how can we define something that is ecstatic, perhaps emotional (not exactly in the sense of Schleiermacher), and uncontrollable? Indeed, typical charismatic gatherings are featured by manifestations that the rational human mind cannot easily accept. One needs either to grasp the phenomena by faith, or apply reason and walk away.

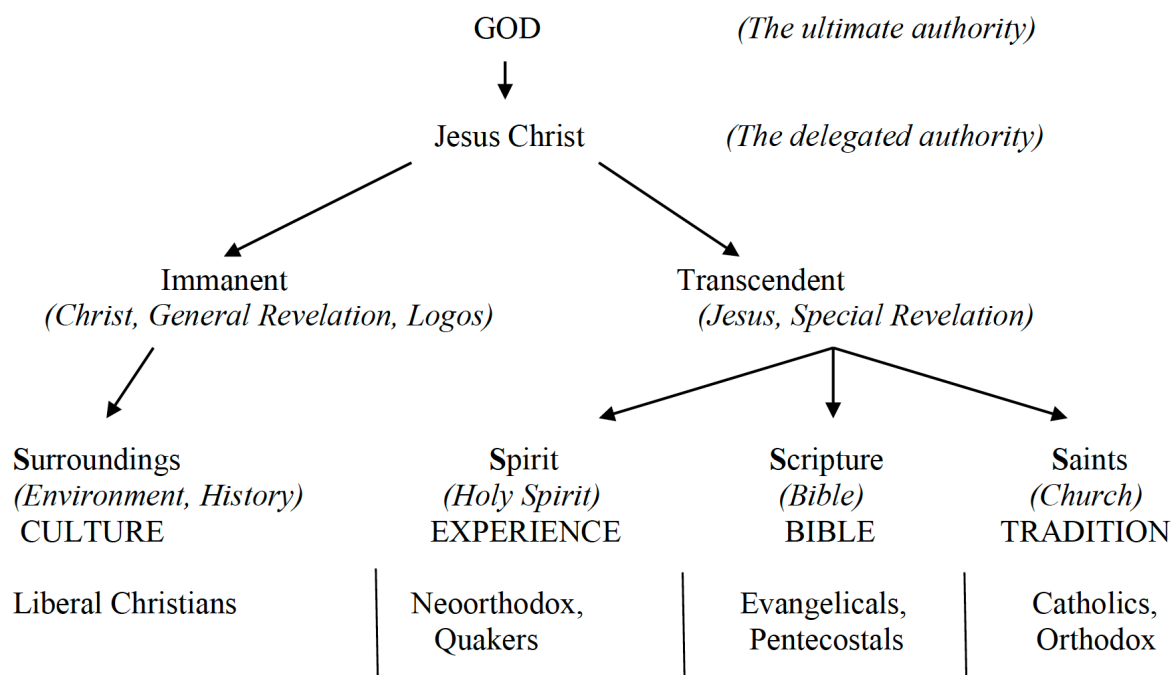
To make things even more complex, William De Arteaga in his efforts to sort out and describe a true divine revival that was represented, e.g., by Jonathan Edwards and the First Great Awakening (launching a new level of spiritual awareness in the thirteen original American colonies during the first half of the 18th Century) basically concludes that all revivals or spiritual awakenings are ‘messy’ (De Arteaga 1996, 283-288). He asserts that true spiritual manifestations are always accompanied by merely emotional, psychic, or even devilish counterparts that aspire to remain in the major focus and thus quench the whole awakening.

Nevertheless, it would be unfortunate to stop trying to ‘experience’, or even throw the whole issue overboard. The number of Pentecostal and charismatic believers is constantly increasing and Christianity as a whole, needs to give acknowledgment to the movement. It is a positive fact that these groups or independent churches, as they sometimes call themselves, mature with the passing of time and are no longer so eager to resist the civil authorities if they conflict with the so-called scriptural law. Instead of rejecting civil duties and over-spiritualising social issues, they readily learn to take responsibility in order to become active citizens not only in terms of the gospel, but also of charitable works and politics. It is particularly the charismatic groups that are very skilled in using the latest technology for marketing or media programs, hand in hand with globalizing trends (Anderson 2004:279).

What needs to be stressed here is that the reality of a true spiritual experience is priceless, not only for the Christian but also for the surrounding world that once again opens up for supernatural phenomena due to the postmodern paradigm of subjectivity. It may well be that it

is the lack of a true spiritual life that prevents the secular community from being more favourable towards Christians. Once we reduce the Christian experience to an ethical level only, it becomes a codex of laws and regulations that is never attractive in itself. It needs to bring with it a fresh metaphysical power. Cox points out that our age actually suffers from the ‘ecstasy deficit’. (Cox 1996:83). Despite some problems that certainly need to be solved in the future, the Pentecostals show us the way to embrace the Spirit within the ortho-experiential approach.

Christian streams in the light of the doctrine of revelation



4.8.4 The globalized church

We have an obligation to admire the Catholic Church for preserving the width and depth of Christian tradition; we need to empathize with the evangelical movement for its effort to preserve the truth of Scripture; and we ought to also give credit to the Pentecostal-charismatic congregations for reminding us that God exists among his people through spiritual experience. The objective here is not to evaluate which one is the most effective tool. On the contrary, by

combining the three pillars, by balancing faith and reason, Christians have the potential to reach the global society.

By way of their millions of adherents, the three typological denominations or movements demonstrated that their particular concept is attractive and appealing to many. With the pressures of time and space, the globalizing society is forced to combine different cultural and community approaches, something that is perhaps unavoidable for the Church as well if it wishes to continue to exert an influence in the world. This fact is not negative in itself: Tradition brings respect and continuity, Scripture exposes spiritual truth and morals, and Experience complements the pattern with empowerment and freshness.

In his book *Streams of Living Water: Celebrating the Great Traditions of Christian Faith*, Richard Foster elaborates on six basic elements to be absorbed by the universal Church: the contemplative tradition (discovering the prayer-filled life), the holiness tradition (discovering the virtuous life), the charismatic tradition (discovering the Spirit-empowered life), the social justice tradition (discovering the compassionate life), the evangelical tradition (discovering the Word-centred life), and the incarnational tradition (discovering the sacramental life). The world of globalization is one lacking borders and boundaries. The breakthrough of the church in the world may dwell in the same principle. The one true (in)visible Church redeemed from mutual congregational obstacles, preserving its fullness and a good testimony through exercising a life of prayer, the Word, virtue, sacrament, compassion, and empowerment.

CHAPTER 5

Multiverse Sides of Pentecostal Hermeneutics in the Pursuit of the Dialectics between the Biblical Historical Timeline and the Spirit

5.1 Introduction

As has been shown, the problem of interpreting the biblical-historical timeline as revealed in the Word of God is complex and not always based purely on rational argument. The experiential part, in the form of presuppositions or what we choose to call it, plays an important role in how we understand different biblical verses and eventually broader Christian doctrines. In this section, an attempt will be made to look at the problem of actual hermeneutics, the craft of interpreting texts, with a focus on the Pentecostal perspective. The need for hermeneutics arises when there is a question or disagreement regarding the meaning of a sacred text, in our case the Bible. A brief look at the definition and historical aspects of hermeneutics will help to build a basis and gain perspective while moving towards understanding a Pentecostal hermeneutic.

According to Marle, the use of the word “Hermeneutics” in the title of a theological work emerged among Protestants in 1654 and for Catholics in 1776 (1967:22). The Greek verb *hermeneuein* has three meanings – “to say, to explain, and to translate” (Palmer 1969:12-32; Soulen 1981:82). These express different levels of the process when we want to understand the original meaning. Saying may also mean explaining, and the process can even include translating into another language. Words evolve over a given period of time, and mean different things given their context (in which a word is used and who is using it). This is also applicable to the word “hermeneutics.”

There are currently three definitions in use for the word “hermeneutics” – the traditional, the more recent definition and a specific sub-set of the latter. The traditional definition focuses on a systematic/orderly set of principles and laws of interpretation of a sacred text. Here, hermeneutics is defined as the art and science of interpretation (Klein, Blomberg and Hubbard 1993:5-6.) The traditional view is text centred, or focused, on the author’s intent (Osborne 1991:367) while the modern or more recent definition, also called the “new hermeneutic” seeks

a phenomenology of understanding. Here the focus or centre has moved from the text to the reader. The reason for this shift is that it is argued that the text does not have a meaning apart from the reader. The “new hermeneutic” focuses on how the reader hears and or understands a text given his/her own personal background/life history (Soulen 1981:82,84). With yet another focus on the reader, a sub-set to the modern definition is a “hermeneutic” or “hermeneutics” that is focused on a specific/particular and self-confessed frame of reference that the “reader” adopts or uses as a template for interpretation of a text or utterance (Klein, Blomberg and Hubbard 1993:5-6). This hermeneutic is concerned with specific fields, such as feminism, liberation and others areas of current interest, and such an approach to interpretation may suffer from presuppositions that the interpreter reads into the actual text. The traditional definition with its focus on the original text thus appears to be the most appealing as a means to obtaining the most objective analysis.

5.2 The History of Hermeneutics

An historical survey is helpful in anchoring the modern Pentecostal view and it is no different in the field of hermeneutics since our lives do not exist in an historical vacuum and church history provides many lessons that we can learn from.

5.2.1 The Early church

Hermeneutics in the Early Church covers a period lasting roughly until the 6th Century. One of the first hermeneutical schools was founded in the city of Alexandria. It became known for the term “allegory.” Allegory states that the “real” or “true” meaning of a text is not literal. Instead, the primary goal is the message that the interpreter desires to mediate (Mickelsen 1963:28). It is basically the Platonic theory that is the source of this approach since Plato stated that “the material world”, “the world of experience” was not the real world, but only a shadow of the reality of a spiritual world. The result of this thought is that one looks for deeper and more spiritual or mystical understandings in the text (Geisler 2000:595).

At the same time, in another city called Antioch, the local Christians being more influenced by the Jewish community used methods of hermeneutics that were more “literal and historical” as opposed to the “allegorical” alternative. As Ferguson puts it, “In fact, wherever the influence

of the synagogue was felt by the church, scriptural interpretation seemed to move in the direction of literalism” (1986:150). Another difference between the two schools was that in Antioch it was argued that even though interpretation was to be “literal,” this did not exclude a “metaphorical” meaning, where necessary, in a text. For example, when Jesus said He is the “bread of life,” this did not mean that He was a loaf of bread (Mickelsen 1963:33). Regarding interpretation, Lucian, the founder of the Antiochian school, stated that every passage has primarily a literal meaning, and only secondarily a typological one alongside it, thus pointing to the relationship between the Old and New Testaments (Dunnett 1984:69).

The Alexandrian school of “allegorizing” eventually prevailed because of the Antiochian Nestorian controversies of the 4th and 5th centuries dealing with the relationship of Christ’s human and divine natures in a way that departed from Christian orthodoxy. This resulted in a reduced influence of the Antiochian school, and the schism between the Western and Eastern churches speeded up the loss of the Antiochian methods of interpretation even further (Mickelsen 1963:33).

5.2.2 The Middle Ages

The Middle Ages between the sixth and fifteenth centuries were distinguished by three approaches representing biblical hermeneutics during this period. The first approach was that of deferring to “traditional” (church fathers) sources for interpretation. The “catena,” and the “gloss” are two means or methods used at this time to help maintain the “traditional” patristic views. Mediaeval “catenas” would serve as a reference to Augustine or Jerome with their traditional doctrinal views. The “catena” then generated what was known as the “gloss.” The “gloss” was a running commentary or annotations from the church fathers, which were written in the margin or interspersed throughout the biblical text (Klein, Blomberg & Hubbard, Jr. 1993:37-38; Mickelsen 1963:36-37).

The second approach to hermeneutics at this time was called “the fourfold sense” of Scripture approach. The “fourfold” approach comprised the literal, allegorical, tropological (or moral), and lastly the anagogical perception. An example of this would be how the word “Jerusalem” would be seen in its “fourfold sense.” Literally, Jerusalem would mean the city of the Jews;

allegorically, it would refer to the church; tropologically, the soul; anagogically, the Christians' heavenly home (Froehlich 1984:28).

The last or third hermeneutical approach of this period was that of "historical" interpretation. Here mediaeval interpreters sought to find the historical sense of the Scriptures by looking to Jewish authorities (Klein, Blomberg & Hubbard 1993:38). Another move towards a "historical/more literal" approach of interpretation occurred during the end of the mediaeval period and was called "scholasticism" (Keegan 1985:16). "Scholasticism" got its influence from Aristotelian philosophy, which resulted in a greater rationalism, which was in keeping with a more literal exegesis (Dunnett 1984:71; Klein, Blomberg & Hubbard 1993:39). Generally, the mediaeval period did not bring anything new to the field of biblical interpretation, but one cannot deny a decline in the use of allegorical methods of interpretation even though they were still in use. Scholasticism's emphasis on using reason revealed the subjectivity that was found in allegory and weakened confidence in its validity (Klein, Blomberg & Hubbard 1993:39).

5.2.3 The Reformation

Martin Luther's hermeneutical views shared by the most prominent figures of the Reformation were shaped by three factors, that of people, education, and experience. In terms of the first two, it has been noted that one of the main impetuses of Luther's hermeneutic was Nicholas of Lyra who lived in the 13th/14th Century (Mickelsen 1963:36-37). It has been said that, "If Lyra had not piped, Luther would not have danced" (Dunnett 1984:72). Nicholas' influence on Luther evolved from the fact that Luther attended the University of Erfurt where Nicholas' views on biblical interpretation were largely exercised. Nicholas consented to the "fourfold sense" of interpretation, but at the same time, he was influenced by rabbinical works that put more emphasis on the literal sense of a text (Mickelsen 1963:37-38). For Nicolas of Lyra, the literal sense was the basis for interpreting the other senses (Dunnett 1984:72). Luther respected him highly as a Bible interpreter and took on a similar literal approach (Mickelsen 1963:38).

Sometime between 1513-1517 an event took place in Luther's life that would shape his outlook of biblical interpretation and his response to the Catholic Church that he was a part of. It happened when the reality of Romans 1:17 struck him: "The righteous shall live by faith."

Luther grasped the fact that righteousness must come as a gift from God, and not be based on human ability to keep the law of God (Ferguson 1986:154-155). The impact of this “experience” on Luther’s hermeneutics after 1517 was reflected in his notion that “only a single, proper original sense makes good theologians” (Dunnett 1984:72), and to allegorize is “to juggle with Scripture” (Ferguson 1986:160). He then directed his criticism against the Roman Catholic teaching concerning “indulgences”. Indulgences were part of a broader Catholic soteriological concept of purgatory that had lacked any proper biblical foundation. As a result, in seeking a reform, Luther nailed his Ninety-five Theses to the door of the All Saints’ Church in Wittenberg (Ferguson 1986:154-155).

Another influential person during the reformation was John Calvin. Both Calvin and Luther agreed on the principals of *solus Christus* (Christ alone), *sola Scriptura* (Scripture alone), and *sola fide* (by faith alone). The main difference between Calvin and Luther was that Luther emphasized the necessity of Christological content in a specific biblical book (Dunnett 1984:73). If the book did not testify sufficiently about Christ and his gospel, Luther spent only limited time with it (Mickelsen 1963:38). While Luther’s approach was more “subjective” concerning the superiority of Christ, Calvin’s approach was more “objective” balancing the general doctrinal content (Dunnett 1984:73; Ferguson 1986:159).

Be that as it may, the Reformation brought about a change in the source of authority for biblical interpretation. The source of interpretive authority no longer rested with the established church, but with the Bible, itself (Keegan 1985:18-19; Osborne 1991:11). This shift in authority and the invention of the printing press would forever change how Christians would look upon the Bible. The mass printing of the Bible in the common language allowed people for the first time to read and interpret Scripture for themselves, independently of the Church’s authority for interpretation.

5.2.4 The era of the Enlightenment

Until the Enlightenment of the 17th and 18th centuries, the vast majority of biblical interpretations was undertaken by Christians and in a church setting. This fact was changing at the outbreak of the modern era. The Scriptures were being studied more objectively in universities, looked upon and interpreted just like any other piece of literature. The merely

normative element of Scripture was being transformed into a descriptive one in certain intellectual circles. One can say that in the post-Reformation, there evolved two characteristics of the Enlightenment affecting the biblical interpretation; namely, the notions of “pietism” and “rationalism” (Kaiser & Silva 1994:226).

“Pietism” arose as a reaction to a sterile doctrinal dogmatism and the barren liturgical worship taking place in protestant churches. This kind of spiritual coldness was demonstrated by a lack of personal faith and pious Christian practice (Kaiser & Silva 1994:226; Klein, Blomberg & Hubbard 1993:42). Pietism called for enhanced Bible understanding, a return to pious Christian acts of service, and for spiritually equipped ministers. Pietism influenced protestant Christianity with its focus on a personal faith and relationship with God. John Wesley, a father of Methodism, met with the pietists and his life was transformed after an encounter with the Moravian brethren.

The second characteristic of the Enlightenment was that of the idea of “rationalism.” Rationalism sees the mind’s ability to reason as the ultimate authority in determining truth (Klein, Blomberg & Hubbard 1993:43). The result of rationalism is that Scripture is evaluated by human reason. For instance, if some event or story in the Bible cannot be “rationalized” or understood logically, then for the “rationalist” the Bible is in error at that point (McQuilkin 1992:27-28).

5.2.5 The historical-critical method

In the 19th Century, we observe the rise of what has been called the “historical-critical method” of biblical interpretation. The “historical critical method” implies the following assumptions (Klein, Blomberg & Hubbard 1993:44): Firstly, it sees historical advancement as an evolving process that underlies everything (“developmentalism”) (Klein, Blomberg & Hubbard 1993:44). Secondly, it uses the idea of “rationalism”, where human reasoning is seen as the apex of interpreting the Bible (McKnight 1988:45). Thirdly, there exists the notion of “naturalism”, which interprets Scripture or any event without the possibility of God’s authorship or intervention (McQuilkin 1992:23). Lastly, it is assumed that the best contribution that the Bible provides is not its theological teaching, but its ethical and moral echo.

The results of the above premises can be observed in at least three obvious approaches toward biblical interpretation. For the first, there has been a shift in focus from trying to find out what the text meant, to looking for the sources behind the text, which was called “source criticism.” The desire at hand was to “reconstruct” or “recreate” the ancient culture and religion behind the texts. Secondly, Scripture was not now being viewed as an everlasting revelation, but something that had developed historically (Klein, Blomberg & Hubbard 1993:44). Thirdly, a natural by-product of the “historical method,” “rationalism,” and “naturalism,” was that of scholars divorcing themselves from any dogmatic or systematic theologies of the Bible in an attempt to maintain “objectivity” (Soulen 1981:88). According to these scholars, it felt that there were too many differences, discrepancies, and a lack of unity between the texts to harmonize and unify them with systemic theologies and dogmas.

5.2.6 The modern approaches to hermeneutics

In the 20th Century the focus shifted to a more philosophical type of hermeneutics, that is, from being text-specific to reader-specific. The ultimate goal was to determine the “how and why” of a reader’s understanding (Klein, Blomberg & Hubbard 1993:6; McQuilkin 1992:52; Osborne 1991:367). Departing from the text, however, bears with it dangers of satisfying the reader’s needs rather than informing him about the original message. “If there is anything distinctive about contemporary Hermeneutics, it is precisely its emphasis on the *subjectivity* and *relativity* of interpretation” (Kaiser & Silva 1994:241).

This situation evolved over a period of time and several human actors contributed to the development and shaped the modern way of hermeneutics. One of them was Friedrich Schleiermacher who began questioning the relationship of biblical interpretation to the process of interpreting texts in *a general way* (McCartney and Clayton 1994:99). For Schleiermacher the locus of his hermeneutic/s was that of ‘understanding’, and grammar and language were the mediums through which ‘understanding’ was conveyed (Palmer 1969:84-85). According to Schleiermacher, ‘grammatical’(objective) and ‘psychological’(subjective) factors are needed for one to ‘understand and interpret’ a text (McCartney and Clayton 1994:99; Osborne 1991). The grammatical objective factor and interpretation comes from a historical and linguistic

analysis (Dunnett 1984:82). The psychological and subjective factor must be aligned with the mind and purpose of the author (Ferguson 1986:167; Palmer 1969:89).

Another influential figure was Wilhem Dilthey who expanded the idea of a *general* hermeneutic by applying it to the event of *history* (Osborne 1991:368). Dilthey focuses not on interpretation and understanding of human communication, but on “how” one interprets, understands and reconstructs history. Therefore, for Dilthey meaning and understanding is always historical and changing with the course of time, it is not fixed or set. Meaning can take place because we are all part of a “historical consciousness” (Palmer 1969:118). For Dilthey, like Schleiermacher, the interpreter needs to experience, or re-experience the original creative occasion of the writer or author for the purpose of doing justice to the text (Ferguson 1986:169).

The German philosopher made an important contribution to hermeneutics with the ontological concept of human existence (Ferguson 1986:170). For Heidegger, language is the means by which “being” is revealed (McCartney and Clayton 1994:23). Meaning is found through the use of three steps in what Heidegger calls the “Hermeneutical circle.” In this circle, the interpreter first brings his/her pre-understandings to the task. The pre-understanding is then tested, modified, asserted, or revised. Lastly, the interpreter’s modified understanding becomes the new pre-understanding and horizon in the next phase of the process (Ferguson 1986:170).

One of Heidegger’s influential students was Hans-George Gadamer. His approach to philosophical hermeneutics views “understanding” rooted in language and dialogue. Gadamer felt that a hermeneutics rooted in language and dialogue would help avoid randomness (Palmer 1969:165-166,177). For Gadamer “understanding” occurs through the process of what he calls “Hermeneutical Fusion.” The idea is that the meaning of the text is generated when the reader’s “horizon of understanding” (the present) meets and responds to the “horizon” of the text (the past), where the end result is a “fusion” of horizons. (McCartney & Clayton 1994:280; Osborne 1991:370) According to Gadamer, our “present horizon” is furnished by tradition, which is not a separate variable estranged from our thinking but rather an integral part of the “horizon” where we do our thinking (Palmer 1969:182-183).

For the modern development of hermeneutics, it is also beneficial to mention the French philosopher, Paul Ricoeur. He is in agreement with Gadamer that the hermeneutical question is predominantly a philosophical one, focusing on the philosophy of language. Language for Ricoeur is revelatory and the interpreter needs to take a position of 'ignorance' and allow the text to reveal and illuminate the reader (Ferguson 1986:6). For Ricoeur, the real power of any text is its ability to change an individual. "Texts" are seen as referring to a new or different world that occurs in front of the text itself. Such a world encourages, challenges, and inspires its readers to change or live in this other "world". Imagination is key to Ricoeur's hermeneutic because it allows this "world" in front of the text to be seen, heard and experienced. It should be noted that Ricoeur sees any text as a painting, rather than as a photograph. Applied to biblical interpretation, this means that language is sufficient to convey God's thoughts accurately, but not comprehensively due to the fact that a reader's ability to receive it is flawed and imperfect (McCartney and Clayton 1994:27-28).

To sum up the modern era, understanding one's own *subjectivity* or *presuppositions* in the process of biblical interpretation is not necessarily negative and may even be helpful (Dunnett 1984:88). One potential problem with focus on the *subjective* and not on the *text* is, however, the potential for numerous meanings, where all of them would be considered valid. Taking this approach too far would lead to a point where one can never really know anything with certainty, and being left with "shades" of meaning rather than the intended understanding. It is still necessary to remind ourselves that "the hermeneutical experience should be led by the text" (Palmer 1969:244).

From the Pentecostal perspective, the Christian life is a daily communication with the Spirit who was present at the creation, played a part in redemption, sanctifies us in the renewal stage and fulfils all God's promises at the consummation. Day by day conversations can help us see the importance of a text-centred approach. It is in our conversations where we seek to "understand" or "interpret" the meaning of what the Spirit is saying to us based on the "context" of the written Word. While there is always a potential for misunderstanding during communication, one key that helps minimize it is "experienced relationship" as we grow into the knowledge of the biblical text and our 'objective' understanding increases. The new or modern way of hermeneutics sees the need for numerous variables based on the historical and psychological context obtained by the reader relativizing the original text, whereas it could be

beneficial to refocus on the ‘illuminating’ work of the Spirit of God. It is no surprise that the philosophers’ promulgating ‘modern’ hermeneutics do not consider the Bible as divinely inspired and follow the culture from a deistic point of view (Ferguson 1986:170). Because of this, the struggle for understanding the historical-biblical timeline in Scripture does not concern only the inner mystery of the original text but also an unwillingness to accept its normative value.

5.2.7 Hermeneutics and Pentecostalism

Apart from the main hermeneutical frameworks associated with giving priority to philosophy, culture, or church tradition within the ortho-experiential approach, it is important to say a few words about the Pentecostal methods of hermeneutics as they have a tendency to hover between the Spirit and the Word of God.

There are Pentecostals who have had an experiential encounter with the Spirit and ‘then’ made an effort to interpret their experience into the related framework of the biblical-historical timeline. The principle “Faith first and understanding second” led many to experience the Lord for the baptism in the Holy Spirit without a proper rational understanding. A biblical example of this phenomenon would be Saul on his way to Damascus when he encountered the living Christ and it took him many years to digest the rational understanding of the newly arisen situation when he received his Christian calling for missions (Acts 26:12ff.). It is not that spiritual experience creates its own subjective theology. Rather, the experience helps to properly understand the objective theology that already exists.

There are other Pentecostal believers, however, who read or study the Scriptures first, rationally consent to the Spirit doctrines, and ‘then’ hunger for an encounter with God in the form of the Spirit baptism or similar. These allowed the biblical text to navigate them into the direction of seeking spiritual manifestations.

Thirdly, there is another group of non-Pentecostals than understand the biblical concept about the Spirit rationally but do not have the hunger or motivation to seek more deeply within the Spirit and are even sceptical about subsequent spiritual experiences such as Baptism in the Spirit (see Hummel 1978:21-28).

Understanding these different groups is beneficial when assessing one's hermeneutics and his or her starting point of the hermeneutical analysis. Could it be that one's experience of being "Baptized in the Spirit" is so radically life-changing that one seeks and needs to make sense of what one has experienced? It may well be that the idea of making sense of our experiences is part of our human nature. This activity is what I would call "mental or cognitive homeostasis," the need to bring understanding, balance and order to one's life. Since most Christians who have had this experience hold to some view of the authority of the Scriptures, they interrogate the Bible to describe their experience. It could also be that this experience of God's intervention, and empowerment sets the tone and the outlook that one has towards the Scriptures. Could it be that the Baptism in the Spirit brings a new set of "eyes" by which one looks at the Biblical text? Margaret Poloma summarizes this idea while focusing individuals who have had charismatic experiences: "The researcher's own direct, personal experience may actually serve to improve the analysis. Experience becomes an original source of data" (1982:4).

In the final analysis, the hermeneutical problem remains the same challenge both for Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal scholars and believers. The source text is primarily the Scriptures and with the gap of two thousand years from the original events, the art of hermeneutics goes primarily back to the basics of understanding the historical context of the original languages and cultural settings. But if we trust the Spirit that He remains the same and manifests himself in all four grand acts of God of creation, redemption, renewal and fulfilment, then the ortho-experiential Pentecostal approach to hermeneutics gains a certain right and a slight advantage in possibility and potential to interpret the events in one accord with the actual intent of the biblical writer.

5.3 The Development of Pentecostal Hermeneutics

5.3.1 The Spirit baptism versus the initial gift of tongues

Within Pentecostalism one can trace a hermeneutical development and different phases or stages of the Pentecostal experiences in relation to the Scriptures. The first stage would be the "classical" Pentecostals claiming that for the true Pentecostal, Baptism in the Spirit is a possible reality and evidenced by the spiritual gift of speaking in tongues. The initial "sign" of speaking in tongues is considered different than the Spirit-given gift of speaking in tongues that occurs

in the context of a service (Hollenweger 1988:9). The other spiritual gifts are part of the package of gifts but do not carry the same level of importance as speaking in tongues. The ‘Baptism of the Spirit’ and the ‘supra-historical and supra-natural’ views are strongly emphasized as points of departure in this sort of Pentecostal hermeneutic.

Looking at the stream of Pentecostalism in the 20th Century, the first name that comes to mind is that of Charles Fox Parham (1873-1929). After an eastern summer tour of holiness groups in the United States, Parham became convinced that “tongues” was the biblical “sign” of Spirit Baptism. In 1900, Parham opened an informal Bible school where he urged students to search for what the Bible taught regarding this “sign” of tongues (Menziez 2000:121ff.). Commenting on his students’ search, Parham noted:

In December of 1900 we had our examination upon the subject of repentance, conversion, consecration, sanctification, healing, and the soon coming of the Lord. We had reached in our studies a problem. What about the second chapter of Acts? . . . I set the students at work studying out diligently what the Bible evidence of the baptism of the Holy Ghost (Dayton 1987:20).

Around 1901, one of Parham’s student, Agnes Ozman was ‘baptized in the Holy Spirit’ with the evidence of speaking in tongues. It became such a popular phenomenon that before 1908 all Pentecostals, (Parham included), held that the tongues experienced in Spirit Baptism were actual languages. These supernaturally given languages would help speed up the end time missionary endeavour of reaching the whole world with the good news, because the barriers of long linguistic studies could be by-passed (Jacobsen 2003:4-5).

Parham’s influence extended to his pupil W. J Seymour who carried his message to Los Angeles in 1906. That is where we really speak about the birth of the Pentecostal movement in the 20th Century because the Azusa Street revival that Seymour led became the catalyst of the movement world-wide (Hollenweger 1988:22; Jacobsen 2003:57). Ironically, when Seymour first accepted the pastorate at Azusa Street and began teaching that speaking in tongues was the only sign of Spirit Baptism, Seymour himself had not yet had this experience (Jacobsen 2003:62).

According to Hollenweger, the first original theologian of the American Pentecostal movement was W. H. Durham (1988:25). He initially did not see tongues as always evidential for Spirit

Baptism but changed his view in 1907 when after being prayed for, he was baptized in the Spirit and began speaking in tongues (Synan 1997:132). Donald Gee (1891-1966), a Pentecostal Theologian of the Assemblies of God in Britain commenting on the importance of initial evidence (tongues speaking) for the continuation of the Pentecostal revival says:

Experience has proved that wherever there has been a weakening on this point fewer and fewer believers have in actual fact been baptized in the Holy Spirit and the testimony has tended to lose the fire that gave it birth and keeps it living (Lederle 1988:23).

It is important to note that, as was the case for most early Pentecostals, Gee did not see Spirit Baptism as a cold and lifeless doctrine or theology, but rather as something that was real and vibrant (McGee 1991:106). This experiential ortho-praxis has been one of the most distinguishing elements of the Pentecostal movement. Rather than a mere mental consent, the believers expressed their faith in the tongues as something both biblical and functional in their own lives as a spiritual blessing.

It was not only men who had had an influence in the early Pentecostal movement. Women ministers played an important role as well. One such influential woman was Aimee Simple McPherson who started an evangelistic ministry. While preaching about Ezekiel's vision (Ezekiel 1:1-28) in 1921, she conceived the idea of the "Foursquare Gospel." Her teaching included "speaking in tongues" as the sign of the Spirit baptism (Synan 1997:201.) By the "Foursquare Gospel", she meant the following: "Jesus saves us according to John 3:16. He baptizes us with the Holy Spirit according to Acts 2:4. He heals our bodies according to James 5:14-15. And Jesus is coming again to receive us unto Himself according to 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17" (Dayton 1987:21).

Pentecostals reached out beyond their denominations through the use of organizations like the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International (FGBMFI), formed by Demos Shakarian from California in the 'fifties. The goal of the FGBMFI, which was made up of Spirit-filled businessmen, was to evangelize and witness to non-Pentecostals. The FGBMFI was successful in reaching mainline Protestants with the Pentecostal message of Spirit baptism since the organization did not wish to make converts to Pentecostal denominations. In his book *The Happiest People on Earth*, Shakarian shares his experience of being baptized in the Spirit. In a spiritual encounter, he began to speak in tongues and experienced an intensive love of Christ.

When he opened his mouth to speak, words came out that he did not comprehend. The words Demos spoke were not Spanish, Armenian or English, but they came out of his mouth as if he had used them his whole life (Shakarian 1975:34-36). He was thus baptized in the Spirit with speaking in tongues as the sign of it (Shakarian 1975:143).

The ‘fifties’ was the era when Pentecostal teaching made inroads into other mainline denominations through the media and technology of the age. One of the most influential American Pentecostal healing evangelists was Oral Granville Roberts. At a young age, he was dying from tuberculosis but God healed him in response to the prayer of an evangelist.

The preacher came over and took hold of me. He led me to the microphone and said, “Son, tell the people what the Lord has done for you.” All my life I had been a stutterer. I had been scared of crowds. I would freeze on the spot. But I took the microphone from his hands and spoke to that crowd as if I had spent half of my life on a platform. My tongue was loose, and I could talk (Roberts 1972:34-35).

In his autobiography, Roberts makes the comment in explaining what was the distinct feature of the mainline Pentecostal groups. He was one of the influential tele-evangelists who believed and taught about Baptism in the Spirit with the attendant speaking of tongues.

Rather, it is that at the turn of the century the founders of the Pentecostal churches reclaimed a valid Biblical experience—the Baptism with the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues. It is called the Pentecostal experience (Roberts 1972:129).

At that time, the Pentecostal doctrine was reaching the mainline churches to such an extent that we can observe the first ecumenical tendencies to bridge their respective teachings into a broader traditional Christian context. One of the most influential and ecumenical Pentecostals was David du Plessis, sometimes also called “Mr. Pentecost”, from South Africa (Synan 1997:224-226). He was also baptized in the Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues (Lederle 1988:47). A noteworthy fact in his theology was his Christocentric emphasis while teaching about Spirit baptism. He taught people to focus on Christ as the Baptizer rather than on seeking “the Baptism.” As an ecumenical figure, by focusing on Christ, Du Plessis wanted to keep the motives of the baptism candidates pure as well as prevent a range of common excesses typical for services focusing on uncontrolled spiritual manifestations. While speaking to a group of people from the World Council of Churches, he noted:

I am not here to confront you with Pentecostalism. I am not here to plead for it.

I am here to confront you with Jesus Christ, the light of the world, yes, but also the baptizer in the Holy Spirit. I would like to challenge the churches as to why Christ is never mentioned as the baptizer in the Holy Spirit. As far as I can see, Jesus never turned this ministry over to the church. It is a ministry that He kept for himself (Du Plessis 1977:200).

As the number of Pentecostal believers grew in the mainline churches, they started to organize themselves in Pentecostal-charismatic groups within the same denomination. These believers are sometimes called Neo-Pentecostals, that is, charismatics who are theologically Pentecostal but have not left the traditional church. (Lederle 1988:43.). Dennis Bennett was an important church figure associated with the beginning modern charismatic renewal. Like the others, Bennett did speak in tongues after the prayer for the Spirit baptism. In the following quote, Bennett had asked a friend to pray for him to be baptized in the Spirit:

Then he prayed in English, asking Jesus to baptize me in the Holy Spirit. I began to pray, as he told me, and I prayed very quietly, too. I was not about to get even a little bit excited! I was simply following instructions. I suppose I must have prayed out loud for about twenty minutes – at least it seemed to be a long time – and was just about to give up when a very strange thing happened. My tongue tripped, just as it might when you are trying to recite a tongue twister, and I began to speak in a new language! (Bennett 1970:20).

Commenting on what had just occurred, Bennett noted that if he had received some kind of gift, he did not have a full understanding of it and felt the need to go home to unwrap it (Bennett 1970:21). He needed time to process what had just happened to him. Regarding his experience, it is noteworthy that Bennett thought he would need to “feel” something for his experience to be valid. It could be that one’s desire to “feel” a certain way when encountering something new is part of human nature, as emotions are part of the human soul. Reason and emotions need to work together to obtain a satisfactory equilibrium of the inner being.

5.3.2 Spirit Baptism versus all the spiritual gifts and in-fillings

The classical Pentecostal view counts on Spirit Baptism being accompanied by the predominant spiritual gift of speaking in tongues. There is, however, another hermeneutical alternative or stage maintained by other Pentecostal groups that any of the nine spiritual gifts based on 1 Cor 12 can serve as evidence for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. In this regard, there is no difference between the gifts of speaking in tongues, the word of wisdom, prophecy etc. All the gifts are qualitatively equal and demonstrate a real Pentecostal experience.

One of the pioneers of this view was F. F. Bosworth. He was baptized in the Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues in 1906. It was during a period of ongoing revival meetings that Bosworth began to question the idea of “tongues” as evidence for the Spirit baptism. Blumhofer, reviewing the impact of the early Pentecostal movement, went as far as calling it a “doctrinal error” that could lead to a disregard of the other gifts and a sense of the superficiality of the baptism (Blumhofer 1989:239-240). For Bosworth, any one of the gifts of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 could be a sign that a person was baptized in the Spirit (Hollenweger 1988:32).

Two European Pentecostal pioneers, T.B Barrett and George Jeffreys maintained a similar view. (McGee 1991:108) George Jeffreys, together with his brother Stephen, founded the Elim Pentecostal church. Both brothers were drawn into the revival in Wales. The Elim church did not consider tongues as the “initial” sign of the Spirit baptism (Hollenweger 1988:200). Their declaration of faith suggested that any spiritual gift can be a validator of the Spirit baptism. At the first European Pentecostal Conference held in 1939, George Jeffreys stated that any of the “supernatural Gifts of the Spirit” should be seen as a valid sign of the baptism of the Spirit (Hollenweger 1988:335).

Charles Finney was known as a prominent evangelist of his time who experienced many moves of God during his services. For Finney, the Baptism in the Spirit occurs after personal conversion, and not only for empowerment for ministry, but (assuming a Methodist approach) theologically as a means to entire sanctification. Both the empowerment for preaching and permanent sanctification was the effect of an empirical union with Jesus as revealed by the Holy Spirit. Rice explains Finney’s all-encompassing approach as follows: “Every step of progression in the Christian life is taken by a fresh and fuller appropriation of Christ by faith, a fuller baptism of the Holy Spirit.” (Rice 1949:158)

Given the above, it makes sense that any time one has an encounter with the “Holy” Spirit who is part of the “living” Godhead there would be some overlap or spill-over in the effective response of an individual’s life in more areas than just one. The baptism of the Spirit is like a stone thrown in the spiritual pond of our lives, causing ripples in all areas. H.I. Lederle writes in the preface to his book *Treasures Old and New* about his own experience:

In January 1980 I had a vivid charismatic experience which caught me unawares theologically. My doctrinal apple-cart was overturned, and I spent a year or two trying to get my bearings again. I had been blessed “right out of my socks” and needed time to digest what God was now doing in my life and in my family. I had found a new dimension to my faith, which I experienced as deeply meaningful, integrative, and transformational (Lederle 1988).

As it happens, many times any kind of sovereign or powerful divine encounter with God causes reflection and a re-examination of one’s life and belief systems. It readjusts believer’s “glasses” and his or her view of the Spirit’s involvement in creation, redemption, renewal and fulfilment. The renewal phase is particularly noteworthy as the believer experiences conversion/regeneration, Spirit baptism with a manifestation of the gifts, and sanctification, in other words, areas in which the Spirit has always been involved intensively, bringing the individual a deeper understanding of different soteriological dimensions.

The ortho-experiential approach is based on the reality of different personal encounters with the Spirit and the baptism in the Spirit can be followed by numerous ‘fillings of the Spirit’ as we observe in the Book of Acts, serving for ministry empowerment or other tasks in the Body of Christ (cf. Rise 1949:183ff.).

The Gifts of the Spirit extend beyond the number mentioned in the Bible, especially the New Testament, although there is still some hesitation as to how far one should go beyond the traditional biblical list of the Gifts of the Spirit. Different Christian traditions, typologically mentioned above as results of cultural, traditional, biblical, or experiential approaches, use different hermeneutics as it is difficult to arrive at precise definitions of the spiritual-mysterious realm. The ‘supra-historical and supra-natural’ viewpoint moves into a grey and fuzzy area between supra-historical/natural and historical/natural creatureliness of people’s lives and the reality created by God. Sometimes the Spirit acts supra-historically/naturally and interjects from above God’s creation into God’s creation and sometimes the Spirit acts in line with the historical/natural and thus in line with God’s creaturely reality.

5.3.3 Spirit baptism in the light of the totality of God’s creation

Many Pentecostal theologians, theoreticians of faith and scholars from all over the world add to the ‘unique baptism of the Spirit’ and ‘the many baptisms and fillings of the Spirit for

different tasks in people's lives', the work of the Spirit in other parts of God's creation in specific and special ways. The traditional biblical list of the Gifts of the Spirit is endlessly extended, while speaking in tongues and prophecy still take a primal position. Pentecostal representatives of this view make an attempt to go beyond the dualism 'supra-historical/natural' and 'historical/natural' especially with regard to the way God's Spirit works and moves in people's lives, history and nature.

Interestingly, two Dutch theologians of the Reformed background made substantial contributions in the 20th Century with regard to the modern phase or stage of Pentecostalism. The first was O. Noordmans (d. 1956) and the second, A.A. van Ruler (d.1970). Noordmans took up the challenge of dialectically combining God's creation and the Holy Spirit. And Van Ruler even went so far as to call the Christ event an intermezzo between God's actions of Creation and the workings of the Holy Spirit in history until the end of time.

Pentecostals obviously disagree with Reformed theologians on two important points. The first is that the Reformed doctrine that the Gifts of the Spirit ceased with the apostolic period cannot in any sense be entertained. Secondly, the Reformed doctrine of Determined Election and Rejection can never be part of a Pentecostal view of God, human life and the world. But the contribution of the Dutch scholars shifting focus from Christology to pneumatology, opening up for the Pneuma-centric perspective on the issues of creation, redemption, renewal and fulfilment is noteworthy for the Pentecostals. All human experience is somewhat closely connected to the Holy Spirit.

If one takes for instance the following statement of S.J. Land in his book *Pentecostal Spirituality* as a basic statement of Pentecostal experience with regard to the return of Christ, one faces a Pentecostal problem. Land states: "The waiting for Christ became **waiting in Christ** (my emphasis) for his return. The waiting for the promised Spirit became waiting in the Spirit for the time when, by the Spirit, God would be all in all" (Land 1993:15). A good Pentecostal reformulation of Land's statement in this sense would be to state that the waiting for the return of Christ became **waiting in the Spirit** for Christ's return and that the Spirit of Pentecost is the 'yet' (the experience and the promise in the Spirit here in this life) and the 'not yet' (the afterlife reality) of when God would be all-in-all in Christ through God's fulfilled Kingdom and Reign.

We have seen above that a strong Pentecostal view would differ from the 20th Century views of the great theologians such as the Reformed theologian Karl Barth who placed the knowledge of God in the process of Word and Spirit while under-emphasising the Spirit, and the Roman Catholic theologian Karl Rahner who placed the knowledge of God in a similar movement, namely Word and Tradition (Spirit), while equally under-emphasising the Spirit. Both of them more or less placed everything within created reality and towards the future within a Christocentric framework. Both Barth and Rahner's views amount to making the Spirit an appendage to God's works and acts in created reality and the future. Barth operated with the view that "God is known through God and through God alone" (Barth 1957: CD II,1, pp 44,179,183), or that God is knowable by or comparable to God alone (CD II, 1, p310). In Barth's view this is completely Christocentric and the Spirit of God is an appendage. It was another Reformed theologian H.J. Kraus (1986) who opened up the Pneuma-centric perspective with many Pentecostals of 1 Corinthians 2:10 that "God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things even the deep things of God." Thus, from a Pentecostal perspective, one can state that God is known through the Spirit of God and through the Spirit alone.

Pentecostals have to start to practice what they preach insofar as hermeneutics is concerned. They are either Christocentric or Pneumacentric or at least both simultaneously. The latter balanced view of accessing one's theological views both in Christ and the Spirit is where I position myself in this work. Echoing the verse in 1 Corinthians 2:10 that God has revealed the realities to us by his Spirit and that the very same Spirit searches all things even the deep things of God, the Pentecostal perspective on hermeneutics should reemphasize its starting point that God is known through the Spirit of God and through the Spirit alone.

5.3.4 The relationship between Pentecostal and Charismatic hermeneutics

Pentecostalism is on the move in today's world and has become a complex body of numerous churches and movements with mutual differences and there is strong overlap between Pentecostals themselves as well as with many Charismatic churches and groupings in both the so-called traditional mainline churches and their own independent denominations. Typologically, all these streams would oscillate between the Barth paradigm (Spirit → Word) and the Henry paradigm (Word → Spirit). The groupings are so numerous that it is difficult to categorize them strictly, so that the analysis focuses on theological undertones.

It would seem here that one of the greatest differences between Pentecostals and Charismatics is their use of the Bible. The majority of Charismatics, in my experience, are imitators of the Bible because they see the Bible as the incarnation, or rather, the inscripturation of Jesus Christ, the Word who at the same time as being in their hearts, is also the divine entity that drives the acts of the reborn person. When a person acts wrongly and sinfully, this is ascribed as of the devil who is the instigator of those acts. The created human mind (spirit) who, under constant guidance of the Holy Spirit, is responsible and accountable for his or her deeds is left at the wayside.

Because of the emphasis on the ‘materiality’ of experience that Pentecostals from the start brought into the Christian world they reckoned their experience in and with the Spirit as on a par with the inscripturation of the Holy Spirit in the Bible through the experience of the writers and compilers of the Bible. Thus, for the majority of Charismatics the Bible is the inerrant and infallible Word of God; and thus, as the incarnated and inscripturated Jesus Christ, according to Augustine or Barth, the Spirit is still an appendage. For the majority of Pentecostals, however, the Bible is the Word(s) of God inscripturated through the Holy Spirit via the experience of human writers and compilers.

Charismatics are divine Jesus-in-the-heart centred or divine Word of God-in-the-heart centred with the application of the gifts of the Spirit based on the power of the divine Jesus and the divine Bible in the heart of a person. They operate with the process divine Jesus/Word + divine Bible/Word → Holy Spirit. Jesus at the right hand of the Father is the King and the Lord who rules in the world and in a person through his divine position in that person’s heart. The focus is on the divinity rather than the humanity – part of God’s creation – of Jesus. The Holy Spirit is the opener of all the gifts given in Christ as Lord.

Pentecostals, on the other hand, are Spirit-centred with an ongoing application of the cross and resurrection (by the Spirit) of Jesus in their lives through their Spirit-directed negotiatory reading of the Bible. They operate with the double process Jesus’ cross + resurrection ↔ Holy Spirit as the ongoing renewer and resurrector in their daily lives on the basis of the Spirit’s resurrection of Jesus from the dead. The way Jesus is present in a person’s life is through the power of the cross and resurrection, activated and sustained by the daily workings of the Holy Spirit and especially the gifts of the Spirit. The ‘blood of Jesus’-theologies in classical Pentecostalism are representative of the fact that people acknowledged the real material world

through the cross as the instance where the ‘washing of sins’ has taken place and from where healing should take place. The material resurrection of Jesus by the Spirit of God and of which the day of Pentecost is the great affirmative beginning and application and the continuous renewing power of God’s creation and in Spirit-filled people’s daily lives, has been neglected in many Pentecostal circles.

The issues of Jesus-centredness and the Spirit-centredness find their expression also in the doctrine of the fulfilment. The former is typical eschatology for Barth and evangelicals, as well as for many Charismatics who are daily waiting and moving in, with and for Jesus Christ for His return. Instead, the true Pentecostals are to be waiting on, and moving in, the Holy Spirit, driven by the forceful power of the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ and until the end of times, awaiting Christ’s return.

Charismatics in general are fundamentalist imitators and mirrorists of the Bible in their lives because they see the Bible as the incarnation or inscripturation of Jesus Christ, the Word of God which is at the same time in their hearts as the divine entity that drives the acts of the reborn person. Pentecostals in general are negotiators through the Spirit of the Bible. The basic reason is that a Spirit-filled person, today in the era of the Spirit, reading the Bible does not have less of the Spirit than say Paul or Jeremia. Therefore, and thereby a person baptized by the Spirit and living in the Spirit is obliged to negotiate with the Biblical text and not just to mirror or imitate it. Sometimes, however, the Pentecostals themselves experience a lack of Holy Spirit nerve and they reduce their vision to that of a Charismatic sense-making one by seeing the Bible as an inscripturated extension of the body of Christ, instead of as the work of the Holy Spirit through human beings.

5.4 The Bible and the Experience in and of the Holy Spirit

5.4.1 Introduction

As has been observed above, the decisive element in one’s approach to the Christian life, praxis, and surrounding culture has to do with how we interpret the Scriptures that are central in all streams of Christianity. It has also been mentioned that Pentecostal and charismatic groups may be either fundamentalist imitators and mirrorists of the Bible or interpreters as well as negotiators of the Scriptures. The mind of Christ has been transplanted pietistically and

charismatically in people's minds to carry the experience of the Bible and transformation and renewal of their lives. In the 20th Century many scattered experiences of real human experience of the Bible and transformation within the ambience of the Holy Spirit or God as Spirit have emerged. We will take a closer look at these three approaches that affect our experience and understanding of the dialectics between the Word and the Spirit.

5.4.2 The fundamentalist mirroring approach

The main aim of this approach is to mirror a text, a theory, processes of nature or human doings in the world of people's lives. This approach is descriptive of all sorts of mirrorisationism – whether it be crude mirroring approaches as in fundamentalism, or enlightened mirroring approaches concerning texts of the Bible, holy books or other literature, theories of different sciences, natural processes or human doings. In a sense 'the letter is more than the Spirit.'

The text must be re-imaged, remirrored, mimicked or emulated when applied in some or other context of life and the world. In a fundamentalist mirroring mindset, scientific theories and processes of nature and human doings and actions also receive the same fundamentalist treatment of imitation and mirroring in people's lives and the surrounding world as is the case with written texts.

The fundamentalist and enlightened mindset in all its variations cuts right through many types of sense-making orientations, from extreme conservative to extreme liberal or whether they are of the enlightened materialist and postmodern types in which a whole text is fully re-mirrored in one action but is repeated and fragmented through fragmented little mirrors.

Moreover, this modern mass culture and consumerism, narcissistic kinds of experience are stimulated and structured through widespread illusions in society that things can get better if one mirrors oneself according to these idealized dreams and fantasies. These illusions are portrayed in advertisements and acted out by media role models. The mirroring of these different ideals signifies subtle forms of fundamentalism in modern societies. This could be a form of narcissism which revolves around the visual metaphor of Narcissus in Greek mythology, who gazes fixedly at his own image in a pool and falls in love with it. This becomes

important because the mirroring – re-mirroring – appropriation procedure appears in many areas of modern life. Van Niekerk asserts:

The main notions of a fundamentalist approach belong to the family of *mirroring, imitating and mimicking* of texts, theories, natural processes and human doings. The fundamentalist process fulfils itself as *mirroring* → *re-mirroring* → *appropriation* of a text, a theory, a natural process or a human doing into the life world of people (Van Niekerk 2009:280).

In this first view, the Bible is **mirrored and mimicked** in the Pentecostal experience. The Bible is the infallible Word of God and through every iota, dot and word and through every sentence of the Bible as a physical book, God is speaking to the Pentecostal person in all his or her senses. The Letter is **more** than the Spirit in this sense. This is the typical fundamentalist view amongst Pentecostals as in many ‘mainline’ churches and the process is expressed from Word → Spirit or to put another way, ‘from nature to grace. The divine process here takes up the historical and physical elements to go into the super-historical and super-natural experiences.

5.4.3 The interpretationist approach

The main aspect of this approach is to interpret a text, a theory, process of nature or human doings for a set purpose in the life world of people. Interpretationism is commonly viewed as the opposite of conservative and fundamentalist mirroring approaches. Interpretation of the text of the Bible, holy books, science texts and literature, scientific theories, processes of nature, human doings and actions in the broadest sense of the word is the bottom line of this approach. The divine/human letter and the spirit/mind of the interpreter correspond with each other.

Richard E. Palmer describes a total and reductionist conception of interpretation as an operational mode of human life:

Consider for a moment the ubiquity of interpretation, and the generality of the usage of the word: The scientist calls his analysis of data ‘interpretation’; the literary critic calls his examination of a work interpretation. The translator of a language is called an ‘interpreter’; a news commentator ‘interprets’ the news. You interpret, or misinterpret, the remark of a friend, a letter from home, or a sign on the street, you are ‘interpreting’ (Palmer 1969:8).

On waking, you glance at the beside clock and interpret its meaning: you recall what day it is, and in grasping the meaning of the day you are already primordially recalling to yourself the way you are placed in the world and your plans for the future; you rise and need to interpret the words and gestures of those you meet on the daily round. Interpretation is, then, perhaps the most basic act of human thinking; indeed, existing itself may be said to be a constant process of interpretation.

These two broadly opposing approaches of mirrorisation and interpretationism with their reductionist treatment of texts are not neutral but are actually extreme fundamentalist forms of mirrorisation and interpretationism. Van Niekerk summarizes this approach as follows:

The main notions of the interpretationist approach belong to the family of what a text, a theory, a natural process or human doing '*actually, authentically, genuinely and really*' portrays and wants to say. The interpretation process fulfils itself as '*understanding→ explanation→ application*' of what a text, a theory, a natural process or a human doing actually, really and in actual fact is portraying and saying (Van Niekerk 2009:284).

From this perspective, the Bible should be 'interpreted' through Pentecostal experience. The idea here is that Pentecostalist experience should be 'critical' towards the Bible and actually portray what the Spiritual interpreters actually portray about what the Bible is really saying about God, human beings and the world as the Creation. The Bible is not to be mirrored in people's experience, but the Spiritual experience of and in the Spirit should interpret and explain the Bible.

In the interpretation paradigm the Holy Spirit is in opposition to the Letter because the Letter or Word is the embodiment or inscripturation of Jesus Christ's body. This is the typical wayward Pentecostal experience in which the divine process is expressed as from Spirit → Word, or to say it in other words 'from grace to nature.' The God, Life and World view here has to be seen in a process as from the super-historical and super-physical to the employment of the historical and the physical-natural experiences.

5.4.4 The consensual negotiation approach

Negotiation approaches are differential and integral approaches and operate with the strategic procedure of ‘co-positing encounter + consensibility + compromise design + clues, cues and hues’ provision between text and negotiator. The Holy Spirit is more than both the Bible’s formulations and our formulations of what makes sense to us in our experience. The main ideas built into what we call negotiation approaches to texts, theories, natural processes and human doings have emerged in the 20th Century under different names and guises; the engagement and involvement of the negotiator with a text is expressed in four dimensions.

The first of these dimensions expresses the Spirit-directed co-positing—placement next to one another—of the corresponding patterns of the negotiators sense-making experience and the sense-making pointers embodied in the text. The second dimension concerns the Spirit-directed interactive consensibility between negotiator and text under the heading of a particular field of experience in which a virtual sensory pattern takes shape experientially. The third dimension has to do with the Spirit-directed co-promise (compromise) and negotiated design between negotiator and text from which clues, cues and hues can be drawn into our daily experience through the Spirit. Finally, the fourth dimension is the so-called ‘ethical’ or ‘value’ question or how a text ought to operate or function somewhere in life. The ethical or ought question is that of the persuasion through the design of a mutual promise (co-promise) in further Spirit-directed negotiation through the making use of clues, cues and hues from the compromise design.

Van Niekerk describes the negotiation approach in the following words:

The main notions of a sensible negotiation approach belong to the family of how ‘*sense, sense-making, meaning and significance*’ of texts, theories, natural processes and human doings must be negotiated. The sensible negotiation process fulfils itself as ‘*consensible co-positing ↔ consensible percolating and filtering ↔ consensible fusing into a co-promise design*’ from where clues, cues and hues can be drawn and folded into the mix of our life world (Van Niekerk 2009:286).

This third approach to Pentecostal hermeneutics is a more balanced one that has emerged in Pentecostalism from Biblical times and the modern world in which a person’s or a church’s experience is engaged with the Bible in everyday life through **consensible negotiation in and with the Holy Spirit**. This is actually the age-old way in which Pentecostals from the beginning interacted with the Bible. The reason why the term negotiation between Experience and the Biblical text is used here, is because this way amounts to a mixture of mirroring of

Biblical texts and interpretation of the same texts. The Spirit of God is equally on the side of the writers of the Biblical text as on the side of the Pentecostal person or group/church that is engaged today with the Biblical text.

The divine process is twofold: On the one hand, the process is God's creational divine process Word → Spirit or 'from nature to grace' or 'from birth to death' or 'from Jesus Christ to the Spirit.' At the same time, that process is integrated with the divine process Spirit → Word, or 'from grace to nature' or 'from death to re-birth' or 'from the Spirit to Jesus Christ.' The resulting trajectory corresponds best to the principle Word ↔ Spirit, Spirit ↔ Word.

The first way taken on its own is one-sided and is mainly portrayed by Reformed and other 'mainline' churches. In Pentecostal circles, a sole emphasis on the first way led to an under-appreciation of the Holy Spirit. The second way taken on its own is also one-sided and portrays the views of Spiritualists and dislocates the experience in and through the Spirit from God's creational process in the Creation and in history. The idea in this approach is that we are in the era of the Spirit, the era of the Third Testament and that we who are travelling this path have the Spirit just as strongly on our side as the Spirit was involved in every part of the original establishment of the Bible. The old Pentecostal principle that the Spirit is more than the letter is very strongly adhered to in this way. As Van Niekerk asserts:

Our main assumption concerning the Scriptures is that a sense-making God-life-and-world approach embodied and expressed in and through a book, chapter and verse of the Bible, does not have more of the Spirit of God than our sense-making God-life-and-world approaches as people of the 21st Century. In our negotiation between two sense-making views – that of the Bible in a particular text and ours in our situation today – a Spirit-filled negotiation process from both sides takes place.

Generally speaking, sensible negotiation with the multifarious experiences of the First (Old), the Second (New) and the Third Testament (our era as of the Spirit of God) establishes the *leading emphasis* and the *perspectival sphere* within which negotiation between the sense-making experiential patterns of the textual world and the sense-making experiential patterns of our current world takes place.

The negotiation approach, let's say between the sense-making approach embedded in the biblical text and an individual's personal sense-making approach, moves to and fro in an oscillating, filtering through (percolating) sense and fusing into a compromise (compromissory, joint promise) design from which people in our day and age can take clues, cues and hues into their life worlds (Van Niekerk 2009:289).

5.5 Concluding Comments per Hermeneutics

The effort of this section has been to show how the four grand acts of God's creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment that we reflect upon within the biblical historical timeline play a role when we read or try to understand a chapter or verse of the Bible. As Pentecostals, we have the task and responsibility to realize how strong input has to be rendered that the Holy Spirit plays a central role in the way that we deal with the Bible.

Pentecostals (and Charismatics) have not been satisfied with the reduced element of philosophical hermeneutics emphasizing Enlightenment ideas and cultural revelation and have striven to discover the dimension of the Holy Spirit – not just as a passive spiritual force embedded in culture, but as an authentic Person of the Trinity, who has been delegated the task of watching over the era of the “Third Testament”, the era of Christ's church. Even then, however, Pentecostal interpreters have run into problems related to a proper understanding of the Spirit's functions since this, in part, involves a mysterious aspect of faith. As regards the typical Pentecostal doctrine of Spirit Baptism, it has been demonstrated how complex the issue is. Some Pentecostal groups consider the baptism to be evidenced by the gift of speaking in tongues, others believe that the baptism may be manifested by any of the spiritual gifts in the Bible, and yet others claim that the number of spiritual gifts cannot be reduced to the nine spoken about in 1 Cor 12, and that the gifts and divine encounters operate in a larger spiritual dimension of the creation, redemption, renewal, and the fulfilment.

I have also discussed the dialectics between the Word and the Spirit within the framework of three hermeneutical approaches. The fundamentalist approach with its imitation and mirroring of Scripture was contrasted with interpretationism with its interpretation and hermeneutical approaches. These two have been balanced with a newer approach of consensual negotiation of texts, theories, natural processes and human doings. The problematics of consensual negotiation is linked to the fact of how the imitation and understanding of these processes belong together, as well as what the role of the Holy Spirit and God's grand acts attested by the Bible in consensual negotiation is. It has been suggested that God's Spirit is equally involved in the biblical historical timeline and our current experience.

A general one-sidedness appears when people talk about their reading of the Bible in the sense

that their sense-making approach of reading the Bible has very little to do with the way they read and engage with other people, other texts and what is happening around them. Experience within the everyday world is experience in which the Holy Spirit plays a central role. Otherwise, we are back at the view that emerged from the Protestant Reformation that the Holy Spirit moves into action only when the Bible is read.

With regard to God's work, one should neither position oneself as only supra-historical and supra-natural nor as only historical and natural. Both the supra-historical and supra-natural ways of God's acts and the divine creational historical and natural ways of God's acts are legitimate and work together. A sole proclamation of God's divine process as the movement of Spirit → Word or sole 'evangelical' proclamation of God's way of working in his Kingdom as Word → Spirit do not serve the ultimate purpose. This dissertation opts for the balanced view that God's actions in his Kingdom in this world are both supra-historical/supra-natural and historical/natural. God's actions are actions of Spirit → Word and actions of Word → Spirit simultaneously and are therefore mysteriously acted out as God's Kingdom in human lives and through the expansion and contraction of the universe that is the playing field of God's Kingdom.

CHAPTER 6

God's Kingdom and Culture

6.1 Introduction

In this section we continue to depict the relationship of God's Kingdom and Culture. Culture in general has to do with a range of symbols, values and the resulting artifacts of a given human group. The challenge is not that easy to answer since culture includes the aspects of people's religious, ethnic, racial, social, class, scientific and language. This is demonstrated by the polarity of different civilizations we face today. To name but a few, we encounter the global western, Islamic, and eastern cultures as well as hundreds of diverse cultures spread all around the world in different areas and localities.

The diversity of cultures in the global and the local sense is expressive of a diversity of all-embracing sense-making approaches that include views and orientations of culture, religiosity, ethnicity, social status, science and language and the ways they relate and differ with people within and outside their cultures. Faith and cultural studies will form part of this discussion. It needs to be pointed out that by orbiting around Niebuhr's work, *Christ and Culture*, I had already been narrowing down my investigation to western culture, even though some parts of the study might have applied universally, it could be claimed that western civilization has been built on Christian foundations and many of its traditionally moral values have been taken from the Judeo-Christian Scriptures.

Duality inclined approaches resulting from Niebuhr's approach will be compared and evaluated, leading to a deeper discussion about the 'never-ending' and conflicting relationship between the world and state represented by culture on the one side and Christianity represented by the Spirit on the other side. The material should bring us closer to acknowledging the importance of how the Holy Spirit in God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment affects our way of life in the surrounding culture.

6.2 The Kingdom of God, the Spirit, and Culture in the Present Era

Culture in general has to do with different symbols, values and the resulting artifacts of a certain human group. The challenge is not that easy to answer while culture includes the aspects of people's religious, ethnic, racial, social, class, scientific and language. This is demonstrated by the polarity of different civilizations we face today. To name but a few, we encounter the global western, Islamic, and eastern cultures as well as hundreds of diverse cultures spread all around the world in different areas and localities. The diversity of cultures in the global and the local sense is expressive of a diversity of all-embracing sense-making approaches that includes views and orientations of culture, religiosity, ethnicity, social status, science and language and the ways it relates to and differs for people within and outside their cultures.

If we look at the problematic relationship of culture (the world) and the Spirit (Christianity) within the tension of the "already" and "not yet" Kingdom of God and its global perspective, the western church has not been particularly successful in maintaining a proper, yet fragile, spiritual balance within which to promulgate Christianity in the culture brought about by the academic and technological boom of recent centuries. The science of theology, an academic representation of Christianity, has been traditionally attached to the sociocultural and political dimension, rather than the economic-technological one. Hans Urs Von Balthasar stated that "theology has no direct competence in the realm of worldly structures; it simply sends Christians into the world with an image of the human whereby and according to which they are to organize its structures as responsibly and intelligently as they can." (Kehl and Lösner 1982:96). Therefore, the problem may not be a rejection of Christianity on the part of the western world, but the cultural shift of focus. Along these lines, the Spirit is neglected within culture rather than rejected.

Historically, the Church was able to provide people with clues as to the purpose of life, the way of living, and was a close component of political life. Viewed from the present perspective, therefore, one cannot be surprised to observe the role of theology considerably diminished. The purpose of life is driven by materialism and economics, the way of life by civilized technologies, and political life is too preoccupied with the negotiation between the market, technology, and the resulting ecological problems. In other words, the globalization process

and (post)modern ideologies do not favour theology. The space society provides for the once-upon-a-time queen among sciences grows smaller and smaller.

On the other hand, theology is a universal science representing all Christians in the western world and has the right to be heard in public on all issues pertaining to the integrational process. Perhaps we can agree with the Dutch theologian Ted Schoof that the future of theology may dwell in the postmodern world of ideas, abandoning “great stories” and focusing instead on the problems being currently experienced (Schoof 2004:374). The globalizing world becomes highly pragmatic just as it is the essential case with finance and technology. Lofty (or empty) gestures are no longer attractive. “Postmodernism manifests itself throughout our everyday life, from our newspapers to our children’s education, from the way we work to the way we spend our leisure time”, as Gene E. Veith points out (Veith 1994:188).

The world has also become relativistic. The recent financial crisis has been claimed to have no certain end because the interdependent economic system lacks absolute values. The modernist pride of absoluteness and materialism is being replaced by the postmodernist phenomenon of relativity and supernaturalism. The rational mindset is forced to cooperate with experiential thinking, which is a bright spot in development when we discuss the ortho-experiential approach to Christianity.

The Church is at the crossroads and has two basic alternatives. It can abandon its involvement in the world as the current trend toward globalization will only increase the degree of secularization overall. Christians can withdraw to churches and pray for their own redemption or a quick rapture, nurturing praiseworthy thoughts of Christian history and a heavenly future with God. The other option for Christians is to face up to the circumstances and adjust their strategy to the conditions of the world as bidden by The Great Commission from Matthew 28:18-20 to proclaim the good news appropriate to all earthly eras. The plausibility of the latter alternative is undeniable. To use the famous Edmund Burke quote, ‘All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing.’

One of the problems possibly experienced in the context of globalization can be the way the Christian world operates today. While the secular world unifies itself, seeking interdependency, the Christian community, as we have seen, remains split in many different denominations and fractions due to the different approach to the doctrine of divine revelation. The ecumenical

movement has been influential and belongs to one of the greatest Christian moves of the 20th Century, yet there is much left to do to reach the goal desired by Christ in John 17:21 stating that we all as Christians “may be one, that the world may believe that God sent him.”

Would it then be of assistance for the survival of Christianity in the western world if the Church as such gets ‘globalized’ to make a permanent mark in the secular integration process? That is not meant to break down denominations and cause even more chaos in our complex society, but the world should perceive that Christians are able to speak with one voice to a contemporary society that would need to take into account their suggestions in respect of global issues. If the denominations are unable to demolish their doctrinal differences, they should aspire to create a common platform upon which to reemphasize their own strengths and mutual augmentation while contributing to ‘world Christianity’ irrespective of whether these Christians are Roman Catholic, evangelical, Pentecostal, or others.

6.3 The Dialectics of Christianity and Culture

The harmony between the immanent and transcendent aspects of God was shattered by the Fall resulting in the present sin in the world and sinful nature of individuals. Since then, those who would follow God struggle to reconcile the teachings of Scripture with socio-political life. Some tend to emphasize God’s immanence and desire to get involved in the business world, while others who in turn incline to God’s transcendence have tendencies to withdraw from the physical world and focus on the eschatological dimension of God’s Kingdom. Observing the different opinions, a compromise is hardly to be found, especially when Scripture is not explicit about it. H. Richard Niebuhr stated in his classics *Christ and Culture* five typological categories of how culture can be approached by Christians.

6.3.1 The cultural dilemma

H. Richard Niebuhr states that the teaching of Jesus was in its basic essence radical, and according to many, it is difficult to be lived out in this fallen world and the ordinary human condition. Niebuhr mentions Rabbi Klausner who attacked Jesus because while His actions were in parallel with Jewish writings, He placed religion and ethics in jeopardy by uprooting it from social life, pointing to the divine life and eschatology and neglecting the culture and

material civilization so typical for the nation of Israel. In his opinion, Jesus did not come to increase national knowledge and instead took away even the last remnants of culture, and spiritualized everything, including the lilies of the field (Niebuhr 1951:18).

While Klausner spoke mainly to a Jewish audience and was disinterested in the Christian stages of Spirit renewal and eschatological fulfilment, the fact is that in the written biblical text, Jesus did not leave many clues to his followers as to how to behave in the surrounding culture where spiritual worship is one thing but the social life and earning income for food and housing is another very important issue. Jesus was not a social anarchist as Klausner would call him, he clearly separated the secular and spiritual culture, but placed a huge focus on the latter. When his adversaries tempted him about paying taxes, he stated clearly “Give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s” (Mark 12:17). Thus, Jesus obviously had a clear concept of how to conciliate the spiritual with the socio-political life. But the clues are not many and the whole is a burning issue especially in the present age with the gap of two thousand years and in the reality of not a Jewish but a universal culture.

Culture is a total process of human activities, including social life and human achievements, sets of values and their materialization and conservation (tradition) as well as its pluralism (Niebuhr 1951:46ff.). Members of society cope with the world and with one another, transmitting culture and civilization—a complex society with cities, social classes and government—through the generations by teaching. Theoretically, it is possible for a culture to exist without a civilization, but a civilization cannot exist without a culture. The latter is the outward image of the inward culture with its actions, causes and motives. Here, Christians have always been in danger of passivity because while reaching out for the Spirit and the eternal Kingdom, they eventually know that secular culture is passing away and perishing. The primary Christian concern is to rescue lost souls in one accord with the Great Commission.

6.3.2 The cultural problematics of the Great Commission

Before Jesus completed his mission in Jerusalem and sent the Holy Spirit, he had given us guidelines for our earthly life: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.” (Mark 12:30-31) Using Lutheran terminology, his great command has both vertical and horizontal dimensions. The

former expresses the relationship between the people and God, the latter focuses on the relationship between the people.

A problem is the broadness of the definition. What is love towards God and how to express it in the best possible way? Is it best expressed by going out and preaching the gospel to unbelievers? Or is it a time of intensive prayer or worship during a quality time with God? Even greater difficulties arise in respect of the horizontal dimension. We are thrown into a multi-dimensional and multi-colourful culture full of its own laws, ethical rules, and people ('neighbours') with different goals, needs and desires. Furthermore, the 'love' needs to be based on the love of God as revealed in the biblical-historical timeline and not on the 'love of love', on the love for the sake of love. Even if we attempted to fulfil the 'love of love' principle, i.e., just do whatever makes other people happy, we know that not everything that people desire is beneficial. The parent loves his or her child by forbidding the child to eat sweets whenever they want to, and that is to prevent a dependency on sugar and maintain healthy teeth. Society 'loves' people in the sense that the authorities reduce the speed limit to prevent a car crash and a possible injury or death.

Liberal theologians searching the Tillichian revelation in their culture often fall into the horizontal extreme, overemphasizing the social issues and reducing the spiritual content of the Scriptures. The Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7 would serve as sufficient guidelines for the life of Christians in spite of the fact that it leaves out the soteriological and eschatological dimension of the gospel. Conservative theologians operating within the framework of the Word and the Spirit, on the other hand, often fall into the vertical extreme and have tendencies over-spiritualize the social issues. The 'love of love' is replaced by the 'love of faith'. In their view, the core of Jesus' teaching would not be Matthew 5-7 but rather the spiritual rebirth in John 3. As we have seen above, to find a proper balance between the vertical and horizontal dimensions is not something to be taken for granted and feels almost irreconcilable. Christians hover between the horizontal and vertical position based on their understanding of the Wesleyan quadrilateral, the revelation of God in culture, tradition, experience, and Scripture. In his work *Christ and Culture*, Niebuhr helps us to understand this dilemma in listing his five typological positions as to how Christians have approached Culture.

6.3.3 Christ against Culture

The most radical position on the spectrum, emphasizing the vertical dimension almost in contrast with the horizontal one, is what is aptly called ‘Christ against Culture’ (Niebuhr 1951:58ff.). The mission of these radical Christians is not a revolution in society but the opposite, a withdrawal from society. They consider themselves a faithful remnant, the new people living in the new world. God’s Kingdom is fully present on earth and has nothing to do with secular culture. It is ‘either or’ and any loyalty to the secular world is rejected: “Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not with him” (1 John 2:15).

The ruler of the world is the devil and we as believers should by no means be associated with him or his worldly systems. Tertullian’s quote “What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?” is symbolic for this theological approach (Niebuhr 1951:61). Another proponent would be Lev N. Tolstoy declaring that all state obligations are against the conscience of a Christian – that is, the path of allegiance, taxes, law proceedings, or military service. Christians should undergo suffering or even martyrdom, rather than compromise with the world. Historically, the Christian streams that would belong to this category are the Mennonites coming from the Anabaptist’s radical wing of the Reformation or the Amish movement.

Niebuhr’ expressed his criticism of this theological approach (Niebuhr 1951:87ff.). In reality, it is very difficult if not impossible to be separated from the culture when our physical body is a part of it. At best, one can become counter-cultural but not a-cultural. Even if one withdraws to a cave or monastery, the original sinful nature still works in that “artificial” setting. The monastic orders had to invent many different rules to preserve their own integrity. The drawback of this is, however, that one becomes over-careful not to break an established rule and fall into the danger of practicing acts rather than living under God’s grace. It can become very stressful to beware of the slightest temptation that the surrounding culture provides and miss the peace of God in one’s heart.

Jesus himself paid the taxes and was not clearly opposed to the established socio-political order. Jesus was among the people and loved the sinners to help them out of their miserable spiritual condition. The Parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10 demonstrates that we ought to love

our neighbours in the mainstream culture. It is the major argument against this position that Jesus himself was part of the culture. If we think otherwise, our speculation would hover on the brink of Docetism. Our physical bodies predestine us to live in the culture, and Jesus was no different (cf. Hebrews 2:14-18).

6.3.4 Christ of Culture

The opposite position on the spectrum, emphasizing the horizontal dimension against anything else, is a position called ‘Christ of Culture’ (Niebuhr 1951:94ff.). The view is typical of cultural Christians who accommodate cultural phenomena in their theology. Christ is considered the highest aspiration and fulfilment of the culture as he brings God and his people into harmony through it. Christianity is merely a set of morals with ‘love’ as its highest principle emphasized by Christ, primarily a moral teacher. The position is close to deism as the Godhead is not particularly active in our current lives. The spiritual content of the biblical-historical timeline is replaced by utilitarian moral doctrines. Abelard, Locke, Kant, Jefferson as well as mainline Protestantism would belong to this category. All those who are not dogmatic about their theology and rather, are concerned about the practical needs of their neighbours would fit here. The traditional status of the Trinity is dramatically compromised. The Father would represent God, Jesus’ divine status is at best unclear, and the Holy Spirit is not a real person.

This view was also criticized by Niebuhr who questioned the negligence of the spiritual content (Niebuhr 1951:116ff.). Emptying the spiritual relationship with God exemplifies a huge impact of the majority of classical Christian doctrines. Without an emphasis on the eternal resurrection of Christ, Christianity becomes legalistic in line with the Jewish Sadducee stream, which disbelieved in the resurrection. The ultimate result is not some kind of Christian humanism but a form of secular humanism since it bears fruit only in the spheres of politics and ethics. The evolving streams have to do with many ethical streams about gender and other issues of a secular lifestyle that is in contradiction with Scripture. If God as the ultimate spiritual authority is left out, the question is also what happens with the ‘love’ principle when imperfect people with sinful natures rule themselves.

6.3.5 Christ above Culture

The third position stands in the middle and is called ‘syncretism’ by Niebuhr (Niebuhr

1951:123ff.). The premise here is that culture cannot be ultimately negative when it has been created by a good God. His creation is certainly fallen but the basic rudiments on which the world is built must mirror the good God. The grace of God is real and it is the very grace that enables us to love and carry on the love through the culture. Christ himself goes beyond the culture but directs us to act in the culture. The typological proponent of this view would be Thomas Aquinas and the Roman Catholic tradition. The Church of Christ is both in the world and beyond the world.

As humans and Christians, we ought to fully live out our salvation and make use of the world's provision of general education and protective legislation through university studies. There are no discrepancies between the temporal goals of our earthly life and the eternal goals bringing us safely to heaven. Aquinas emphasized both the role of the natural law with its prudence, temperance, justice, and fortitude, and the Divine Law with its faith, hope, and charity. The moral-political and spiritual content of the gospel should work together in harmony. For this reason, the Church ought to support the government's authority because it has received such a mandate from God, and the government in turn, should heed what the Church has to say.

Even this view is not without problems (Niebuhr 1951:150ff.). It tends to lead to a conservation of values and social stagnation. Politically, there exists a threat of perpetuate dictatorships without any reforms being instituted. There is a possibility of an overemphasized respect for temporal authorities and their "divinization". Man-made laws mirrored in the natural law may overshadow God's law. The Pharisees who would be representatives of this stream clashed with Jesus in Matthew 15:3-7 because the human laws reflected by their tradition nullified the true commandments of God. The actual integration of Church and state is controversial, as we have also seen above. Such an integration requires a firm hierarchical order that can hide behind the grace of God but in reality, can be destructive as a human invention. It can lead to doctrines about different grades of holiness in different stages of the socio-religious ladder – something that Luther criticized heavily.

6.3.6 Christ and Culture in paradox

The next typological position would originate in Luther's view concerning a certain tension between Christ and culture that cannot be reconciled. Niebuhr thus defines this view as 'dualism' (Niebuhr 1951:154ff). The premise was Luther's belief that sin is universal and

dwells within every man and every Christian. For salvation, he or she needs to receive God's grace of righteousness through faith (*simul justus et peccator*). There is no rational explanation as to how these two opposites could be synchronized as they simply coexist without impacting each other. Their co-relationship is shrouded in mystery and this extends also to Christians living in the culture. There are certain elements that do not make much rational sense, we cannot comprehend them and need to trust God that He leads us on the right path. This may be very individual, and the same pattern cannot be applied to someone else as we all have our unique calling from God. Niebuhr placed the apostle Paul in this category as well, observing his struggle between the spirit and the flesh in Romans 7.

Nevertheless, we should not give up and withdraw from the culture. All leading principles and vocations come from God and we ought to obey the temporal law on earth that manifests itself as the state authorities (cf. Romans 13). Every individual has the freedom to choose any secular vocation and expect it to be blessed by God. The paradox dwells in how eternal and temporal principles occasionally clash, which is basically unavoidable. For instance, Christians are commanded by the gospel that they should not repay harm for harm but in the time of war, they may be ordered to take up arms and go to the battle because there is some divine purpose behind it. In the time of real dilemma or inner conflict, one is urged to choose a lesser evil.

The objections to this view are centred around the passivity with which one receives his or her fate (Niebuhr 1951:187ff.). It may be oversimplified to declare something as a paradox and just move along without any real attempt to solve the issue. In this view there may be tendencies to overemphasize grace, which may lead to antinomianism. On the other hand, as we are urged not to struggle with the secular authorities, the approach may bring about a cultural conservatism even when the Scriptures make it clear that it is not desirable. We should submit ourselves and not protest or call for major reforms. Christians can pray and believe that in the end, everything is in God's hands. The Law simply shows us how sinful we are, but has no positive role to *guide* us how to improve society.

6.3.7 Christ transforming Culture

The last position that Niebuhr possibly prefers is similar to the previous one, but with more optimistic undertones about the possibility of improving secular culture (Niebuhr 1951:192ff.). Even though sin is universal, the culture or cultures can be converted. Hence, he entitles this

approach ‘conversionism’. The Fall only perverted things which were originally created good. The divine calling is to take back and ‘reform’ the values, elements and things that the devil stole from us.

The difference between this position and that of ‘Christ above Culture’ is that in the latter of the two, God’s will for the world is deeply embedded in the actual culture while ‘Christ transforming Culture’ calls for a reformation of things cultural to align them with the Word of God. Christians are supposed to be culture Christians rather than cultural Christians. Here the presence of evil (and the devil) is more sharply acknowledged and calls for something to be done. The believers form a holy Christian community on earth, which should reflect its heavenly status. Niebuhr put Augustine into this category and in principle, also John Calvin who extended the teaching of Martin Luther claiming the right for a more active reparatory involvement in society. According to him, the Law is a *guide* to social reform.

Niebuhr’s model: Christ and Culture

	Cultural Christians		Culture Christians		Counter cultural Christians
<i>Definition</i>	Christ of Culture	Christ above Culture	Christ transforms Culture	Christ in paradox with Culture	Christ against Culture
<i>Typology</i>	Liberals	Synthetists Catholics	Conversionists Reformed	Dualists Lutherans	Radicals/ Fundam.
<i>Biblical Support</i>	Apocryphal Gospels	Romans 13 “to Caesar”	John’s Gospel	Paul’s Letters	1 John The Twelve
<i>Historical Examples</i>	Gnosticism Kant Schleiermacher	Justin Martyr Clement of A. T. Aquinas	Augustine Calvin F. Maurice	M. Luther Kierkegaard R. Williams	Tertullian Monastics Tolstoy
	CULTURE	←—————→			CHRIST

6.4 Evaluation of the Transformational Model

Based on Niebuhr's material, it seems clear that he inclines toward the last view, 'Christ transforming Culture' as it is his concluding position without any real objections. The culture belongs to the Christians and they should work on its transformation to be in accordance with God's image as the Kingdom of God is "already" present. This model and conclusion, however, have been revisited by numerous scholars who provided a complementary analysis of the problematics.

As Niebuhr focuses on the model Christ ↔ Culture, the question has arisen as to whether his theology is not oversimplified and reductionist as to the role of the Father and the Spirit, the other two persons of the Trinity. One of those who wished to include more complexity and implications concerning who Godhead was, was John Howard Yoder, a Mennonite ethicist and theologian:

The New Testament writers could not say with Niebuhr that nature or creation is the domain of the Father, and history that of the Spirit, and therefore not subject to the Son. Nor could the New Testament writers agree in contrasting the will of the Father or of the Spirit with the teaching and example of the Son. Yet further: in a few New Testament texts, Jesus is described as uniquely identified both with 'The Father' (John 14:6ff) and with 'The Spirit' (Chapters 14-16)" (Yoder 1996:60).

Another interesting problem directly linked to the transformational model is its coerciveness. Yoder, influenced by his Anabaptist convictions, also criticized Niebuhr's coerciveness, which may often lead to acceptance of using force in certain political situations. Jesus' teaching is embedded in an ethic of non-violence, which is considerably compromised by Niebuhr's realistic approach (Yoder, 2004:263ff.). Hauerwas points out that Niebuhr's use of the framework of creation (Culture) and redemption (Christ) makes "the church invisible" and "the invisibility of the church in Christ and Culture is the result of Niebuhr's failure to take account of the eschatological character of the Christian faith" (Hauerwas 2004:16). The realism within which Niebuhr operates reduces the transcendental aspect of the Christian faith.

6.4.1 The dualistic obstacles in balancing the Church and the world

It cannot be denied that the Holy Spirit was active in the act of creation and is present in culture and possibly calls for a cultural transformation. The problem begins when considering how this fact can pragmatically assist the church in its mission. The church is called to win disciples out of the world that typologically represents the powers of evil in the history of salvation. Yet, the Body of Christ has a great ally in the person of the Holy Spirit in this. We are used to having a mental picture that the Spirit will reach some unbelievers through the Gospel message, bring them over to the Kingdom of God, and give them individual pieces of illumination that will contribute to the progress of the whole church. It is a universal mandate of the 'invisible' church to assist unbelievers to become believers and the Holy Spirit as the agent of redemption has the same position, both in the church and in the world. A problem arises, however, when the mandate is usurped by the 'visible' church because the Holy Spirit works differently in the physical church and the world. These are two autonomic domains of creation and salvation. Confusing the two domains has led to dangerous extremes in the past. Some even point out that this error contributed to the fall of Christendom in the West (Carter 2006:18-24; Yoder 1984:135-147). The church in its zeal to win the world for Christ, stepped over the boundaries of respecting the "other side" of the Spirit's work manifested in culture and caused chaos.

The world has not become hostile toward the church on its own terms. The enmity has grown alongside the church's futile pursuit of absolute dominance of the world and state. Apart from some ideological streams such as communism imposing its artificial rules on the natural world order, it was the yoke placed on the western world by the church that repeatedly brought it, its great miseries. The Spanish Inquisition was an example of this unfortunate attitude. It lasted over centuries and nourished bitterness against the church before it was brought to an end by Napoleon who was one of the most criticized leaders in human history. Nevertheless, it is the irony that the Spanish people welcomed Napoleon as their saviour from the bondage of the clerical institutions. Perhaps the best account of the Inquisition events in Spain is Antonio Puigblanch's work *The Inquisition Unmasked*.

While the church perhaps believed it was battling the powers of evil and thus was even more determinative, what happened in fact was that it was striving against the creative function of the Holy Spirit in the sphere of the world. The fruit of this approach was not only idleness but also the world's hostility, demonstrated in a departure from Christianity in recent centuries. In

certain European circles today, it is plausible to talk about the “post-Christian” era and this term is becoming an ever-enlarging phenomenon.

It seems that the mystery of the balance between church and state has to do with the ‘mandate of invitation’ the church needs to obtain from its secular counterpart. Only then, will church cease to be accused of ‘violent coercion’—as Carter called it, pointing out the fact that the gospel is countercultural, nonviolent, and subversive of empire (Carter 2006:20)—but instead praised for its achievement in the realm of the gospel and charity. In other words, the church needs to fill a need that the world has, in order not to operate offensively in terms of arrogance. I assume that it is to disclose the non-subjective factor of the Holy Spirit present in the world to meet such a need (or rather needs). It is beyond the scope of this paper to go into concrete details here, but that is the missing part of pneumatology. It has to do with an overall understanding of the Spirit’s economy in the concept of God’s creation and providence, of what is legitimate to do in our surrounding culture and what is not. Due the difficulties mentioned above, the church has frequently missed its mandate and became overly either separated from the world (a safe way of holiness) or involved in it (an unstable way of offence).

There is nothing intrinsically wrong with the pietistic approach except that it may appear an unnecessarily small effort in comparison with God’s calling. In moral terms, nevertheless, it is more plausible than the dominating attitude that not only leaves a vacuum behind it, but can also cause harm. Niebuhr apparently favours the transformational model; however, one can never be careful enough with transforming. There are many side-effects to transformation defined by Niebuhr. History teaches us that the church has generally failed in transforming the world into its own image. In eschatological terms, the view that would best correspond to successful spiritual transformation is postmillennialism. But if the Book of Revelation is understood literally, it speaks about tribulation rather than transformation (Revelation 7:14; cf. also Matthew 24:21-22).

Conversely, experience shows us that the world has not been designed to be merely a servant of the Body of Christ and is to be treated as such, but has ultimate autonomy in certain matters (cf. Paul’s teaching in Romans 13). The Holy Spirit is present in culture in a unique and objective way that the church needs to respect. Individually speaking, believers must respect unbelievers. They may be mistaken about the way to salvation, but they are capable of expressing legitimate views about cultural issues by way of common grace.

6.4.2 Christianity versus Christendom

In recent centuries during which the modern world has been shaped, Christians have not been particularly successful in keeping Christian doctrines and the science of theology as the focus of western society and civilization, where it was once dominant. There is a difference between ‘Christianity’ and ‘Christendom,’ which is a form of institutionalized Christianity. While the former can be defined as a monotheistic religion centred around the Persons of the Father, Christ and the Holy Spirit, Christendom would be an expression of territorial Christianity where it prevails in culture, social life and civilization. The first trace of Christendom could be dated back to the emperor Constantine in the 4th Century who elevated Christianity to its official religious status (Constantinianism). It represents the union of church and state in which the civil power incorporates the church into the state. In the history of the church there have been periods of social and political dominion by the church, not far from a theocratic system, that have had a decisive impact on the secular culture. ‘Christendom’ was a flourishing ideology in favourable historical eras, but its long-term success could not be guaranteed if it were not accompanied by an authentic spiritual life, giving space to the Spirit who works in the creation, the redemption, the renewal, and the fulfilment.

Thus, Christendom has been declining both in modernism and postmodernism. The Christians have not convinced the ‘modernists’ that the absolute authority and dogmas should relate to God and not just in the main to the natural sciences or atheism. Similarly, even though the ‘post-modernists’ have become once again open to supra-historical and supra-natural phenomena after the years of material philosophy, the Christians have largely failed to point them to the transcendence of the Christian God and even less to the Holy Spirit.

Some of the historical eras of the Middle Ages were favourable to western Christians and their socio-political systems, but it was more a sign of God’s grace and specific circumstances than due to the merits of Christian believers. With all respect to their frequent heroic endeavours, it rather would appear that the Christians never knew how to handle the culture and the fact that God’s Kingdom is “already” present in the world, but “not yet” finalized on earth. It was almost a rule that the more Christians strived actively to impact secular society as a whole in their effort to spread ‘Christendom’ to the ends of the earth, the less influence they gained, and if they succeeded temporarily, the resulting fruit was very unfortunate, bringing more misery to people than the expected blessing – as if the struggle for secular power was more important

than the fellowship with the Spirit. We can mention, inter alia, the Crusades (1095-1272), the Western Papal Schism (1378-1417), the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) or the Spanish Inquisition (1478-1834).

No matter how chaotic and limited the secular world may seem, it is authentic and unforgiving enough to discover whether the church has real spiritual power coming from God or whether it is just driven by *coercion* by imperfect Christian leaders. Perhaps like the old Pharisees criticized by Jesus, these superiors have been more concerned about the Christian status and position than the Christian inner life that should precede any other individualistic efforts. In the work *The Decline of Christendom in Western Europe, 1750-2000*, McLeod and Ustorff point to the fact that church attendance in Britain decreased from 45% in the 19th Century to less than 10% in the 1990s (McLeod 2003:43ff.).

With such a scenario, then, the worst imaginable combination is when the state and the church are joined together. Instead of being constantly revived by the Spirit in the form of living Christianity, the state and socio-political system is permanently quenched by empty Christian phrases and acts, eventually causing the world to withdraw and develop its own secular culture. The Swedish scholar Eva Hamberg has researched the situation in Sweden where the Swedish church became implanted in the state for centuries and she concluded that the secularization in Sweden is certainly due to several interacting causes, but that the state church system and the associated lack of religious pluralism was likely a strong contributing factor in this development (Hamberg 2009: 265ff.).

Culture is a complex body of technological endeavours, social relationships, contradicting ideologies, and unforeseeable problems. Christians live in the tension of the temporal world (the “already” Kingdom) and the eternal realm (the “not yet” Kingdom). The secular world flourishes with entertainment full of dubious TV shows, heavy-metal music streams and many ethical decrees that are rather contradictory to those of the Bible. The dilemma then remains as to how much the Christian should approach and ‘touch’ things pertaining to the world in the effort to reach the lost originating from the Great Commission of Matthew 28, and how much he or she should abstain from it in order not to insult the Spirit who is at work on their inner sanctification and character.

6.4.3 The transformational model in light of the dualistic approach

As it has been suggested, Christianity is a monotheistic religion centred around the Persons of the Father, Christ and the Holy Spirit while Christendom is a form of territorial institutionalized form of Christianity. According to Carter, Niebuhr's optimistic transformational approach may have to do with the relative success of America Protestantism in the 50's that presupposed the existence and legitimacy of Christendom (Carter 2006:14). In Niebuhr's days, experiential Christianity was merged with secular society more effectively than is the case today. Society was more accommodated to Christians. Today, Christians are rather more accommodated to society and many speak about a post-Christendom era in the West.

The major reason why Christendom never lasts long is the coercion of the religious system. Politics has to do with realism, but Christianity is a more complex set of doctrines that do not only express God's immanence but also God's transcendence in which there is always a little paradox and mystery involved. This mysterious element is not always able to be interpreted into the realism of socio-political life and it causes tensions and schisms in the culture. In the worst-case scenario, as shown above, the leaders actively coerce dogmatic laws upon the citizens without really having any proper inner understanding. The resulting effect is that the culture turns away from the organized form of religion that does not rely on the Spirit and hinders the social progress of the society. Experiential Christianity flourishes best without organized structures coercing secular institutions. And as it seems, the world never deliberately abandoned God, but had no other way of escape to preserve its existential freedom.

Carter advises Christians to make the opposite choice to that of the 4th Century Christians who established the first historical Christendom. If not, there are major dangers. The church will have a tendency to cling to political power even at the expense of biblical and historical orthodoxy, thus promulgating a liberal stream of Christianity emptied of its experiential dimension. It may also provoke a strong reaction by the secular forces who will ultimately gain control and begin persecuting the believers (Carter 2006:96ff.).

There have been some scholars, however, who considered this theory as exaggerated. D.A. Carson took a more active approach toward Christian involvement in society, criticized Carter's model for its passivity, and rather defends Niebuhr's transformational model. He points out that without a certain element of coercion, Christians become totally pacifist. Carter

reflects – as a side comment – concerning the nature of the Gospel, how it is tied not only to Christology, but also to sin, judgment, mercy, the cross, and the resurrection of Jesus. The reality of the both “already” and “not yet” Kingdom of God is too complex to be merely reduced to the rejection of violent coercion, as the line between coercion and pacifism is very thin and inconclusive in different contexts (Carson 2008:218ff.).

Menuge adds that all five of Niebuhr’s typological scenarios are sometimes appropriate in situational ethics, but at the same time, none of them is simply and basically correct alone (Menuge 1999:43ff.). The Christendom idea can also have some positives as the 4th Century Christians did not err entirely. There is always some value in organized institutions as they make the social and spiritual help more effective. Menuge admits, nevertheless, that the danger of the Christendom approach is ever-present and should be balanced by a more experiential Christian practice. In his opinion, the transformational model needs to be combined with the dualistic approach (Menuge 1999:46ff.).

While Niebuhr was critical about dualism, Menuge points out that despite a transformational action in the culture on the part of the Church is discouraged, it affirms an indirect influence on culture due to the activities of Christians who pursue their secular vocation and serve as a living testimony to the people in the world. Luther did not see any discrepancy between faith and vocation (Menuge 1999:47). While protesting against political leadership is possible only within the vocation, there is also a vocation of a soldier who can get actively involved in the desirable transformation. Luther supported the use of any secular techniques for one’s vocation as long as they could be applied without sin. No earthly calling is sinful *per se*. A secular computer technician may legitimately develop software that can later be used by i.e. biblical scholars in studying Scripture more efficiently. Conversely, a Christian doctor should probably have a problem with performing abortions.

In many ways, it seems more plausible if the church is separated from the state and wait for its invitation to become a true spiritual blessing for the world. According to Menuge, the dualist view with its paradoxical dimension is a sound compromise between separatism/withdrawal and responsibility in relation to active involvement in social issues (Menuge 1999:50). The transformational model can turn out to be very legalistic and utopian. As C.S Lewis said in *Mere Christianity*, “You cannot make men good by law: and without good men you cannot have a good society” (Lewis 2012:71).

It needs to be pointed out, however, that the dualistic approach is not a separation in pietistic terms. That is a misconception brought into discussion by Carson who attacked Yoder and his followers of pure pacifism which is unable to bring all the desired changes into the society (Carson 2008:221-222). The proper meaning of ‘dualism’ is a balance between separatism and responsibility, and despite its shortcomings and paradoxes, the Lutheran doctrine of the church and state, the two Gelasian “swords,” is probably the most realistic Christian approach toward culture. It is distinguished by indirect influence on culture through the activity of church members pursuing their secular vocations. They bring their dynamic experiences with the Holy Spirit from the church-like setting and implant them in the culture, in which they meet the more objective criteria of the same Spirit who wants to manifest God’s glory in the Creation.

6.4.4 Concluding comments

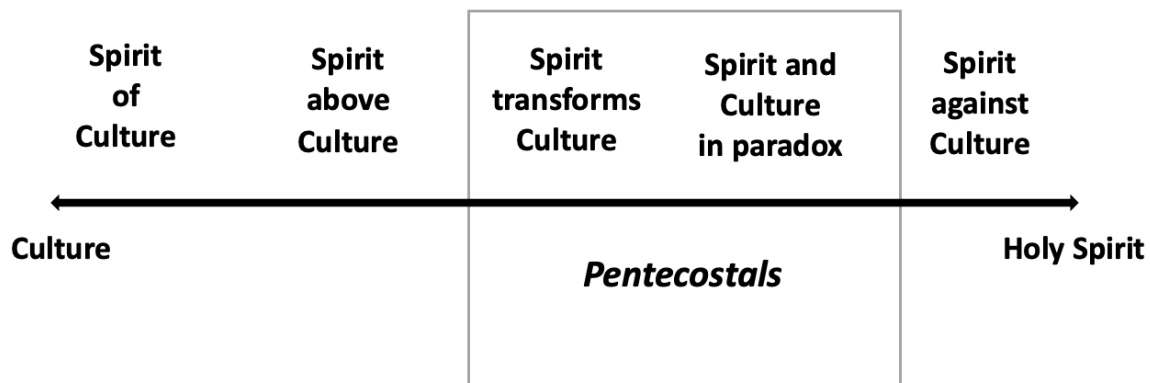
Generally, even after many decades the Niebuhr’s (Christological) model is still adequate in constructing the framework of differing Christian approaches toward the culture despite the fact that details will always be discussed and questioned. The dualist view is a good starting point for approaching the true relationship between Christianity and culture. It is a pragmatic model, including both the supra-historical/supra-natural and historical/natural dimension of Christian life in the “already” and “not yet” Kingdom of God. Christians may influence society and culture with a “from the bottom up” approach where the inner change of the heart comes first and subsequently the evangelical-spiritual testimony to their surroundings.

The transformational model, however, can still be useful when the dualist paradox exceeds its limits and a confusion with pessimism could tend to spread. “Culture” (not “cultural”) Christians have the divine mandate to reform social institutions because “the earth is the LORD’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.” (Psalm 24:1) Generally speaking, if a large number of believers is regenerated spiritually, their faith will be automatically implemented in social life and culture. The transformational model steered “from the top down” can be an effective tool in special circumstances when violent coercion is ruled out. Some believers come to faith because Christianity “makes sense” since their country was previously Christianized. Thus, the combination of the dualist and transformational models can work in both the Christendom and post-Christendom concepts based on the specifics of local cultures.

6.5 The Spirit and Culture

One of the arguments John H. Yoder used against Niebuhr's Christological typology was the absence of the remaining persons of the Trinity. Yoder specifically exalts the Person of the Holy Spirit saying that the whole set of decisions, principles, decrees, and adaptations made between Christ and culture in the history of Christianity was presumably a result of the work of the Spirit (Yoder 2004:102). That corresponds with my opinion that the dualist and transformational models should be applied primarily to the Spirit who is the prominent agent of the four grand acts of God, i.e. creation, redemption, renewal, and fulfilment.

Niebuhr's model applied to the Spirit with emphasis on the transformational and dualist approach



6.5.1 The ecclesiological need of pneumatology

In the area of systematic theology and its ecclesiological context, we often mention terms such as general revelation, divine Logos, providence of God, or common grace. We do so in regard to the benefits of the gospel that both the regenerate and unregenerate person may enjoy. There is a belief that there is a certain spiritual blessing available to people outside the covenant of salvation because Christ and the Holy Spirit are active in the culture just as in the life of the church.

Traditional experience reveals, however, that Pentecostals and charismatics have frequently denounced the world as the area of darkness, and promulgated the church as the exclusive sphere of the Holy Spirit. The focus has been placed on the sphere of redemption rather than of creation. The root of this idea is connected with the historical development of the church and its pneumatology, if not *de jure* then certainly *de facto*. After a certain struggle by the early church to elevate the Spirit to the position of Trinity, the Holy Spirit has been considered an object of private rather than public experience. In Protestantism, the pietistic movement emphasized the internal character of the relationship with God and the Spirit. Luther and Calvin mentioned the creative function of the Spirit, but did not develop its consequences (cf. Prenter 1953:192-202; Krusche 1957:15-32). Roman Catholicism connected spirituality and the charismatic renewal with the structures and life of the church. The Eastern Church, due to its close ties with the state, went perhaps the furthest of all in the concept of public spiritual experience. But it acknowledged difficulties in describing the ‘unseen’ and inclined to an apophatic tradition of the negative meaning of doctrines. Lossky points out that if we cannot determine what the Spirit is, we can at least assert what the Spirit is not (cf. Lossky 1957:23-43).

Based on the experience of the early church and contemporary denominations, it is generally observed that the doctrine of the Holy Spirit has been difficult to understand properly and many denominations today still hesitate to discuss the topic at length; even more so, the case of the universal function of the Spirit outside private experience. The effort here is to show the importance of spiritual issues in relation to the Creation (and culture), which would enable a more effective ecclesiological link to the world and surrounding culture.

As spirituality is connected with matters of faith rather than reason, a certain paradox can be observed. We live in the era when the Kingdom of God penetrated worldly domains in the person and work of Jesus Christ. He departed, but sent the Spirit to us (John 16:7). For this reason, this stage of salvation history is frequently called “the era of the Spirit” because the Spirit is the finger of God by which divinity meets humanity. Against this background, it is astonishing that we are unable to define the Holy Spirit properly. Research has tendencies to elaborate on the biblical list of the Spirit’s activities in redemption, without linking the terms together in a more systematic manner, as is the case with Christology or ecclesiology. To a great extent, these two areas of systematic theology surround pneumatology in a ‘hamburger-like’ structure and a better understanding of pneumatology would shed more light upon the

relationship Christ—Spirit—Church. Pneumatology is a certain missing link between the Christological and ecclesiological fields.

The facts that are known about the Holy Spirit are usually reduced to his presence in the church and to the context of the subjective experience of believers. There is a lack of strength or potential to think about the Spirit in a larger “objective” framework of creation and culture that affects the life and teaching of the church from without. As McDonnell explains it,

By restoring the Holy Spirit to creation, one can both overcome the subjectivistic privatizing view of the Spirit in pietism while evaluating the experiential dimensions of pneumatology positively, and at the same time be on track to theologize meaningfully about the Spirit of Christ in relation to resurrection and cosmic redemption (McDonnell 1982:151).

Even though it is partially understandable, it is unfortunate that many prominent scholars have paid such little attention to the problematics of the Spirit to assist the Body of Christ in enlightening the issue. To mention one striking example, in his multivolume work *Systematic Theology*, the prominent evangelical scholar Norman Geisler devoted only four pages to a section specifically entitled “Pneumatology.” To repossess the various areas of culture is certainly one of the tasks of theology. With a belief that God not only created but also sustains the world through the Spirit, pneumatology transcends the framework of the rather theoretical discussion about the Trinity and extends to the debates about our culture and civilization as well.

6.5.2 Two common ways of interpreting the work of the Spirit

Churchgoers often discuss the topics of social justice, governmental and economic issues, or the attitude of Christians toward arts and music, but rarely implement practically applicable teaching about the Spirit on such issues. Two major, mutually exclusive positions evolved over the years at opposite ends of the spectrum, phenomena that could be titled ‘oversubjectivism’ and ‘overobjectivism’. Either the Spirit is described in terms of piety and thus usually negated in the culture; or we adhere to the liberal theology of recent centuries that secularized the Spirit with the concept of *Geistphilosophie* (i.e. philosophy of mind), reducing the spiritual doctrine to philosophy, ethics, and morality (Fackre 1997:86). For instance, Paul Tillich attempted to correlate culture and theology, a step forward compared with Schleiermacher and Hegel. Yet, in accordance with the same tradition he stripped revelation of the specific Christian elements

and replaced them with universal philosophical concepts. A demonstration of these two attitudes can be observed in different emphases placed on the central message of the Gospel. As mentioned above, an evangelical theologian may claim that the nub of Christ's message is found in John 3 (speaking about the spiritual rebirth) while a liberal theologian would disagree and consider the core of Christ's teaching is represented by the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5.

Neither of these two approaches is satisfactory while searching for a solution for a 'dynamic' church. The word 'dynamic' here represents a definition of a church that claims Christian responsibility for the world and does not fear to debate or pursue the gospel issues in relationship to the everyday problems besetting the average citizen (Von Balthasar 1982:368). The pietistic approach functions within the limits of the church and focuses on the personal experience with the Spirit. The New Testament used as the foremost material here describes the actual presence of the spiritual reality rather than having as its ambition to be a systematic elaboration on the Holy Spirit as the Person and the Work. There is not much more revealed than the fact that he is part of the Godhead, was active in the act of creation and, in the contemporary stage of the heavenly Kingdom brought in by the work of Christ, represents the chief mediator of divine blessings to individual believers as helper, comforter and teacher (John 14:26; 16:7; Luke 12:12).

The early pietists bound the Spirit to subjectivism. As to the Spirit's creative function, they were either silent (Johann Arndt), did not know what to make of it (P. J. Spener), or explicitly denied it (Jean de Labadie) (McDonnell 1982, 151). Indeed, we face difficulties when we are to define the Spirit as an 'object' based on the information provided by divine revelation. Pannenberg points out that "there is almost no other subject in modern theology so difficult to deal with as the doctrine of the Holy Spirit" (Pannenberg 1969:13).

Since the anchoring doctrines of the Spirit typical for, e.g., Christology are scarce, believers have many times diverted their gaze from viewing the Third Person of the Trinity as a Person and preferred to regard him as a divine energy (I call this a 'wind-like' as opposed to 'Spirit-like' approach). As a result, Christians may have exercised anointing but lost a certain degree of sensitivity (humility?) toward him. Apart from spiritual excesses, this issue has been made transparent in the problem of over-spiritualizing social issues, which has been addressed on certain occasions and brought the criticism of Pentecostals and charismatics from the circles of

traditional denominations (Anderson 2004:179). The importance of culture and social life has been played down in exchange for an increase in the value of the spiritual Gospel. While social activity and charity are of secondary importance in the strictly theological terms of redemption, they still ought to play a vital part in the practical life of the church.

Notwithstanding the fact that it could be broadly discussed how the ‘pietists’ esteem or ignore the Spirit as a person, the secular approach from the other side of the street elevates the ‘wind-like’ attitude almost to perfection. Despite a certain common root, there is still a difference between the pietistic and the secular approach. The former commits the error in the realm of subjectivity (i.e., the experience of an individual) wherein many issues are left to interpretation, while the latter makes it in the sphere of objectivity (i.e., the experience of the world) and is more dogmatic and universal. One could summarize that to hear what the Person says would bring about a sound balance between subjectivity and objectivity in relation to the culture; to only hear where the wind blows results in either of the two unbalanced positions.

6.5.3 The Creator’s Spirit versus the spirit of creation

The ‘secular’ approach intensively elaborates on the cultural issues, but with a dramatic lack of the Spirit. One cause to this effect can be found in the difference between Spirit and Logos. The Orthodox scholar Pavel Florensky considers Logos as a science whose premise is related, progressive, and uninterrupted. But as for the Holy Spirit and the spiritual gifts...

Here there is interruptedness, and the interruptedness goes beyond the boundaries of science... It is quite evident that the holy fathers know something from their own experience; but what is even clearer is that this knowledge is so deeply hidden away, so ‘accountable,’ so unspeakable, that they lack the power to clothe it in precise language (Florensky 1965, 155f.).

It is difficult to view the Spirit as a neutral object since his task is to be the presence in which Christ indwells us. Against this background, it is not surprising that scholars prefer to explore the arena of Christology rather than pneumatology. However, it is a double-edged sword to bridge Christology and ecclesiology without proper pneumatological research. In the case of the secular approach, the lack of pneumatological understanding once transferred from the church to the world and culture, causes the Spirit to become an abstract doctrine without biblical substance. It results in merging Logos and Spirit while compromising the precious

element of the Spirit. Logos becomes predominant and the Spirit merely a decorative undertone. The fact that it is the Spirit that is the clearest expression of God's providence both in the church and in the world is utterly neglected. The term "Holy Spirit" is exchanged for "spirit of culture," regarding all worldly phenomena as part of God's will.

In the 19th Century, the subjectivism of pietism was exchanged for the subjectivism of idealism: one's spirit was identified with one's mind. *Geistphilosophie* sounded positive as a rational explanation of spiritual phenomena, but therein lay the trap of emptying the dynamic spiritual content. There has always been a fear on the part of some philosophers and theologians that the Spirit would become independent from the doctrine of Christ and this resulted in fanaticism. Faith was, therefore, considered plausible only when controlled by reason.

Hegel stated that the universe was created by spirit, "which was an absolutizing projection of the human mind" (McDonnell 1982:151). Such a doctrine nullified the reality of the divine Spirit as a sovereign being. The Creator's Spirit was replaced by the spirit of creation. Already Basil warned that "unpractical philosophy" is a delusion that results in unsophisticated doctrine of the Spirit and makes the human mind the measure of divine mysteries (Basil, *On the Spirit* III.5). Such a mindset can perhaps handle the question of what is right and wrong in terms of ethics but falls short in expressing the deeper realities of the Spirit who wants to reach out toward humans to bring them into a relationship with God and the spiritual gifts.

This is not to say that the church refused to strive after a proper understanding of the Spirit in recent years. Scholars from the Pentecostal and charismatic movement constantly pursued a better understanding of the issue. Some efforts have also been observed in the field of Lutheran scholarship where *theologia spiritus* needs to complement *theologia crucis* (Bröcker and Buhr 1960:5). After Vatican II, Roman Catholicism increased research of the Spirit in order to shed new light on the relationship between Christology and ecclesiology: "To the Christology and especially to the ecclesiology of the Council there ought to follow a new study, a new cult of the Holy Spirit, precisely as the indispensable complement of the teaching of the Council" (*Documentation Catholique* no.1635 in McDonnell 1982:146).

Scholarship has been primarily involved in functional pneumatology that describes the activities of the Spirit. However, this field's treasure would be found in ontological pneumatology. To understand the actual character of the Spirit as a Person would bring better

illumination into the mode of his work and activities. This kind of pneumatological study cannot be undertaken without solid Christology on one side (i.e., the Spirit as the image of the Son) and profound ecclesiology on the other (i.e., the Spirit as the point of contact between God and humans). This is not without difficulties. A perfect understanding of ecclesiology has been disproved by church history as seen by the many theologies and denominations in existence. The field of Christology also has its own problems in relation to the Trinity.

John of Damascus said that “The Son is the Father’s image and the Spirit the Son’s.” (John of Damascus: *The Orthodox Faith* 1.13) That expresses the part of revelation that God shared with us in the Scriptures. But no mention is made of a Person of the Trinity being an image of the Spirit. This contributes to the fact that the teaching about the Holy Spirit is more abstract than that of the other two Persons of the Trinity. Biblical revelation contains only the history of salvation and we cannot escape interminable theological discussions, such as the problem of functional and ontological subordinationism. One example is the clash of the two prominent evangelical scholars Wayne Grudem and Millard J. Erickson. In his *Systematic Theology*, Grudem defends functional subordinationism, while Erickson’s *Christian Theology* supports ontological subordinationism. But instead of giving up on further pneumatological research for its abstractness, we need to agree with Karl Barth who repeatedly returns to the Spirit as the only source and potential for a human relationship with God (Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, I/2:198-199). The actual faith in God is initiated by the Spirit and it is he who struggles to create the authentic Christ-like character in us.

6.5.4 Rediscovering the Spirit in the culture

Much has been said about the Holy Spirit as the one who reaches out to impact the life of the church. Basil’s analogy depicting a chain springs to mind, where he says: “...just as he who lays hold of one end of the chain and draws the other towards him, so he who ‘draws the Spirit,’ as says the prophet, by His means draws to him at the same time both the Son and the Father” (Basil *Letters* 38.4). The thought manifests the indispensable “double” role of the Spirit that reveals the Father and the Son to us, and at the same time, mediates our human concerns, prayers and supplications back to the other two Persons of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit is thus the key figure in the actual redemptive process. This is the case in the sphere of sanctification (the church-like direction of the Spirit’s work), but by way of analogy, also in the realm of culture (the world-like direction of the Spirit’s work) because in order to redeem us, the Holy

Spirit needs to transfer us by his sole act from the domain of the world to the Kingdom of God—irrespective of whether his activity operates in the framework of ‘common grace’ (as a long-term activity) or ‘prevenient grace’ (as a short-term activity). In other words, as the universal principle of salvation, the Spirit plays an equally important role in the resurrection of Jesus and the era of the heavenly Kingdom just as in the history of creation and providence.

The church is not an enclosed phenomenon, but functions in the broader framework of the world. The world does not live in the church, but the church lives in the world. The Spirit lives in both the world and the church. Thornton points out that the church (i.e., the faithful remnant) can never be separated from the world to which it ought to bring salvation (Thornton 1958:25). Thus, for a better understanding of the Holy Spirit as a whole, it is necessary to depict also the characteristics of his activities in the surrounding culture.

The Holy Spirit has left his fingerprints on creation. In the very first verses of the Old Testament, it is written that “the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters” (Genesis 1:2). Job adds: “The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life” (Job 33:4). Likewise, the psalmist declared, “When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth” (Psalm 104:30).

In the New Testament, Paul declares:

Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore, whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil... For he is God’s minister to you for good... (Rom. 13:1-4, NKJV).

Even the worldly ruler serves as God’s (and hence, the Spirit’s) tool in establishing God’s order and punishing evil. For Paul, the Spirit is not just an inwardness symbol, but views him also in more corporal terms associated with the world and nature (Käsemann 1964:68). Exploring the area of the Holy Spirit, therefore, one must consider both the Trinity and the surrounding culture.

The western church has never been especially focused on portraying the Spirit as creator. While the Latin church was preoccupied with the “aftermath” of incarnation and Pentecost, it was

Eastern Orthodoxy and the Syriac tradition that best preserved the teaching of the Spirit and creation. Athanasius and especially Basil stressed the collaboration of the Spirit in the act of creation and connected this concept with the proof of his divinity (McDonnell 1982, 150). The Protestant theology in the west, however, fell back to emphasize the soteriological conception of the Spirit, as has been mentioned above. If we lose sight of the creative power of the Spirit, however, how then should we relate the social and moral issues of a Christian living in this contemporary western culture? The Holy Spirit will maintain his prominent position in the church, but will be too closely associated with liturgy and sacred life. Without denying this fact as perhaps the crucial aspect of the Spirit's work, it is important to view his work in the larger cultural framework to avoid a life lived in a church-like bubble. The Holy Spirit is central in God's grand acts of creation, redemption, renewal, and fulfilment, and the secular world has the right to experience this fact.

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