THE FUTURE OF JESUS CHRIST: A CONSTRUCTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ESCHATOLOGICAL STRUCTURE OF JÜRGEN MOLTMANN'S THEOLOGY: 1964-1996.

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While eschatology provides the abiding horizon of Jürgen Moltmann's theology, the centre of his thinking, which conditions the contours of that horizon, is christology. In Part One, this thesis provides an analysis of the methodological considerations which shape Moltmann's christology. It demonstrates how Moltmann's elected hermeneutic strategy of interpreting Jesus within the horizon of promise enables his christology to determine the eschatological structure of his theology. Part Two then examines the actual product of this method. It analyses the succession of christologically determined models of the relationship between eschatology and history that can be found in moving from *Theology of Hope* to *The Coming of God*. Both the conceptual development of one idea from another, as well as the chronological development of ideas over time, are thus examined. In this thesis, however, analysis also serves the purpose of theological construction. Where Moltmann's proposals are seen to run into difficulty suggestions are made for how the tensions observed may be resolved in accordance with Moltmann's own root theological assumptions. The fundamental problem of Moltmann's eschatology is perceived to be the lack of an explicit account of how eschatological transcendence is related to historical becoming. In Part One this leads to the provision of a model of the inter-relationship of Jesus' universal (eschatological) significance and his particular relevance for the multifarious situations of the present creation. In Part Two this same problem leads to the construction of a christological model in which Jesus becomes in time who he is in *adventus* (the transcendent future). Achieving this comprehensively necessitates the provision of an account of the distinction and unity of the divinity and humanity of the one person of Christ. Only so does it prove possible to distinguish appropriately between what the one future of the new creation will mean for God and creation respectively. The thesis concludes by demonstrating the breadth of applicability of the christological insights developed by utilising them to address the question of the relationship between the economic and immanent Trinity.

ABSTRACT 2

While eschatology provides the abiding horizon of Jürgen Moltmann's theology, the centre of his thinking, which conditions the contours of that horizon, is christology. Thus for Moltmann Christian eschatology speaks of the future by speaking of the future of Jesus Christ. This thesis aims to explore the way in which Moltmann's christology discloses the development of his understanding of the relationship between the eschatological future and the temporal plane of creation. Its method in achieving this aim is one of constructive analysis. Without ignoring Moltmann's sources or the various contexts of his theology, our primary concern is with Moltmann's own text. We test the coherency and consistency of Moltmann's theology in the light of its own internal criteria. Moreover, where Moltmann's account is perceived to run into problems analysis gives way to the task of theological construction. In this thesis I seek to make theological proposals for how the problems detected in Moltmann's presentation could be solved while remaining faithful to his root theological assumptions.

Part One is concerned with method. Chapter 2 seeks to analyse the internal logic and consequences of Moltmann's presupposition that the person and history of Jesus Christ is best understood within the horizon of promise. To facilitate this I first construct a hermeneutic vocabulary of two key terms. 'Specific' stands for that which requires interpretation. 'Horizon of interpretation' stands for the cluster of presuppositions which render interpretation possible. Their range of interactions is then examined. The resulting hermeneutic understanding is used to analyse, and make explicit, the process of promise-development which Moltmann detects in the Old Testament history of promise. The irruption of the new, such as the Assyrian and Babylonian incursions into Israel, calls existing theological tradition into question. As a result, memory of past promise undergoes development to form new promise capable of surmounting the experienced breach. This cycle of development is seen to be capable of a number of iterations. Summary diagrams are provided for ease of comprehension. It is within the horizon of resurrection produced by this process of promise-development that the *novum* of Jesus' 'appearance'-as-living comes to be understood. But the contingent details of the Christ event

result in the modification of this horizon to produce a specifically Christian understanding of resurrection. The hermeneutic of promise-development is discerned to be capable of grounding certain key features of Moltmann's eschatology notably: the ontological priority of the future; the future as the primary mode of being of the God of promise; and the interpretive priority which the *novum* possesses over the horizons of interpretation used to render it significant. The promise-development cycle does not, however, only determine the relationship between Jesus and past promise, but also is observed to relate Jesus' remembered history to his as yet outstanding future. Jesus becomes, in part, his own interpretive context. This operation of the promise-development cycle *within* Jesus' own person and history further discloses certain key fundamentals of Moltmann's eschatological christology. It grounds Jesus' ec-centric identity; that is his inherent orientation towards the future his identity will unfold. It explains why Jesus' historical mission must be accorded significance. And it also demonstrates why Moltmann will need to elect to read Jesus' history both forwards and backwards.

How is the Jesus who comes to significance within the universal horizon of the promised new creation of all things related to the multifarious situations of the present creation? Building upon insights already gained, chapter 3 seeks to answer this question by introducing a distinction, not made by Moltmann, between Jesus' universal significance and his particular relevance. Cosmological and anthropological christology are seen to fail as accounts of Jesus' universal significance because they are burst apart in their attempt to contain the Jesus whose significance is established on the boundary between the eschatological new creation and present creation. This leads to the notion of Jesus' *uncontainability*; he cannot be contained by any horizon constructed on the basis of present experience. But this then creates a crisis for accounts of Jesus' relevance. How can *this* Jesus be shown to be relevant to a particular set of present circumstances? This is a question which Moltmann does not address directly. A solution is found by building on Moltmann's account of the way in which the cross mediates the future of the risen Christ to present reality. This leads to the counter-balancing conception of Jesus' *containability* within the circumstances of the present. Linking Jesus' uncontainability and containability by means of a hermeneutic circle then results in the following christological

proposal. Whereas Jesus' universal significance is to be established by means of his uncontainability, Jesus particular relevance is constructed by tracing out a trajectory of transformation from his containment within each and every present towards the eschatological future he will accomplish. On the basis of this general principle, a model for the construction of Jesus' relevance is established. Offering an analysis of how each account of Jesus' relevance so generated will be related to every other, and to Jesus' overarching universal significance, indicates a possible way to face up to the challenge of postmodernism. For it demonstrates one way in which contextually conditioned accounts may be related to that which alleges a universal claim. Because the question of theodicy is addressed by seeking to link present misery with the meaning of God for present existence, its solution requires offering an account of Jesus' relevance as this has been defined above. It is also the most commonly used route by which Moltmann seeks to demonstrate Jesus' soteriological relevance. However, by tying himself too closely to this question, Moltmann's accounts of Jesus' relevance suffer from a number of weaknesses. He is unable to speak of the consummation of that which is already good, and he is observed to run into problems when dealing with situations of moral ambiguity to which the question of theodicy does not apply so directly. Our foray into hermeneutic questions is concluded by observing that Moltmann's developing interest in a 'metaphysics of relationality' leads to an increasing interest in context. How this might affect the suggestions proposed in this chapter is examined.

Part Two focuses upon Moltmann's actual christological proposals. More precisely it seeks to explore the succession of christologically determined models of the relationship between eschatology and history that can be found in moving from *Theology of Hope* to *The Coming of God*. These are understood not as a series of alternatives, but as the building blocks of Moltmann's overall scheme; the stages of a process of cumulative development. Once again, where tensions are discerned in Moltmann's presentation, theological proposals for their resolution are put forward. The aim is to clarify what is meant by the future of Jesus Christ.

Chapter 4 opens with an analysis of a fundamental notion of *Theology of Hope*: the dialectical identity of the crucified and risen Christ. This dialectic between death and life, the presence and the absence of God, cannot be resolved within the Christ event itself. Rather it points towards both the God who raises and the reconciling synthesis of the outstanding future of Jesus in new creation. I make the suggestion, in clarification of Moltmann, that the open future of Jesus is grounded in his being an *inclusive person*; an incarnate person. His identity is inseparably grounded in the history of God with the world; the history in which God identifies with the world for the sake of transforming the world into correspondence with himself. Thus the future happens in the resolution of Jesus' dialectical identity. Moltmann's employment of Blochian terms to describe this outstanding future of Jesus leads to a fundamental ambiguity concerning the role of human action in contributing to the new creation. Closer analysis of the defence of this future of Christ also confirms the suspicion that Moltmann's understanding of Jesus' person is more complex than he explicitly states. How, we wish to know, is Jesus related to God?

The second part of chapter 4 introduces and examines Moltmann's fundamental distinction between *futurum* and *adventus*. The future as *adventus* is found to be the equivalent of the prospect held out in the resolution of Jesus' dialectical identity and the transcendent future earlier observed to be implied by the process of promise-development. The key move of retrospective projection (found in *The Crucified God*), in which what is revealed of Jesus' identity in the resurrection is projected back across his life, is also found to be grounded in the logic of *adventus*. Yet if retrospective projection assumes a constant identity with respect to time, Moltmann's soteriology demands an eschatological becoming in Jesus' identity. To solve this tension it is proposed that Jesus is in the process of becoming in time who he is in *adventus*. A full explication of this proposal demands doing what Moltmann conspicuously does not do. It requires offering a systematic account of how Jesus' humanity and divinity are distinguished and related in the one person of Jesus. Clarifying this enables us both to preserve the basis of retrospective projection *and* secure a contingent process of becoming essential to Jesus' genuine humanity.

Chapter 5 examines Moltmann's increasing interest in the messianic mission of Jesus. From *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* onwards Jesus' historical mission is no longer seen as a preliminary necessary for appropriate interpretation of the Christ event, but as a stage in the eschatological history of Jesus with God with its own intrinsic value. Jesus' messianic mission discloses the impact of the eschatological future on present creation *within the limits of history*. It constitutes an anticipatory re-patterning of the possibilities of history, mediated by the Holy Spirit, which introduces the proximity of God. The eschatological future itself, however, is realised through the transcending of the limits of history in the conquest of transience and death. How the messianic is related to the eschatological is explored in some detail. An examination of the inherently eschatological orientation of the Spirit leads to an explanation of why it should be that Moltmann comes to regard the Spirit as the medium of continuity of the eschatological history of God. The Spirit mediates the Son's relationship to the Father which constitutes the inner form of the new creation. The Spirit thus links eschatology and relationality together. This connection is explored further by demonstrating the way in which the Spirit mediates both Jesus' becoming in history and his relations with others. And thus how Jesus is both the agent, and the primary locus of anticipation, of the eschatological future; a distinction Moltmann does not make. The emphasis on continuity, which arises from Moltmann's developing pneumatology, leads to an apparent conflict with Moltmann's earlier emphasis on the dialectical relation of Jesus' cross and resurrection. It does so by suggesting that in the Spirit cross and resurrection are but two aspects of one single event. This apparent conflict is resolved, however, by showing that Moltmann's later theology is marked by a tendency to adopt the perspective of God from which such continuity may be discerned, without thereby undermining the perspective of creation from which the discontinuity between its present transient form and the new creation is all too obvious. An examination of Moltmann's later understanding of the resurrection as a *diachronic* event leads us to observe an important tension in Moltmann's presentation of the new creation within the orbit of this conception. Does the future result from the eternalisation of time, or from the transformation of time? Moltmann's problem is traced to a double usage of the term 'simultaneous'.

The parousia of Christ, examined in chapter 6, marks the completion of Jesus' eschatological history. But, in Moltmann's presentation of the relation of this concluding event with the rest of Jesus' history, a confusion is found to exist in Moltmann's language of the becoming and coming of Christ. Resolution of this difficulty is achieved by a closer examination of the relationship between the anticipation, and the final arrival, of the eschatological future. This in turn leads to the delineation of a number of forms of Jesus' becoming which are compatible with his awaited eschatological coming. Examination of Moltmann's model of God's eschatological de-restriction, as a way of understanding the consequence of Christ's parousia, reveals a number of problems with this conception. Most seriously, the implication that God's de-restriction possesses an inherent, simple causal efficacy is found to be at odds with Moltmann's account of the christological mediation of the eschatological future to creation. More precisely, the process by which Christ and the Spirit become in time who they are in *adventus*, is shown to be the inescapably necessary preparation for the coming of God. God cannot be held to be coming to creation 'in any case'. Another inherent danger in Moltmann's model of eschatological de-restriction is that, in conceiving of the new creation, the life of God is projected into this future in an undifferentiated way. In criticism of Moltmann, I take up and develop my earlier christological proposal. What the eschatological future will mean for God and what it will mean for creation is derived from what the one goal of Christ's person will mean for his divine and human natures respectively. Allowing christology determinative place also leads to the suggestion that Moltmann should abandon his use of the concept of absolute eternity (as part of his threefold structure of eternity, aeon and time) and speak instead about the relationship between *adventus* and time. Conceiving of how this might be achieved leads to the notion of *adventus* as the 'time' of God; a 'time' which subsists in the defining movements of the trinitarian persons themselves.

By way of conclusion I seek to demonstrate something of the breadth of applicability of the christology proposals made in the course of this constructive dialogue with Moltmann. The relationship between Christ's becoming and coming is used to attempt a solution of a particularly thorny problem in Moltmann's theology: that of the relationship between the

immanent and economic Trinity. This problem is seen to resonate with the Achilles heel of Moltmann's theology: the lack of a convincing account of the *relationship* between God's eschatological transcendence and historical becoming. It is a problem not helped by the presence of no less than three separate accounts of how the immanent and economic Trinity might be related. Co-ordinating these accounts leads to my proposed solution: God's becoming (economic Trinity) subsists within his coming (immanent Trinity). God becomes while remaining God. This is why the eschatological future of the new creation created in the wake of God's becoming, the future of Jesus Christ, is of soteriological significance.

ABBREVIATIONS

In the notes of the thesis the following abbreviations are used for Moltmann's works. Full bibliographical details are given in Bibliography I.

CG	*The Crucified God*
CofG	*The Coming of God*
CJF	*Creating a Just Future*
CPS	*The Church in the Power of the Spirit*
EG	*Experiences of God*
EH	*The Experiment Hope*
FofC	*The Future of Creation*
GinC	*God in Creation*
GHH	*God - His and Hers*
HD	*On Human Dignity*
HP	*Hope and Planning*
HTG	*History and the Triune God*
M	*Man*
PP	*The Power of the Powerless*
RRF	*Religion, Revolution and the Future*
SofL	*The Spirit of Life*
TasE	'Theology as Eschatology'
TH	*Theology of Hope*
TJ	*Theology and Joy*
TKG	*Trinity and the Kingdom of God.*
TSL	*The Source of Life.*
WJC	*The Way of Jesus Christ.*

1.0 INTRODUCTION: THE NATURE OF THE QUEST

I shall introduce this thesis by offering answers to a series of questions which I hope will reveal why this study takes the form it does.

Why eschatology?

I am a great admirer of the science-fiction television series Star Trek. I love the freedom which the format of the programme provides for the exploration of ideas. But I am forced to the conclusion that Captain Kirk was almost certainly wrong. Jean-Luc Picard has followed him into the same error. *Space* is not 'the final frontier'. Rather, the ultimate boundary faced by humanity is 'the undiscovered country'[1] of the future. The boundary between the known and the unknown which is encountered in every present moment is that between itself and the future. But the boundary of the future is not merely that of mystery. Our experience of the differentiation of time into a before and after, in relation to the present moment, is irreducibly bound up with the phenomenon of transience. It is transience that constitutes the sting in the experience of the future as boundary. For transience means that the ultimate form which the boundary of the future takes is death.

The problem of transience is not simply, however, a problem about the end of life. It is the problem of the mortality of every moment. The moving and open present sets hard as necessary past. Time, as it were, becomes frozen over. An event once happened, a deed once done, cannot be undone. The present experience of life for many is marred by guilt, suffering and injustice. These are, of course, sufficiently evil in themselves. They already provoke the question of theodicy. But the phenomenon of transience transforms these disfiguring experiences into permanently open questions. Caught in a necessary and unalterable past these experiences become petrified questions which no future prospect in time, however marvellous, can answer. The temporal future, therefore, cannot be a category of salvation. In the end, all

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1. The title of the sixth and final original Star Trek motion picture.

the future holds is future transience. Salvation can only be discovered where these petrified questions of the past find the freedom to receive resolving answers. And this demands that the past is brought into contact with open possibility. Given that this clearly cannot happen in the past, present or temporal future, the Christian claim is that the only locus of hope for such transformation lies in the eschatological future. It is the eschatological future which has the ability to open every present and once-present moment to God's recreative power. It is the eschatological future that discloses the hope of a new creation in which the frozen past can melt into life.

In the light of these reflections, therefore, we must refine our opening statement. It is not the future in general which is the 'final frontier'. The phenomenon of transience means that this accolade must go to the eschatological future. For the boundary of the eschatological future abuts not just the present, but the past and the temporal future as well. It is this transcendent quality which means it is of soteriological significance.

Any account of God which takes the nature of the reality of the world seriously must therefore reckon with the eschatological future. Every theology which desires to gain a hearing in a world like ours must include an account of eschatology. Given that the problem of transience is written into the fabric of the universe, one of the most serious problems, perhaps *the* problem which theology has to face, is the problem of the saving future.

Why the theology of Jürgen Moltmann?

No theologian has taken the question of the eschatological future more seriously, or given it more thought, that Jürgen Moltmann. Since the publication of *Theology of Hope* in 1964 his name has been inextricably linked with eschatology. Few of his words can have been more widely quoted than this passage from the opening of that volume.

> "From first to last, and not merely in the epilogue, Christianity is eschatology, is hope...The eschatological is not one element *of* Christianity, but it is the medium of Christian faith as such, the key in which

everything is set, the glow that suffuses everything here in the dawn of an expected new day."[2]

What characterises Moltmann's theology, however, is not merely an initial but an abiding concern for eschatology. The horizon of the eschatological future has constituted the distinctive perspective of both Moltmann's first trilogy and his subsequent series of 'contributions to theology'.[3] Significantly, the latest volume, *The Coming of God* published thirty one years after *Theology of Hope* is again concerned with Christian eschatology. Moreover, in this his most recent major book, Moltmann makes the following claim:

> "This eschatology, written thirty years after the *Theology of Hope*...is entirely in line with that doctrine of hope."[4]

It is these two books which effectively provide the *terminus post quem* and the *terminus ante quem* of this study.

But my reasons for wishing to explore Moltmann's theology go beyond the coldly rational grounds that his theology resonates with a theological question I consider to be of utmost importance. I share many of his root methodological assumptions. I find his theology exciting and thought-provoking. He thus constitutes an ideal partner in theological dialogue. The critique I raise of his theology is thus born, I hope, of patient listening.

The passionate style of Moltmann's theology which makes it so engaging, and his enduring concern with a hope that can survive the contradiction of present circumstance, almost certainly have the same biographical genesis. This is the set of experiences both during and immediately after the Second World War which turned the would-be student of mathematics

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2. *Theology of Hope: On the Ground and the Implications of a Christian Eschatology*, Tr. Leitch, J.W., (London: SCM, 1967), p.16; henceforth, TH.

3. *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God: The doctrine of God*, Tr. Kohl, M., (London: SCM, 1981), p.xi; henceforth, TKG.

4. *The Coming of God: Christian eschatology*, Tr. Kohl, M., (London: SCM, 1996), p.xii; henceforth, CofG.

and physics into the student of theology.[5] In the firestorm that engulfed Hamburg in July 1943 as a result of the RAF 'Operation Gomorrah', the anti-aircraft battery Moltmann was operating was destroyed.

> "Forty thousand deaths in that last night and my friend Gerhard Schopper who was with me for a time was torn apart...In that night for the very first time I cried out to God, "Where are you God?" and "Why am I not also dead?" Questions which even to this day have yet to leave me. They were more important to me then than the formula E=mc2."[6]

Moltmann took these questions with him into the 38 months he spent as a prisoner of war from 1945-8 in Belgium, Scotland and England. In the Scottish labour camp he was given a copy of the New Testament with an appendix including the Psalms.

> "I read it without much comprehension, until I stumbled on the psalms of lament...They were the words of my own heart and they called my soul to God. Then I came to the story of the passion and when I read Jesus' death cry, 'My God, why have you forsaken me?', I knew with certainty: this is someone who understands you...this was the divine brother in distress, who takes the prisoners with him on his way to resurrection. I began to summon up the courage to live again seized by a great hope."[7]

When Moltmann later comes to write of a future mediated to the present by means of the cross of the risen Christ this is no mere intellectual construct. It is grounded in the most profound existential experience.[8]

Why focus on Christology?

If eschatology provides the horizon of Moltmann's theology then, as these autobiographical reflections indicate, the centre which conditions the contours of that horizon is christology. For

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5. Moltmann has offered a number of autobiographical accounts of these experiences. See *Experiences of God*, Tr. Kohl, M., (London: SCM, 1980), pp.6-10; henceforth EG; *The Spirit of Life: A universal affirmation*, Tr. Kohl, M., (London: SCM, 1992), p.21; henceforth, SofL; and *The Source of Life: The Holy Spirit and the Theology of Life*, Tr. Kohl, M., (London: SCM, 1997), pp.1-9; henceforth; TSL. See also J. Moltmann (Ed.), *How I have Changed*, Tr. Bowden, J., (London: SCM, 1997), pp.13f.

6. "Gelebte Theologie 35 Jahre in 35 Minuten", the unpublished valedictory lecture of Jürgen Moltmann on his retirement as Professor of systematic theology in the Protestant Faculty of the University of Tübingen in 1994. The translation is the author's own with grateful acknowledgement of the help of Mr Gary Ecclestone.

7. TSL 4f.

8. Cf. R. Bauckham, *The Theology of Jürgen Moltmann*, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), p.1.

Moltmann the foundation, criterion and motive force of eschatology is the resurrection of the crucified Jesus.

> "Christian eschatology does not speak of the future as such. It sets out from a definite reality in history and announces the future of that reality, its future possibilities and its power over the future. Christian eschatology speaks of Jesus Christ and *his* future. It recognises the reality of the raising of Jesus and proclaims the future of the risen Lord."[9]

The history of Jesus Christ forms the backbone of Moltmann's theology. It is the supporting structure of the whole corpus of his writings. And at the centre of this history stands the dialectical relationship between the cross and resurrection of Christ. As we shall observe, over time this centre of the Christ event comes to be set within a broader perspective; it is also complemented by an increasing emphasis on pneumatology, but its determinative significance is never surrendered.[10] This thesis does not pretend to cover every eschatological theme in Moltmann's theology. Rather, given this methodological centrality of christology, it aims to offer a comprehensive analysis of that which fundamentally conditions the shape of Moltmann's eschatological thinking. From this analysis I develop a set of insights whose power of explanation could then be harnessed in exploring the theological territory into which Moltmann's christology leads. An example is offered in the conclusion where we reach the comprehensive horizon of the trinitarian history of God. On the way to that conclusion, the thesis is structured into two sections. The first concentrates on the effect of Moltmann's chosen method of interpreting Jesus' history for the development of the broad structural features of his eschatology. In particular it examines the nature and result of the interaction between Jesus' history and the interpretive horizon of promise. The second section gives priority to content. It examines the whole range of christological motifs, as these progress from *Theology of Hope* to *The Coming of God*, for what they disclose about Moltmann's developing understanding of the relationship between God, creation and the future.

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9. TH 17.

10. Thus in the *Coming of God* Moltmann can still write: "Christian eschatology has its foundation in the experience of Christ's death and resurrection" (p.261). It is from this basis that he then moves on to consider questions of cosmic breadth.

These two complementary sections are held together under the notion of an 'analysis of the development of eschatological structure' which my title promises. Exactly what is intended by this phrase might usefully be delineated now. The word development is used in two senses. It is intended to include both conceptual and chronological development. Given that we are studying Moltmann over a span of thirty two years, it would be quite remarkable if his theology were not marked by change over time. We shall find ourselves, therefore, contrasting and comparing Moltmann's 'earlier' and 'later' theology. In broad terms these labels of convenience refer to Moltmann's first trilogy of volumes and the five volumes of his series of 'contributions to theology' respectively.[11] But far more interesting than the bald observation of change over time, is an explication of why such changes might have occurred. To explore this aspect of Moltmann's theology we need to consider conceptual development. Here the key question is: How is one idea unfolded from or dependent upon another? Understanding this will enable us to discern whether Moltmann's changing perceptions over time are the product of a more comprehensive outworking of his basic presuppositions and ideas, or, whether they represent the result of a discontinuous new beginning. In the past some commentators have been too quick to jump to the latter conclusion without engaging in the detailed analysis necessary to justify the former.[12] Also, thinking now synchronically rather than diachronically, a concern for conceptual development has this further benefit. It will enable us to distinguish between ideas which, at any one time in Moltmann's theological progression, can be inherently supported by Moltmann's root assumptions, from those which must be regarded as alien importations from elsewhere. Again, some commentators have failed to make this distinction correctly.[13] On the whole we shall discover that Moltmann's theology is

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11. This will also include, of course, the numerous smaller publications of Moltmann to which we shall need to refer as these are related to each series respectively.

12. See, for example, J. Niewiadomski, *Die Zweideutigkeit von Gott und Welt in J. Moltmanns Theologien*, (Innsbrucker theologische Studien 9.), (Innsbruck/ Vienna/ Munich: Tyrolia, 1982). In defending his thesis of a fundamental ambiguity in Moltmann's understanding of the relationship between God and the world he over-emphasises the divergence between *Theology of Hope* and *The Crucified God*. Instead of seeing a complementary shift of emphasis from God's transcendence over, to God's involvement in, the world that contradicts him, Niewiadomski perceives an irresolvable tension. In a less extreme way, J. Sobrino makes the same error (*Christology at the Crossroads*, (London: SCM, 1978), p.29.

13. This, as we shall see, can include some very respected interpreters of Moltmann such as C. Morse whose *The Logic of Promise in Moltmann's Theology*, (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979) is in many other respects an excellent study.

characterised by a remarkable degree of self-consistency both at any one moment and over time.[14]

The phrase 'eschatological structure' in my title is really a cipher for the relationship between the eschatological future and the plane of creation in all its temporal extension. Thus we will be interested in the 'internal' christological question of how, for Moltmann, Jesus' outstanding future relates to his historical mission, his crucifixion and his resurrection. And from this we shall unfold the 'external' question of how this set of relationships is itself related to, and determines, an understanding of the relationship between the hoped-for new creation and creation as it presently exists. The term 'structure', therefore, is used to describe the notion of a set of widely applicable, and as it turns out highly nuanced, relationships.

What is a constructive analysis?

At the heart of this study lie the numerous texts of Moltmann's theology. There are a number of possible ways in which they could be approached. In thinking about these possibilities we might usefully draw on the terminology of the various disciplines of Biblical criticism. I am not suggesting that these disciplines provide an exact correlation with the options before us, but simply that they indicate the kinds of questions that could receive predominant attention.[15]

One option would be to focus attention on the theological influences which have contributed to Moltmann's theology. This would equate with source criticism. In this respect mention should be made of the brilliant pioneering study of M. D. Meeks.[16] Meeks draws attention to the crucial influences of Moltmann's Göttingen teachers.[17] Here, by way of illustration, I shall

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14. R. Bauckham, *The Theology of Jürgen Moltmann*, p.214 is also led to the same conclusion.

15. Quite clearly the status of Moltmann's theology and the history and mode of its formation is quite different from scripture!

16. *Origins of the Theology of Hope*, (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974).

17. *Origins*, pp.19-43.

briefly relate some of his observations which have relevance for Moltmann's eschatology. Otto Weber introduced Moltmann to the discipline of historical theology in which area, and under whose direction, Moltmann completed both his dissertation[18] and his Habilitations-schrift.[19] Weber emphasised the Calvinistic teaching that the reformation is God's work in history in which God encounters humanity in the totality of its existence; a process ultimately orientated on the 'restoration of all things'.[20] H.J. Iwand significantly shared Moltmann's basic methodological presupposition that theology must move from the particular (history) to the universal (eschatology). We shall be exploring this presupposition in some depth in the next chapter. Iwand also stressed death as the foremost dehumanising power against which salvation must demonstrate its necessity, and introduced Moltmann to the idea that Hegel's dialectic of reconciliation could be used to interpret the relationship of the crucified and risen Christ.[21] M. D. Meeks has also drawn attention to the crucial role of the Dutch Reformed theologian A.A. van Ruler in showing Moltmann that Barth's seemingly all-encompassing theology could be opened up in an eschatological direction.[22] Building on the work of Meeks, R. Bauckham has given a fine account of the catalytic effect of E. Bloch's *Philosophy of Hope*.[23] Bloch's ontology of the 'not-yet', as we shall later see, provided Moltmann not only with a stimulus to reappropriate the largely neglected (in systematic theology at least) area of eschatology and hope, but also provided a dialogue partner for the development of a conceptual vocabulary to achieve this goal.[24] Other names will be mentioned in the course of our study, among them G. von Rad and E. Käsemann who profoundly affected Moltmann's interpretation of the Old

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18. *Christoph Pezel und der Clavinismus in Bremen*, (Bremen: Einkehr, 1958)

19. *Prädestination und Perseveranz, Geschichte und Bedeutung der reformierten Lehre 'de perseverantia sanctorum'*, (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1961).

20. Meeks, *Origins*, pp.21f.

21. Meeks, *Origins*, pp.32-4.

22. Meeks, *Origins*, pp.24f. See also Moltmann's own account of the matter in EG 11; *How I have Changed*, p.15.

23. *Moltmann: Messianic Theology in the Making*, (Basingstoke: Marshall Pickering, 1987), pp.7-22.

24. Again see Moltmann's own account of Bloch's significance at EG 11. For an interesting confirmation of the powerful effect of Bloch on Moltmann, at least on first encountering *The Principle of Hope*, see E. Moltmann-Wendell, *Autobiography*, (London: SCM, 1997), p.40.

Testament and New Testament respectively in his early theology. Such source critical studies have a legitimate and important place in the interpretation of Moltmann's theology. But they do not constitute the only approach. And, cautioned by the 'genetic fallacy',[25] we must always be careful to read what Moltmann actually says rather than assume his meaning can be read off his source.[26] This study does not seek to duplicate the excellent work which has already been achieved in the source-critical area, but, building on this where necessary, opts for a different emphasis.

Another option would be a form-critical approach. Here the emphasis would fall on determining the *Sitz-im-Leben* of Moltmann's theology. Again Meeks and Bauckham are not found wanting. Morse also contributes his insights.[27] *Theology of Hope* was published right in the midst of a general 'outburst of hope'.[28] The 1960's were the decade of the Second Vatican Council, the Civil Rights Movement and, in Czechoslovakia, 'Socialism with a human face'. *The Crucified God* written in the 1970's could be understood in part as a deepening of hope[29] in response to the end of an easy optimism. Such optimism was brought into question by the encyclical *Humanae vitae* which brought *aggiornamento* to a shuddering halt, the assassination of Martin Luther King and the military intervention that put an end to the 'Prague Spring'.[30] We could likewise set *God in Creation* against the growing awareness of the so-called 'ecological crisis' and *The Way of Jesus Christ* against what Moltmann himself describes as

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25. That is, the belief that the meaning of a word or idea, as used at one time, can be revealed by discerning its original meaning in the sources employed.

26. While Bloch was clearly a highly important influence, if we are to believe Moltmann, his effect should not be over-emphasised. "With my 1964 *Theology of Hope* I did not seek to be Bloch's 'heir'...Rather, I wanted to undertake a parallel action in Christianity on the basis of its own presuppositions" (*How I have Changed*, pp.15f.). I do wish to imply that R. Bauckham has made this error; he has not. I simply wish to demonstrate that it is a danger to be avoided.

27. *The Logic of Promise*, pp.15f.

28. R. Bauckham, "Moltmann's Theology of Hope Revisited", *Scottish Journal of Theology* Vol 42, No. 2 (1989), p.201.

29. "I wanted to deepen my theology of hope by comparing it against my theology of the cross" (*Gelebte Theologie 35 Jahre in 35 Minuten*).

30. See *How I have Changed*, pp.16f.

"the contradictions of scientific and technical civilisation".[31] Again, such analysis has its own inherent worth. There will be times when we make use of it. But if we are interested in what Moltmann actually says we must be careful not to reduce text to context.

A third option might be that of redaction criticism. Here the concern would be to enquire after the purpose of Moltmann's writing. What did he seek to achieve? What were his motivations? At this point, however, the structure of my presentation of these critical options is in danger of setting up false alternatives. No one indulges solely in source or form critical approaches to Moltmann's theology. The most important commentators on Moltmann, such as Meeks, Bauckham and Morse, have all used the source and form critical approaches to enhance their understanding of the purpose of Moltmann's texts.

Yet there is another discipline which comes closest to what this study will seek to offer.[32] That is the canonical approach first pioneered by B.S. Childs.[33] Without ignoring the insights afforded by the other approaches we have mentioned, our primary concern will be with Moltmann's own text interpreted in the light of its own internal criteria.[34] We shall be interested in what Moltmann actually says, in the theological proposals he puts forward. We shall test the coherency and consistency of Moltmann's theology both in terms of the structure of its method and its content. But we shall also do more than this. We shall engage in a theological dialogue with Moltmann which is both analytical and constructive.[35] Where tensions are found in Moltmann's theology, where his account is perceived to run into

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31. *The Way of Jesus Christ: Christology in messianic dimensions*, Tr. Kohl, M., (London: SCM, 1990), p.63; henceforth, WJC.

32. I am not claiming that this is an original approach, simply that this is the area in which this study will concentrate its attention. Many of the essays which comprise R. Bauckham's *Theology of Jürgen Moltmann*, for example, fall into this category.

33. *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, (London: SCM, 1979).

34. Childs writes that "The canonical approach is concerned to understand the nature of the theological shape of the text..." (*Introduction*, p.74).

35. Interestingly Childs also sees his approach as opening up the possibility of the construction of an OT theology. See *Old Testament Theology in Canonical Context*, (London:SCM, 1985), p.1.

problems we shall not be content simply to point these out. Rather I shall make constructive proposals for how these problems could be solved while seeking to remain faithful to Moltmann's root theological assumptions. This study will therefore be engaged not simply in an analytical taking apart, but also in a constructive putting together. Some of the ideas put forward could, perhaps, be developed further than opportunity will allow within the constraints of this work. Here my concern is simply to build upon the theological foundation laid by Moltmann. Any proposals of my own will thus be deeply indebted to Moltmann's creative insight.

In this theological dialogue with Moltmann I shall not wait until the conclusion before engaging in theological construction of my own. Rather, the aim will be to build up throughout a christologically determined model of the relationship between the temporal plane of creation and the eschatological future in tandem with a structural analysis of Moltmann's thought. The aim will be not merely to discuss systematic theology but actually to engage in systematic theology. Only so can one pay tribute to the enormity of Moltmann's creative achievement. Yet this study will only constitute a beginning. Not only does it cover some, hopefully central, topics rather than covering the whole range of Moltmann's theological endeavour. But Moltmann's theology itself is not finished. Despite the claim of his publishers that *The Coming of God* completes his series of 'contributions to theology',[36] Moltmann intends to produced the promised concluding volume on method.[37] Until that is written no final assessment can be offered, or attempted. In the relative safety of writing before this completing volume exists, it is to the text of Moltmann's theology and the question of interpretive method that we now turn our attention.

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36. This claim is made on the back cover of the 1996 SCM edition.

37. *How I Have Changed* pp.20f. The original declaration of intent was made in the preface of *God in Creation: An Ecological Doctrine of Creation*, Tr. Kohl, M., (London: SCM, 1985), p.xv; henceforth, GinC.

PART ONE: METHOD
THE INTERPRETATION OF JESUS CHRIST

2.0 THE HORIZON OF PROMISE

To have isolated and understood a person's methodological approach is not yet to have comprehended the positive content he or she desires to put forward. But it is to have discerned a crucial component of the structural form of his or her argument. The method a person chooses sets limits to what may be said and determines the contours of what is said. If our quest is to uncover both the conceptual and chronological development of the eschatological structure of Moltmann's theology, then questions of methodology cannot be ignored. This chapter will attempt to analyse the internal logic of Moltmann's presupposition that the person and history of Jesus Christ is best understood within the horizon of promise. This will enable an assessment of the extent to which this perspective can explain certain structural features of both his christology and his understanding of the relationship between the eschatological future and the temporal plane. In addition, because promise is of programmatic significance in *Theology of Hope*, we will also have created a means of measuring the consistency of Moltmann's later theology and so of illuminating any significant elements of progression.

In order to begin this analysis, it will first be necessary to construct the conceptual tools required. If we are to describe Moltmann's hermeneutic model then the development of a precise vocabulary will be a first priority. The aim will not be to offer an exhaustive foray into the question of hermeneutics, but simply to equip ourselves with sufficient clarity of understanding for the task at hand. I will attempt to make explicit the methodological underpinnings of Moltmann's theology which he himself seems content should remain only implicit,[1] and I am, therefore, bound to develop some terms that he himself does not employ.

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1. In the preface of *The Coming of God* Moltmann writes: "...I am often asked about my theological method, and seldom provide an answer. At a time when so many colleagues are concerned solely with questions of method, what interests me are theological ideas, and their revision and innovation." (p.xiii).

In addition, the conceptual tools developed will also facilitate independent theological construction. They will, it is hoped, especially in the following chapter, open up a set of new and illuminating perspectives and questions.

1. The hermeneutic spiral[2] between a significant 'specific' and a signifying horizon

The world does not constitute its own exhaustive self-explanation. If explanation aims at total intelligibility then the doctrine of creation would imply that without reference to God the world's existence, meanings and purposes cannot be rendered fully comprehensible. Within the perspective of creation alone there are, in fact, only islands of intelligibility separated by a sea of undemonstrable presupposition. This means that within the plane of creation itself no absolute beginning can be found,[3] no starting point which does not presuppose another anterior to it. The cosmological proofs of God, irrespective of the question of their ultimate success, begin on the basis of precisely this observation of an endless[4] series of beginnings. If interpretation is a specific form of explanation to do with the question of meaning, then these observations have profound implications for hermeneutics. It means that in interpretation we are forced to plunge into the middle of things without the luxury of a pure starting point. To put the matter concisely, this suggests that there can be no construction of meaning apart from presupposition.[5] At the very minimum, therefore, we seem to require two terms to engage in an analysis of interpretation. One term is needed to stand for that which requires interpretation.

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2. The term 'spiral' is deliberately used in place of the more customary 'circle' to indicate the degree of interpretive *advancement* which should pertain to the hermeneutic process. The term circle does not sufficiently convey the difference which must exist between the starting and finishing point of each hermeneutic cycle if it is to amount to more than simply the projection of presupposition.

3. Cf. D. Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall* (New York: Macmillan, 1959) pp.14-16.

4. That is, endless in the sense that it can never be brought to a conclusion within the realm of created reality itself, but points tantalisingly towards a transcendent beyond.

5. An interesting and recent example of the difficulty of determining a starting point to a biographical narrative is afforded by the opening of Brian Keenan's poignant and inspiring personal account *An Evil Cradling* (London: Vintage, 1992). "It is always difficult to find a beginning" (p.1) he writes. Why? Because his own story is not yet completed, but also because he wishes only to narrate a certain episode of his life. He is, therefore, forced to begin in the middle.

Another term is necessary for the cluster of presuppositions which render interpretation possible.

The attempt to provide the first of these two terms is fraught with a particular difficulty. To have observed anything at all, even if this observation provokes sheer perplexity, is to have already begun the process of interpretation. Take as an example the phrase 'unidentified flying object'. Although the phrase disclaims knowledge, it already demonstrates that the entity concerned falls within the category of both flying objects and unidentified objects; interpretation has already begun. This inescapable relationship between observation and interpretation explains why very small children are unable to see certain shapes and objects: they may not yet have the interpretive categories to render them visible. To attempt to find a word, therefore, to cover something which in principle is yet to be interpreted, is to search for a word that potentially covers the unobservable and unthinkable. Given that the unthinkable is unlikely to have provoked the development of language it is unsurprising to discover that no such term is easily available. In its absence we shall elect to use the term '*specific*' to describe that which it is hoped to interpret. The intention behind the use of 'specific' is to indicate something distinct, but this should not be taken to rule out the possibility that the phenomenon in question might be multi-faceted, having more than one separable feature as an inherent component. In the light of these comments, however, it should never be forgotten that even in naming something as a 'specific' the territory of interpretation has already been entered. This minimal, but inescapable level of interpretation to render something perceptible is often referred to as preunderstanding.[6]

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6. Bultmann, *Existence and Faith*, (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1964), p.346. While he rightly insisted that this means there can be no such thing as presuppositionless exegesis, instead of viewing it as simply an inevitable negative he stressed its appropriate indispensability to the interaction between subject and text. "The demand that the interpreter must silence his subjectivity...in order to attain an objective knowledge is therefore the most absurd one that can be imagined" ("The Problem of Hermeneutics" p.255 quoted by A.C. Thiselton, "The New Hermeneutic" in I.H. Marshall (Ed.), *New Testament Interpretation* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1979) p.313). It is absurd because without the application of presupposition on the part of the interpreter the text would remain essentially meaningless. This same inescapability of subjective assumptions has been used by Latin American Liberation Theology to justify the overt use of its own prior option for the poor leading to the utilisation of a Marxist socio-analytic mediation. A highly sophisticated example of this approach is offered by Clodovis Boff, *Theology and Praxis*, (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1987).

The second necessary term lies more easily to hand. The cluster of presuppositions necessary to generate meaning will be designated a '*horizon of interpretation*'. This is the term which Moltmann, following the insights of Edmund Husserl,[7] adopts himself.

> "Experience and judgement are always bound up with a *horizon* of openness towards reality, in which a thing comes to view and can be experienced and in which judgements become meaningful. A horizon of this kind contains a certain anterior knowledge of that which we learn. It is not a closed system, but includes also open questions and anticipations, and is therefore open towards the new and the unknown."[8]

Furnished with these two terms, we can now proceed to an examination of their interrelationship. At its most basic level this will take the form illustrated in the following example. The observation that two or more manuscripts diverge in their recording of a certain piece of text may be rendered significant by presupposing a process of transmission through copying. Here, the specific under investigation is the phenomenon of divergence, and the horizon of interpretation used to render this specific meaningful is that of the process of textual transmission. The interaction of the two leads to textual criticism and a theory about the propagation of errors.

While this example illustrates how a specific comes to gain a particular meaning, and so undergoes hermeneutic development, it does not show, and here we reach the next level of complexity, that the interpretive horizon itself may also undergo a process of hermeneutic modification. The joy of the metaphor 'horizon' is precisely its ability to accommodate such a sense of movement. Parallelling the way the physical horizon of earth and sky is capable of movement with the changing position of the observer, so the interpretive horizon can also shift and modify under the influence of that which it encompasses. Such a degree of flexibility is

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7. See TH 191, n.1.

8. TH 190f. In the preface to *Hope and Planning*, Tr. Clarkson, M., (London: SCM, 1971); henceforth, HP (original German title, *Perspektiven der Theologie: Gesammelte Aufsätze*), Moltmann describes what he means by a theological perspective (p. viif). It enables something to be seen and opens up a view. It needs to be distinguished from the "matter itself". It is open for critical elaboration by other perspectives. It always has a "heuristic and experimental character". And, characteristic of Moltmann's concern for theology's application, it helps develop directives for action. These lucid observations help further clarify what Moltmann intends by horizon.

necessitated by any 'misfit' which may pertain between the specific in question and the imposed horizon. For example, the specific may prove to possess certain features which are either incongruent with, or unaccounted for by, the horizon of interpretation used. In such circumstances the specific may call the horizon into question provoking a hermeneutical spiral of mutual modification. The way this process functions may usefully be illustrated by the everyday occurrence of becoming acquainted with a previously unknown person. In this situation all knowledge begins in pre-judice. On the basis of general rules constructed from previous experience an estimation of the person is formed from what can be absorbed in a first impression: his or her visual appearance and demeanour; the style and content of his or her language. But it is only in the *conflict* between this assumed understanding, which constitutes the interpretive horizon applied, and the person who unfolds himself or herself as the encounter continues, that prejudice is replaced by more accurate knowledge. This happens only as that which is contingent and individual about the person comes to light. Consequently, in the never-ending process of the discovery of the *other*, not only does one's perception of the person encountered undergo modification, but also the horizon of interpretation utilised. Here, a new personal encounter shifts the horizon as new observation-significance relations are added and errant ones jettisoned.

Later we shall come across examples of exactly this process in connection with Moltmann's approach to the particular person of Jesus Christ. In a parallel way, he will argue that the conflict between the 'specific' of Jesus' person and history and the horizons used to interpret him result in the modification of the latter to become determinately Christian conceptions. Thus in the New Testament employment of the apocalyptic horizon 'resurrection' to interpret the contradiction that a man who was crucified three days later appeared alive to his followers, the notion of resurrection that results is no longer apocalyptic but Christian.[9]

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9. See Moltmann TH 190ff; *Religion, Revolution and the Future*, Tr. Meeks, M.D., (New York: Charles Scribner's, 1969), pp.45ff; henceforth, RRF; *The Crucified God: The Cross as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology*, Tr. Wilson, R.A. & Bowden, J., (London: SCM, 1974), pp.169ff; henceforth, CG; WJC 220ff; *et passim*.

Building on this analysis of the interaction between a specific and a single horizon, we next need to consider ways in which different horizons may be related to the same specific. A multi-faceted specific may be equally successfully, if differently, illuminated by a variety of horizons. Applying the interpretive perspective of transportation to a car yields the notion of a device for getting from one place to another. Under the perspective of status symbol, however, its capacity for functional use fades into insignificance. Interpretive horizons may also 'nest' within one another. Again, using a motoring example, a spark plug (as specific) may be given an immediate significance within the horizon of the properties of electricity as the component of a spark-generating mechanism. But this significance is further illuminated within the all-embracing perspective of 'internal combustion engine'. As we shall later see, this phenomenon of nesting, of one horizon existing within another more expansive one, plays an important role within the functioning of the horizon of promise.

Horizons need not, however, only be related in complementary ways. Rival interpretive horizons, which seek to offer competing accounts of the same specific, can come into conflict. This observation holds a particular importance for our central concern: Moltmann's interpretation of the significance of the person and history of Jesus Christ. It is, therefore, deserving of careful elucidation.

We have already established that any specific presented as significant must already have been interpreted as such from within a signifying horizon. It follows from this that in the presentation of Jesus' significance, in the New Testament in general and in the Gospel narratives in particular, we are afforded little access to neutral facts about his person and history. Neutral facts belong to a stage prior to interpretation and are accordingly essentially meaningless in and of themselves. Rather the text inseparably connects Jesus' contingent particularity with the signifying horizon which alone renders the transmission of his importance possible. In considering the hermeneutic process which takes place between interpreter and text, therefore, it is essential to realise that what is scrutinised is the *product* of a prior interaction between specific and horizon of interpretation. It is thus, what we shall term, a

compound-specific. In interpreting biblical texts, any texts in fact, one is seeking to offer an interpretation of an interpretation. To be more exact, the interpreter's pre-understanding will act as horizon of interpretation for the compound-specific which the text presents. In this interaction two distinct types of relationship may be isolated. These will be designated [A] and [B] and are now described.

[A] In the first, the pre-existing product of specific-horizon interaction in the text is taken as a compound-specific. As such it is interpreted within the perspective of the horizon of interpretation brought to bear by the interpreter. This leads to a process of mutual modification after the fashion of H. G. Gadamer's 'merging of horizons' (*Horizontverschmelzung*).[10] The world of meaning created by the text and that of the pre-understanding of the interpreter modify each other, until a new perception is created. This model has the notable feature of allowing the text *as a unitary reality* to subject the interpreter to an interpretation of its own. In other words, it allows for the interpreter's pre-understanding itself to become a specific within the interpretive reach of the text acting as interpretive horizon. The encounter is thus best characterised as subject-subject rather than subject-object.[11] It may, therefore, be labelled 'non-Cartesian'[12] because it does not set up the invulnerable and isolated subject, as the final arbiter of truth. This may be contrasted with a second type of relationship.

[B] If it is believed possible to conceptually separate horizon and specific in the text under examination,[13] then a competition can ensue between the preferred horizon of the interpreter

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10. *Truth and Method*, (New York: Seabury, 1975), pp.269-73. The explicit influence of Gadamer on Moltmann's use of the term horizon, especially as regards its capacity for movement and development, is displayed at TH p.106 and WJC p.237.

11. This observation will reveal to the reader with an eye for hermeneutic issues, that it has proved impossible for our account of specific-horizon encounter to remain within the subjectivist presuppositions of Husserl. Instead we have moved closer to the early Heidegger's notion of 'being-in-the-world'. To examine this recognition further would take us beyond the scope of our present purpose.

12. After the usage of Helmut Thielicke, *The Evangelical Faith* Volume I, (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1978).

13. Clearly this is possible in some instances. The fact of Jesus death by crucifixion may be conceptually separated from any interpretation which is subsequently placed upon it. However, as I later argue, it is highly doubtful whether the 'fact', in this sense, behind the interpretation 'resurrection' can be recovered.

and that of the text itself; this is a competition to offer the most significant account of the specific being considered. Just such an assumption would appear to lie behind Bultmann's programme of demythologisation. Here an existential perspective, influenced by the philosophy of Heidegger, is allowed to compete with those interpretive horizons of the text judged as mythological. Accordingly, the assumptions contained within the interpreter's preferred horizon judge between that which should be jettisoned, and that which may be recognised as authentic, in the text's presentation of the specific. The dynamics of this encounter are thus best characterised as subject-object and may be labelled 'Cartesian'.[14]

Given that no 'merger of horizons' is ever complete and that no seriously considered rival horizon is ever totally inappropriate, model relations [A] and [B] should only be seen as useful labels for the extreme ends of a continuous hermeneutic spectrum.[15] Consequently although relationship [B] is at one extreme, it does usefully highlight the inescapable degree of relativity which pertains to interpretation. If we cannot do without presupposition, without pre-understanding, then significance is rendered relative to the horizon applied. What prevents the hermeneutic task from becoming purely arbitrary, however, is the ability of specifics to call interpretive horizons into question; the phenomenon of 'misfit' provoking conflict already touched upon above.[16] Accordingly it is possible to construct a test of comprehensiveness utilising this critical function which specifics possess, note, not in isolation, but in interaction with interpretive horizons. How completely can each rival horizon render as significant the whole range of facets which the specific contains, and how well integrated are these results? The greater the explanatory power of a horizon, the more it is to be preferred.[17] Consider the

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14. Again after the usage of Helmut Thielicke, *op. cit.*.

15. This is because the interpreter's *inescapably* employed horizon of preunderstanding described in [A], and the *deliberate* utilisation of an imposed alternative horizon outlined in [B], while clearly distinct, must lie at different points along the same continuum.

16. It should also be borne in mind that many horizons of interpretation will fail to extract any significance from a particular specific at all. In the case of a biblical text the horizon 'aeroplane' will yield disappointingly thin results.

17. Geologists moving to an unfamiliar field-area often speak of the need to 'get their eye in', by which they effectively mean discover a model horizon of interpretation which allows them to 'see' both significant presences and absences in the composition and structure of the rocks.

example of a Quiz Show in which contestants are asked to deduce the intended use of a previously unencountered article. Clearly, if the suggested use, acting as interpretive horizon, leaves certain features of the implement unexplained, it is almost certainly incorrect!

This last illustration serves as a reminder of a critical peculiarity of biblical texts. Unlike a Quiz Show in which the specific under examination is capable of being directly scrutinised by its interpreter, the one who would offer a rival horizon of interpretation for a biblical text is limited by the fact that it is no longer possible to 'see' more of the specific than the text itself records.[18] This is because facets which did not 'fit' the text's own interpretive horizon would have been rendered 'invisible' and so have gone unrecorded. A competing horizon, therefore, will only be able to offer an equally comprehensive account of the facets of the specific, or one which leaves certain features unincluded (e.g. dismissed as purely mythological). The situation is different, however, if the contemporary interpreter seeks to offer not a competing but a complementary horizon (this possibility is opened up by the phenomenon of nesting described earlier). Where the text records certain features of the specific as 'problems', or where tensions are detected between different biblical sources, the prospect exists of constructing a more comprehensive horizon than those offered by the text. Comprehensiveness would mean an ability to integrate such recalcitrant features with the facets of the specific already rendered as significant and could not, of course, be achieved at the expense of leaving meaningless facets once rendered meaningful. Traditionally theology has claimed that the doctrine of the Trinity does exactly this by affording a horizon of greater power of signification than those explicitly employed in the original texts, while maintaining complementarity with these earlier

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18. This irreducible degree of non-equivalence between contemporary theology and the writers of the New Testament is imaginatively captured by Karl Barth. " He [the contemporary theologian] is neither a president of a seminary, nor the Chairman of the Board of some Christian Institute of Advanced Theological Studies, who might claim some authority over the prophets and apostles. He cannot grant or refuse them a hearing as though they were colleagues on the faculty. Still less is he a high-school teacher authorised to look over their shoulder benevolently or crossly, to correct their notebooks, or to give them good, average, or bad marks. Even the smallest, strangest, simplest, or obscurest among the biblical witnesses has an incomparable advantage over even the most pious, scholarly, and sagacious latter-day theologian. From his special point of view and in his special fashion, the witness has thought, spoken, and written about the revelatory Word and act in direct confrontation with it." (*Evangelical Theology*, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1979), pp.31f).

horizons.[19]

We have now reached the point at which we can begin to set our hermeneutic vocabulary to work. Awareness of the relevant issues should by now have been sufficiently raised.

2. *The methodological priority of the particular*

One of Moltmann's most distinctive methodological claims is that, "the path of theological knowledge leads irreversibly from the particular to the general, from the historic to the eschatological and universal".[20] Exactly how Moltmann understands this movement to operate is expressed in the following foundational statement.

> "Christian theology speaks of God with respect to the concrete, specific, and contingent history, which is told and witnessed to in the biblical writings...It ties the memory of unique historical persons and unique historical events to language about God, the one, singular God and Lord of all men and things. Thus it merges with specific historical recollection a universal and absolute claim...As long as the dialectical unity of particular history and special historical mediation with the universally relevant that pertains directly to everyone can be retained, that is, as long as the unity of Jesus with God and of God with Jesus can be retained Christianity is alive. As soon as the dialectical unity between history and absolute is broken, Christianity disintegrates."[21]

For Moltmann *Christian* theology only happens when the particular biblical history of Jesus Christ in all its specific detail and contingency is allowed to become determinative of theology rather than merely providing a jewel box of ornaments to illustrate principles and concepts derived from elsewhere. Clearly Moltmann elects to operate toward the [A] end of our

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19. While no mention has been made thus far of a possible mediatory role for the Holy Spirit between interpreter and text, it is important to observe that there is nothing in the explication of our hermeneutical model which would, *per se*, rule out this prospect.

20. TH 141.

21. "Theology as Eschatology", in *The Future of Hope: Theology as Eschatology*, Herzog, F., (Ed.), (New York: Herder & Herder, 1970), pp.1f; henceforth, TasE. *Contra* P.D. Molnar who makes precisely the opposite claim: "Methodologically [Moltmann's] thinking invariably moves from the general to the particular and this influences his view of Christ and of the Trinity in a number of ways" ("The Function of the Immanent Trinity in the Theology of Karl Barth", *Scottish Journal of Theology*, Vol 42 (1989), p.383.

hermeneutic spectrum.[22] As well as shining a predictive light on the way Moltmann will criticise his opponents, this observation also enables us to offer a more precise account of Moltmann's methodological option than he explicitly offers himself.

Moltmann's term 'particular', in the phrase "particular history", must refer, I suggest, to the particular *product of interaction* between specific and horizon which the biblical text preserves. His term particular thus corresponds to our notion of compound-specific. We have already established that the process of interpretation involves hermeneutic development for both specific and interpretive horizon through mutual modification. This is the hermeneutic spiral. Thus in the biblical interpretation of Jesus as significant we should expect that horizons utilised will have undergone a history of modification. Each horizon applied will have traced out a trajectory of development. Consequently, when Moltmann accords the biblical narrative methodological priority he is actually giving normative significance to *the orientation of the process of specific-horizon interaction* preserved in the text.

We could think of the biblical texts as a veritable museum of such trajectories of interaction; a set of different processes preserved at varying degrees of advancement.[23] This suggests that one way to conceive of the task of systematic theology is as bringing this museum to life. To achieve this would require the pursuit of trajectories of interpretation projected by the texts themselves in the hope of creatively integrating them together with the minimum of distortion or misfit. Integration would be achieved through the use of new interpretive horizons functioning as theological models. This strategy would, therefore, exploit the test of

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22. Cf. A.E. McGrath who interprets Moltmann's christology as being radically opposed to the three Cartesian assumptions he suggests have shaped modern christological debate. These are: the belief that history is incapable of disclosing the kind of information necessary to construct a theological system; the belief that reason alone can lay down in advance what God must be like; the belief that God's perfection rules out the possibility of his suffering (*The Making of Modern German Christology 1750-1990*, (Grand Rapids: Apollos, 1994), pp. 201f.

23. Given the temporal proximity of Paul, for example, to the events with whose significance he is compelled to wrestle, it is astounding that this hermeneutic process has proceeded as far as it has. This is especially striking if one compares the comprehensiveness of his understanding of the Holy Spirit in the soteriological process with, for example, the second century Apologists.

comprehensiveness already described. Moltmann, I submit, implicitly takes up just such a strategy.

If this proposal for systematic theology is to prove practicable, however, it will need to be methodologically possible to recover the original form of any horizon applied to the person and history of Jesus prior to its modification through interaction. This is because only by means of a comparison between its original and modified form could a trajectory of alteration be established and, therefore, something of the significance of the specific 'Jesus and his history' be determined. Thus while it may not be possible to get at the nature of a specific directly, by means of an analysis of its causal effect on an applied horizon it can be rendered visible indirectly. It is as if while we cannot look at the specific Jesus directly we do possess a methodological torch capable of casting his shadow.

It is worth pausing at this juncture to underline the fact that this strategy for systematic theology is far from biblicist. To the subtlety of its methodology may be added another factor already isolated. The trajectories of hermeneutic development will be inescapably discerned within the perspective of the interpreter's pre-understanding. At each stage of the process the pre-understanding will be involved in rendering observations visible. Of course, mutual modification will hopefully take place in a way analogous to the development of interpersonal knowledge outlined above. But the inescapable involvement of the pre-understanding will guarantee that the text can never be used, illegitimately, to exert an oppressively totalitarian authority over theology. There will always be room for debate between interpreters. There will always be the possibility of new insight, especially when the interests and concerns of the present are found to resonate with those of the text in a novel way.[24]

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24. For example in Latin America, Gutiérrez' seizure upon the metaphor 'liberation' in his seminal work *A Theology of Liberation* (London: SCM, 1974,1988), has highlighted forgotten or repressed resonances within the paradigmatic events of exodus and resurrection (see especially chapters 9-11). More particularly, the explosion of systematic interest in eschatology in the 1960's, of which Moltmann is a prime example (others include Wolfhart Pannenberg, Walter Kreck, Gerhard Sauter and Johannes Baptist-Metz), has been linked, as we saw in the Introduction, with the hope-laden consciousness of that period.

Moltmann, like a gifted but unwilling student of mathematics, does not always show his working. He is content to denote a methodological move from particular to universal without taking the trouble to explain just what the term 'particular' hides. As we shall see, especially in the following chapter, this leads Moltmann to internal contradiction and a lack of conceptual focus. Despite his own best insights,[25] he can sometimes give the impression of a certain naivety concerning the inability of specifics to function as normative outside an interaction with an interpretive horizon. His term 'particular' is too crude in the absence of a vocabulary which can indicate that it stands for a normative set of specific-horizon trajectories of development.[26]

As Moltmann's commitment to the methodological priority of the particular means that christology comes to stand in the very centre of theology, so at the centre of christology stands the resurrection of the crucified Jesus.[27] Again, unlike Moltmann, we must be careful to differentiate our terms. The word resurrection can be used to indicate two distinct things. First, it may be used to denote the *interpretive horizon* applied to the specific which lies behind the event of Easter. Secondly, as in the expression 'the resurrection' above, it may be used to indicate the *interpretive result* of the application of this horizon. In this second case, therefore, resurrection refers to a *compound-specific*. Awareness of this difference of sense will suffice to make it clear from the context of use which meaning is intended. It will, however, also be important to distinguish the compound-specific 'resurrection' from the 'bare fact' (the specific) which lies behind such interpretation. In attempting to find a term to cover 'what

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25. "It is impossible to discover the substance of these experiences [of the risen Christ] in the form of naked facts without subjective interpretations. The only result would be unhistorical abstractions. Moreover, pure facts are inexpressible. In every perception, what is experienced is interpreted through the ideas which people bring with them. Of course these ideas do not remain what they were; in the process of perception they themselves change...If we perceive something 'wholly other', we ourselves are fundamentally changed. If we are not, we have merely assimilated it to what we already are and know, repressing its strangeness." (WJC 216f).

26. This lack of vocabulary can also affect Moltmann's commentators. Consider Richard Bauckham's statement that, "For Moltmann, the determining starting-point for Christian theology must be the biblical history of revelation...This means that theology moves *from* the unique events of biblical revelation, which culminate in the history of Jesus , *to* the universal significance of this revelation for all people and all reality." (*Moltmann: Messianic Theology in the Making*, (Basingstoke: Marshall Pickering, 1987), pp.24f). It also is in danger of masking the fact that the events of biblical revelation themselves, as presented in the text, are already a product of just such a movement. They are already *theological* narratives.

27. See, for example, TH 165 and the ensuing argument.

really happened' at Easter we face, I suggest, an insuperable difficulty. This is because the specific will remain unrecoverable in abstraction from an account of its meaning. Though it is thus strictly inadequate, we shall use the term 'appearance' of Jesus to indicate this hidden specific rather than be reduced to silence. This is not because it pre-dates interpretation, but because 'appearance' seems to be the earliest, and perhaps most neutral, interpretative category preserved in the biblical texts.[28]

The absolute centrality of the resurrection for Moltmann's christology is demonstrated when he writes:

> "...the problem of the origin of christology is reduced to the question whether his death on the cross was and still is a refutation of his preaching, or whether behind the preaching of the resurrection of the crucified Jesus there lies the refutation of this refutation by his death...The historical and hermeneutic question, how Jesus who preached became Christ who is preached, is therefore basically the christological question, how the dead Jesus became the living, the crucified the resurrected, and the humiliated the exalted."[29]

Moreover, in Moltmann's estimation, the resurrection does more than render christology possible, it also erects boundary conditions for theology's positive content.

> "...Jesus *is* the Lord because God *has raised* him from the dead. His *existence* as the Lord is to be found in God's eschatological *act* in him, which we call raising from the dead. Jesus' identity is this eschatological identity. He is not the Christ apart from this act of God. He is the Christ in the eschatological history of God..."[30]

What Moltmann is doing is allowing elements which are inherent to the interpretive horizon 'resurrection' to assert a normative control. In this way, what Moltmann terms christology's "biblical identifiability"[31] demands that the significance of Jesus cannot be expressed apart from reference to: (a) the history of God's action in, with and for him; (b) the eschatological

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28. See, for example, C.K. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, (London: A.C. Black, 1966/1971), p.341. The term 'appearance' is found, significantly, in the traditional credal formula employed by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:3ff. On the status of this traditional material see G.D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), pp.721-729.

29. CG 123.

30. WJC 40.

31. WJC 41.

future; (c) the activity of the Spirit;[32] and for the later Moltmann, (d) Christ's continued bodily existence.[33] In turn, by reason of the mutual modification occasioned by specific-horizon interactions, the (resulting interpretive product of) resurrection also comes to determine the *Christian* definition of each of these inherent dimensions. God comes to be defined as the one who raised Jesus from death[34] and so as 'the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ'.[35] Thus the resurrection functions as an event which defines deity for the New Testament on a scale comparable with that of the exodus for the Old,[36] and suggests that God cannot be comprehended apart from the eschatological dimension. In a parallel way, Moltmann insists that Christian eschatology speaks of "Jesus Christ and *his* future";[37] it does not speak of the future in general.

If the resurrection thus touches on the dimensions of christology, pneumatology, and from thence the doctrine of the Trinity, together with eschatology and the goal of creation (proleptically realised in the risen *body* of Jesus), it is not a matter of slight importance whether the interpretive horizon applied is appropriate. It would be possible to defend the thesis that in theologians' understanding of the resurrection is foreshadowed the whole range and content of their theology. It will be understandable then, that for a theologian like Moltmann who wishes to work from the particular to the universal, the question of the

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32. Curiously in *The Way of Jesus Christ* when Moltmann covers the Spirit in connection with christology's 'biblical identifiability' reference to the foundational role of the resurrection is rather oblique: "the presence of Christ is experienced in the Spirit who is the giver of life" (p. 41). The emphasis falls on the *subjective* experience enabled by the Spirit rather than directly on the Spirit's objective role in the resurrection (cf. Romans 8:11).

33. Moltmann accuses modern English liberalism especially of failing to take sufficient account of these dimensions (WJC 347, n.4). He writes quite pointedly, "Anyone who pares the theme of christology down to 'the Jesus of history', anyone who reduces the eschatological person of Christ to the private person of Jesus, and anyone who historicizes his presence to the time of his life on earth, must not be surprised to discover that christology is no longer a subject that has any relevance at all. For who could still get up any interest after 2,000 years in a historical Jesus of Nazareth who lived a private life and then died?" (WJC 40f).

34. See, for example, Romans 4:24.

35. See, for example, Romans 15:6.

36. See, for example, Exodus 20:2.

37. TH 17.

process of interpretation of Jesus Christ and his history is far from trivial.

3. *Promise as horizon of interpretation*

For Moltmann the resurrection of the crucified Jesus is most authentically understood as an event of promise. Unfolding precisely what this deceptively simple statement means will, it is ventured, make possible an explication of the fundamental logic of his eschatology. However, before moving to an exegesis of Moltmann's positive position, it will be helpful to examine the options he rejects. This is because an abiding feature of Moltmann's style of argumentation, operating at every level of his endeavour, is the presentation of his own view as the mediating synthesis of a dialectic constructed from the juxtaposition of the positions of others. In the case of the horizon of promise, this continuity of style only serves to highlight a remarkable continuity of substance. For both chapter one of *Theology of Hope* (1964) and chapter one of *The Coming of God* (1995) define the theme of biblical eschatology over against the same erroneous options.[38] Because of their clarity we shall borrow two subheadings from the latter volume.

(i) *The transposition of eschatology into time*:[39] Johannes Weiss[40] and Albert Schweitzer[41] are universally credited with uncovering the critical importance of the dimension of eschatology for the preaching and existence of Jesus and also for the earliest Christianity which grappled with and transmitted his significance. But crucially, in their own accounts of the import of Jesus for theology, neither could find a place for this dimension. The preacher of the imminent in-breaking of the kingdom of God, once discovered, appeared to have nothing to

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38. Moltmann claims that the only difference between the two volumes is one of focus: "My present concern is the doctrine of hope in a special sense - i.e., the horizons of expectation for personal life, for political and historical life, and for the life of the cosmos" (CofG xii).

39. CofG 6-13, cf. TH 37-39.

40. *Die Predigt Jesu vom Reiche Gottes*, (1892).

41. *Vom Reimarus zu Wrede. Eine Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung*, (1906).

say to the modern world. The uninterrupted continuation of history made his claim unintelligible. For Moltmann however, this eschatological dimension was dismissed only because it was falsely understood. Speaking of Weiss and Schweitzer he writes:

> "Their error was to transpose eschatology into time, instead of seeing in eschatology a transformation of time itself. But true eschatology is not about future history; it is about the future *of* history."[42]

Their rejection of the eschatological element in christology was based on the assumption of a simple temporal continuity between Jesus' proclamation and the final arrival of the kingdom of God, as if the 'already' and the 'not yet' were merely separated along the line of time's usual progression. Imminent expectation of the end was thus refuted by 1900 years of history. This error of understanding allowed mainstream Liberal Protestantism to perceive its discovery as merely a temporary crisis for the prevailing ethical reduction of the figure of Jesus; something to be "assimilated, mastered and overcome".[43] It is understandable that someone who wishes, as Moltmann does, to accord the biblical text a normative significance should be profoundly dissatisfied by this erroneous strategy for crisis resolution.

(ii) *The transposition of eschatology into eternity*:[44] Not even so-called 'dialectical theology', which specifically aimed to rehabilitate this eschatological dimension, succeeded, in Moltmann's estimation, in appropriating it without distortion. Here it is the structural influence of Immanuel Kant's 'transcendental eschatology' which is perceived to have led to error. In *Das Ende Aller Dinge* (1794) Kant effectively chose to locate 'the last things' in the subjective side of the post-Enlightenment cleavage between subject and object. The *eschata* were accordingly reduced to the "eternal, transcendental conditions for experiencing oneself in a practical way".[45] Thus removed from the objective realm of history, the *eschata* could only find pertinence within the inscrutable realm of the self. This legacy, mediated via Wilhelm

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42. CofG 10.

43. TH 37.

44. CofG 13-22, cf. TH 45-69.

45. TH 48.

Herrmann, informs 'dialectical theology'. At its heart lies an understanding of the crisis of decision provoked by the in-breaking of God's eternity into time. But, within this structural similarity, a clear bifurcation takes place depending upon whether the inscrutable self, primarily disclosed in the confrontation, is taken to be divine or human. For Karl Barth the dialectic of eternity and time serves to underline the absolute sovereignty of God's Word of address which equally abuts every moment of time. Eschatology no longer has to do with the end of history in any temporal sense, but is rather seen as eternity's qualitative limitation of every temporal moment. The parousia of Christ is no longer to be expected of the future, but takes place whenever God's Word calls humanity and history into radical question. While sharing the same transcendental structure Bultmann's focus falls on the existential possibilities which this encounter with eternity creates for the addressee. The proclamation of Jesus brings with it the possibility of authentic human existence. Eschatological language of the end, therefore, finds an individual reference point in death; a recognition which serves to underline the urgency of decision. From H.J. Iwand, Moltmann learnt that the fundamental problem with so called 'dialectical theology' is its substitution of a paradox for a genuine dialectic.[46] Eternity and time, God and humanity, stand in contradiction but without a movement toward a reconciling synthesis. Consequently the problem of the transposition of eschatology into eternity is that it can no longer distinguish between a present in which a new future is heralded and the coming of that future itself. And in the collapse of this distinction, Moltmann believes, a biblical understanding of eschatology collapses as well. In this notion of eschatology as the transcendental 'presence of eternity', eschatology swallows up time and history. It can find no significance in the world's contingent, temporal unfolding. How then, Moltmann asks, can such a notion lead to an understanding of the fulfilment and consummation of time?

What Moltmann has done is to utilise the dialectic between time and eternity to set in tension positions which he believes falsely resolve eschatology into either term. This suggests that he will understand eschatology as that which mediates between time and eternity, so bringing

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46. Douglas Meeks, *Origins*, pp.60f.

eschatology and history into a creative relationship in which neither one swallows up the other. Moltmann aims to achieve this by unfolding the distinctive biblical language of promise.[47] This is not a purely arbitrary move. Rather under the influence of the OT researches of especially Martin Buber, Victor Maag and Gerhard von Rad,[48] and the NT insights of Ernst Käsemann, Moltmann understands the biblical language of promise to have been already engaged in similar battles. In the OT the conflict is between "the promise-centred faith of Israel" and the "epiphany-based religions of the world about it"[49] which conceived revelation as "the epiphany of the eternal present of being".[50] In the NT the dispute is between an interpretation of God's revelation in Jesus which elected to operate under this same rubric of promise and, for example, the 'fulfilment ecstasy' in Corinth, with which Paul wrestled, which understood the presence of the risen Christ in the Greek category of eternity. [51] What then does the category of promise have to offer?

It will be helpful to pause briefly at this juncture to explore in basic terms what is true of any promise. This will provide orientation for the exploration ahead. A promise is clearly related to the future. Unlike a prediction, however, which speaks of what will happen in any case, a promise opens up a future prospect which would not otherwise have been. In this sense it is inherently related to change and transformation. Thus to view a specific within the horizon of promise is to open up the question of what it may become; no longer can it be understood simply in terms of its present existence. And this becoming will, therefore, have an open, unexpected and surprising element since it is not constrained by the possibilities inherent in its present form. The horizon of promise thus has two interesting effects. First, it will mean that that which already resonates with the prospect promise creates can act as a proleptic sign of its

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47. Interestingly, J. Macquarrie suggests that "for Moltmann, promise has the central role that Barth and Bultmann assigned to revelation" ("Today's Word for Today: I. Jürgen Moltmann", *The Expository Times*, Vol 92 (1980), p.5).

48. D. Meeks, *op. cit.*, pp.68f

49. TH p.41.

50. TH 40.

51. TH 154-165.

fulfilment. For example, consider a car in need of renovation. The few parts which are already pristine will, viewed within the horizon of its promised restoration, act as signs of what the car may become. Second, within the horizon of promise, identity becomes ec-centric, that is, no longer fully centred in the present. In the case of our car illustration, the description 'rotten car' no longer suffices to describe the sum of its identity; rather its identity will be unfolded further. Armed with these clarifications, we may now return to our main purpose which is to demonstrate the way in which both Moltmann's explicit and implicit eschatological structuring of Jesus' person and history follows as a direct consequence of the horizon of promise within which he elects to operate.

Moltmann understands the eschatological outlook of the New Testament to function within the perspective of the history of God's promise which it inherits from the Old. Accordingly, in *Theology of Hope* he begins with an examination of this distinctive understanding of revelation[52] which is the product of Israel's peculiar encounter with its God.[53] For this investigation he draws heavily upon the Old Testament researches of Gerhard von Rad[54], Walther Zimmerli[55] and Victor Maag.[56] Particular attention, however, should be drawn to the contribution of Zimmerli. His definition of promise directly informs one of the jewels of *Theology of Hope*: a seven-part analysis of the nature of the promise of God. This analysis is

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52. Moltmann aims "to develop a view of the 'revelation of God' which is 'eschatological' in so far as it seeks to discover the language of promise" (TH 42). He is, however, careful to point out that the OT does not contain a clear, unified and unambiguous account of the matter (TH 95). Despite this he does in practice assume that the mainstream path of OT reflection about God, humanity and the soteriological future lies along a specific trajectory of development. It is this trajectory which the NT then utilises in its account of the significance of the history of Jesus and which we are concerned to explore.

53. It is important to note that Moltmann's later theology still operates within the rubric of this methodological assumption. A key example is afforded by his desire in *The Way of Jesus Christ* (1989) to expound the messianic significance of Jesus against the OT background. "Christian christology is a particular form of Israel's hope for the messiah, and is still related to, and dependent on, the Jewish forms of messianic hope that anteceded Christianity and run parallel to it." (*Ibid.*, p.2).

54. See, for example, *Old Testament Theology* Vol. II, (London: SCM, 1975), pp.104ff.

55. "*Verheissung und Erfüllung*", *Evangelische Theologie* 12, 1952, pp.38ff; cited at TH p.103.

56. "Malkut Jhwh", *Vestus Testamentum* Suppl., vii, 1960. Cited at TH 96. Curiously, in *Theology of Hope* his following of Victor Maag causes him to locate the primary *Sitz im Leben* of Israel's 'religion of promise' not in the paradigmatic experience of the exodus event, which is certainly true of his later work (see *The Experiment Hope*, Tr. Meeks, M.D., (London: SCM, 1975), p.18; henceforth, EH) but in the early nomadic, vectorial existence of Israel's ancestral past which survived, against historical precedent, into Israel's settled agrarian form of life (TH 95-102).

most relevant to promise which has developed to reach the eschatological level by means of a process which will be subjected to close scrutiny below. But, because of the programmatic significance of this account, not just for *Theology of Hope*, but for the whole of the Moltmannian corpus, it will be helpful to offer a summary of his analysis at this point.

(a)[57] The promise of God constitutes the declaration of a coming reality, not yet in existence, made possible, not only through the realisation of the immanent potentialities of creation, but supremely through the transcendent possibilities of God. Such a reality can, therefore, "be something which by the standard of present experience appears impossible".[58]

(b) It binds humanity to the future, affording a specific sense of the historic character of human existence; determined not by a general impression of world history or of human possibility, but by a decisive orientation towards the promised fulfilment.

(c) It initiates and provokes history, a history which possesses a definite trajectory; a trend towards the specific goal of fulfilment. Thus in stark contrast to any cyclical notion of history, promise "divides reality into one reality which is passing and can be left behind, and another which must be expected and sought."[59]

(d) It stands in *contradiction*[60] to the reality which is open to experience in the present and in the historical future[61]. Rather it projects a distinguishable (eschatological) future defined as

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57. These letter demarcations equate to those in Moltmann's text (TH 103-106).

58. TH 103.

59. TH 103.

60. This contradiction between promise and present reality is not total. "[God] promises a new world...and with this promise he constantly calls the world in question - not because to the eye of hope it is as nothing, but because to the eye of hope it is not yet what it has the prospect of being" (TH 164).

61. I am using this term, in line with Moltmann's convention, to designate the future which arises as a result of the selective realisation of the immanent potentiality contained within one moment to form the next. This will be, therefore, a process which takes place solely *within* the plane of creation.

that reality which is congruent with the fulfilment of the promise.[62]

(e) It produces "an interval of tension"[63] between its issuing and fulfilment which in turn creates an area of freedom within which either an attitude of hopeful obedience or resigned disobedience may be adopted with respect to the promise.[64]

(f) It finds its fulfilment in God's *freedom* and *faithfulness*, which therefore may contain an element of newness and surprise over against the surface appearance of the initial promise. This demonstrates that the promise-fulfilment relation is not bound by the constraints of law. Rather, having its locus of continuity rooted in the faithfulness of the God who promises, a promise may undergo a process of development through historical transmission which does not necessarily undermine "its character of certainty, of expectation and of movement."[65] In this way a promise could expand beyond, rather than remain entrapped within, the confines of the historical circumstances of its origination. Promise thus has its own history: "the history of the working of the word".[66] We shall define this as a process of *promise-development*.

(g) It consequently remained transcendent over all Israel's experiences of disappointment and (partial) fulfilment as it underwent a process of new, wider and more heightened interpretation. Accordingly, promise is perceived to contain an "abiding overplus"[67], or remainder, with

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62. R. Bauckham (*Moltmann*, p.30) draws attention to the fact that this element "is not explicit in Zimmerli" but "anticipates the dialectical understanding of promise which emerges more fully later in the book.". To what extent this facet of Moltmann's description arises from an exegesis of OT theological understanding rather than being, in part at least, an eisegesis of the text caused by the wearing of the Hegelian spectacles is a question to which we will have cause to return.

63. TH 104.

64. How this relationship between obedience and disobedience determines the relationship between promise and law is helpfully explored in TH 120-124. The law may be comprehended as either an explication of what it means to cleave to the God of promise in the 'interval of tension', or as conditions for the fulfilment of promise. A promise's fulfilment is thus either grounded in God or made a function of human obedience. In the case of the latter, it actually becomes a form of disobedience to promise.

65. TH 104. The term 'movement' here refers to its character as promise; it ability to get history moving.

66. TH 112.

67. TH 106, cf. EH 49f.

respect to historical fulfilment (such as was interpreted to have been occasioned by the occupation of the land in relation of the ancestral promise). In fact past fulfilments come to be understood "as expositions, confirmations and expansions of the promise."[68] To borrow the language of an early essay[69], they come to constitute a "reality-prolepsis" of that which still remains outstanding in the developed promise. Moltmann suggests the following ontological basis for this promissory remainder,

> "...the reason for the overplus of promise and for the fact that it constantly overspills history lies in the inexhaustibility of the God of promise, who never exhausts himself in any historic reality but comes 'to rest' only in a reality that wholly corresponds to him." [70]

The history of promise development on this account, therefore, is driven by an ontological disequilibrium between God and the reality of the present which does not yet conform to him. Ultimately, then, "the *author* and the *content* of the promises are one";[71] coming together in the transfiguration of reality into congruence with the God of promise. Each particular promise is thus ultimately orientated on the goal occasioned by God's transformative indwelling in creation.[72]

Clearly such language of the transformation of creation, which must include the transformation of time, removes eschatology from the purely temporal plane over against Schweitzer and Weiss. We may also already observe how this understanding of promise protects against eschatology's collapse into the transcendental category of eternity. If God's revelation takes the form of promise, then it sets in motion not just a hope for *someone*, but also for *something*.[73]

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68. TH 105. R. Bauckham (*Moltmann* p. 151 n.8) observes that Moltmann's exposition of this point bears a strong resemblance to the thought categories of Ernst Bloch (*The Principle of Hope*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1986, pp. 178-195).

69. TasE (1968).

70. TH 106. Cf. WJC 237f.

71. EH 50.

72. This clarifying elaboration, of the hoped-for indwelling of God which is the ultimate reason for creation's transformation, is already present in Moltmann's 1970 introductory account to a *Theology of Hope* (EH 44-59).

73. Moltmann has clearly borrowed this terminology from Karl Barth (see TH 56).

That is, hope for the self-revelation of God can never be abstracted from hope for the realisation of that which he promises. This is a point of dispute which Moltmann takes up with Zimmerli.[74] Over against the latter's view that the history of promise only serves an evermore profound knowledge of God through a process of the self-demonstration of Yahweh in history, Moltmann argues the following. It is not the epiphany of Yahweh as Subject which is the sole content of the OT scenes of revelation, but also the issuing of the assurance of God's coming redeeming lordship *over all things*. Zimmerli is in danger of opening up a gap between God's person and his promise such that revelation could be reduced to the purely subjective realm so leaving out of account the transformation of reality as a whole which will be the issue of his coming lordship. Zimmerli's argument thus results in a collapse back into the transcendental eschatology of Kant. Consequently, Moltmann does not wish to talk about God as a transcendental, supra-historical self, but as a God *who accomplishes a future*.[75] To avoid Zimmerli's emphasis, Moltmann thus talks of the faithfulness and the self-sameness of the God who issues and will redeem his promises in a future which remains, as yet, outstanding.[76]

4. *The promise-development cycle*

The methodological structure now to be described is of supreme importance to Moltmann's eschatology across the whole range of his writings. We shall, therefore, draw upon a broad cross-section of material in unfolding its working. Our purpose will be to describe the hidden structure of Moltmann's eschatological christology by demonstrating how what he later says about Jesus Christ, can be grounded in the process of promise-development and its attendant corollaries.

Earlier, in thinking about promise in general, we drew the conclusion that to view a specific

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74. TH 112-114.

75. Cf. Christopher Morse, *The Logic of Promise*, pp. 41-44.

76. "'God himself' cannot then be understood as reflection on his transcendent 'I-ness', but must be understood as his selfsame-ness in historic faithfulness to his promises" (TH 116).

within the horizon of promise is to open up the question of what it may become. This is because a promise may be understood as a pledge that things will be otherwise than they presently are. To adopt Moltmann's terminology, promise's contradiction of reality results in reality being experienced as 'historic'.[77] It is not yet what it has the prospect of becoming. Viewed within the perspective of promise all things come to "bear the mask of something that is still outstanding, not yet finalised, not yet realised."[78] Within the horizon of promise not even past events can be considered finished and complete, as 'over and done with'. Rather they come to possess an anticipatory character, becoming proleptic symbols of their own prospects.

> "The overspill of promise means that the facts of history can never be regarded as processes complete in themselves which have had their day and can manifest their own truth by themselves. They must be understood as stages on a road that goes further and elements in a process that continues."[79]

This becomes particularly clear when promise reaches the point of holding out the prospect of the transformation of all reality. Clearly, by definition, the promise of such transformation connects each point of reality with the future prospect of its own alteration. But even before this point of promise-development is reached, the same effect can be observed. This is especially true of past promises. For past promissory words and events can themselves come to be the subject of new promise. A past promise can be said to become 'historic' when the horizon of expectation it projects comes to nest within a newly generated and more expansive horizon of expectation. The effect of this is to take up, extend and develop (or in the case fulfilment rekindle) the future which lay inherent within its original form. In this way remembrance (of past promissory reality) can come to be a route to expectation (of that which its development projects). It is this peculiar feature of the horizon of promise which creates the possibility of a promise-development cycle. How exactly, then, does this function?

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77. See, for example, TH 107, 224f.

78. TH 107, cf. WJC 238.

79. TH 107f. Moltmann indicates that to conceive reality as 'historic' is inherently hostile to a cosmological perspective which understands reality to offer a reflection, albeit an imperfect one, of the divine (TH 84, 110). Not reality as it yet exists, but reality's transformatory prospect held out to it in promise is revelatory of the divine. The world is not a tranquil sea reflecting the face of God, rather God is reflected in the far shore towards which run the waves his promises create.

The promises to the patriarchs, followed by the events of the Exodus, the Sinai covenant and the conquest and occupation of the Promised Land, while individual and unique occurrences, came, on the basis of the continuity of the God who acted, to be conceived as a unitary succession.[80] The time connecting remembrance and expectation was perceived as essentially continuous. This conception of history as sequential progression, however, reaches its definitive limit in the cataclysmic events of the eighth and sixth centuries BCE. The resulting prophetic understanding of history is distinguished from that preserved in the historical writings by the prophets'

> "present experience of the rupture of this salvation history through the destruction of Jerusalem and the new enslavement of the people. For them, this meant experiencing the discontinuity of history."[81].

This is a discontinuity of such enormity that it appears to set Israel "back behind the Exodus"[82], behind the very event which constituted Israel's theological identity as God's people. Consequently the political crisis occasioned by the Assyrian and Babylonian incursions into Israel refutes everything from the exodus onwards: covenant and law; even it seems God himself.

> "As with a deadly wound in my body, my adversaries taunt me, while they say to me continually, 'Where is your God?'"[83]

This crisis renders any simplistic elongation of past tradition to account for the present hopelessly inadequate. No future of salvation can emerge from the past now that the past is undone. The prophets only surmount this rupture by interpreting these events as *Yahweh's* judgement and so by identifying the God of the present nightmare with the God of Exodus and

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80. *God in Creation: An Ecological Doctrine of Creation*, Tr. Kohl, M., (London: SCM, 1985), pp.119f; henceforth, GinC. As evidence for this Moltmann points to the textual existence of the so-called 'brief historical creeds': Deuteronomy 26:5ff; Joshua 24:3ff. The question Moltmann fails to consider is whether this continuous succession was essentially historical or whether it is not the theological construct of later interpretation. Fortunately, provided this perspective was in place before the exilic prophets the substance of his argument is unaffected.

81. GinC 120.

82. TasE 18.

83. Psalm 42:10, cf. v3.

covenant. Judgement is perceived as the reverse side of God's faithfulness to his people; an overarching faithfulness in which hope is still made possible. But the present crisis means that the ground of this hope must shift decisively. Israel's self-understanding and confidence move away from "the future of the Yahweh who has come" toward "the future of the Yahweh who is to come."[84] This is achieved by means of a major expansion of past promise. Such development, as we have already intimated, exploits the ability of the horizon of promise to render past reality 'historic'. Thus within this perspective past promises and past events of salvation, because they come to have their focus of meaning *ec-centrically* located in the future, are effectively understood as sources for the anticipation of the future. Consequently, hope for a new soteriological act from the *same* God of past promissory event leads to the searching of past traditions for analogical delineations of the hoped-for future. The past provides a treasury of prototypes, but the intervening rupture demands of any new expectation generated that analogy and expansion[85] go together. In relation to the past, present expectation must look toward the *qualitatively* new.[86] The new must be "more than the restitution of the old, since through guilt and judgement something has intervened which cannot be facilely eliminated".[87] The prophets, therefore, speak of a *new* Exodus[88] and a *new* covenant[89] which possess a heightened content with respect to their old forms. For example, whereas the old exodus was a hasty flight by cover of night, the new is conceived as a festal

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84. TH 128, cf. GinC 120. Here Moltmann draws heavily on, while moving beyond, von Rad's definition of that which deserves the term 'eschatological'. See *Old Testament Theology Vol. II* (London: SCM, 1975), pp.112ff.

85. Moltmann uses both the term 'expansion' (e.g. TH 105, 127) and 'extension' (e.g. TH 126, 129, 132). Our preference has been for expansion which seems to suggest development in more than one dimension. Neither term, however, should be interpreted as indicating a simply linear and continuous process which might thereby exclude novelty. In the process of promise-development the analogies of God's newly-promised future action, furnished by past promises, are consequently used to interpret the "wholly non-analogous" (TH 129).

86. Second Isaiah affords an extreme statement of this principle: "Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?" (Isaiah 43:18f).

87. RRF 9.

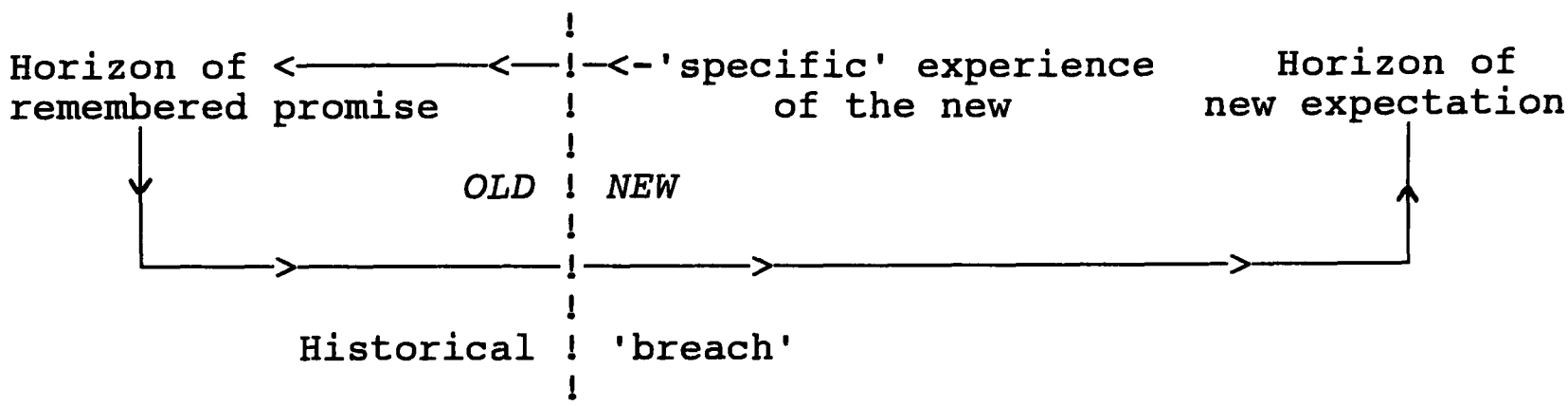
88. E.g. Isaiah 40:1-11; 52:7-12.

89. E.g. Jeremiah. 31:31-34; Ezekiel. 11:19f.

procession within the public gaze.[90]

> "The catastrophe turns into 'the old' what has hitherto been a sustaining pillar, and so divides the times into a 'before' and 'after', divides them so radically that past and future can no longer appear on the same continuous temporal line. They have become two different eras or epochs."[91]

This process, which Moltmann terms an "event of tradition"[92], may be diagrammatically represented as follows (*figure 1*):



As this diagram underlines, remembrance and expectation cannot lie on the same ontological level. This is because expectation must surmount the historical breach that renders the past obsolete. Moltmann puts the matter in extremely strong terms: "God's new reality is always like a *novum ex nihilo*"[93]. In fact, the result of the prophets' explosion of theological activity is an expansion of promissory expectation to reach the *eschatological* horizon.[94] In *Theology of Hope* Moltmann justifies the use of this term 'eschatological' in relation to two dimensions of expansion.[95]

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90. Isaiah 40:3-5.

91. WJC 23.

92. "Between promise and fulfilment stretches the process of the history of the working of the word - *an event of tradition*, in which the promise transmitted to coming generations is interpreted in actualised form, and every new present is exposed to the promised future" (TH 112, my emphasis).

93. RRF 9.

94. Again, Moltmann follows the work of von Rad: "The new element which in a certain respect differentiates [the prophets] from all previous spokesmen of Jahwism is - to use the controversial but unavoidable term - the eschatological element." (*Old Testament Theology, Vol. II*, (London: SCM, 1975), p.113). Part of this quotation is cited at WJC p.22.

95. It should be noted that Moltmann recognises that his schematization represents a more coherent picture than is given in the prophetic writings themselves. Their situation in time amidst the breaking down of the 'old' and the in-breaking of the 'new', means that they announce a future which, for them, still remains irreducibly mobile (TH 132).

(i) *Universalisation*: In judgement God is perceived to have become an actor in history on a universal scale. Not only does he use other nations to effect Israel's destruction, these very nations also subsequently find themselves subject to judgement.[96] Prophetic interpretation thus reaches the level of God's universal lordship. Consequently if the construction of a new horizon of expectation structurally amounts to the overcoming of judgement, the projected soteriological future can be on no less a scale.[97] The future of God can be no less extensive than the judgement it surmounts. Thus Moltmann concludes:

> "By this very means Yahweh's threats and promises for the future are set free from their restriction to one specific people and its particular future in history, and become eschatological."[98]

(ii) *Intensification*: The distinction between 'old' and 'new', as we have seen, demands that the promised future far outstrips the analogical models of the past. But by means of the additional mechanism of the negation of the negative, at the prophetic and especially apocalyptic periphery of OT faith, the promised future stretches even to the overcoming of death. Following von Rad,[99] Moltmann asserts that death comes to be seen as a form of judgement to be overcome. This is because it occasions the exclusion of the bearer of God's promise from the promised consummation of life. Consequently, Moltmann speaks of "apocalyptic promises and hopes that where death is concerned God will give proof of his divinity at last".[100] But in "apocalyptic eschatology"[101] the future horizon projected by promise can stretch even further. It reaches beyond the boundaries of present existence to render the entire cosmos 'historic' in

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96. See, for example, Isaiah 47:6-9.

97. See for example the vision of First Isaiah (2:2-4) which while undoubtedly Israelo-centric extends to the limits of humanity. See also Second Isaiah's conception of the role of the Servant in relation to the nations (49:6).

98. TH 129.

99. Meeks, *Origin*, p.75f, also detects the influence of Hegel's conception of the negation of the negative at this point.

100. TH 197.

101. TH 133. Moltmann employs this phrase to distinguish the apocalyptic strands of the prophetic movement from apocalyptic conceptions as such.

the perspective of a new future for reality as such. In the light of this Moltmann offers the following interpretive suggestion:

> "the peculiarity and theological significance of apocalyptic could lie... in the fact that what we have here is not by any means a cosmological interpretation of eschatological history, but an eschatological and historic interpretation of the cosmos."[102]

In other words, the apocalyptic language of two ages need not be employed to describe a new form of ordered cosmos in which the 'old' and 'new' exist in a preset, static and stable pattern. Rather the cosmos itself can be understood to be taken up into the process of the eschatological future.[103] The result would be an 'eschatological cosmology' leading to an 'eschatological ontology'[104] provoked by the prospect of 'a new heaven and a new earth'.[105] This would make "eschatology the universal horizon of all theology as such".[106] And the importance of this conclusion for Moltmann's theology cannot be over-estimated.

Armed now with an understanding of the internal logic of this process of promise-development we are in a position to unfold how comprehensively it sheds light upon Moltmann's interpretation of the person and history of Jesus and, in so doing, his understanding of a specifically Christian eschatology.

5. *The cycle's hermeneutic repetition*

It is vital to spell out what Moltmann appears to be working towards intuitively. That is, the process of promise-development is capable of more than one cycle or iteration. Consider the

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102. TH 136.

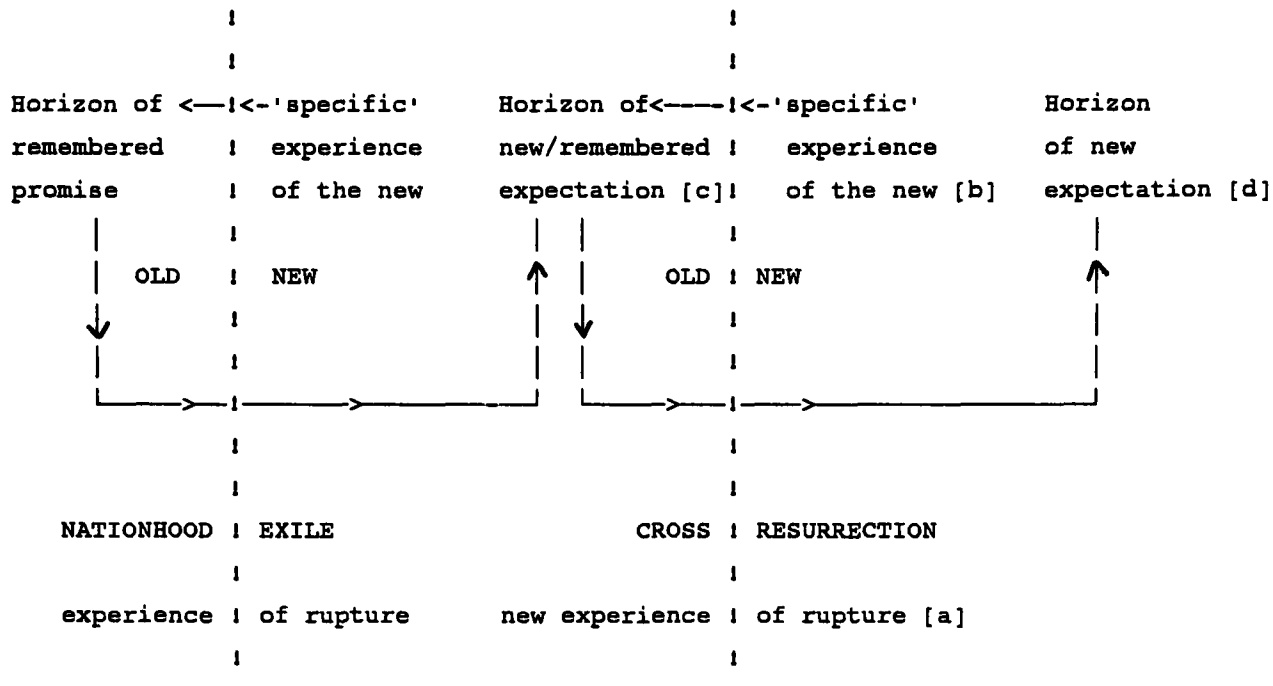
103. Here Moltmann draws on von Rad's criticism of the potentially ahistorical character of apocalyptic (*Old Testament Theology Vol II*, pp.303ff). This observation is made by Meeks, *Origin*, pp.116f.

104. TH 137.

105. Isaiah 65:17.

106. TH 137.

diagrammatic representation offered below (*figure 2*):



From the perspective of a rupture of the present [a] constituted by an experience of the new (*novum)* [b], a past projected horizon of expectation [c] can be utilised again as a now present horizon of remembered expectation [c]. The result is the generation of a new horizon of expectation again [d]. The determining factor of the possibility of such reuse of past expectation would appear to be the *newness* of the present experience. It is this which has the power of initiation. But in order to be able to qualify as new it must be perceived as that which creates a breach in existent theological tradition and understanding. It must provoke a crisis. Consequently, I suggest, if God's action in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ thrust itself upon its interpreters as just such a *novum*, it presented itself as a candidate for comprehension within this same cycle of promise-development. God's action in Christ has the power to initiate the cycle's hermeneutic repetition utilising the results of the cycle's previous iteration(s). It is, therefore, highly significant that Moltmann maintains,

> "The New Testament did not close the window which apocalyptic had opened for it towards the wide vistas of the cosmos and beyond the limitations of the given cosmic reality."[107]

How then was the 'specific' of the person and history of Jesus interpreted as significant within the horizon of interpretation of the promissory history of the OT? How precisely did this

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107. TH 138.

interaction function and what does it entail for eschatology? Our account will begin at what we shall consistently argue is the fundamental point of origin of Moltmann's theology: the resurrection. Consequently our exegesis will again be able to draw upon *all* stages of Moltmann's theological endeavour.[108] And in expounding the hermeneutic repetition of the promise-development cycle as set out in *figure 2* we will also draw upon the hermeneutic principles constructed in our opening reflections.

That an estimation of the significance of the person and history of Jesus functions within "a decidedly *eschatological horizon* of expectations, hopes and questions about the promised future"[109] is manifested to Moltmann's mind by the very designations 'raising' and 'resurrection' which are employed by the New Testament authors. Early Christian reflection utilised the preexisting apocalyptic symbol 'resurrection of the dead' to comprehend the Christ-event: the radically contradictory experiences of Jesus' godforsaken death and subsequent appearance in the glory of God.[110] The *novum* of the appearances apparently drove reflection back to this existing expectation of the future demanding its application to this new phenomenon.[111] Moltmann judges that this symbol possesses a particular appropriateness as an interpretive horizon because, in terms of our nomenclature, it provides signification for *both* of the two apparently contradictory facets of the Christ-event. It can interpret both the deadliness of Jesus' death and the 'livingness' of his appearances without collapsing either component of Jesus' history into the other and so inappropriately blurring their incongruity. It thus matches up to what we earlier described as a test of comprehensiveness. Consequently, Moltmann understands the interpretation 'resurrection' to indicate a qualitative distinction

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108. See TH 190ff; RRF 45ff; CG 103ff, 169ff; WJC 220ff; CofG 27ff.

109. TH 191.

110. The expression Christ-event is thus being used as a convenient shorthand for the cross and subsequent appearance of Jesus understood as *facets* of the *specific* 'the person and history of Jesus'.

111. The apocalyptic symbol, 'resurrection of the dead', is itself the product of more than one cycle of promise-development. The rupture of the exile produces, in Ezekiel 37, an intra-historical image of life from death applied to the future of Israel as a nation. In the rupture occasioned by the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes in the second century BCE, this promissory image is expanded and developed to produce a supra-historical expectation (c.f Daniel 12:2).

between Jesus' risen life and the mortal life which preceded it.[112] It excludes any conception of revivification or of a 'life after death'[113] understood to be an inherent possibility of the self as might be conveyed by the ideation of the immortality of the soul. Death, perceived within the horizon resurrection, is thus not merely circumvented, it is annihilated in a once for all victory.[114] To take this horizon as normative for theology would, therefore, rule out an interpretation of Jesus' persistent availability for encounter as the product of a continuing immanent facet of the 'earthly' Jesus such as his influence, cause or spirit[115]. Rather it would rule in understanding the 'resurrection' to denote,

> "... a new creative act of God's, an act with which the new creation of all mortal and transitory being begins."[116]

It should now be clear that the horizon 'resurrection' is capable of rendering the Christ-event meaningful. But the process of interpretation does not stop here. In accordance with the process of mutual hermeneutic development between horizon and specific constructed above, the particular details and circumstances of the Christ-event, by reason of a certain 'misfit' between themselves and the horizon applied, call the latter into question with resulting adaptation.

(i) Whereas the remembered apocalyptic hope is for 'the resurrection *of* the dead' as future event, this becomes in the Easter kerygma the assertion that God has 'raised Jesus *from* the dead,' as an event already begun. This, Moltmann writes,

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112. See CG 169f; WJC 222f.

113. Stephen H. Travis, *Christian hope and the future of man* (Leicester: IVP, 1980) p.94 completely misunderstands the significance of this expression as used by Moltmann. So too does S.W. Sykes, "Life after Death" in R.W.A. McKinney (Ed.), *Creation, Christ and Culture*, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1976) p.259. Both take it as a denial of any individual future beyond the boundary of death. Rather it merely serves as a polemical tool for the exclusion of certain Greek ideas judged by Moltmann as alien to *Christian* theology. Cf. R. Bauckham, *Moltmann*, p.149 n.38.

114. Cf. Romans 6:9.

115. CG 169f; WJC 222f.

116. WJC 223.

> "...amounts to nothing less than the claim that this future of the new world of the righteousness and promise of God has already dawned in this one person in the midst of the history of death".[117]

The implication is thus "that this world of death and the coming world of life are no longer set over against each other like two different periods of the world".[118] What is provoked, therefore, in designating Jesus as 'the *first fruits* of those who have fallen asleep'[119] is nothing less than a new eschatological comprehension of time. This might be labelled: 'the overlap of the ages'.[120] The qualitatively distinct 'age to come' of apocalyptic expectation now thrusts itself like a promontory of 'the new' into the midst of 'the old'. And, by reason of the possibility of its manifestation under the conditions of the 'present age' it indicates, we might observe, that 'the new' comes to fulfil 'the old' rather than annihilate and replace it. The peculiarity of the Christ-event is thus that it is an eschatological event displaced to the midst of time; a supra-historical event taking place within (while not being limited to) history. As such, we may note, it is intrinsically open to further application and development. The 'intra-historical' resurrection of Jesus points towards the supra-historical resurrection of reality to constitute a new creation.[121]

(ii) Not only is apocalyptic's eschatological structure called in question, so is its fundamental material content. As Moltmann correctly states, the apocalyptic hope for 'the resurrection of the dead' does not arise primarily from a narrowly-focussed anthropological concern for life's continuation beyond death. Rather it arises as a means for asserting the belief that the righteousness of God, as disclosed in the law of the covenant, cannot be frustrated by death. In this way resurrection serves as the necessary ontological presupposition for the judgement of

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117. CG 171.

118. CG 171.

119. 1 Corinthians 15:20.

120. Cf. 1Corinthians. 10:11. Significantly, Paul can speak of 'the new' as both a present reality (2Corinthians 5:17) and, assuming that being 'in Christ' means participating in his death and resurrection (cf. Romans. 6:3-11), as a future prospect (Phil. 3:20f).

121. I owe this insight to Dr Paul Fiddes.

all people.[122] The final glorification of the Torah's definition of righteousness is to occur in eternal life for the just and eternal damnation for the unjust.[123] To assert, therefore, in the case of Jesus that the one man who is raised before all others is precisely one who has been condemned as the accursed of God[124] in his crucifixion, is to call these preexisting assumptions into radical question. The outcome of this collision between interpretive horizon and Jesus' contingent circumstances is the emergence of a specifically Christian understanding of the righteousness of God. God's righteousness is *creative* righteousness; "the right of unconditional grace which makes righteous the unrighteous and those without rights".[125] The significance of Jesus is thus sharply depicted in the resulting modification to the conception of resurrection. No longer is it seen as a necessary presupposition of judgement, but as already constituting the means of access to the new creation issuing from the creative righteousness of God.[126] Resurrection has become an unequivocal concept of salvation.[127] It is not now the servant of judgement, rather judgement has to be redefined in the service of the resurrection of all things in Christ. The redefinition is the Pauline notion of justification.

Consider the example of an electronic amplifier. It works by making a large current conform to the same pattern as a much smaller signal current. In the same way the Christ-event of cross and 'appearance'-as-living, understood within the hermeneutic method of promise-development, is able to project its own distinctive character upon the universal and eschatological screen provided by the horizon of interpretation 'resurrection of the dead'. It is precisely this distinction, opened up between the horizon of remembered expectation employed and the horizon of future expectation projected, which testifies to the determinative

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122. WJC 224.

123. Daniel 12:2.

124. Cf. Galatians 3:13.

125. CG 175, cf. TH 193; WJC 224.

126. C.f Romans 4:25.

127. RRF 47.

hermeneutical significance of the 'specific' Jesus. Though we no longer have independent access to his reality as 'specific', this process of interpretation allows us to make out the contours of the shadow which he casts upon the interpretive horizon employed.

So far we have explored the interaction between the 'specific' of Jesus' 'appearance'-as-living and the horizon of remembered expectation which renders it significant. But how is this interpretive *result*, which Moltmann terms 'gospel'[128], related to the promissory history of the Old Testament which it utilised? In other words: What is the relationship between new and old promise?

Earlier we observed that application of the promise-development hermeneutic was dependent on an experience of rupture, of discontinuity, such that past remembrance and expected future are divided into qualitatively different realms. From this it follows that the relationship between developed promise and the promise it develops cannot be one of simple continuity. This recognition explains Moltmann's hostility to U. Wilckens' attempt[129] to construe this relation in terms of a linear history of salvation. For Wilckens the Christ-event is *wholly* contained within the historical trajectory projected by past soteriological announcement and event. It thus amounts to no more than the prolongation[130] of past promise. In Moltmann's estimation Wilckens therefore illegitimately reduces the *novum* of the Christ-event to the noetic disclosure of what has been essentially the case all along. However, given that the *novum* comes to signification within the horizon of interpretation created by past promise, the newly projected future cannot be materially unrelated to past expectation. Consequently, Moltmann also rejects G. Klein's existential interpretation of this relationship.[131] The only strand of continuity Klein is prepared to entertain is the structural (and therefore not material) parallel

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128. See, for example, TH 148.

129. "Die Rechtfertigung Abrahams nach Rom. 4" in *Studien zur altestamentlichen Überlieferung*, 1961, pp. 111ff; as presented in Moltmann's discussion TH pp.148-150.

130. This is the term helpfully employed by Morse, *The Logic of Promise*, p. 35.

131. "Rom. 4 und die Idee der Heilsgechichte", *Evangelische Theologie* 23, 1963, pp.424ff; see TH 150f.

between the common anthropological response of faith to be discovered in past and present hearers of promise. As one might anticipate, Moltmann's solution amounts to the attempted mediation of this dialectic between continuity and discontinuity represented by Wilckens and Klein respectively.

Moltmann is emphatic that the relationship of the resurrection of Jesus to past promise is not one of simple fulfilment.[132] Notwithstanding the way in which the eschatological structure of inherited apocalypticism is skewed in the direction of proleptic actualisation, the resurrection retains a promissory content. Accordingly, proleptic actualisation is seen to function as the ground of assurance that the promise it enacts will ultimately be redeemed. Moltmann thus sees the resurrection as the eschatological validation, the *In-kraft-setzung* (setting-in-force)[133] of God's past promises as they are taken up and modified by the Christ-event. This relationship between gospel and past promise is aptly captured in Moltmann's expression that past promise "finds in the gospel its eschatological future".[134]

> "The gospel has its inabrogable presupposition in the Old Testament history of promise. In the gospel the Old Testament history of promise finds more than fulfilment which does away with it; it finds future. 'All the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen' (2Cor 1:20)."[135]

Moltmann's solution, I suggest, amounts to the assertion of a continuity of identity between past promise and promissory gospel, but a discontinuity of projected future by reason of the intervening process of promise-development which connects them.

Our explication of the application of the promise-development hermeneutic to the *novum* of the Christ-event has now reached the point where it will be appropriate to make explicit some of

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132. Cf. *On Human Dignity: Political Theology and Ethics*, Tr. Meeks, M.D., (London: SCM, 1984), p.202; henceforth, HD.

133. Morse, *The Logic of Promise*, p.35 correctly observes that the English translation 'validation' for *In-kraft-setzung* masks the dynamic sense of the original. We shall give preference, therefore, to the rather clumsy but more accurate phrase 'setting-in-force'.

134. TH 152.

135. TH 147.

its key structural implications for Moltmann's eschatology. This exercise will also act, therefore, as a demonstration of the absolute centrality of this method for the generation of Moltmann's distinctive eschatological conceptions.

6. *The common future of all promises*

(i) What is meant by the assertion of a continuity of promissory identity made above? Given that the promise-development cycle functions not by contradicting or negating past promises, but by reinterpreting them, the new future they come to project must have already been present to some degree in their original form. Only so could past promises successfully act as a horizon of interpretation for an experienced *novum*. Viewed within the perspective of its own developed horizon, a promise can be seen to be ec-centrically constituted. Its identity is no longer defined solely by its original future prospect, but is seen to include the potential series of new prospects it can come to project. The identity of a promise must, therefore, include the envelope of its potential development. Promise, we might say, has an ec-centric identity not primarily in relation to the future prospect it holds out at any one stage of its development, but in relation to the ultimate future prospect towards which it is developing. This prospect is constituted by the future which will *ultimately* secure its fulfilment. If this ultimate future is held to be the new creation of all reality into congruence with the God of promise, which we have observed to be Moltmann's position, then we may draw the following conclusions.

First, the commonality which links together the various trajectories of promise, in their different and respective levels of development, is this *single* future of new creation towards which they all converge with varying degrees of precision. The relationship between, for example, the patriarchal promise of land and the eschatological promise of new creation could be characterised as follows: the promise of land is the contextual manifestation of the promise of new creation for a particular historical situation. It is, if you will, the incarnation of the promise of new creation in present creation. In turn, new creation takes place when every historical context is transformed to correspond with the inherent content of this incarnate

promise.[136] Again, the promise of a covenant relationship between God and his people can be related to the eschatological promise of new creation in a parallel manner. This becomes clear when it is borne in mind that new creation is effected through the transfiguring indwelling of God; i.e. through the consummation of God's relation with the world. Understanding particular promises as the contextual manifestation of a single promised future implies that promise-development can take place when there is a marked change in historical context. The language of 'rupture' or 'breach' we have been using is indicative of just such a shift of context. Consequently, this proposal provides an explanation of why the promise-development cycle is initiated at such points. In effect a breach provokes the question, 'what has God's promise to say to us now?'. It also explains why the answer to this question is made by way of development, rather than replacement, of past promise. It happens by way of the further unfolding of a common identity of promise.

Second, if this understanding of inner relationship is correct, we would expect to discover a shared 'family resemblance' between each promised future and every other, with all being capable of consummatory integration within the promised new creation. Given that the new creation concerns the prospect of transformation into conformity with God, this 'family resemblance', and thus the inner identity of all God's promises, must be rooted in God himself. This is what Moltmann appears to indicate in his assertion that ultimately "the *author* and the *content* of the promises are one".[137]

Third, if the inner identity of every promise is grounded in the common future of the new creation, this future must be held to transcend the process of promise-development. Accordingly, in the issuing of every particular promise, this transcendent future could be said to have made its (contextual) approach to time. Remembering that promise contradicts the

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136. Chapter 4 will see us take up and expand on this relationship between anticipation and incarnation.

137. EH 50. The same idea is hinted at rather more obliquely when Moltmann writes: "The history of Israel shows again and again that the promises to which Israel owes its existence prove amid all the *upheavals* of history to be a *continuum* in which Israel was able to recognise the faithfulness of its God" (TH 109, partly my emphasis).

immanent process of historical becoming, it thus becomes clear that, in transcending the process of promise-development, this future also transcends creation's past, present and historical future.[138] As such it possesses an ontological priority over time. The content of this future as new creation explains the nature of its transcendence. It transcends every present because it will transform every present. If these ideas sound strange then notice, for example, that the conception 'resurrection of the dead' contains the notion of a *common* transcendent future for those who are entrapped in the past as a result of death. Thus contrary to the thesis of Morse, Moltmann's conception of the transcendent future need not be understood as an alien philosophical importation from the work of Ernst Bloch which cannot be grounded essentially in his conception of promise.[139] Rather, when, for example, Moltmann writes of the "transformation of all things which projects its appearance in Christ and the Spirit"[140] he is simply expressing the direct corollary of the promise-development hermeneutic which we have been elaborating. Promise only projects a future noetically 'forwards' because it is itself the verbal or reality prolepsis of an *ontologically prior future* which, in the issuing of a promise (or in an event of soteriological significance), has projected itself 'backwards' into a particular present.

> "Our statements spoken *out* of our present *into* the divine future are possible on the basis of the divine words spoken *into* our present *out* of God's future".[141]

Fourth, as this last quotation demonstrates, it is but a short step from the assertion of the ontological priority of the transcendent future to the statement that this transcendent future

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138. Moltmann's chosen term for this transcendent future is *adventus*, whereas the historical future is referred to as *futurum*. A foundational account of such terminology is to be found at TasE 11-16, but it is present throughout the Moltmannian corpus (see, for example, EH 52f, *The Future of Creation*, Tr. Kohl, M., (London: SCM, 1979), pp.29f; henceforth, FofC; GinC 132-134; WJC 317; CofG 25f). A close scrutiny of this terminology and its basis is offered in chapter 4.

139. Morse, *Origin*, pp. 2, 65f. Morse's fundamental mistake stems from his failure to capitalise on his observation that what Moltmann characterises as promise is bound up with a process of "dialectical transformation of sacred memory and historical experience" (p. 51). In other words, it is inseparably connected with what we have termed promise-development. Unfortunately, when Morse considers, with the help of linguistic philosophy, what the language of promise may and may not inherently imply he resorts to ordinary discourse and not this unique process of development.

140. HP 26.

141. FofC 45. Cf. "promise itself is reality coming from the reality of the glorification of God." (HP 17).

constitutes the primary mode of being of the God of promise.[142] This follows directly if new creation equates to the transformation of reality into congruence with God. It is also implied in the 'arch' of God's faithfulness which maintains the tension between promise and fulfilment across all the discontinuities of history.

(ii) By definition, the experience of rupture, of discontinuity, means that continuity cannot be established in the direction in which rupture is observed. Consequently, in the environment of promise-development continuity cannot be discerned from the past forward, but only from the *novum* backwards.[143] Likewise the continuity of identity of promise we have just examined is only visible from the perspective of the future looking back. The consequence of establishing continuity in this direction is to accord the *novum*, in each instance, final determinative power over its horizon of interpretation. In, but not in isolation from, their mutual hermeneutic interaction, it is the *novum* which must finally dictate how the future to be discovered in the past (acting as horizon) is to be taken up into itself.

> "What is eschatologically new, itself creates its own continuity, since it does not annihilate the old but gathers it up and creates it anew"[144]

To operate within the hermeneutic of promise-development is, therefore, a way to accord the *novum* ultimate interpretive priority. This approach is thus profoundly suited to Moltmann's express intention of according methodological priority to the contingent particularity of Jesus' person and history. For this method of signification does not mask, but rather highlights and renders determinative, the "staggering novelty" of the Christ-event over against past expectation[145]. This is precisely what was demonstrated in our analysis of the interaction between the specific of Jesus' 'appearance'-as-living and the interpretive horizon

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142. See, for example, TasE 9-16; CofG 24.

143. Rather confusingly, the early Moltmann is in the habit of designating "a continuity which is established from the future" as a "*historical* continuity" (TasE 19).

144. CofG 29.

145. C.f. CG 105.

'resurrection'. It also applies more widely to the relationship between 'gospel' and past promise examined above.[146] Here, in the Christ-event's 'setting-in-force' of past promise, the former's contingent particularity is not suppressed. Rather the *novum* dictates how the past is to be taken up into itself. Thus in the raising of the *crucified* Christ, which we observed to issue in the justification of the unrighteous, Moltmann understands past promise to have been rendered unconditional and unrestricted. He speaks of promise having been 'liberated' and made universal; that is, set free from the condition of fulfilment of the law[147] and membership of the particular people of Israel respectively. The 'gospel', therefore, reveals how promise and remembered tradition should be related. The gospel antiquates law by differentiating between the promised future's entrapment in written code (*gramma*) and its prolepsis in promissory tradition (*graphe*).[148]

7. *The operation of the promise-development cycle within the specific of Jesus*

I wish to suggest that the promise-development cycle does not simply operate between Jesus and past promise, but also operates to shape the relationship between Jesus' remembered history and his outstanding future. Again our task will be to render visible the implicit basis of Moltmann's eschatological christology.

In Moltmann's discussion of 'Christ's birth in the Spirit' in *The Way of Jesus Christ*[149] he arrives at the following conclusion:

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146. Cf., "Paul rediscovers the promise to Abraham in the gospel of Christ and therefore recalls along with the gospel of Christ the promise to Abraham as well" (TH 152).

147. Whether behind the 'Lutheran' spectacles (cf. R. Bauckham *Moltmann*, p.153 note 8) with which Moltmann interprets First Century Torah Judaism there is to be recovered a historically verifiable strand of opinion may be open to question. The validity of the positive point, however, which Moltmann inherits from Paul, that promise by its very nature cannot and should not have its redemption conditionalised (Romans 4:1-5; Galatians 3:15-18) remains independent of this particular historical conundrum. The question simply reduces to whether there is not a greater continuity between law and gospel than we see projected through the prism of Paul's polemical concerns.

148. TasE 22.

149. WJC 78-87.

"...it will be permissible for us to assume that the nativity stories are secondary, retroactive projections of the experiences of the Easter witnesses with the risen Christ who is present in the Spirit".[150]

This observation is highly significant. If the narrative of the 'virgin birth' results from the backward projection of Jesus' resurrection, more precisely of Jesus' rebirth through the Spirit by means of God's sole agency, then the irruption of the *novum* experienced in the resurrection may also be projected back onto Jesus' human beginning. This implies that 'the virgin birth' may become a way of symbolising that the *whole* of Jesus' historical appearance constitutes a 'breach' of the immanent process of historical development. As Moltmann himself observes, but without further elaboration, in Christian tradition the virgin birth has been understood to indicate that:

"The patriarchal succession of the generations is broken off for the sake of the history of the promise".[151]

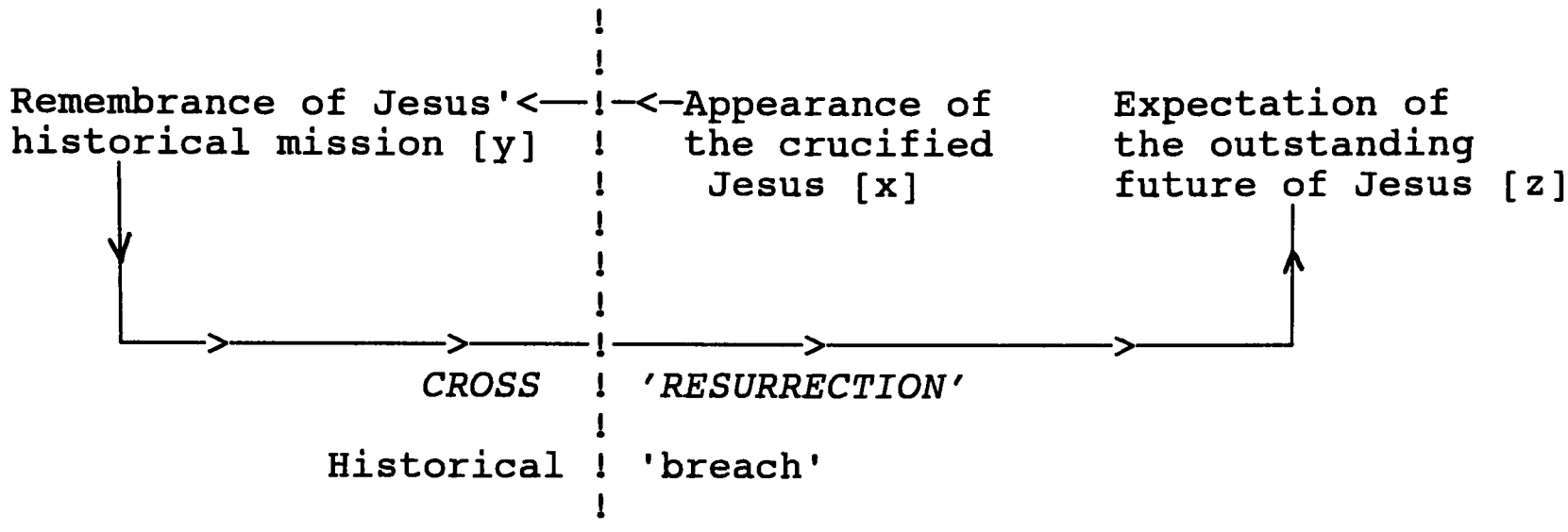
Here then lies the inner justification for conceiving Jesus' person and history as a unitary *novum* within the hermeneutic of promise-development; a key move which remains hidden in Moltmann's work. But we should not ignore the primary implication of Moltmann's understanding of the resurrection as the irruption of the *novum*.[152] A peculiar feature of the 'specific' Jesus and his history is that it straddles the profound discontinuity occasioned by Jesus' death and 'appearance'-as-living. The resurrection, for Moltmann, does not constitute the continuation or elongation of Jesus' existence prior to his death, but, as we have already seen, the proleptic realisation of the eschatological new creation. Thus in the expression 'crucified and risen' history and eschatology abut. This suggests that *within* the specific of Jesus and his history a rupture exists capable of instigating the cycle of promise-development. An interactive hermeneutic may exist, therefore, between the historical and eschatological dimensions of Jesus' existence. Consequently, we might re-label our basic diagram of this process (*figure 1*) so as produce the following one (*figure 3*).

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150. WJC 82.

151. WJC 83.

152. See, for example, RRF 11f; CofG 28f.



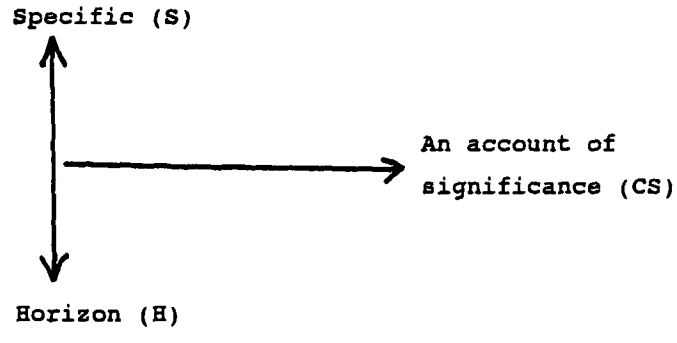
While this diagram shows the way in which the promise-development cycle works within the specific of Jesus, what I shall call its intra-specific operation, the total picture of this hermeneutic process is, however, more complex. We also need to take into account the respective hermeneutic interactions between [x] and [y] with the horizon of remembered expectation in the Old Testament (itself the product of at least one cycle of this hermeneutic process) to render Jesus' historical mission and appearance significant. For it is these interpretive products which relate together as represented above to produce [z]; the projection of Jesus' outstanding future. So far we have examined the functioning of the horizon 'resurrection of the dead'. Clearly, however, Jesus' person and history also creates its *own* connection with a number of other horizons of remembered promise as was implied in *figure 2*. In elucidating the intra-specific operation of the promise-development cycle, we shall, therefore, for the sake of a more complete exposition, concentrate on another horizon of remembered promise; that of the kingdom (or lordship) of God. Significantly, Moltmann suggests that this notion is the "real heart of eschatology, and the basic concept which it employs with varying content".[153]

What is happening in the development of promise may be also represented by a different kind

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153. TH 216. Here we shall be following the general argument of TH 216-224. The reader's attention is also drawn to Moltmann's parallel treatment of the promise of righteousness (TH 203-208) and the promise of life (TH 208-216). The principle which is operative here is that "if we enquire about the *intention* of God in the mission of Jesus, then we light upon what was promised beforehand. The *missio* of Jesus becomes intelligible only by the *promissio*" (TH 203).

of diagram so that we may more easily express the linking of a number of hermeneutic cycles. Consider the following representation of the basic relationships between a specific, an interpretive horizon and the account of significance produced as the result of their mutual modification (*figure 4*).[154]

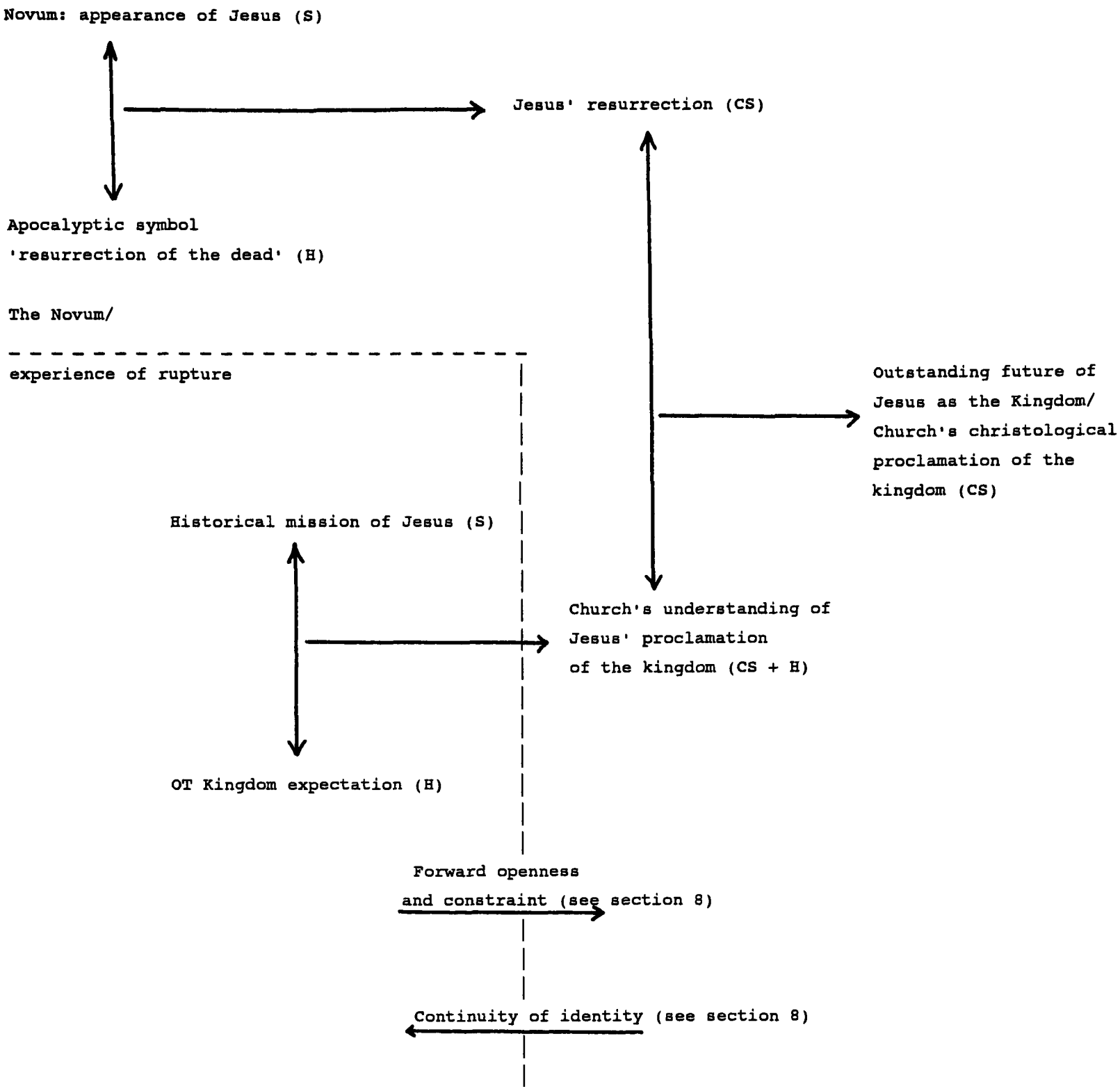


Where, S= Specific
H= Horizon
CS= Compound-specific

A number of this basic diagrams may then be linked together to produce the following representation of the interrelationship between a number of such hermeneutic cycles (*figure 5*).

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154. This method of diagrammatic representation was suggested by Clodovis Boff, *Theology and Praxis* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1987). He utilises a similar construction to express Louis Althusser's understanding of the general process of theoretical practice, which he then applies to the relationship between sociology, classical theology and political theology.



Originally, according to Moltmann, Yahweh manifests himself both as God and Lord in faithfulness to and therefore in (partial[155]) fulfilment of his promises. Here lordship is experienced within the realm of historical life. In the eschatological development of the promise, undertaken by the prophetic movement in response to the rupture of the exile, the future expectation of God's lordship expands laterally to include all peoples and increases in

155. According to the argument advanced so far, complete fulfilment belongs to the realm of the transcendent future.

intensity to become the hope that all things "will attain to salvation, peace, happiness, life"[156] in becoming "[God's] universe, his kingdom and his praise".[157]

In the New Testament generally, and in the synoptic accounts of Jesus' mission in particular, this same basic conception 'kingdom' clearly plays a central role. However, its functioning as an interpretive horizon occasions its transformation by comparison with its inherited form. In the remembrance of Jesus' historical mission, the kingdom is seen to be inseparably linked with his own person.

> "The peculiar feature of [Jesus'] proclamation of the kingdom lies in the fact that nearness to, entry into, and inheritance of, the kingdom are bound to him and tied to his own person. The future of the divine lordship is immediately bound up with the mystery of his own presence."[158]

It is this absolute inseparability between Jesus' person and his proclamation which makes the cross such a startling refutation of his message by exacerbating this effect of the cross. The *rupture* of the cross refutes, in the example of his own person and history, the very message Jesus sought to proclaim.

> "He who proclaimed that the kingdom was near died abandoned by God. He who anticipated the future of God in miracles and in the casting out of demons died helpless on the cross. He who revealed the righteousness of God with an authority greater than Moses died according to the provision of the law as a blasphemer. He who spread the love of God in his fellowship with the poor and sinners met his end between two criminals on the cross."[159]

It is thus impossible, Moltmann maintains, for Jesus' proclamation to be detached from his person and continued by others in any simplistic way. It has been rendered untenable. Only if this comprehensive refutation of his person *and* proclamation is itself refuted, on both counts, could it prove possible to take up his message again. This is exactly what Moltmann perceives the resurrection to constitute. However, precisely because Jesus' message and

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156. TH 216.

157. TH 217.

158. TH 218.

159. CG 125.

existence are inseparable, his proclamation

> "can continue to be preached only together with and in the from of the proclamation of his person, that is, in the kerygma of Christ."[160]

To appreciate how this takes place, consider *figures 3 & 5* presented above. The experience of the *novum* of the appearances of Jesus, perceived as the eschatological demonstration of the lordship of God in his dead Christ, overcomes the refutation of the cross and impels memory back, through the discontinuity of the 'breach', to the recollection of Jesus' own message of the kingdom. Consequently, the resurrection (as compound-specific) becomes the ground of the adoption of Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom. But, in turn, what is remembered to be Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom becomes the horizon of interpretation within which the resurrection gains significance. Jesus is seen to rise, as it were, into the future he himself proclaimed. However, in the ensuing process of mutual modification the resurrection, as its initiator, comes to exercise a determinative role. The result is the projection of a new and distinctive horizon of expectation determined by the specific detail of the resurrection's occurrence. Accordingly, Jesus' own 'open picture' of the future of the kingdom, presented in his historical mission, does not only discover its concrete representation in his resurrection but, more significantly, comes to be "Christologically 'distorted' (*verstellt*)"[161] into conformity with the particularity of the Christ-event itself. Jesus' rising into his own proclamation gives it particular content. Thus the kingdom comes to be conceived as that which is constituted by the future of Jesus opened up in his resurrection. The kingdom is equated with *Jesus' own future*.

By the hermeneutic procedure set out in *figure 5* this same Christological determination of the kingdom, therefore, gathers into itself the product of the Old Testament, prophetic expansion

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160. CG 124. Here Moltmann understands himself to be applying M. Kähler's assertion that the cross of Christ is the 'basis and standard of all christology' (CG 3). Either an understanding of the crucified Jesus must be the origin of all Christology or else his death on the cross renders Christology impossible (CG 125). It is noteworthy that, for Moltmann, not historical criticism but the cross itself constitutes the greatest obstacle to Christological pronouncement.

161. TH 220-222.

of the kingdom-expectation; notably retaining its concern for the consummation, rather than the replacement of, historical existence.

A profound distinction is, therefore, rightly perceived to exist between Jesus' historical message of the kingdom and the Church's Christological proclamation of that kingdom[162]. They lie on either side of the *novum* and are thus separated with respect to the eschatological structuring of time. For the early Church Jesus' resurrection itself forms a vital and determinative element of its understanding of the kingdom. 'Christological distortion' arises therefore because, in the light of God's eschatological act in and for his dead Christ, the kingdom of God is seen to have to do with the resurrection of the crucified. In Moltmann's estimation it thus comes to be furnished with the following distinctive content:[163]

(a) The kingdom cannot be the resultant product of causal chains immanent within the process of history. For this reason it may not, by means of a solely existential or ethical focus, be reduced in its significance to purely present existence.[164] Rather, as irreducibly connected to the resurrection of the dead, the kingdom comes to signify the *transformation* of all things in a new creation of *this* reality.

(b) In the resurrection of the *crucified*, the kingdom is seen to mean nothing less than the election of 'the things that are not' (1 Corinthians.1:28), i.e., the unrighteous and the godforsaken.

(c) Since the resurrection is essentially a promissory event (see above) the full realisation of

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162. "The Church has not to carry on Jesus' self-consciousness or self-understanding, but to proclaim who he *is*." (TH 219). Meeks, *Origin*, pp.101f draws attention to the influence of Kasëmann on Moltmann's understanding of this relationship. And, as Moltmann acknowledges himself, it finds resonance with Albert Schweitzer's observation of the distinction between Jesus' proclamation and the Church's proclamation of the proclaimer, while carrying quite distinct implications.

163. The following four corollaries form a summary of the material in TH 220-224.

164. TH 223. This becomes particularly clear if the cross is taken to reveal the godforsakenness of all reality and so the material absence of the kingdom of God.

the kingdom as yet remains outstanding.

(d) In this *process* of the kingdom Jesus' exaltation serves the ultimate lordship of the Father who gives an eschatological demonstration of both his faithfulness to and lordship over reality in the resurrection of his dead Christ. He thus reveals himself to be the *creator ex nihilo*[165].

8. *The constraint of forward-openness*

How is this interpretive *product* of the kingdom as Jesus' future related to Jesus' historical mission? In answering this question we shall now repeat for this intra-specific operation of the promise-development cycle, the exercise engaged in earlier when we investigated the relationship between 'gospel' and the history of past promise. What we will discover in Moltmann's presentation of this relationship is exactly what the hermeneutic method of promise-development suggests. The remembered features of Jesus' historical mission find their *validation* (their 'setting-in-force') and *universalisation* in the early church's christological proclamation of the kingdom. As evidence for this we may single out the following three features of Jesus' historical mission which find confirmation and development in such christological proclamation. First, the eschatological structure of Jesus' proclamation which we might refer to as the 'at-handedness'[166] of the kingdom; a sense of being between inauguration and completion. Second, the kingdom's essential, rather than merely fortuitous, connection with his person. Third, the righteousness of prevenient grace enacted in Jesus' approach to the outcast. As Moltmann observes, though without our explicit methodological underpinning:

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165. We may note in passing that while the implied co-relative of this expression, *creatio ex nihilo*, may function as a description of certain abstractable and general features of the resurrection of the dead, it is in danger of unhelpfully masking the fundamental difference between resurrection and creation-in-the-beginning. While the former is constrained by the presupposition of the once-existent, the latter is not.

166. See, for example, Mark 1:15.

> "...the christological understanding of the message of the kingdom does not distort[167] Jesus' message of the kingdom, but makes it universal, opens it to embrace a totality of new being."[168]

Having established the basic applicability of the promise-development hermeneutic to the question of the relationship between Jesus' history and future, we shall now explore this more deeply with the aid of our earlier observations. Advancement will initially take the form of a developing summary.

I have already tried to show that the logical structure of the hermeneutic of promise-development implies that ultimately every promise points to the same transcendent future. Accordingly, it was proposed that all promises within this common process of expansion and reinterpretation share an inner *identity*. Within the horizon of promise such identity is construed from the future back and so possesses an open character. Instead of being wholly contained in a single locus, a promise's identity is extended to form an identity envelope which includes both that which it now is and that which it has the prospect of becoming. It is this phenomenon of *ec-centric* identity, orientated upon an ultimate commonality, which legitimates the process whereby earlier promises can provide signification for later, if historically discontinuous, promissory events by their provision of a horizon of interpretation.[169] In this way, however, past promises place *constraints* upon interpretation by delineating the perspective within which a specific can be viewed. A horizon cannot prescribe in advance of the details of a specific under examination what its significance will be. But a horizon, as the perspective within which a specific is viewed, can constrain the broad dimensions of meaning within which a specific comes to significance. This is precisely because a specific gains its meaning from the horizon within which its significance is generated. It can, as we have demonstrated, modify these dimensions. It cannot, however, of itself replace them with others.

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167. This is a poor choice of word and should be distinguished from the term 'christological distortion' examined above.

168. TH 223.

169. Typological exegesis found, for example, in 1 Corinthians 10, Galatians 4, and Hebrews 7-10, would appear to be predicated upon just such an assumption as this.

Constraint, therefore, is defined in relation to the *novum* which initiates the hermeneutic impetus. It is this impetus which is constrained. But this same phenomenon may be defined in relation to past promise as *forward-openness* for development. Each promise is ec-centrically orientated upon the intrinsic fulfilment its ultimate development will bring. Forward-openness may thus be conceived as that which prevents the process of development from becoming the arbitrary imposition of alien meaning. We could summarise these observations by stating that forward-openness not only invites a consummatory completion by way of development but also lays down conditions concerning the range of possibilities which could be entertained as legitimate.

That the specific of Jesus Christ[170] straddles the irruption of the *novum,* occasioned in his appearances, means, I suggest, that in the hermeneutic of promise-development he comes (at least in part[171]) to constitute *his own interpretive horizon* with all the attendant corollaries described above. Accordingly, if our elucidation of Moltmann's hidden methodological foundation is correct, we should now be able to explain the structural features of his presentation of the relationship between Jesus' historical mission and his outstanding eschatological future.

That an identity relation exists between the Jesus who engaged in a historical mission and the Jesus who is raised from death is, of course, the *conditio sine qua non* of christology[172]. But to assert such an identity relation within the hermeneutic of promise-expansion should imply that both Jesus' message *and existence* are ec-centric; that is they intrinsically point beyond themselves to an outstanding future of consummation. This is precisely what we do find.

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170. The phrase 'Jesus Christ', which links together both the historical and eschatological dimensions of his existence on either side of the *novum* of his 'appearance'-as-living, is here used advisedly.

171. This qualification has to be made because the interpretive role of the Old Testament horizon of remembered expectation must not be forgotten. In its absence, as I have attempted to demonstrate, the intra-specific operation of the cycle of promise-development could not function.

172. Cf. Moltmann's imitation of Rahner's trinitarian principle: "The risen Christ *is* the historical and crucified Jesus, and *vice versa.*" (CG 160). Cf. K. Rahner, *The Trinity*, (London: Burns and Oats, 1970), p.22.

> "The life, words and actions of the Jesus of the synoptic gospels are centred not in himself, but on the future which is called the 'kingdom of God'. His God and Father is to reveal him as the one who he truly is. The kingdom of God, which he proclaimed to be imminent and realised in practice, shows him as the one who he is in truth."[173]

Again, the observation that identity in this hermeneutic environment is constructed from the future back enables us to predict that ultimately Moltmann will ground Jesus' identity in his awaited parousia.

> Christ's parousia is not a dispensable appendage to the history of Christ. It is the goal of that history, for it is its completion...It is the keystone supporting the whole of christology, and this also makes it the key to the understanding of the history of Christ"[174]

Our observations also imply that Jesus' historical mission should possess an intrinsic forward-openness for its development by means of his own eschatological resurrection. And this we saw to be the case in the relationship of validation described above. That both these features of ec-centric identity and forward-openness are to be found in Moltmann's exposition of christology demonstrates, I suggest, that it operates firmly within the hermeneutic of promise-development we have abstracted. In chapter 4 each of these two points will be subject to much more detailed investigation. For now their presence points to another corollary of the promise-development hermeneutic: the *constraint* which remembrance of Jesus must, on this method, exercise over the interpretation of the Christ-event of cross and 'appearance'-as-living. The importance of this discovery is its demonstration that christology developed within a promissory context cannot but help reckon with the significance of Jesus' historical mission. Thus, according to Moltmann, when the attempt is made to understand Jesus' existence within the perspective of the question "of the future of the history revealed in the Old Testament promises":[175]

> "it is no longer a matter of indifference or chance that Jesus was a Jew, appeared in Israel, came into conflict with the guardians of the people's law, and was condemned and handed over to the Romans to be

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173. CG 104.

174. WJC 316.

175. CG 98.

crucified".[176]

In other words, the contingent specifics of Jesus' earthly mission come into focus as being of consequence. When, therefore, in *The Crucified God* this dimension receives much greater attention over against *Theology of Hope* it may be understood as a development which can be wholly accounted for as an implication of Moltmann's chosen hermeneutic approach.

A clear and highly important example of this type of constraint is afforded by Moltmann's method of recapitulation. In this example it is the crucifixion rather than the positive content of Jesus' historical mission which is in view, but the logical structure of the relationship remains the same.

> "The primitive Christian interpretations of the crucified Jesus in the light of his resurrection by God and within the testimony of eschatological faith set out to recapitulate the trial [of Jesus]...and to draw upon it in the name of God."[177]

It has already been stated that for Moltmann the possibility of christology rests upon the refutation, by virtue of his resurrection, of the earlier refutation of his person and message in crucifixion.[178] Clearly, the exact dimensions within which his prior refutation is remembered to have occurred will *constrain* the particular dimensions within which the resurrection, as the rebuttal of this refutation, is interpreted as significant. Moltmann understands the crucified Jesus to have been refuted as: (a) a 'blasphemer' with respect to the law which claimed to have codified the will of God once and for all[179]; (b) as a 'rebel' with respect to politico-religious *Pax Romana*;[180] and (c) as 'godforsaken' with respect to the God whose nearness he experienced and proclaimed.[181] Accordingly, Moltmann's account of the significance of the

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176. CG 99.

177. CG 133.

178. Cf. CG 123.

179. CG 128-135.

180. CG 136-145.

181. CG 145-153.

resurrection, which provokes the eschatological recapitulation of his trial,[182] comes to explication within corresponding dimensions. Moltmann is concerned with the questions of God's creative righteousness[183], and of political existence (and particularly for Moltmann with respect to the legitimacy of 'civil religion'.[184]) And his concern with the question of the nature of God leads ultimately to a trinitarian understanding of the 'crucified God' rooted in the Christ-event[185].

Summary: It has been demonstrated that to view the specific 'the person and history of Jesus' within horizon 'promise' means reckoning with the unique way in which this multi-faceted specific functions as its own interpretive context across the rupture occasioned by the *novum* of his resurrection appearances. A mutual relationship of modification and illumination exists between the 'historical' and 'eschatological' Jesus. Thus an interpretive movement from the *novum* backwards, to make contact with the remembered horizon of expectation constituted by his historical mission, must be matched by a corresponding movement forwards, as this mission constrains the meaning of his still outstanding future. Put simply, his 'history' must be read both forwards and backwards. We have thus laid bare the methodological grounding of one of Moltmann's most fundamental theological procedures.[186]

> "If we are to understand the truth about Jesus according to the New Testament, we must take two courses at the same time: we must read his history both forwards and backwards and relate both readings".[187]

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182. Margaret Kohl, who has translated many of Moltmann's original German texts into English, provides the reader with an important note at WJC 183. She indicates that the word *Prozess* can mean both a legal trial and a process. Moltmann himself, if a little more obscurely, also indicates the double sense of this term (CG 113f) showing that he intends it to suggest a process of struggle for the truth of God. The intrinsic incompletedness of the conception 'process', admirably suits a context in which reality is understood as 'historic'.

183. See, for example, Moltmann's five-fold summary at CG 177f.

184. E.g. CG 317ff. For more detail, see especially, "The Cross and Civil Religion", in *The Institute of Christian Thought*, (Harper and Row, 1974) pp.14-47.

185. See especially CG 200ff.

186. As our investigation will later reveal, Moltmann's whole interpretation of the relationship between the eschatological future and the temporal process of creation is grounded in this methodology.

187. CG 162.

This approach is made possible on the presupposition of an identity relation which exists between the crucified Jesus and risen Christ, itself implicit within the hermeneutic of promise-development.[188] There is, therefore, no contradiction between the apparently divergent foundational statements about which revolve *Theology of Hope* and *The Crucified God.* When Moltmann argues first that Jesus' message and existence must be understood in the light of his resurrection from the dead,[189] *and* secondly that the 'historical' Jesus must be the criterion of christology,[190] he is in this way simply being profoundly true to the implications of the horizon of promise within which he has elected to operate.

> "[T]he earthly, human, and therefore historically knowable Christ is remembered and known in the light of his resurrection from the dead and his presence in the Spirit of God; and the raised and present Christ is perceived and known in the light of what was remembered and passed on about the life he lived...it is not a question of an alternative, but only of a dialectical perception of the mystery of Jesus Christ by way of remembrance, hope and experience".[191]

Once, therefore, the full implications of the horizon of promise are thoroughly understood, the most distinctive and basic features of Moltmann's eschatological structuring of theology are rendered transparent.

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188. Interestingly R. Clutterbuck has attempted to discern Moltmann's understanding of the continuity of doctrinal statements over time by analysing how Moltmann perceives the relationship between the crucified and risen Christ. Because he looks at this relationship in isolation he is forced to the following conclusion: "This is a continuity through the most radical discontinuity imaginable and one which makes impossible an appeal to the straightforward transmission of the past as a mark of doctrinal continuity" ("Jürgen Moltmann as a doctrinal theologian", *Scottish Journal of Theology* Vol 48/4 (1995), pp.494f). Had he set this relationship within the hermeneutic process of promise-development he would have produced a more nuanced understanding of how the future can take up the past into itself as well as the past constrain the range of meaning of the future.

189. "Christianity stands or falls with the reality of the raising of Jesus from the dead by God. In the New Testament there is no faith that does not start *a priori* with the resurrection of Jesus"(TH 165). Cf., "the experience of his resurrection through God...was the only reason why his words and his story were remembered and why people were concerned with him" (CG 162).

190. Moltmann asks, "does the primitive Christian belief in the resurrection do justice to the life and death of Jesus, or has it put something else in Jesus' place?" (CG 161). See also CG 114-119.

191. WJC 69.

3.0 JESUS' UNIVERSAL SIGNIFICANCE AND PARTICULAR RELEVANCE

For Moltmann specifically Christian theology is only alive when the concrete and contingent details of the biblical presentation of the person and history of Jesus Christ are accorded methodological priority.[1] This means that the biblical presentation of Jesus must be permitted both to dictate the key elements of theology's structural form and material content, and to adjudicate between that which can and cannot be accounted Christian. On the basis of the particular, of Jesus, theology is to speak of the universal; of God. Can such a strategy succeed? Long ago Gotthold Lessing (1729-81) raised the problem of what he termed 'the scandal of particularity'.[2] He perceived the existence of an intellectual chasm separating the 'accidental (and particular) truths of history' from the 'necessary (and universal) truths of reason'. Can the contingent details of the biblical narrative really be accorded a universal significance? In raising this question, we shall also be concerned with a co-ordinate problem. Even if an abstract and formal notion of universal significance can be constructed, what genuine pertinence might this have for the multifarious situations of contemporary life? Does not the temporal and cultural separation between the biblical narratives and ourselves mean that a theology which would take them as its ultimate norm is robbed of any particular relevance? In facing up to these questions our central concern will be to determine whether the eschatological structure of Moltmann's christology, discerned in the previous chapter, holds a key to their possible solution.

It will not be sufficient, however, to take into account only critical voices from the past. In approaching the territory of a claimed universal significance, we traverse ground being explored by the contemporary concerns which cluster around the term 'postmodern'. "Simplifying to the extreme", writes Jean-François Lyotard, "I define postmodern as

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1. See chapter 2.2.

2. For a recent and lucid account of Lessing's position see, for example, A.E. McGrath, *The Making of Modern German Christology*, (Leicester: Apollos, 1994), pp. 28-33.

incredulity toward metanarratives".[3] If a metanarrative may be taken as an account which creates significance of an alleged universal scope, the pertinence of Lyotard's observation becomes obvious. The notion of universal axioms of truth, or indeed of universal criteria of any kind, which undergirded the Enlightenment and Modern period, are presently under attack.[4] Such conceptions are seen as forms of intellectual imperialism which suppress difference and plurality for the sake of an enforced homogeneity which serves the interests of the powerful.[5] Clearly the notion of God, as supreme universal, is directly affected by this new sensibility. Nietzsche, of foundational influence for many postmodern thinkers, is also of manifest importance in the explicitly theological realm. Commenting on the work of the important American theologian Mark C. Taylor, Graham Ward writes:

> "The death of God is the death of the transcendental signifier stabilising identity and truth. It is the death of...meaning in anything but a local and pragmatic sense".[6]

This chapter will attempt to explore the possibilities, which lie hidden in Moltmann's eschatological structure, for facing up to this challenge. Must theological meaning also only exist on the local scale? Is it the case that there can only be contextual theologies for particular historical situations which remain essentially unconnected to one another? Or is there a legitimate way to affirm contextual meaning while grounding this in a unifying account of universal meaning? Can one affirm a certain relativity of perspective without thereby subscribing to relativism; a certain plurality of meaning without collapse into pluralism? These are questions which will accompany our exploration of Moltmann's method of the priority of the particular.

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3. *The Postmodern Condition: a Report on Knowledge*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), p.xxiv.

4. Elaine L. Graham, *Transforming Practice: Pastoral Theology in an Age of Uncertainty*, (London: Mowbray, 1996), pp. 18ff. Chapter 1 of this book, "Anatomy of Uncertainty", provides a recent and clear analysis of the breakdown of modernity to produce the 'postmodern condition'. See also, A. Thiselton, *Interpreting God and the Postmodern Self: On Meaning, Manipulation and Promise*, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), p.11.

5. The work of Michel Foucault is most frequently associated by commentators, such as Graham *op. cit.*, with this insight into the linkage between knowledge (particularly forms of scientific knowledge) and power. Though, of course, Karl Marx's notion of the economic substructure's conditioning of the intellectual superstructure results in much the same conclusion. For an excellent account of Marx see F. Copleston, *History of Philosophy Vol. vii* (London: Search Press, 1963) pp. 305-334.

6. "Postmodern Theology" in D.Ford (Ed.), *The Modern Theologians*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), p.589.

1. *A question of christology's identity and relevance*

Moltmann is entirely correct in stressing that the task of christology cannot be limited to simply ensuring that all christological statements made concerning Jesus' person and history are grounded in its biblical presentation.[7] Christology cannot be reduced to what Moltmann terms "the hermeneutics of [christology's] origin".[8] To do so would be to condemn christology to sterility and ineffectiveness, sealing it off from the questions and agendas of other places and times. Rather this task must be complemented by "the hermeneutics of [christology's] effects and consequences".[9] Here the aim is to offer an account of the soteriological relevance of the Christian confession of Christ for particular contexts and concerns. Moltmann defines these broadly as follows:

> "the present day understanding of reality and the present day dispute between the truth of God and the righteousness of man and the world."[10]

These two tasks, 'origin' and 'effects', function in correlation with one another. The result, argues Moltmann, is the coordination of the unique name and history of Jesus, through the operation of the first, with his 'titles of office' through the working of the second. These titles, such as 'Christ', 'Son of God' and 'Logos' are, therefore, taken as expressions of Jesus' meaning and significance. Moltmann asserts, however, that this hermeneutic process was not brought to closure in the construction of the biblical texts. Rather, because meaning is dependent on context, it has proved necessary for such titles to possess a certain openness and flexibility. Consequently, individual titles may be extended, or replaced as new titles are added.

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7. CG 83-87.

8. CG 84. Moltmann appears to use the terms 'Christian faith' and 'christology' interchangeably at this point. In doing so he demonstrates the absolute centrality of christology for his account of theology. I have elected to remain with the primary christological focus. It is this which is explicitly in view when Moltmann later re-utilises this terminology in *The Way of Jesus Christ* (p.43f).

9. CG 84.

10. CG 84.

> "*Just as* they [the (original) titles] were formulated to express Jewish or Greek reasons for faith in Jesus, it is possible on principle to formulate new titles to express, say, Hindu reasons or even Marxist reasons for faith in Jesus."[11]

Here, by the phrase "just as", Moltmann appears to be asserting that Jesus' significance can equally well be generated within a variety of horizons of interpretation. Yet, in the light of our previous chapter, this statement is extremely puzzling. His method of according normative status to Jesus' biblical presentation must surely argue against such a proposal. Rather, it would appear to demand that the horizon of promise, and in this sense Jewish (and early Christian) reasons for faith in Jesus, should claim determinative precedence. In the absence of such hermeneutic control what, for example, is to prevent the Marxist reasons for belief in Jesus illegitimately distorting Jesus into a Marxist figure? Moltmann's answer is to assure us that his suggestion of titular elasticity is subject to constraint.

> "The constant in the changes brought about by time, and in the transformations in the concrete form of faith, love and hope, is the name Jesus, and the essential reference to him and his history in every Christian statement about God, the world and man...The name says *who* is meant. The titles and the predicates say *what* is meant. And just as in a sentence the subject governs the predicate, so in christology Jesus must govern the christological predicates."[12]

Moltmann further characterises this relationship or "tension" between the name and the titles of Jesus as that between,

> "...the earthly and the eternal, the particular and the universal, the temporal and the eschatological. The name covers the earthly, particular and temporal side of his origin, the titles attributed to him cover the eternal, universal and eschatological side."[13]

In these elaborating statements, however, I suggest that Moltmann's error becomes plain and with it the reason for our puzzlement above. Moltmann's mistake is twofold.

First, he fails to appreciate the full complexity of what is entailed in according a 'specific'

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11. CG 85, emphasis mine.

12. CG 85f.

13.CG 85.

normative control. For something to act as a norm it is clearly a fundamental condition that it must have an intrinsic meaning and significance. Yet we established in the previous chapter that there is no meaning without interpretation. Only in and through the act of interpretation, therefore, and not apart from this process, can something act as a norm. Moltmann, however, appears to believe that the specific, the 'bare facts', of Jesus' identity and history can act as a norm *independently* of a process of interpretation. At this point, therefore, his implied hermeneutic model is too simplistic. But Moltmann makes a further, perhaps more fundamental, error.

Second, he fails to appreciate precisely what the biblical text affords an interpreter. Moltmann appears to assume that the biblical presentation of Jesus allows access to him *independently* of an account of his significance. It is as if he assumes that the bible is a route to encounter with Jesus equivalent to that enjoyed by those who met him for themselves in the flesh. This would explain why he thinks it is possible to treat the sheer facts of Jesus' identity and history as somehow separable and on a different level from the accounts of his meaning offered by his titles. It would explain why he can propose that it is Jesus in isolation who is key, and the Jewish, Greek, Hindu and Marxist reasons for faith in him secondary equivalents. He appears not to realise, therefore, that in taking the particular biblical presentation of Jesus as normative he must treat as determinative *the series of interactions between specific and horizon* which the text records. The biblical account does not present a neutral picture of Jesus; it is already christological. It presents any interpreter with a compound-specific which must act as norm in relation to other horizons of interpretation (including of course the interpreter's preunderstanding) in the manner described in the previous chapter. To express this point in terms of Moltmann's own terminology, there is, therefore, no subject, 'Jesus', available for inspection apart from the Jesus which the christological predicates make visible. We have no access to an account of *who* Jesus is in isolation from an account of *what* he means. And so, in culmination, unless 'the hermeneutics of origin' already discloses an *intrinsic* 'effect and consequence' it can neither function as a source for, nor a critical control upon, accounts of Jesus' christological relevance.

It is interesting that when Moltmann later picks up this theme of the interrelation of the hermeneutics of christology's origin and effects in *The Way of Jesus Christ*,[14] this rather obvious point appears to find implicit acknowledgement. The problematic relationship between name and title is no longer used. In its place stands a more accurate account of the unity of christology and soteriology.[15]

> "This unity between the christological foundation of soteriology and the soteriological explication of christology is never extinguished, *even when* christology is made the criterion for soteriology, so as to prevent soteriology from being delivered over to the caprice of people's own religious desires and anxieties, which would turn it into the religious wish-fulfilment of the moment."[16]

Here Moltmann appears to imply that christology is able to offer a critique of soteriological accounts of Jesus' significance precisely because it already possesses an inherent soteriological component. In this case, then, the identity and significance of Jesus appear to be treated as a unitary complex rather than as separable entities.

While we have now clarified what is required of Moltmann's task of 'the hermeneutics of christology's origin', his corresponding activity of 'the hermeneutics of christology's effects and consequences' still requires further elaboration. This is because the general intention to construct an account of Jesus' soteriological significance is not yet an explication of how this will be accomplished in relation to a variety of *particular contexts*. For, to be relevant, accounts of Jesus' 'effects and consequences' will need to be context-specific.

To advance further, I propose to introduce a distinction which Moltmann does not make . We will need to lay bare the connection and distinction between what I shall term Jesus' *universal significance* and *particular relevance*.

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14. WJC 38-46, especially 43f.

15. The intended equivalence of this usage is demonstrated by the following two observations. First, that, in the immediate context, christology here functions as an explication of Jesus' 'biblical identifiability'. And second, that soteriology is seen to be equated with 'therapeutic relevance'.

16. WJC 44, my emphasis.

While significance and relevance are clearly closely related terms, they are not equivalents. Relevance is, I suggest, a specific form of significance. We have already established that significance is dependent upon the horizon of interpretation within which it is generated. To this extent, then, all significance is contextually dependent; all significance is irreducibly 'significance for'. The distinction I wish to establish is essentially related to the extensiveness of this 'for'. To assert that something is universally significant is to maintain that it comes to meaning within a horizon which is universally encompassing. Whereas, to assert that something is relevant requires the demonstration of its significance within the specific horizon for which relevance is sought. On the basis of this definition of the distinction of these terms, it is also possible to lay down the ground of their interrelationship. To have offered an account of Jesus' universal significance is not yet to have provided a delineation of his relevance for a particular set of circumstances. However, it is to have demonstrated that the attempt at the construction of his particular relevance for a specific context is always, in principle, possible. This is simply a corollary of a genuinely universal meaning. Notice, however, that the reverse argument does not hold true: Jesus' relevance does not necessarily establish his universal significance. Consequently, if it is wished to show that Jesus' relevance can be constructed for every context and for every time, that an attempt at relevance-construction is always a possibility, the first priority must be the demonstration that comprehension of Jesus, in all his contingent specificity, *necessarily requires* perceiving him as significant within a universally encompassing horizon. We shall, therefore, first examine Moltmann's method for the establishment of Jesus' universal significance before returning to the question of particular relevance.

2. *Striving for the universal plane*

If Christian theology is the attempt to speak of the universal God on the basis of the contingent details of Jesus' existence, then, clearly, the construction of Jesus' universal significance is of absolute necessity. As Moltmann affirms:

> "The real problem seems to be whether or not Christian talk of God, based on the historical witness of the Bible, has a universal significance. In what universally binding sense does the Christian proclamation of God address itself to all men?"[17]

It is important to appreciate that the crux of this problem is not whether the contingent history of Jesus *can be coerced* into operating on the universal level. This could easily be achieved by viewing it within an imposed interpretive horizon of universal dimensions. The question is rather whether the biblical narrative is *intrinsically* capable of justifying a universal claim. This intrinsic relation is crucial; only so could the contingent be accorded universal significance. This is because the *imposition* of a universal horizon would inevitably run the risk of undermining the determinative power of Jesus' biblical presentation. The danger would be the suppression of any elements of the person and history of Jesus which conflicted with the presuppositions of the imposed horizon. And this danger would be real because to allow Jesus' contingent particularity to modify the imposed horizon instead, would undermine the very purpose of its use; namely that of establishing a universal claim to meaning. The cost entailed in such coercion to universal significance is thus the distortion of Jesus' biblical portrayal as alien and imported meanings are foisted onto his identity and existence. Jesus would be reduced to a projection screen on which to view conceptions derived from the imposed horizon of interpretation. No longer, therefore, could his biblical portrayal be held as determinative.

Despite this obvious danger, the great schemes for the verification of Christian truth claims operate in precisely this way. In the important essay, 'The Revelation of God and the Question of Truth'[18] Moltmann makes this point with great effectiveness. These schemes, he observes, attempt to coordinate the specifics of biblical history with a supposedly universally perceivable 'problem'. The aim is to show the universal necessity of the former as the soteriological answer to the latter. That which is contingent and so, in the tradition of Lessing, seen as an unreasonable claimant upon a universal significance, is read as a "palimpsest"; that is, viewed

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17. HP 3.

18. HP 3-30. This essay was originally written as part of a collection to celebrate Karl Barth's eightieth birthday (1966).

within the interpretive horizon of that which is generally held to be so.[19]

> "For the concrete texts of God, a generally approachable text is substituted through which the Bible is to become more readable and more understandable...Interpretation then becomes a bridge between the witness of a specific history and a sphere of generally accessible possibilities which recur through the ages."[20]

How, then, might such a method specifically affect a christology which sought to operate within this environment of the 'proof of God'? In both Moltmann's early trilogy and later series of 'systematic contributions' he consistently defines his own position over against two such options: cosmological and anthropological christology. It will be useful to offer a brief account of these rejected alternatives.

(i) *Cosmological christology*[21]: This approach arises out of the perception of the universal problem of finitude and transience which afflicts all created being, both human and natural. It is a perception which provokes the following soteriological question:

> "...how can finite being participate in Being that is infinite, so that in eternal Being it may acquire a continuance which will resist transience in time and decay in death?"[22]

This question finds its answer in the God who has been defined precisely as the solution to the plight it represents. He is the ontological opposite of worldly experience: eternal rather than temporal; one rather than manifold; infinite rather than finite; immutable and impassible rather than mutable and passible; necessary and self-existent rather than contingent and dependent. Early Christianity, which operated in the midst of this cosmocentric world-view, came to assert that *this* God, the God for whom all being *universally* seeks, became a human being in Jesus. The defining boundaries of this conception were established at the Council of Chalcedon (451 CE). In the one person of Jesus, these two distinct natures, the human and the divine, are

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19. As Moltmann insightfully observes, "...only the general within the particular seems to be what is reasonable." (HP 5). This is the outlook of Enlightenment rationalism.

20. HP 5. In a footnote at this point (p.27 n.4) Moltmann reveals that he has "borrowed this formulation" from H.U.von Balthasar.

21. See TH 140-143, 276-279; HP 5-7; TasE 2-5; CG 87-92, 227-235, 267-274; WJC 46-55, 68-70.

22. WJC 47.

inseparably related to one another. The incarnation therefore achieves the presence of "eternal, original, unchangeable being in the sphere of temporal, decaying, transitory existence, in which men live and die".[23] In this way the incarnation already implies the salvation of the very nature of creaturely being.

The coordination of *this* God, by means of incarnation, with the contingent individuality and history of Jesus undoubtedly appears to offer the latter a universal significance. However, it does so at the expense of suppressing the determinative power of Jesus' particularity as this is presented in the biblical narrative. As Moltmann observes, this happens in a number of ways.

First, because the focus of the problem is on the ontological distinction between divine and earthly being, Jesus' history is reduced to a 'vertical' movement between these realms.

> "It is 'the way of the Son of God into the foreign country' and 'the return home of the Son of man'. If the history of Christ is essentially this vertical history, then it is fundamentally 'eternal history'."[24]

Because irresolvable into the imposed vertical perspective, the 'horizontal' dimension of the Old Testament's signifying horizon of promise is thus rendered invisible. In consequence, Jesus' historical mission, together with the yet outstanding expectation of his parousia, are accorded little meaning. In effect the deficiency results from the already familiar 'transposition of eschatology into eternity'.[25] Jesus' history within the future of God's kingdom, a key dimension of his biblical presentation, is eclipsed as the vertical dimension enforces the perspective of God's eternity which is indifferent to historical development.

Second, the assertion that the divinity of this universally desired God finds its highest

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23. CG 88.

24. WJC 52. The quotations in this passage are taken from Karl Barth (*Church Dogmatics* IV.1,2). Significantly, Moltmann constantly accuses Barth of operating within the same vertical framework with matching consequences (see, for example, TH 50-58; WJC 230-232, 318f; *History and the Triune God: Contributions to Trinitarian Theology*, Tr. Bowden, J., (London: SCM, 1991), pp.128-130; henceforth, HTG).

25. CofG 13; see chapter 2.3.

expression in Jesus of Nazareth creates another, related conflict with the *identifying* details of his history.

> "How can the intransitory God be in a transitory human being? How can the universal God be in an individual? How can the unchangeable God 'become flesh'? How can the immortal God suffer and die on a cross?"[26]

Moltmann points to two, equally unacceptable, attempts at the resolution of this conflict. The first resorts to paradoxical statements, for example, 'the impassible God suffered in Christ'.[27] The problem here is that a presupposed notion of divinity is effectively insulated from any challenging inference which Jesus' particularity might make.[28] Second, and more radically, the details of Jesus' existence may become the grounds for rejecting the claim that in him the God for whom all being seeks became incarnate. This was precisely the argument of the Alexandrian philosopher Celsus.[29] In each case the problem reduces to: Why seek *this* (universally required) God in *this* (particular) person? What is the *necessary* connection between the two? To attempt to construct Jesus' universal significance in this way, therefore, appears arbitrary; possible but not requisite.

While not belonging to the cosmocentric world-view of antiquity, Hegel's speculative christology is also seen, by Moltmann, to suffer from the same methodological inadequacy of imposing an essentially abstract notion of divinity upon the particular contingency of Jesus.[30] Here a notion of God as Absolute Subject is held to *entail* both the idea of the incarnation and the 'death of God' as necessary components of God's self-realisation. While this notion of God

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26. CG 88.

27. WJC 69.

28. Notice that the Scholastic schema of the *communicatio idiomatum*, which restricts the communication of properties of the divine and human nature to only the concrete personal unity of Christ, also has exactly the same effect. It too is actually a way of preventing the details of the biblical presentation of Jesus' person and history from acting as a potential revelatory *source* for a conception of divine nature. The more straightforward assertion, that Jesus suffered in his human nature alone, achieves the same result more directly.

29. CG 88f.

30. CG 89-92. Cf. TKG 15f.

could be *associated* with Jesus as biblically presented, Moltmann's point is that it is difficult to see why such a connection must necessarily be made. We might put this objection in the form of a counter-question to Hegel. Does Jesus offer sufficient reason for constructing a notion of God which demands that the creation and reconciliation of the world are actions necessary to the definition and actualisation of God's own self? This is a question we shall also find ourselves asking of Moltmann's own more Hegelian moments.

(ii) *Anthropological Christology*[31]: Modern consciousness of existence is distinguished from the cosmocentric world-view of antiquity by the well documented irruption of awareness of human subjectivity. Human subjectivity comes to be defined over against the objective world of things and substances it perceives itself to transcend. Order is no longer disclosed through the structure of the cosmos, rather human beings perceive themselves to be the structurers of the world; its definers and manipulators. Correspondingly, reality comes to be characterised by the process of (human) history. But, to precisely the extent to which human subjectivity asserts its freedom from and autonomy over the world, human beings become embroiled in an identity crisis. For unlike the animals,[32] whose innate instincts, in correlation with a particular ecological niche, define the pattern of their existence,[33] human beings are forced to become the constructors of themselves. Such is the cost of isolation from the defining structures of the cosmos.[34] Consequently, a new anthropocentric question of soteriology comes into focus: the need to discover true human authenticity.

This new soteriological question requires a fresh christological approach. For, from the

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31. See TH 182-190, 273-276; HP 7-11; TasE 4-6; CG 92-98; WJC 55-63, 70.

32. Cf. *Man: Christian Anthropology in the Conflicts of the Present*, Tr. Sturdy, J., (London: SPCK, 1974), pp.4-7; henceforth, M.

33. "The ant knows the law of the ant hill. The bee knows the law of the beehive...It is only man that does not know his own law". Moltmann cites this quotation from Dostoyevsky at M 5.

34. Moltmann observes, in an interesting aside, that the rise of the American and European concern with human rights and dignity may be attributed to a consciousness that natural limits to inhumanity are no longer sufficient (WJC p57). We might add to this that the fact that such accounts attempt to succeed by pointing to the *self-evidentiality* of their affirmations is probably a reflection of precisely that which is perceived to be in dispute.

perspective of the question of human authenticity, the metaphysical soteriology of antiquity appears largely irrelevant. Significantly, the same assumption of universal applicability is made with respect to this problem of identity. This assumption may, therefore, be turned to theological advantage if the experienced questionability of the human self can be interpreted as a question of God; perhaps in line with the Augustinian *cor inquietum*. In such circumstances,

> "...God's revelation in Jesus can be interpreted as the fulfilment of man's questionability."[35].

Christologically, Jesus is perceived as actualising authentic human existence. Consequently, if it is to find meaning, that which had previously been understood as his divine nature is expressed as its co-relative within the dimension of human existence. For the Schleiermacher of *The Christian Faith*, God in Christ becomes Christ's unparalleled consciousness of God. Similarly, the immutability of the divine nature corresponds to the 'unremitting potency' of this consciousness.[36] For Immanuel Kant the anthropological mesh is finer still. Only that which can pass the test of practical (ethical) usefulness, as this is judged by humanity's *own* standard of moral perfection,[37] can be accepted in the portrayal of Jesus as the prototype of 'humanity well-pleasing to God'. Moltmann also detects this same pattern at work in Rahner.[38] For Rahner the incarnation demonstrates that it is God's self-communication which brings a human being's innate[39] orientation to self-transcendence to the point of consummation. Such an understanding famously has the possibility of opening up a notion of 'anonymous Christians': the person moving towards the fulfilment of his or her nature witnesses to God's

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35. HP 9.

36. *The Christian Faith* (2nd Edition), Section 94.

37. "Even the Holy One of the gospel must first be compared with our idea of moral perfection before we can recognise him as such" (I. Kant, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, (New York, 1960), pp.54f); cited at CG p.94.

38. WJC 61-63. For the sources which Moltmann is utilising at this point see WJC 350, n.43.

39. This should not be taken to imply that Rahner ever conceives of the realm of nature as independent of the realm of grace, the latter being perceived as the former's universal, enabling ground. Here, notably, Rahner's emphasis of continuity extends even beyond Aquinas (see J.A. Di Noia, "Karl Rahner" in *The Modern Theologians, op. cit.*, p.126). Moltmann is perhaps guilty of underplaying this degree of connection between nature and grace in presenting Rahner's argument. But this does not detract from his assessment that Rahner's inherent emphasis falls on the anthropological plane (probably for apologetic reasons), and so runs the risk of elevating the anthropological over the theological. It is the former which has the ultimate power of definition in matters christological.

self-communication to that person. But, in the legitimating christology, Moltmann suspects that it is the anthropological category of self-transcendence which is in danger of becoming determinant. Thus the incarnation's significance effectively reduces to fulfilled human existence.

Despite the differences in material content between these cosmological and anthropological schemata, the structure of their demonstration of the universal validity of the Christian claim remains the same[40]. For the questionability of transient earthly existence in the first, is substituted the questionability of human existence in the second. But the palimpsest technique remains. Anthropological christology is, therefore, subject to the same fundamental objection of arbitrary imposition. Be it supreme God-consciousness, moral perfection, realisation of self-transcendence, authentic existence and the rest,

> "Right down to the present day, this modern Jesuology has made the human Jesus of Nazareth the *projection screen* for all the different fantasies of the true humanity which alienated men and women are seeking".[41]

Again Jesus' person and history presented as significant within the various biblical strata, is filtered for that which will pass through, and thus illustrate, the imposed, predetermined mesh of acceptable meaning. That which remains behind is held to be of little import unless 'demythologised', i.e., *forced* through the same mesh. The consequences of this filtration are serious.

I agree with Moltmann that the hermeneutic key to the biblical estimation of Jesus' significance is his resurrection from death by means of God's action. The only Jesus which the New Testament holds up as worthy of attention is this eschatological figure revealed as Lord because raised from death.[42] It is this event which, in light of his godforsaken death, makes

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40. HP 10.

41. WJC 61, emphasis mine.

42. See, for example, Romans 1:4.

his remembrance both possible and necessary. However, within the orbit of concern represented by anthropological christology, that of present human existence, this 'event' can appear only as a meaningless and impossible miracle. If Easter has any meaning it resides in the continuing influence of Jesus' personality and proclamation. It is this which creates the present possibility of the authentic human existence illuminated in the lives of Jesus and his first followers. But, in effectively by-passing the hermeneutic key of Jesus' resurrection as eschatological event, this approach risks disassociating itself from the very grounds for according Jesus' historical life the decisive theological import it wishes to maintain. It has cut itself off from the very horizon which generates his meaning and significance. Consequently, it becomes highly problematic as to why such an arbitrarily[43] constructed Jesus should have any *definitive* claim as a discloser of humanity in correspondence to God. Why should this individual, rather than some other, be the object of faith? As Moltmann rightly suggests,

> "It is possible to interpret Jesus as the perfect man to those who by tradition are already Christians, but hardly to pagans and post-Christian atheists. Jesus *can* be understood in this way, but why *must* one necessarily go to the trouble of doing so? Thus modern christology always assumes faith, and states that Jesus can be understood in this way in faith. But it rarely says why one should have faith, and have faith in Jesus in particular".[44]

Moltmann also demonstrates that anthropological christology fails even in respect of Jesus' death. Why should this be so? Because no adequate account of Jesus' death in abandonment by God can be offered within the dimension of 'the question of the humanity of living persons' in which it has elected to operate.

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43. The word 'arbitrary' is used to keep this account in line with general principles outlined above. Arbitrary here means as judged from the perspective of the biblical account. Clearly, from the perspective of the assumptions of meaning held by the constructor of Jesus' as a picture of ideal humanity, the delineation is far from arbitrary. Exactly this point was marvellously pin-pointed by George Tyrell in respect of Harnack's christology: "The Christ that Harnack sees, looking back through nineteen centuries of Catholic darkness, is only the reflection of a Liberal Protestant face, seen at the bottom of a deep well." (Source: McGrath, *The Making* p.98).

44. CG 97. Rowan Williams has recently raised similar questions with respect to the work of Maurice Wiles. In *Faith and the Mystery of God* (London: SCM, 1982) Wiles postulates that God is the one "for whom nothing is expendable except himself" (p.72). Williams' question concerns how such a statement is constructed. He asks, "Is the narrative of Jesus *constitutive* of this insight (and if so in virtue of what, and 'by what authority'?) or is it *illustrative* of a more generally available understanding (in which case, can it bear the full 'parabolic' weight of creating the conditions for a genuinely transforming decision?)" ("Doctrinal Criticism: Some Questions", in Coakley, S. & Paulin, D.A., (Eds.), *The Making and Remaking of Christian Doctrine*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), p254).

> "The crucified Christ no longer has any place in the context of questions about practical action, the consciousness of God, personal identity or the certainty of faith".[45]

In this respect Moltmann can speak of 'the transcendence of the crucified Christ'.[46] He cannot be comprehended within the narrowness of the perspective of anthropological christology.

Anthropological christology's narrowness of focus also leads to a restricted soteriology. The plane of human existence, defined over against the natural world, functions as a trammel. In its most restricted form, reduction to individual existence leaves it unable to address the very external, societal conditions which are, in part at least, responsible for the alienation of self on which it concentrates. It thus falls into the trap of idealism.[47] Even in its Ritschlian conceptions of kingdom, upon which Moltmann does not comment[48], it has nothing to say to the crisis which has been provoked in the ecological relations between humanity and the world which sustains its life. Worse, its adopted method of defining humanity over against the world has actually contributed to this crisis.[49]

If cosmological christology, as we saw, was guilty of a transposition of eschatology into eternity, then anthropological christology might, in broad terms, be thought of as a transposition of eschatology into time. For the eschatological figure of Jesus is substituted one whose significance can be fully comprehended within the temporal plane. That which he

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45. CG 97f.

46. CG 98.

47. WJC 63. Here, I suggest, we might think of the contrast between the actions of Bultmann and Bonhoeffer in response to the rise of the Third Reich. Bultmann's quietism contrasts strongly with Bonhoeffer's activism. I do not suggest that differences in theology offer an exhaustive explanation of this observation. I do however think it highly significant that for Bonhoeffer christology demanded that God could never be conceived apart from the world (see *Ethics*, (London: SCM, 1955), pp. 161-178).

48. It is interesting that Albrecht Ritschl appears to function for Moltmann simply as a negative exemplar of the ethical reduction of the eschatological conception of kingdom (TH 38; CG 284; WJC 362). The positive potential of his interest in the structure of the human society as a the source for a Christian critique of contemporary societal reality is not utilised or mentioned. And this despite the fact that it might easily have resonated with Moltmann's own intention especially, for example, in chapter V of *Theology of Hope*.

49. In Moltmann's writing, christology's ecological implications first receive sustained analysis in *The Way of Jesus Christ* (1989).

promises can be expected of time's continuous unfolding. To draw this typological conclusion is to predict how Moltmann will wish to defend Jesus' universal significance. In a mediating fashion he will utilise the eschatological horizon of promise. The eschatological perspective will become the route to universal significance.

The establishment of Jesus' universal significance may certainly appear to create a peculiar difficulty for theology which elects to accord methodological priority to the contingent details of Jesus' existence. In actuality, however, no such difficulty is encountered. The reader will recall that the biblical presentation of Jesus' significance is established through his *interaction* with the horizon of remembered expectation. By the process of promise-development this horizon stretches all the way to the eschatological new creation. If Jesus comes to meaning within this universally encompassing horizon, his universal significance must follow. Consequently, the New Testament's understanding of Jesus not only makes possible but actually demands that a christology grounded in its narratives reaches the desired universal plane. Palimpsest techniques, therefore, are not required to achieve this goal.

3. *Jesus' universal significance and particular relevance: the eschatological perspective*

What makes Moltmann's presentation of cosmological and anthropological christology of special interest for our purposes is the opportunity they provide for the clarification of thought. Their usefulness stems from their inability, as they presently stand, either to reach the universal plane or to be considered successful accounts of particular relevance. An analysis of their failure in these respects will lead, it is hoped, to a more profound understanding of the relationship between Jesus' universal significance and particular relevance. Because Moltmann does not make this distinction, he does not possess the conceptual tools to perceive the different, though interrelated reasons for their inadequacy in respect of each count. Consequently, he fails, I suggest, to appreciate the full complexity of the christological task. We shall, therefore, in describing and utilising Moltmann's work attempt to move beyond him. The resulting account of the interrelationship between significance and relevance will also

enable us to return to the questions raised by postmodern sensibilities which we described at the outset of this chapter.

Though cosmological and anthropological christologies aim to afford a verification of Jesus' universal significance, they are, in fact, (unsuccessful) construals of Jesus' particular relevance for specific contexts. Why, then, do they not succeed in reaching the universal plane? A difference exists, I suggest, between a universally applicable observation of a given totality and that totality itself. This is because a given single totality may contain a number of features which are universally present throughout it. Consider the example of a plant. As an organic life-form carbon atoms are universally present within its structure. But a plant is much more than its chemical composition. It also, for example, possesses colour and shape and is associated with particular ecological niches. In this way a knowledge of carbon chemistry, while related to a universally applicable feature of plants, could not be said to be universally significant for a total account of their being. In a parallel way despite the fact that cosmological and anthropological christology allege a universal claim, they only address, at best, a universally applicable facet of reality, rather than reality as such. They are accounts of particular relevance because they are constructed within the particular horizons which their respective questions constitute; horizons which do not encompass the totality of reality. They are attempts to answer the respective questions: 'who is Jesus for finite being threatened by transience?';[50] 'who is Jesus for humanity confused as to its own authentic identity?' The specificity of their focus, should doubt remain, is also revealed by they way in which their approaches have become historically antiquated and so in need of reformulation. This is a point which Moltmann himself makes forceably. He speaks of fundamental alterations in the christological paradigm which are occasioned by changes in the soteriological questions of men

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50. At first sight this question might appear to deal with the reality as such. In fact, it only deals with a universally applicable feature of reality; its transience. Salvation must clearly include the overcoming of transience, but it must go beyond the mere eternalisation or stabilisation of experienced reality. More is required than the recapitulation of the past. Reality must also undergo a qualitative transformation of its positive content. This will include such areas as relationships, purposes and feelings. It must address the question posed by frustrated and stunted lives (cf. CofG 116-118). For more detail see chapter 6.

and women.[51] He can thus employ the chapter heading 'Trends and Transmutations in Christology' in *The Way of Jesus Christ*.[52] Moltmann also alerts us to the critical factor which stands behind this observation. It is the historical conditioning of our knowledge and comprehension which calls in question the whole strategy of attempting to define Jesus' universal significance in relation to experienced 'problems'. For not only will the definition of perceived problems prove to be ephemeral, but so will their corresponding solutions.[53]

Moltmann's general objection to cosmological and anthropological christology operates, however, on different grounds. We might summarise it as follows: these options transgress his fundamental methodological principle. In *Theology of Hope* he avers that they both elect to move from that which is generally held, to the discovery of the true expression of the general in the particular.[54] Be it the general idea of God in Greek metaphysics, or the general conception of humanity formed in the wake of 'the turn to the subject', Jesus' particularity is held to provide their fullest expression. The corrective he proposes is a path to theological knowledge which moves in the reverse direction. In Christ a general truth does not become particular,

> "but a concrete, unique, historic event of the crucifying and raising of Jesus by Yahweh, the God of promise who creates being out of nothing, becomes general through the universal eschatological horizon it anticipates".[55]

We have consistently argued, in clarification of Moltmann's position, that this path from the particular details of Jesus' history to the universal eschatological horizon is *already* actualised in the biblical texts. Accordingly it is necessary to translate his assertion. Theology's task is to take this already initiated progression from the particular to the universal as normative. In this

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51. WJC 39.

52. Chapter II.

53. TasE 9.

54. TH 140f.

55. TH 142; cf. 194.

way the move which Moltmann is declaring illicit would be the attempt to comprehend the biblical account of Jesus' universal significance within the framework of a competing, alternatively derived, universal perspective. In line with our observations above, we can now formulate more precisely why such an attempt must fail. As we saw, the alleged universal frames of reference employed by cosmological and anthropological christology are in fact constructed in the interest of a particular relevance. They are, therefore, as purported dimensions of *universal applicability* simply unable to contain what they seek to possess. Jesus' significance, as biblically presented, can be encompassed by nothing less expansive than the prospect of the new creation.

> "Christianity...points forward to the new age and the new creation, in which the crucified Christ can no longer be a scandal and a foolishness, because he has become the basis of the proclamation 'I make all things new' (Rev. 21:5)".[56]

Clearly, no account based on one aspect of creation, albeit universally present, can hope to contain the prospect of the new creation of all reality. Rather, in their attempt at the containment of this new totality, cosmological and anthropological christology are broken apart. In the light of the hermeneutic tools that we constructed in the previous chapter we may say, therefore, that the Christ-event appears uncontainable. That is, it cannot be contained, or encompassed, by any horizon constructed on the basis of present reality.

It is this very uncontainability of the Christ-event, resulting from its transcendence over all that yet exists, which guarantees that it has a significance of a scope which can discover no rival. Such eschatological significance can never be outrun by the immanent process of history.[57] It therefore holds good from the vantage point of any and every location within the process of history. Jesus' universal significance is thus established at the 'boundary' between present reality, in all its temporal extension, and its eschatological new creation.

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56. CG 107.

57. Cf. TH 88.

Yet, precisely by defining universal significance in this way, we appear to run up against a substantial difficulty. For how can such a transcendent significance hold particular relevance for locations *within* present existence? From the perspective of the question of relevance the very uncontainability which seems so advantageous, now appears to be a liability. For if relevance demands the perception of significance within a limited horizon, and the anticipated goal of the Christ-event can admit of no such limitation,[58] the result is an unhelpful incompatibility between the twin objectives of a christology with both universal significance *and* particular relevance. We may put the matter thus: to acclaim Jesus' significance in this way is to make him appear precisely as that which is *not yet relevant* to present reality.[59] This 'not yet' relation exists because reality has yet to catch up with him through its own transformation. Only then will he be of direct consequence for it.

We can illustrate the nature of this problem by reference to the way Moltmann attempts, in his early theology, to outline an account of the relevance of Jesus' universal significance for the very questions which led to the christological approaches he rejects.

> "The question of the divinity of God, the question of the worldliness of the world and the question of the human nature of man are not...rendered irrelevant, but in the light of the Easter appearances they are set within a peculiar horizon, both in regard of *the way they are asked* and also in regard of the point at which an answer is sought...they are no longer answered on the basis of experience of the world, of man's experience of himself, or of a concept of God, but on the basis of the event of the resurrection and within the eschatological horizon of this event."[60]

We may agree with Moltmann that these questions must be open to receiving answers which cannot be wholly contained within the presuppositions of their origination. If this were not the

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58. Cf. D. Bonhoeffer's insistence that Christ cannot be contained within a classification constructed on the basis of the existing order of the world: "What happens if a counter-logos appears which denies the classification?...What if the old order of the first logos be proclaimed as broken up, superseded and in its place a new world already begun? When the human logos is addressed like that, what answer can it give?" (*Christology*, (London: Collins Fount, 1978), p.29.

59. Cf. RRF 51.

60. TH 192, emphasis mine.

case, it would be impossible to discover anything one did not already tacitly know.[61] Where I feel constrained to disagree, however, is with the suggestion that the questions themselves must undergo alteration by being conformed to those which are already contained within the perspective of biblical revelation.[62] The suspicion must be that here revelation is acting in a totalitarian way; even dictating which questions may or may not be asked of itself.[63] We are put in mind of a skilled politician's manipulation of his or her interviewer with all the accompanying frustration! On this point at least, Pannenberg's criticism that Moltmann's understanding of revelation as promise functions in a parallel, and equally authoritarian fashion, to the 'Word of God' in Barth's dialectical theology, has some weight.[64] Over against this position, we have defined relevance as the construction of significance within a limited and particular horizon. Such a horizon is constituted by the question which emerges from a specific context. Consequently, it is this question which enables biblical revelation, and hence the christological account it contains, to make *contact* with the issue of concern. In other words it is the question which sets the parameters of relevance for any answer it may receive.[65] By dictating in advance which questions are legitimate, therefore, Moltmann's approach is in

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61. This, however, is precisely what the epistemology of Platonism does assert. If *similis a simili cognoscitur*, as Moltmann himself comments, knowledge could only be "a matter of *anamnesis* within a closed circle." (CG 26). However, as the progression of scientific knowledge demonstrates, it is possible to ask a question on the basis of present knowledge which leads to an answer which breaks up much which was assured before. The emergence of the model of plate tectonics in Geology affords a relatively recent example; the emergence of quantum physics another.

62. Compare this approach with TH 95 where, in confronting the question of the conception of revelation contained within the Old Testament, Moltmann refuses to allow the form of this question to be dictated either by assumptions of human need or assumptions concerning the nature of God as Absolute. This, however, is entirely legitimate. The concern at this point is to uncover the Old Testament conception *on its own terms*. It is not yet the attempt to relate this to the problem of revelation perceived within a specific context. Bauckham (*Moltmann*, p.25), however, unfortunately conjoins this text with the one we are examining.

63. This was Bonhoeffer's frustration with what he termed K. Barth's 'positivism of revelation'(*Letters and Papers from Prison*, (London: SCM, 1971), 8.6.1944, p.328).

64. W. Pannenberg, *Grundfragen systematischer Theologie*, 1967, p.5 n.2. See CG p.197 note 21 where Moltmann vigorously refutes the charge. The English translation of Pannenberg's *Basic Questions in Theology* Vol I, (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971) does not, however, appear to contain this remark.

65. As Moltmann himself admits in relation to theology, *though not in relation to the biblical text*: "The questions the traditional doctrine of the resurrection tried to answer can no longer be our questions" (RRF 42). Why? Not because the questions are wrong, but because they have lost their open character. "They have dried up like fish in a drained pond" (RRF 43).

danger of ignoring the particular perception of plight out of which these questions emerged.[66]

Yet in establishing this weakness, we only reach a restatement of our apparent impasse. This is because, to be fair to Moltmann, we must note that in his problematic assertion of the autonomy of revelation, he is simply being true to the implications of the uncontainability of Jesus' universal significance. It is this which creates the fundamental problem. It was liberation theologians such as Gustavo Gutiérrez who first alighted upon this problem of the uncompromising transcendence of the eschatological future in *Theology of Hope*. He, following R. Alves, labelled it docetic: the future transcends but does not become involved in history.[67]

Deepening our dilemma is the recognition that Moltmann is also being true to a fundamental principle which we established in the previous chapter. In our examination of the hermeneutic of promise-development we drew the conclusion that, in relation to the discontinuity occasioned by an experience rupture, continuity can only be established from the *novum* backwards. In this way, we concluded, the *novum* exercises a determinative power, controlling the manner in which the past is taken up into itself. Consequently, if Jesus' universal significance is established on the 'boundary' between the *novum* of the new creation (which he anticipates) and present reality (which is to be transformed), the autonomy of Jesus over any question put to him on the basis of an existing context is hardly surprising.

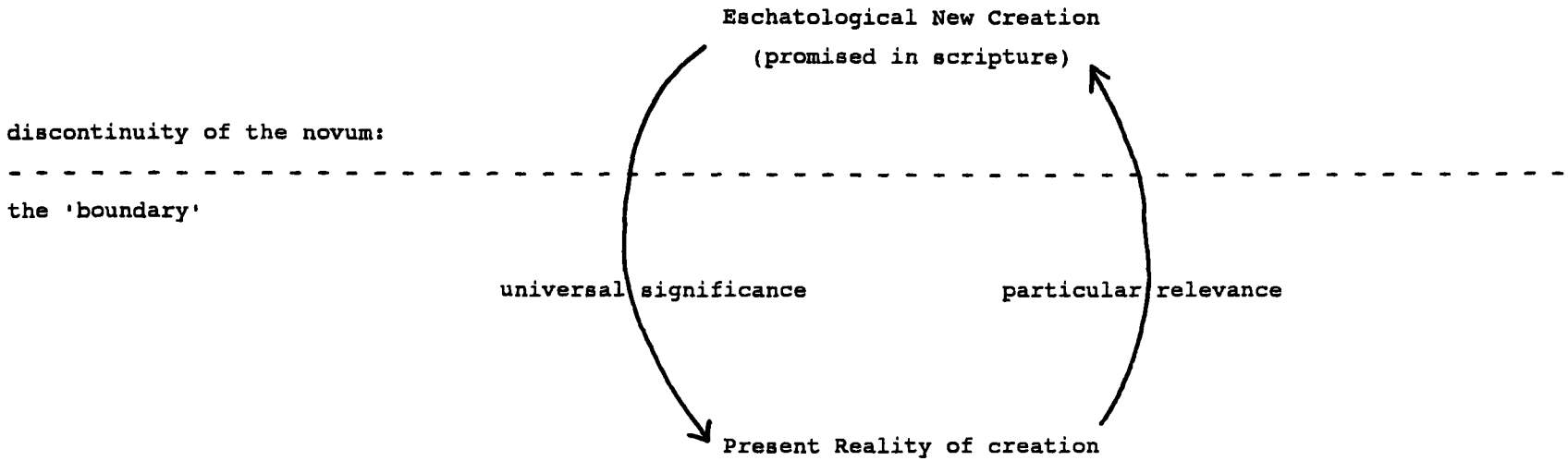
Resolution of this impasse lies, I suggest, in perceiving the relationship between universal

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66. A. Torrance faces just the same danger when he argues: "although there is no such thing as pure, contextless theology and, granted that there will invariably be a hermeneutical circularity in the dialogue between our contexts and Christology, the theological order or pressure of interpretation and revision should be from *Christ* to our context rather than from our *context* to Christ. Otherwise, our interpretation of Christ to easily becomes a projection of a prior, unconditioned analysis and agenda" (*Christ and Context*, p.194). While agreeing with Torrance's basic thrust, what I miss is an attempt to discern what necessary and legitimate form a move from context to Christ might take within this framework. He appears simply to relegate it to the level of an inescapable negative. I wish to argue, however, that an account of Jesus' relevance depends upon just this movement.

67. *A Theology of Liberation*, p.124.

significance and particular relevance in a particular way. As I have defined them, they may be conceived as a respective pair of complementary hermeneutic movements. Each movement may be understood as a semi-circular limb of one complete hermeneutic cycle. Consider the following diagram (*figure 6*).



Universal significance may be conceived to establish itself in the semi-circular movement from the hoped-for new creation of all things towards the present reality of creation which it transcends. It is, as we have established, a movement across the *novum* backwards from the future of creation to its present form. We might characterise this, therefore, as a movement from the biblical text which speaks of new creation in the form of eschatological promise, to any and every present context. Relevance, in a complementary fashion may be conceived as a semi-circular movement in the opposite direction. It begins with questions which arise out of present experience, and in the light of these moves to consider the biblical account of Jesus' eschatological (and so universal) significance. In broad terms, therefore, relevance might be understood as a hermeneutic movement from a particular context to the biblical text of eschatological promise.

Thinking in these terms illuminates sharply why an account of the relevance of such eschatological (universal) significance proves so problematic. Its hermeneutic movement demands crossing the discontinuity occasioned by the *novum* of new creation in a forward direction. But it is in precisely this direction, from present reality towards the eschatological new creation, that the discontinuity is defined as such. Accordingly, how can a hermeneutic

movement be defined in this direction when it runs up against this boundary? And if there is no way of contacting the eschatological future, how can we define its particular relevance?

If the Christ-event of Jesus' cross and resurrection constituted only the anticipation of the goal of the eschatological new creation, this difficulty would remain insuperable. But in fact, the Christ-event constitutes not only the anticipation of this outcome, it is also the means by which this transformation is to be attained. Jesus, as Moltmann states, is not only the promise of the eschatological future, he is also its basis.[68]

The peculiarity of the conception 'transformation' is that it may function as a description both of a goal, and of the process by which a goal is realised.[69] To describe the meaning of the Christ-event simply as transformational, is thus unhelpfully to conceal these two separable meanings. A process of transformation is distinguished from a process of mere replacement in this: to succeed it must connect with the original form not only the final state of that which it effects. If the process of new creation is essentially one of transformation, it must, therefore, be related both to reality as it now is, and as it will be. Consequently, if it is through participation in the Christ-event of death and resurrection that reality's transformation is to be effected,[70] the Christ-event must overlap the discontinuity occasioned by new creation and so contact both reality as it now is and reality as it will be. This suggests that some component of the Christ-event must, in principle, have become comprehensible within the interpretive horizons generated by present reality. And this is precisely what is required if a construction of Jesus' particular relevance is to prove possible. It supplies the missing piece of the hermeneutic jigsaw. And the component of the Christ-event which may supremely be comprehended within the horizon of present reality is the cross.

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68. CG 262-266.

69. This observation finds resonance with the relationship between what Moltmann terms 'tendency' and 'latency'. This is examined in the following chapter.

70. The coordination of being 'in Christ' with new creation at 2 Corinthians 5:17 is highly suggestive of just such a conclusion. Since for Paul, to be in Christ, means at least this: to be a participant in his death and resurrection (see, for example, Romans 6:3-11).

It is no coincidence, I would argue, that in *The Crucified God*, where a concern for Christianity's relevance to the problems and aspirations of society forms the *starting point* for Moltmann's theological aspirations,[71] the primary focus moves from the resurrection of the crucified Jesus to the cross of the risen Christ. A key argument of this volume[72] concerns the very element of the process of the world's promised transformation which we have highlighted as necessary for an account of relevance. It is that the eschatological future, proleptically realised in the Jesus who is raised into the glory of God, is *mediated* to present reality by means of his passion and death.[73] This soteriological connection is effected because the cross occasions Jesus' entry into, and solidarity with, the world's godlessness, godforsakenness and transitoriness.[74] The cross of the risen Christ may thus be conceived as the deepest point of contact of the eschatological future with present reality.

> "Through his suffering and death, the risen Christ brings righteousness and life to the unrighteous and the dying. Thus the cross of Christ *modifies* the resurrection of Christ under the conditions of the suffering of the world so that it changes from being a purely future event to being an event of liberating love."[75]

For the purposes of our argument it is important to appreciate the parallel structure which comes to pertain in Moltmann's thought between the *transcendent significance* accorded to Jesus, by reason of his prolepsis of the new creation, and the *ever-present immanence* of Jesus

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71. CG 7-31. This theme is, of course, already present in *Theology of Hope*, but here as the conclusion. Interestingly, his treatment of the church's relation to the niches which society creates for it (chapter V) follows as a consequence of the church's *uncontainability* within the existing structures of the present. Why? Because the church is to be a locus of anticipation of the transformative future. The life and essence of the Christian church is to be determined "by the open foreland of its hopes for the world" (TH 326).

72. The outline of this argument may also be found in the earlier essays TasE and RRF chapter III. It will be subjected to close scrutiny in the following chapter.

73. CG 178-187. In chapter 4.2 this whole notion receives extended attention. For our present purposes we must here assume what we shall later justify in detail.

74. It is because D.J. Schuurman fails to take serious account of this key development in Moltmann's theology that he can only recognise the problem which the transcendence of Christ's future makes for knowledge of the eschaton. He thus over-emphasises the contradiction in Moltmann's theology between the noetic unavailability of the eschaton (the future of Jesus Christ) and the requirement of its noetic availability to if it is to call the present into question in such a way as to guide ethical reflection (*Creation, Eschaton, and Ethics*, (New York: Peter Lang, 1991) pp.86-92.

75. CG 185, my emphasis. Cf., "This implies for christology that Jesus' resurrection is by no means only an arrow pointing to the hitherto unknown future of God and man, but that this future has become flesh in Jesus, the crucified, and thus has become involved in the present" (RRF 53).

within reality, effected supremely through the cross. This immanence suggests Jesus' integrative inclusiveness of the plight of every present context.[76] Jesus reaches both below[77] and beyond every present as if the envelope of his identity contains all that presently is and all that will come to be through him.[78] The crucified Jesus is, therefore, precisely the Jesus who can be understood within a horizon of interpretation generated on the basis of present existence. His perceived solidarity with us demands no less. And in this recognition lies the christological foundation for our desired, completing hermeneutic movement from present context to eschatological text.

Whereas the risen Christ, as the prolepsis of the new creation, possesses an *uncontainability* with respect to present reality, the crucified Jesus can be *contained* within its perspectives. Though, by reason of the relationship of identity between the risen and crucified Jesus this containment must be carefully qualified. The crucified Jesus can only be perceived within the horizons of present experience for the sake of present reality's transformation. The Christ-event, I suggest, presents us with a *dialectic of containability and uncontainability*. It is a dialectic which moves towards resolution in the transformation of reality which the Christ-event itself provokes. In making this suggestion I am applying, to the question of the hermeneutics of christology, a dialectic which stands at the heart of Moltmann's theology. The dialectic of containability and uncontainability equates to Moltmann's understanding of God's identification with that which is essentially *other*,[79] in the crucified Christ (without becoming

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76. See, for example, TH 168-172 (examined below); CG 178-187, 191-193; TKG 80-83; WJC 153-170, 172-181; SofL 130-138. In *The Way of Jesus Christ* by understanding Christ's sufferings in an apocalyptic context Moltmann affirms: "In 'the sufferings of Christ' the end-time sufferings of the whole world are anticipated and vicariously expressed" (WJC 155). Accordingly, he appears to understand them as inclusive of the sufferings of every present (see, for example, SofL 130f).

77. "The suffering, tormented and murdered Christ...becomes a victim among other victims. The forsaken Christ is the *most* beset of all the people who are beset, and who despair of God." (SofL 130, my emphasis).

78. Again, for further detail, see Part Two.

79. CG 24, 27f.

assimilated to it[80]), for the sake of *making it other*[81] through participation in Christ's transformative resurrection.[82] Our formulation effectively parallells and applies this insight. Jesus both enters into but cannot finally be contained by the horizon of any particular present. This is because his containment within our horizon ultimately serves the purpose of our entry into his future horizon by means of new creation. Jesus' ec-centric identity thus has a transforming effect.[83]

In the light of the foregoing discussion, we may now propose the following christological model. Whereas Jesus' universal significance is to be established on the boundary between present reality (in all its temporal extension) and its eschatological new creation, accounts of Jesus' particular relevance are to be constructed by tracing out a trajectory of transformation which leads from a particular context of the present towards this promised eschatological future. This completing hermeneutic movement forward across the discontinuity of new creation is rooted theologically in the mediation of that future to the present in the cross of Christ. This insight serves to deepen our earlier observation that the revelation of the future anticipated in Christ must make contact with reality on its own terms; an assertion which appeared so problematic. It does so by establishing that the process of creation's soteriological transformation is only effected by the *prior* contact of the promised future with reality on precisely *reality's own terms*. Therefore, if Jesus himself enters into the circumstances of the present for the sake of its transformation into congruence with his future, it will be permissible for us to construct a hermeneutic path which moves from present reality in the direction of the

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80. CG 28.

81. HP 36; FofC 11, 30.

82. For an excellent clarifying discussion of what is entailed in Moltmann's phrase 'revelation in the opposite' see Bauckham, *Moltmann*, pp.68-72. Here he utilises the material of his earlier paper, "Moltmann's Eschatology of the Cross", *Scottish Journal of Theology*, Vol.30/4 (1977), pp.305-308.

83. See chapter 4.1.

prospect held out in the Christ-event.[84]

Much has so far been made of the cross as the supreme moment of Jesus' containment within present reality. But what might be said, more broadly, of the incarnation? Is not the incarnation in its entirety ultimately a form of containment? An account of such containment need not take a crudely spatial form. It could be conceived relationally. In the human life of Jesus is *contained* and expressed the form (*gestalt*) of the divine life of the second person of the Trinity; the form of life which is creation's eschatological goal.[85] Consequently, if the incarnation concerns containment in the service of an eschatological goal, must not Jesus' historical mission, in addition to the cross, have much to contribute to the process of relevance-construction? It is an important criticism of Moltmann's early theology that the presence of both God and the eschatological future within the fabric of present reality is cripplingly restricted to the cross. As his work unfolds beyond *The Crucified God*, however, this deficiency is increasingly addressed. This is a motif to be explored in more detail in Part Two, but we might offer the following briefest of outlines for the sake of our present argument. *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* sees the beginning of a more sustained focus on the 'messianic mission of Jesus'[86] which comes to its deepest expression in *The Way of Jesus Christ*.[87] Again, the emergence of pneumatology from embryonic beginnings in his first trilogy, to become a major element of *God in Creation* and the sustaining theme of *The Spirit of Life* provides an important connection between God, the eschatological future and the whole emergent process of the universe.[88] Therefore, part of the reason for our concentration on the

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84. In general terms, therefore, we might expect that christologically conditioned accounts of the relevance of *Christian belief and praxis* will be characterised by the motif of solidarity with particular states of affairs aimed at the desirability of their alteration for Jesus' sake. This is certainly true of Moltmann's presentation (see, for example, TJ 49-54; FofC 53f). In developing the present argument we are, however, primarily concerned not so much with such accounts themselves as with their christological foundation.

85. For more information, please see chapters 4 and 5.

86. *The Church in the Power of the Spirit: A Contribution to Messianic Ecclesiology*, Tr. Kohl, M., (London: SCM, 1977), chapter III.2; henceforth, CPS.

87. WJC chapter III.

88. See, for example, GinC 98-103 and especially elaborations (a)-(d) on p.100.

cross thus far stems from a concern to offer an exegesis of the emergence of the conceptions Moltmann provides for addressing the issue of Jesus' universal significance and particular relevance. Later in the chapter we shall explore the consequences of the developments outlined above. But I would wish to defend the independent legitimacy of this route to construction of our argument. The cross is the most suitable point of entry into a discussion of containment because it may be conceived as the most profound point of the incarnation. How might this statement be substantiated?

In the cross Jesus' is contained within the horizon of present reality in a way that cannot be said of his historical mission. In Jesus' mission, precisely because of the prolepsis of the kingdom enacted through his own person in parable, miracle and fellowship with outcasts, the vector of his life cannot be completely resolved into the present structure of the world. If it could be so resolved there would hardly be any grounds for asserting the nearness of the kingdom brought about through his mission.[89] But in the cross, if we follow the Markan and Matthean accounts, not even his distinctive consciousness of God's presence distinguishes him from the world's experience. The cross is marked out as the moment of the supreme hiddenness of the kingdom in conformity with present reality in all its negativity. It might be objected that the cross does possess an extra-ordinary dimension in the distinctive and unique depth of Jesus' suffering. But such an assertion is only possible by means of an examination of the uniqueness of what has been *lost* between his prior life of messianic anticipation and the stark ordinariness of the cross. And it is precisely this loss of distinguishing difference which makes the cross the supreme moment of containment. But is the cross not also an act of God, and, therefore, does it not here possess a degree of radical distinction from the process of the world? Yet here again, the act of God in the cross is precisely God's containment within the world's experience and so within the world's categories. In the cross, as we shall argue at some length in Part Two, God becomes like us so that we might become like him.

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89. Cf. Mark 1:15.

That we are right to place the emphasis of Jesus' containment on the cross is confirmed by the observation which stands at the centre of W. H. Vanstone's remarkable book *The Stature of Waiting*.[90] In especially the synoptic gospels, the onset of the passion narrative signals a profound transition in the portrayal of Jesus. From an initiator of action he shifts to become the passive recipient of the actions of others. We might build on Vanstone's insight to suggest that Jesus is handed-over (*paradidomi*) not only to the world's actions, but thereby also to the world's categories of interpretation. We may constrain Jesus within the questions which arise from the present in the quest for his relevance to it because he has given himself to be so contained.

As we have already argued, however, the cross cannot simply be understood in isolation. Taken on its own Jesus' containment within the present would possess little meaning. Its significance only emerges in coordination with the uncontainability of the resurrection. Jesus' historical mission, I suggest, derives its importance from the way in which both these elements of containability and uncontainability already find expression. The undergirding presupposition of incarnation speaks of containment. The prolepsis of the kingdom speaks of that which goes beyond the present form of the world. Thus Jesus' historical mission may be seen as proleptically tracing out a trajectory of soteriological alteration from the present towards the kingdom. According to our definition then, it thus constitutes a trajectory of relevance. How exactly the Gospel narratives may be employed in the task of relevance-construction will be explored more fully in the next section.

Summary: Because Jesus' resurrection may be conceived as the proleptic realisation of the soteriological transformation of all reality, his universal significance for present reality is thereby established. Examination of the christological process by which this transformation is to be accomplished leads to a formulation of the general principles by which the particular relevance of this universal significance is to be conceived. The cross reveals and demonstrates Jesus' solidarity with the present in all its negativity. It implies that transformation is to take

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90. London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1982. See especially pp. 1-33.

place in favour of the present *as it really is* in all its godlessness, godforsakenness and transience. Construction of Jesus' particular relevance, therefore, will take the form of a trajectory of soteriological alteration linking the contexts of present reality with the hoped-for new creation. They will be accounts which seek to link Jesus' containability and uncontainability in descriptions of the liberating change his identity will accomplish. Jesus' universal significance remains the *conditio sine qua non* of his unlimited relevance to present reality. But to this we must now add another condition. Jesus' universal significance only serves the interest of present existence through his *enmeshment* with it.

4. *A model for relevance construction*

My purpose in this section will be to construct a model by which the particular relevance of Jesus for a given set of circumstances may be established. Moltmann's work does not itself explicitly contain such a hermeneutic model. But his theology does contain many of the concepts necessary to its construction. Our purpose will thus be twofold: first to clarify Moltmann's own thought; and secondly to suggest new ways in which his ideas may be put together. The end result will enable us to face up to the postmodern sensibilities described at the outset of this chapter.

We have seen that cosmological and anthropological christology cannot succeed as interpretations of universal significance. But why do they also fail as accounts of soteriological relevance to specific contexts of misery? Their weakness here, contrary to the implication of *Theology of Hope*, has nothing to do with their initial movement of argument from the general to the particular. As we have suggested, questions of relevance must, by definition, be context specific. Consequently, they can only approach the biblical portrayal of the particularity of Jesus' person and history from the direction of the concrete circumstances of the present which prompts such investigation. But it is not, simplistically, merely the direction of first movement which is methodologically decisive here. Rather it is the *nature of*

the interaction which is envisaged between, on the one hand, the interpretive horizon afforded by the contextually determined question, and, on the other, the contingent specifics of the biblical narrative. For these two rejected christological approaches fail as accounts of relevance because, as we saw, in perceiving Christ only within the framework of their initial presuppositions they compromise his distinctive identity.[91] The Jesus they portray is but a stylised caricature of his biblical presentation. He does not, therefore, contact *as he is*[92] with the context at issue. They constitute not 'actualisations' of Christ's meaning for a particular plight, but its 'accommodation' to the presuppositions which determine that plight's perception.

These terms, 'actualisation' and 'accommodation', are borrowed from the work of Helmut Thielicke.[93] For Thielicke 'accommodation' takes place when the biblical word of revelation is distorted into congruity with the prevailing self-understanding of the subject and his or her culture. In this way it is rendered safe and harmless; it can no longer disturb the status quo. 'Actualisation', by contrast, is the re-presentation of the biblical word of revelation, in all its otherness and distinctiveness, for a particular context. It thus preserves the creative ability of revelation to challenge and question its recipients. 'Actualisation', it should be noted, is far from a form of naive biblicism. Its presupposition of re-presentation fully acknowledges the historical, cultural and conceptual separation which exists between the biblical text and its interpreters. If our concern is to construct an account of the particular relevance of *Jesus' biblical presentation*, rather than some substitute account, I suggest that any model of relevance-construction will need to aim at just such 'actualisation'.

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91. Notice than even in *The Crucified God* Moltmann is only concerned with one side of our hermeneutic cycle. "If the question of Christ, whatever form it takes, is to do justice to Jesus himself, its relationship to him must not be one of questioning, but of being questioned; must not be one of demanding an answer but of giving an answer. It cannot simply manifest him as its object, but must be aware of its object as a subject. Otherwise it would never be in contact with Jesus himself, but only with that in him which was originally implicit in the question." (CG 103). To this we must add the need for a hermeneutic process of *mutual modification* between question and biblical presentation.

92. It is recognised, of course, that in the light of Jesus' ec-centric identity the formulation 'as he is' is too static. It is used at this point for the sake of clarity of argument.

93. *The Evangelical Faith*, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1978). See especially Vol. I, pp.26f.

Another way to approach this consideration would be in terms of the 'identity-involvement dilemma'.[94] This becomes a major component of Moltmann's theology from *The Crucified God* onwards. Originally its primary focus is on Christian praxis.[95] But in *The Way of Jesus Christ* it is explicitly developed through linkage with christology as such.[96] The dialectic of identity and involvement constitutes a dilemma because, if improperly resolved, it carries with it the twin dangers of either assimilation or ghettoisation.[97] The danger of ghettoisation would accord closely with the problem examined above of an isolated universal significance, insulated from that which it transcends. It might preserve its identity as Christian, but is of little or no relevance. The danger of assimilation corresponds to the problem of 'accommodation' occasioned by cosmological and anthropological christology. Here identity is sacrificed for the sake of desired relevance. Resolution of this dilemma lies, I suggests, in a *creative interaction* between the text which codifies Jesus' universal significance and the various contexts of the present. Only so can a compromise of either distinctive identity or contextual relevance be averted. The rules of engagement for this essential interaction have already been constructed. They are provided by the hermeneutic process of mutual modification between a 'specific' and a horizon of interpretation which we developed in the previous chapter. Accordingly, an account of relevance may be developed by allowing the compound-specific of the biblical presentation of Jesus' eschatological significance to be viewed within the horizon of the contextual perspective for which his relevance is sought. This axiomatic principle will now be expanded in more detail.

On the basis of the universal significance of Jesus that we have already established we shall now set out a general model for the construction of christological relevance in the form of a number of key stages. Before we do so, let us remind ourselves of our basic principle. Jesus'

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94. CG 7.

95. CG chapter I.

96. WJC 38-46; see p.347 n. 1.

97. CG 25-28.

particular relevance will take the form of a trajectory of soteriological alteration linking the contexts of present reality with the hoped-for new creation. An account of his relevance will, therefore, seek to link Jesus' containability and uncontainability in descriptions of the liberating change his identity will accomplish.

(1) *Begin from the present context*: Because relevance is by definition context-specific, the only possible starting point for such construction must lie within the concrete conditions of the present which occasion the question. Concern for the present comes first, interrogation of the biblical narrative of Jesus second.[98] In suggesting that this question then functions as the interpretive horizon for the biblical presentation of Jesus' transformative significance, we may draw upon the notions of constraint and forward-openness discerned in the previous chapter. Relevance-construction is inseparably rooted in an application of both conceptions. It is dependent on an inherent forward-openness of each locus of creation for its consummatory transformation in the new creation. Only so could a *transformative* significance prove genuinely relevant. It also relies upon the ability of a predetermined perspective of the question of Jesus' relevance, acting as horizon of interpretation, to constrain the range of possible meanings Jesus possesses.

Clearly such a pre-determined perspective will be selective. It will enhance the 'visibility' of certain facets of Jesus' person and history over others. In fact, some elements of the biblical narrative will fail to be illuminated by it at all. Such differential highlighting possesses a creative potential. It can facilitate the discovery, or rediscovery, of particular facets which may long have been ignored, or suppressed, as inconsequential. A significant example is afforded by the work of Juan Segundo.[99] He defines the hermeneutic circle as being,

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98. Gustavo Gutiérrez has famously asserted, "Theology is reflection, a critical attitude. Theology *follows*; it is the second step. What Hegel used to say about philosophy can also be applied to theology: it rises only at sundown" (*A Theology of Liberation*, (London: SCM, 1974), p.11.). This suggests that liberation theology is best understood as a theology of particular relevance. However, what Gutiérrez fails to demonstrate explicitly is that this methodological priority of context is itself dependent upon *prior* theological convictions. By contrast the reader will be aware that our primary task was to demonstrate the universal significance of Jesus which undergirds attempts at the construction of his relevance.

99. *The Liberation of Theology*, (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1976).

> "the change in our interpretation of the Bible which is dictated by the continuing changes in our present-day reality, both individual and societal".[100]

In the context of Latin America in which political structures form a key component of his experience, Segundo is led to question the veracity of the customary portrayal of Jesus as an apolitical figure. Orthodox exegesis has defended its position on the basis of Jesus' failure to denounce the Roman authorities or identify whole-heartedly with the Zealot movement. But, in a closer examination of the biblical texts driven by Segundo's 'suspicion', he finds Jesus' political activity disclosed in another relationship often misinterpreted as purely religious. Jesus' opposition to the religious authority of the Sadducees and Pharisees must, he suggests, be interpreted in political terms. It was they who, in conjunction with the Roman authorities, principally determined the effective socio-political structure of Israel. As Segundo observes,

> "In real life this authority was political, and Jesus really did tear it apart".[101]

From Moltmann's own work, an important example of enhanced visibility is found in *The Way of Jesus Christ*. It concerns the effect of the general climate of ecological concern. For against the horizon of "the ecological conditions of history in nature" new prominence is given to "the *bodily* character of the Christ who died and rose again".[102] In this way an element of the biblical narrative which had seemed inconsequential, or worse mythological, is enabled to come to new prominence.

(2) *Allow the biblical text its questioning power*: Viewing the biblical presentation of Jesus within a deliberately selective perspective may have a creative potential, but it also carries the risk of distortion to the point of caricature. This danger may be lessened if the hermeneutic

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100. *Liberation*, p.8.

101. *Liberation*, p.95, n. 5. The question of whether the Gospels, in their portrayal of Jesus' relationship to these religious groups, have not projected the polemical concerns of a later time onto their presentation, does not substantively alter the main point at issue.

102. WJC 247; my emphasis.

process encouraged is one of mutual modification between horizon and specific. In this way presuppositions rooted in the origination of the question[103] 'What does Jesus mean for X?', may themselves be subjected to questioning. 'Misfit' between the horizon applied and the biblical narrative examined would therefore be resolved in favour of the determinative power of Jesus' concrete specifics. If this could be successfully achieved, accounts of relevance would preserve their identity as representations of *Christ's* salvation. This point may be illustrated by returning to the question underlying cosmological christology: who is Jesus for transient reality? To ask this question within the cosmological perspective from which it arises risks the danger, actualised in part by patristic christology, of 'smuggling' in an answer which has already been assumed. In this case it would be an assumed conception of God's nature as the inverse of earthly experience. But to the extent that it is impossible to formulate any question without presuppositions, this method of approach, contrary to Moltmann's account, is not an illegitimate point of entry. However, the hermeneutic process is as yet incomplete. Its successful advancement requires that the specifics of Jesus' narrative call in question, and thus modify, the assumptions of the horizon within which it is being viewed. This is in fact just what Moltmann does do in his critique of cosmological christology. He allows the specifics of Jesus' narrative to call in question its assumed conception of the immutable and impassible God. It also leads him to an account of Jesus' soteriological relevance for transient reality rooted in the details brought to prominence within the horizon of this question of the transience of reality. Here, the resurrection of the one who died in solidarity with all transient reality finds particular pertinence. Moltmann's account, therefore, is one that, rather than excluding the eschatological perspective of God's promised future, operates firmly within this distinctive perspective. Another example of the process of mutual modification envisaged is provided by the prologue of John's Gospel. The startling and unexpected statement that 'the Word became flesh' (John 1:14) cannot be fully accounted for within the presuppositions of its possible

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103. This must include any ideological interest served by the question. That is, it must always be asked in *whose interest* is an answer sought.

sources.[104] Rather the ideation *Logos*, acting as an interpretive horizon of Jesus' identity, has undergone a significant redefinition through coordination with Jesus' history. In its Johannine usage it now conveys something uniquely Christian, yet in a way which resonates with the sensibilities of those for whom the term would already have been familiar.

Selective highlighting of the biblical narrative, which works in the interest of relevance, is thus coordinated with the hermeneutic process of mutual modification initiated by the biblical text which serves to preserve Jesus' identity. Yet if this identity is to be successfully maintained, this mutual relation will need to extend beyond the specifically highlighted material. The resulting portrayals of Jesus' relevance will also need to establish their legitimacy in relation to the full range of Jesus' biblical presentation. The test in this instance can only be one of broad compatibility. Yet, any tensions discerned here should reinitiate the process of mutual modification between the assumptions contained in the question and the narrative of Christ.

(3) *Recognise the openness to the future of the biblical text*: We have already signalled that Jesus' historical mission has an important contribution to make to accounts of his soteriological relevance. But what, in more detail, is the value for today of the time-conditioned accounts offered by the Gospels? Notice first, that their time-conditioned character may be seen as the corollary of the necessary element of containment required of accounts of relevance. Without Jesus' enmeshment in the past, he could have had no relevance to it. But it is their element of uncontainability which renders them of use in respect of contemporary questions. What these narratives possess, which enables them to transcend the bounds of their time-conditioned nature, is a set of trajectories of soteriological alteration which run from the circumstances of their present towards the eschatological future. They record the enacted prolepsis of the kingdom. But the Gospels, and the NT writings more generally, are more than just a suite of accounts of Jesus' particular relevance constructed in relation to specific questions, problems

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104. The range of possible sources is generally regarded to include: the Septuagint; Old Testament Wisdom Literature; Aramaic Targums; an alleged pre-Christian Myth (Bultmann); and the attempts at synthesis between Jewish monotheism and Platonic and Stoic philosophy offered by Philo of Alexandria.

and communities of the past. They are more than a set of worked examples. By virtue of their eschatological orientation their original recipients and their present interpreters are rendered contemporaries. Both they and we hope for the same kingdom of God. The NT writings therefore still possess a living value. They are more than merely of historical interest because we too look expectantly toward the same transcendent future of transformation with which they were concerned. This openness of scripture to the future is also recognises by Moltmann who grounds it in the working of the Spirit.[105] Why Moltmann opts for this pneumatological perspective will become clear in Part Two.

(4) *Make use of the informed imagination*: It would be very misleading, however, to suggest that relevant christological construction can be fully accomplished simply by a careful and, as far as possible, balanced selection of the biblical presentation. The biblical narratives as finite can only proffer certain, general principles of transformation (along the line of the trajectory of the Christ-event). To ask who Jesus Christ is for a very particular set of circumstances will, therefore, inevitably require the use of the informed imagination of the interpreter. Moltmann too appears to have room for the imagination.

> "Theology always includes the imagination, fantasy for God and his kingdom... Eschatologically orientated theology is dependent on a messianic imagination of the future, and sets this imagination free."[106]

Moltmann, however, only leaves this remark as a tantalising suggestion. I wish to take it up and develop it further.[107]

The imagination is not only required to bridge the 'gap' between general principle and concrete

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105. HTG 67.

106. GinC 4, 65. Cf. HP vii.

107. A case could be made for the more general proposal that the imagination has an inescapable role in *any* theological construction. Creation exists because God does not desire to be everything. Rather God holds the boundaries of the possible and waits on reality, in part at least, to shape itself. Is there a parallel here in respect of theological knowledge? Is the imagination called upon to complement revelation? Theological knowledge would then not be about reiterating dictates. Rather, the knower, as partner in the process, would be required to have an active role. Imagination could in this way be perceived as a way of encountering the Other while preserving the distinction between oneself and the Other.

actuality. It also has an additional, and perhaps more fundamental role. As we observed the attempt to move 'forwards' across the discontinuity occasioned by the *novum* of the new creation is inevitably difficult to delineate. This is precisely because the discontinuity is defined in relation to present existence. Consequently, it will always be easier to construe the transformation of reality in terms of the overcoming of present negatives rather than in consummation of present positives. Yet both elements would seem to be demanded if Christ is to be conceived as the consummator of existence. To attempt to spell out what it might mean to describe Jesus as, for example, the consummator of music's beauty will always be inherently more problematic than asserting Jesus' relevance in terms of the eradication of some present misery. The reason for this is simply explained. That which is to be brought to consummation achieves fulfilment through participation in the transformation of reality. Consequently, its future nature cannot be contained within a horizon generated on the basis of present experience. The best that can be achieved is the play of the *informed* imagination. By contrast, the elimination of that which is judged to have no share in the eschatological future can easily be conceived within the horizon of present reality, even if it cannot as yet be actualised. Even so, accounts of relevance constructed in relation to present misery will still possess an inevitable experimental and heuristic character. More will be required, for example, than simply delineating Jesus as conqueror of sin and death. For although the powers of sin and death universally afflict present reality, the way in which they invade the present will depend upon each exact context. The expression 'structural sin' already discloses its contextual conditioning. But, to the extent to which the internal lives of individuals are shaped in reaction to societal and environmental conditions, even what might be termed 'personal sin' is not immune from contextual variation. The backward shadow cast by death across life also varies with context. Just as a literal shadow varies with topography, so that which leads to the denial of life alters with life's positive content. The imagination thus serves the task of constraining the pole of Jesus' containability within the exact circumstances of the present (for which his relevance is sought). It connects him with a present context so that a trajectory of transformation which leads from that point towards the new creation may be sighted and thus visualised.

The theological imagination will need, therefore, to be informed by accurate knowledge of the present. For this it will have to rely upon psychological, sociological, economic, political and natural science. Thus scientific knowledge will help to illuminate what it might mean for Jesus to enter into and be conformed to the precise reality in question. Interestingly, Moltmann never appears able to acknowledge *explicitly* such a positive contribution of present knowledge.[108] His early focus upon the way promise contradicts present experience[109] appears to exercise a prohibitive control. Though it should be noted that characterising this relationship in terms of contradiction need not necessarily produce such a consequence. This is because the language of contradiction must remain meaningless unless one has a clear idea of what precisely is being contradicted! But, more tellingly, Moltmann's own account of Christ as the incarnation of the future in present reality[110] should have demanded according present knowledge a significant role within his theology. If in Christ the future is conformed to the nature of this present world, then this must give the present theological significance.

(5) *Recognise that the process of relevance construction can never be completed*: The process of interaction between context-dependent questions and the biblical presentation of Jesus is intrinsically incompletable. There are what we might term both external and internal reasons why this must be so. Externally, the ever-continuing process of historical development means that new contexts are always arising. Additionally, understanding of the biblical account is itself open to permanent enhancement. There is a general advancement in textual interpretation, helped in part by scrutiny of the text under an ever new variety of perspectives. As Moltmann helpfully recognises:

> "the substance of the gospel only becomes recognisable in the process of translating the tradition into the present. Only as the outer garments of theology change between the Middle Ages and modern times, and

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108. See, however, GinC 99f where Moltmann's exposition of the cosmic Spirit's operation in nature, while rooted in part in biblical exegesis, is manifestly also indebted to a scientific evolutionary model.

109. See, for example, TH 18. Morse (*The Logic of Promise*, pp.27, 37-41) helpfully describes this tension as existing between 'descriptive-sentences' (*Lehrsätze*) and 'hope-sentences' (*Hoff-nungssätze*).

110. See, for example, CG 184. This conception of Jesus as the incarnation of the future is fully examined in Chapter 4.

> between modern times and what may be a 'post-modern' age, does one recognise who is wearing the garments and cease to confuse the wearer with one set of garments or another."[111]

Internally, two other factors are at work. First, relevant christological construction remains permanently open to the criticism of the biblical account of Jesus as significant.[112] The question of legitimacy can never be regarded as closed. Second, if the resulting accounts of relevance are worth their labour, they should offer a new perspective within which to view the reality which provoked them.[113] The benefit of a perspective beyond the ordinary is the possibility it brings of seeing the familiar apart from the distortion of self-delusion or the jaded perspective of habit and convention. As Moltmann observes,

> "the crucified Christ manifests what really is wrong with the world...We cannot therefore, in all our ideas about the world's openness to the future and the evolution of mankind, overlook the fact that the forces of history bear the names of law, sin and death"[114]

The greatest danger associated with this model is that the hermeneutic spiral at its centre should cease to operate. This would allow its results to solidify into what could easily assume the status of dogmatic statements. Again, we must agree with Moltmann.

> "Fundamentalism fossilises the Bible into an unquestionable authority. Dogmatism freezes living Christian

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111. *Theology Today: Two contributions towards making theology present*, Tr. Bowden, J., (London: SCM, 1988), p.ix. There is an interesting parallel here with a phenomenon in physics known as 'characteristic impedance'. Maximum energy transfer is found to occur not in an environment of minimum resistance, but when faced with a certain *characteristic* level of *impedance*. This is the reason why brass musical instruments, well noted for their loudness, have flared bells which might seem to increase the opposition to sound production. Similarly, it appears, the relevance of the biblical presentation of Christ is most effectively grasped not in the abstraction of 'pure' thought, but in the face of a particularly pressing concern. Was this not the case with the creative explosion of christological development in the first centuries of the church? The need to offer an account of who Jesus Christ was in the midst of particular, often hostile, intellectual and practical contexts, drove forward a development far removed from detached speculation.

112. Cf. "To speak metaphorically, the cross of Christ is the source of permanent iconoclasm of the christological icons of the church and *the portraits of Jesus in Christianity*." (CG 87, my emphasis).

113. For the Moltmann of *Theology of Hope*, 'natural theology' takes exactly this form. It is reflecting upon nature and human existence in the light of revelation. It is thus a demonstration of the nature of the world from God rather than vice versa (TH 89f). In *God in Creation*, however, such an exclusive focus is softened to allow natural theology both an educative and hermeneutic function in relation to Christian belief (GinC 58).

114. FofC 53; cf. CG 17. Moltmann's observation in relation to Christian praxis could be applied christologically: "Bonhoeffer's 'existence for others', to which so much appeal has been made, becomes meaningless if one is no longer any different from the others, but merely a hanger on" (CG 16).

tradition solid".[115]

As long as movement is maintained, the possibility of authentic perception of both Jesus *and* the context to which he is related remains alive. A particular interpretive technique of Moltmann's, which we might label 'return to origins', exhibits just this concern with maintaining movement. In the case of the doctrine of creation Moltmann writes,

"it must be exposed to the criticism of the present day, so that it may arrive at its own origins".[116]

In the face of perceived soteriological irrelevance, or even destructiveness, of contemporary theological models of creation, Moltmann advocates a return to the biblical narratives. This methodological suggestion may, therefore, be understood as an attempt to reestablish creative contact between context and text where this has ceased to function. Its aim will be to enable the hermeneutic process to advance further. The entire project of *The Way of Jesus Christ*[117] can, perhaps, be understood within this methodological rubric of 'return to origins'. Moltmann is desirous that his 'eschatological christology' should surmount the crises of soteriological irrelevance which have afflicted cosmological and anthropological christology.[118] The paradigm of reality within which they operated has become obsolete. Moltmann, therefore, intends that 'eschatological christology'[119] should result from a *new* creative interaction between the horizon of ecological history (which now characterises the present) and the biblical presentation of Jesus.[120] We may observe that the hermeneutic spiral at the heart of the construction of Jesus' relevance will only finally cease to operate at the eschaton. It will come

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115. CG 8.

116. GinC 22.

117. See especially WJC xv.

118. See particularly WJC 69-72.

119. This is also sometimes referred to as "ecological christology" (e.g. WJC 247); unhappily, I suggest, because the two terms are in fact in tension. One speaks of progress and transformation, the other of equilibrium and balance. For other problems provoked by Moltmann's adoption of biological terminology see C. Deane-Drummond, *Ecology in Jürgen Moltmann's Theology*, (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 1997), pp.266-272.

120. Cf. Bauckham, *The Theology of Jürgen Moltmann*, p.200.

to completion when the context-dependent perspective which begets questions of relevance perfectly coincides with the reality of which these questions are asked. This condition will clearly only be satisfied by the new creation. Accordingly, the epistemological structure of christology must, from our present perspective, be characterised by an irreducible eschatological conditionality. This is, of course, a function of the horizon of promise within which we are operating. Knowledge, in other words, is rendered 'historic'. Consequently,

> "when faith confesses Christ this cannot be a final ontological or factual judgement...If it is in accordance with Jesus himself, it is an anticipatory judgement of trust and confidence, and therefore, for all its certainty with regard to the person and mission of Jesus, is nevertheless provisional in an eschatological sense."[121]

The main aspects of the model of relevance-construction I wish to propose have now been described. However, a full elucidation will not be complete until two related questions have been addressed. What relationship exists between each contextually conditioned, and so time-conditioned,[122] account of relevance and its counterparts? And how will this series of accounts relate to Jesus' universal significance?

5. *Relevance and Universal Significance*

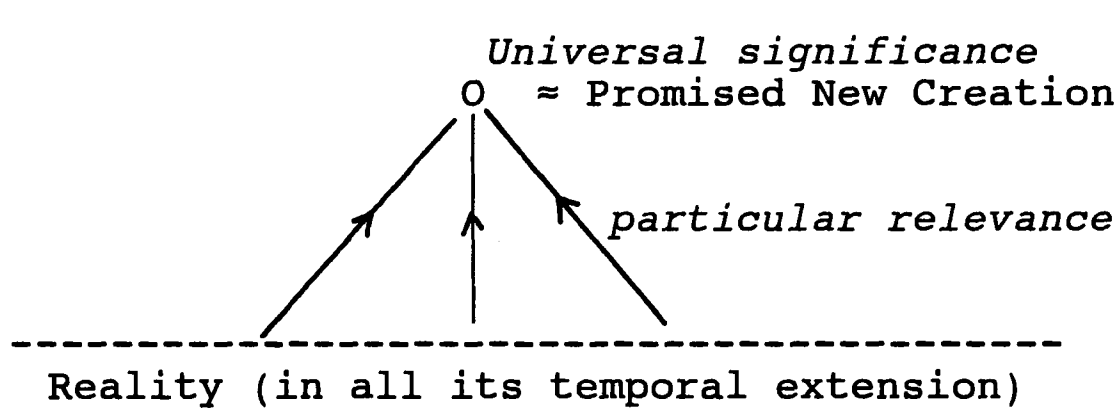
Our model has been constructed in such a way that a common identity should underlie the Jesus presented as relevant in each instance. Any misfit discovered between the imposed horizon of the questions of relevance and the biblical presentation is to be resolved, I have suggested, by according determinative power to the particular details of Jesus' biblical portrayal. On this basis, the christological portraits drawn for varying contexts should act as

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121. CG 106. It is this notion of eschatological provisionality which forms the basis of Moltmann's complaint against Pannenberg's epistemology. To Pannenberg's assertion that the resurrection of Christ, as the prolepsis of the end of history, constitutes the proof of Jesus' claim (see *Jesus - God and Man*, (London: SCM, 1968), pp.129f), Moltmann makes the following counter-assertion. "[T]he verification pattern of claim and confirmation" has to be referred again to "the confirmation of his resurrection *from the dead* by the general resurrection *of the dead*" (CG 172).

122. Cf., "...a christology in eschatological perspective will have to be continually aware that it is historically conditioned; for without that, it would cease to be eschatologically provisional." (WJC 39, cf. xiv/2). Moltmann's observation that the development of the 'titles' of Jesus will be marked by openness and flexibility (CG 85), upon which we remarked earlier, also bears upon this point.

mutually reinforcing complements.[123] Each account portrays an aspect, or a set of aspects, of the same whole. This assertion may be confirmed by a consideration of the second question posed above concerning the link between Jesus' universal significance and the accounts of particular relevance it underwrites. Each account of Jesus' relevance seeks to offer a delineation of the promise of transformation inherent in the Christ-event for a particular set of circumstances. In essence, we suggested, it comprises a trajectory of alteration which Christ's identity traces from a particular point within the created realm to the promised eschatological new creation. The trajectory of every account of relevance thus has a common goal. Or, thinking in the reverse direction, each account of Jesus' relevance is the product of the fanning of Christ's universal significance into the multifarious situations of existence. We might represent this underlying commonality diagrammatically as follows (*figure 7*). Here the intention is to show the *distinction* of each account by reason of the *different* paths they trace to the eschatological future, yet also to demonstrate their *complementarity* in that they are all orientated towards the *same* goal.



This relationship, between Jesus' universal significance and the series of accounts of his particular relevance which it transcends, should strike the reader as familiar. It parallels that which we discerned in the previous chapter between the ontologically prior future and the approach of that future to the various circumstances of history made in each particular promise. This is not surprising since the Christ-event of cross and resurrection is itself here being understood as an event of promise which straddles the discontinuity between present

123. Cf. "It is therefore...appropriate to present the salvation which Christ brings in ever-widening circles, beginning with the personal experience of reconciliation and ending with the reconciliation of the cosmos, heaven and earth." (WJC 45).

existence and the transcendent future. The degree of parallelism may be discerned more clearly if we adopt a more general form of expression. These two relationships both comprise that between a series of contextual manifestations of an identity (the present relevance of the one Christ/ particular promise), and that identity itself (the Christ of the parousia/ the promised new creation). And, in both cases, the contextual manifestation of this identity within present creation serves the ultimate aim of transforming creation into congruence with that transcendent identity. In other words, thinking christologically, in Christ God the Son (transcendent identity) becomes as we are (contextual manifestation) that we might become as he is (conformed with his transcendent identity). This pattern is perhaps the most decisive structure in Moltmann's eschatological thought. In chapter 7 we shall discover that this pattern even extends to Moltmann's account of the relationship between the immanent and economic Trinity.

This pattern of relationship also explains Moltmann's criticism of Karl Barth's account of the relationship between God's name (God's essential identity) and his word.[124] Moltmann rejects Barth's understanding of this relationship as in his view an essentially static coincidence. Rather he asserts that "an internal difference exists between the word and the name of God".[125] The grounds for Moltmann's argument become clear if one equates God's word with particular promises, or accounts of particular christological relevance, and God's name with the ontologically prior future or Jesus' universal significance. Promise, as that which intrinsically points beyond itself to the transformation of reality into congruence with God, shares an inner relationship of identity with that future but is not to be equated with it. The name of God constitutes, therefore, the eschatological goal served by God's words of promise.[126] Moltmann, therefore, suggests that Barth's conception of a coincidence between word and name is an anticipation of the eschaton. It refers to the word which God *will* speak

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124. TH 279-281; HP 11-18.

125. HP 18.

126. HP 17f.

when he is 'all in all'.[127] In the eschaton this word of immediate self-disclosure will be possible because then, and only then, will word and reality coincide.

Despite our theoretical prediction of complementarity between the various accounts of Jesus' relevance, a certain degree of dissonance will also inevitably be found. This would be the case even if our suggested model were perfectly executed. Such dissonance will arise from a number of sources.

First, it must not be forgotten that the various biblical strata themselves are not in perfect coincidence. Oscar Cullmann might be correct: New Testament scholars may have tended to over-emphasise the differences between various texts to the point where the suggestion of agreement is seen as "manifest or concealed 'integralist fundamentalism'".[128] However, these differences do exist and cannot be ignored. In part they exist precisely because the Gospels, letters, treatises and apocalyptic reflections of the New Testament may be conceived as attempts at the expression of Jesus' particular relevance. The divergence of the various biblical strata will thus have resulted from the differences in external assumptions, circumstances and needs which have affected each presentation. These are factors which both Form and Redaction Criticism investigate. It is this variation at 'source' which leads us to argue that accounts of Jesus' relevance will never possess exact congruence. A difference at source, even perhaps open conflict,[129] is bound to produce a divergence of hermeneutic results.[130]

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127. TH 281.

128. *Prayer in the New Testament*, (London: SCM, 1995), p.120.

129. An example is the thorny issue of righteousness: is it the product of faith (Romans 4) or works (James 2:14-26)?

130. I would wish to argue, however, that the theoretical basis for an inner unity between accounts of Jesus' particular relevance could be applied to the New Testament to show, at the very least, that the question of agreement between texts is *also* a legitimate task for the exegete (cf. Cullmann, *Prayer*, p.120). It is acknowledged that each of the Gospel presentations of Jesus' history and significance as well as the Pauline and deutero-Pauline accounts possess their own distinctive interests and theological nuances. Yet, if they are ultimately expressions which the impact of the *same* person has provoked, they should, in principle, be capable of demonstrating an ultimate tendency towards convergence.

Second, the changes in perception which arise as a result of historical development through time, which we observed to render the task of relevance construction incompletable, must also lead to a divergence in presentations of Jesus' relevance. Both the biblical text and the various contexts to which this is related will be interpreted differently over time. This will alter the respective priority given to different facets of Jesus' person and history at different stages. More decisively, historical development will vary the nature of the external sources upon which the theological imagination is able to draw. These considerations suggest that past attempts at relevance-construction will not be directly applicable to a new situation. It will be impossible to adopt the account of another age just as it stands. Yet such past codifications of Jesus' relevance may, nevertheless, prove to be helpful sources of insight and inspiration in a parallel, though subordinate way, to the time-conditioned biblical texts. Moltmann's dialogical method of seeking out conversation partners from the past[131] may, therefore, be understood as an implicit corollary of these ideas.

Third, within the same time period, even within the same geographical location, another clash of assumptions will be generated. Variations in social structure will also prove to be a source of dissonance. An obvious example would be the distinction in basic assumptions which pertains between the oppressed and those who oppress. *The Spirit of Life* affords an interesting example of just this phenomenon. In considering the question of "The Justification of Life"[132] Moltmann rightly alerts us to the way in which the universal concept of sin, which underlies both the Protestant and, in his view, the Pauline doctrine of justification, carries with it an attendant danger. It is that,

> "Collective guilt of this kind makes people blind to specific, practical guilt...The universality of sin leads to a universal night in which everything is equally black, and even to use weapons of mass extermination is no longer anything special".[133]

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131. See, for example, TKG xiii-xv.

132. Chapter VI, pp.123-143; cf. HTG 44f.

133. SofL 126.

More pertinently, it masks the fundamental distinction between perpetrators and victims, notwithstanding the fact that individuals can fall into both categories.[134] In the face of these two distinguishable existential situations it would seem necessary that a construction of Jesus' soteriological relevance should take different forms. Moltmann offers hints that this is the case, yet without such indications coming to full explication. We are offered the outline of a christology of atonement in the case of the perpetrator and of "solidarity christology" in the case of the victim.

This illustration has been used to demonstrate the form divergence might take in different existential circumstances. And in this, it is hoped, it is successful. Yet it also raises an intriguing question. If the Christian community at its best is to be a shared community of justice established between perpetrators and victims *in Christ*; then surely the variation of these distinct construals of Christ must in principle be capable of integration into an account of Christ's liberating efficacy:

> "...the liberation of people deprived of justice, *and*...the liberation of the unjust, so that they may all be freed for a just society".[135]

How these different 'faces ' of Christ might best be related is tantalisingly hinted in relation to the Spirit.

> "The Spirit of Christ...is the accuser of the guilty, the defender of the accused, and the merciful judge, all in one".[136] (p.123).

These observations should serve to remind us that accounts of relevance will be dialectically related to each other in terms of *both* complementarity and divergence.

Clearly, no one construction of relevance can function in and of itself as normative. In addition to the reason constituted by their intrinsic provisionality, to do so would lead to an inevitable

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134. SofL 125.

135. SofL 128.

136. SofL 123.

restriction of the scope of Christ's salvation, calling in question his prospective universal lordship. Accounts of relevance must, therefore, always be subservient to the normative function of the biblical text which provides the basis for an interpretation of Jesus' universal significance. It is this which must hold methodological priority since it underpins each attempt at relevance-construction.

It must be noted, however, that what we might term the *theology*, as opposed to the mere principle, of Jesus' universal significance is not yet possible. Such a universally encompassing theology is the prerogative of the full establishment of the kingdom. It is a theology which cannot be written before the new creation. As Moltmann correctly observes, from the perspective of time Jesus must remain irreducibly questioner even in relation to the answers which Christianity gives concerning him.[137] Such answers can only strain in anticipation after what is set in motion through his identity. All that is presently available is the principle of universal consummatory transformation which we have utilised. Every theology which moves beyond this principle, and so in practice every theology which may yet be constructed, is in fact an attempt at the construction of theology's particular relevance. The expansiveness of this relevance will vary considerably depending upon the perspective from which a particular theology is constructed. The *Summa Theologiae*[138] of Thomas Aquinas may reasonably be held to be of more lasting significance than say *The Secular City* of Harvey Cox.[139] Yet every theology will be subject to all the conditions and characterisations which we have enumerated above. Notwithstanding these provisos, however, every theology of particular relevance, I submit, can be constructed in the hope of an inherent *eschatological* consummation. It is a fragment yes, but it is also a fragment orientated on the whole. It need not, therefore, be doomed to intrinsic relativism. Its orientation towards the eschatological universal sets it free from this isolating fate.

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137. CG 106.

138. See, for example, the excellent translation afforded by Oxford: Blackfriars/ Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1963-1981.

139. London: SCM, 1965. This a book which seemed to relate specifically to a concern with the theological significance of the process of secularisation as this was perceived in the 1960s.

Uncovering the implications of the eschatological structure of Moltmann's theology offers the possibility, therefore, of conceiving how contextually conditioned theological proposals might, over against the implications of some postmodernist thinkers, have an intrinsic structural relationship both with each other and with the universal plane. Yet at the same time our model has been able to give expression to many of the sensibilities which are rightly being stressed by this contemporary cluster of concerns. No one theology can operate in an imperialistic fashion over against others. Not even revelation possesses a totalitarian claim over human thought. The perception of *différance*,[140] of distinction and open-endedness,[141] so central to postmodern thinking is, therefore, at once both legitimised and conditioned by our model.

Yet the reader may feel that for all its strengths this model has one fatal weakness. It is a feature which arises from operating exclusively within the horizon of promise. Legitimate forms of Jesus' particular relevance seemed constrained to take the form of an infinite variety of promises of consummatory transformation. Jesus' relevance appears to be inseparably tied to a *change* of the present as this is variously experienced. What relevance, then, does Jesus have to that which is already good; to experiences of ecstasy and delight occasioned by the way things presently are? Can nothing rest as it already is? The first remark to make is that such an objection clearly stems from a 'First World' perspective. It arises from the search for a Jesus who will be the sustainer and validater of the status quo. Yet, this having been admitted, even if we rigorously applied a hermeneutic of ideological suspicion to every experience of present contentment, surely a legitimate remainder would still exist. To find no *inherent* pleasure in present life is, perhaps, a sign of mental illness. The objection, therefore, remains.

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140. This is one of the most quoted conceptions of Jacques Derrida. In part it suggests that meaning is never closed and stable because every assertion of meaning is also a denial of other rival meanings, and such denial is never fully effective. Unanimity is only apparent, it also contains *différance*. See, for example, E. Graham, *Transforming Praxis*, p.21. The parallel with our model of christological relevance is as follows: every portrayal excludes some features as irrelevant to the peculiar circumstances under consideration. No one account, therefore, can be considered a locus of definitive meaning. Yet, we have also sought to show how these portrayals are related to each other by way of the notion of complementarity.

141. Thiselton in *Interpreting God* explains this as follows: "Meaning is always postponed, in the sense that new meanings constantly overtake it as new interests and new cultural frames repeatedly change its multi-level currencies" (p.15). In this way *différance* implies 'deferral' of meaning for Derrida.

In answer three counterbalancing points may briefly be made. First, it must not be forgotten that the transformation to new creation is not merely for transformation's sake. It is fundamentally about consummation. Consummation confirms, reinforces and underlines the value of that which is already good; it is not its enemy. Second, the problem of death is not only a problem about the end of life, it is the problem of transience which afflicts all experience; even that which is good. True, transience may serve to heighten the delight of pleasure by way of contrast. But it is also the sting in a pleasure that will not endure. Third, everything good about present existence may be taken as a prolepsis of the kingdom. The rubric of consummation suggests to me that this prolepsis is not one of mere formality, but of sacramental substance. Prolepsis may thus become a way of affirming not disparaging the present.

6. *Theodicy: Moltmann's only route to relevance?*

The principal theological development of Moltmann's theology which we used above to complete the hermeneutic cycle between Jesus' universal significance and particular relevance is to be found in *The Crucified God*. It is here that an understanding of the crucified Jesus as the incarnation of the eschatological future in present reality is first fully articulated. Although this development is the unambiguous achievement of this volume, its seeds already lie within *Theology of Hope*. Here Moltmann offers an outline account of Jesus' enmeshment with a profound concern of modern existence: the question of theodicy. This question has proved to be of abiding concern to Moltmann and lies at the heart of his understanding of theology's relevance to the present.[142] The problem of theodicy raises the question of God precisely on the basis of a perception of the 'misery of the present'.[143] Its resolution, therefore, demands

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142. For an excellent general treatment of the question of theodicy in Moltmann's theology see R. Bauckham, *The Theology of Jürgen Moltmann*, pp.71-98. As W.W. Willis observes, "For Moltmann, the question of theodicy is unavoidable for any relevant theology" (*Theism, Atheism and the Doctrine of the Trinity*, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), p.92). Willis also writes: "According to Moltmann, behind all theological investigation stands the question of theodicy - the attempt to uncover the righteousness of God in the face of human misery" (p.136). Cf. J. Sobrino, *Christology at the Crossroads*, p.31.

143. Cf. HP 32.

offering precisely what we have defined as an account of relevance. It necessitates the attempt to construe the meaning of God for a question rooted in present experience. It will therefore be important to assess how well the problem of theodicy fares as a route to a construal of Jesus' relevance against the standards of the model we have constructed. It is to an elaboration of the basis, strengths and weaknesses of this approach of Moltmann's that attention will now be turned.

In *Theology of Hope* Moltmann considers the question of the nature of the resurrection 'event'. His complaint against the commonly adopted contemporary approaches, those of "the historian's view of history", "man's view of himself", and "his utopian view of the future",[144] has a common theme. They emerge from presuppositions about the character of reality which are essentially a-theistic. Consequently, in marked contrast to the biblical narrative, within each of these perspectives a theology of the resurrection can at best present the idea of God as being "partly superfluous, partly optional".[145] These methods of approach are thus clearly untenable for anyone such as Moltmann who assumes that,

> "Christianity stands or falls with the reality of the raising of Jesus from the dead by God".[146]

Moltmann, therefore, desires to open up another option. He aspires,

> "to discover the point of approach at which the answer to the reality of the resurrection can become plain".[147]

This will be an approach in the perspective of which the biblical account of God's resurrection of Jesus can demonstrate its inner necessity. Moltmann selects as his point of departure,

> "a question which embraces the whole modern experience of the world, of self and of the future - a

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144. TH 167.

145. TH 168.

146. TH 165.

147. TH 167.

question which we ourselves constitute with our whole reality".[148]

This is the question which emerges out of the human situation expressed in the evocative phrase of both Hegel and Nietzsche: 'God is dead'.

> "Only when along with the knowledge of the resurrection of Jesus the 'God of the resurrection' can be shown to be God in terms of the 'death of God' that has become familiar to us from history, from the world and from our own existence - only then is the proclamation of the resurrection, and only then are faith and hope in the God of promise, something that is necessary, that is new, that is possible in an objectively real sense."[149]

Moltmann's technique is to utilise Hegel's speculative Good Friday as a way of establishing the connection between the *particular* event of Jesus' crucifixion and the *generally* perceived godforsakenness of all reality.[150] This connection, once established, is then expanded as follows. Just as Jesus' resurrection finds its necessity in respect of the cross,[151] so the prospect of the resurrection of all reality, rooted in Christ's resurrection, finds its necessity in respect of the world's godforsakenness revealed in the cross.[152]

> "From the theological standpoint one thing at least is unforgettably plain in Hegel - that the resurrection and the future of God must manifest themselves not only in the case of the god-forsakenness of the crucified Jesus, but also in that of the god-forsakenness of the world".[153]

Moltmann's utilisation of Hegel thus enables him to understand the modern atheistic world as, far from being absolute, simply an element in the more extensive process of 'the cross and resurrection of reality'.

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148. TH 167.

149. TH 168.

150. Cf. TH 211, HP 41f.

151. See chapter 2.2. Cf. *God - His and Hers*, Tr. Bowden, J., (London: SCM, 1991), p.67; henceforth GHH.

152. TH 211.

153. TH 169. Moltmann's utilisation of Hegel at this point, however, should not mask Moltmann's criticism. He accuses Hegel of reducing revelation to an eternal event by subsuming the cross and eschatological resurrection into categories of divine process immanent within the Absolute Subject. In this way Hegel is guilty of transposing eschatology into the eternity. By contrast, the cross, for Moltmann, stands as a sign of eschatological openness of the Christ-event which cannot be brought to completion in advance of the annihilation of death (TH 172).

This example of Moltmann's theological endeavour is striking because it appears to share exactly the same method of 'proof' as we observed Moltmann to outlaw in connection with the cosmological and anthropological schemes for verifying Christian truth. Here Moltmann appears to deliberately set himself the task of discovering a universal 'problem' against which biblical revelation can display itself as the necessary 'answer'! In assessing this project we can, in the light of our earlier arguments, immediately establish that it cannot succeed as an account of Jesus' universal significance. Thankfully the dimensions of present reality stretch beyond that which might provoke the question of theodicy! We therefore need to assess its legitimacy as a route to the portrayal of Jesus' particular relevance.

Within the rubric of relevance the question of theodicy possesses a distinct advantage over the schemes of verification Moltmann rejects. In contradistinction to them, this project's 'problem' resonates much more exactly with the horizon of interpretation utilised in the biblical account of the Christ-event. As we saw, the question when will God demonstrate his divinity in the triumph of his righteousness over this world's evil and injustice, forms the context out of which hope for the resurrection of the dead developed in Jewish apocalypticism.[154] Death, it is assumed, can prove no limit to the realisation of God's justice.[155] This question is thus one which resonates with a fundamental concern of the biblical texts. Accordingly, the risk that this approach might also become a distorting procrustean bed for the biblical narratives is reduced. Additionally, its peculiar nature is that it is intrinsically capable of mediating between both the 'misery of the present', as this is grounded in contemporary experience, and the conviction of hope rooted in God's promissory revelation.[156] In fact this question is only

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154. On this origin of the resurrection hope see, for example, W. Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament* Volume Two, (London: SCM, 1967), pp.509-516, and W. Zimmerli, *Old Testament Theology in Outline*, (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1978). Cf. P. D. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), pp.159-161 on the origins of hope for a new creation.

155. Moltmann, following Käsemann, points to the way in which Paul interprets the cross and resurrection of Christ in the horizon of the coming 'righteousness of God'. "The righteousness of God for which one must 'wait' (Gal. 5:5) is now revealed in the word of the cross for everyone who believes (Rom. 1:16), and it will become real when death is destroyed and the body is redeemed and 'life from the dead' (Rom. 11:15) will show God's presence" (RRF 46).

156. Cf., RRF 55.

alive in precisely this tension and collapses if either dialectical term is obscured. It is only alive when hope sustains a protest against present, negative experience.

Significantly, the identity of the crucified and risen Christ sustains just this tension between reality and promise. It is the tension between what we have termed Jesus' containability and uncontainability. Both Jesus' historical mission, characterised by consciousness of the unparalleled closeness of God,[157] and his resurrection into God's glory, serve to raise to agonising perplexity the question voiced in Jesus' death cry: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?".[158] The cross of the risen Christ is thus open for the inclusion of other questions provoked by experience of suffering.[159] Accordingly, by being linked with the crucified Christ in this way they can also be brought into coordination with the universal prospect of soteriological transformation held out in the trajectory of the Christ-event. The question of theodicy may therefore be shown capable, not merely of linking faith and reality in general terms, but of specifically linking the Christ-event of cross and resurrection with every present of imperfection. In fact, if the only 'answer' which will bring the agonising question of the dying Christ to consummatory closure is the eschatological new creation,[160] then the horizon of the theodicy question can be demonstrated to be infinitely flexible. It contacts the misery of every present, in all its particular detail, yet stretches away to the promised transformation of all things. Accordingly, the 'arch of tension' of the theodicy question is orientated exactly along the trajectory of relevance as we have defined it. It links specific locations in present existence with the anticipated new creation. It is not surprising, therefore, to discover that the vast majority of Moltmann's attempts at relevant christological construction function within the orbit of this concern.[161] A brief example will demonstrate the power of

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157. CG 147f.

158. Mark. 15:34. Cf. HP 42f; WJC 171.

159. Cf. *The Power of the Powerless*, Tr. Kohl, M., (London: SCM, 1983), p.120; henceforth, PP.

160. TH 168f; HP 35f; CG 106.

161. The great exception is *Theology and Joy*, Tr. Ulrich, R., (London: SCM, 1973); henceforth, TJ. Here Moltmann attempts to make christological connection with positive, aesthetic experience.

this approach.[162]

Moltmann perceives the problem of a 'society of having' to be that,

> "Man regards his body as his *possession*, but he is no longer identified with his bodily life".[163]

Deeper examination reveals this to be a contextual manifestation of the problem of death understood in Platonic and Cartesian terms. The difficulty of identifying oneself with one's bodily life in face of the expectation of bodily death, is overcome by the christological mediation of the promise of resurrection to that which is transient. The prospect of resurrection enables one to identify with, even love, that which is impermanent. The consequence of faith in the risen Christ who has overcome death, therefore, is the humanisation of the repressive society of having through the possibility it creates of loving identification with that which had been denied its essential importance.

> "Love is therefore the immanent power of the resurrection in the flesh. The resurrection is the transcendent perfecting of love."[164]

Relevance is thus constructed along a line, a trajectory, which links the impermanent 'here' to resurrection 'there' across the boundary between historical existence and eschatological hope. Love is the human response, the human act which corresponds to this trajectory within the limits of present reality.[165]

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162. See also CG 329-335 where Moltmann analyses a series of interconnected 'vicious circles of death' which operate within the dimensions of economics, politics, culture, and ecology. For each vicious circle he suggests that liberation may be attained by way of, what amount to, particular anticipations of the kingdom of God: socialism; democracy; emancipation; and peace with nature. Underlying each vicious circle is the embracing one of senselessness and godforsakenness. This is overcome by the recognition of the hidden presence of God in the godforsaken Christ which offers the 'courage to be'. In this way, within the overall context of theodicy, Moltmann sets out a series of interconnected theolog*ies* of liberation. Cf. CPS 163-189; HD 110.

163. RRF 56, cf. WJC 263-273, especially 265-267.

164. WJC 263.

165. We have elected, however, not to pursue the question of the human response to Jesus' relevance once generated. Vital as this is, it lies beyond the scope of our present concern.

Before turning to consider the possible weaknesses of using the question of theodicy in this way, it is worth pausing to reflect briefly on another of its strengths. It has the capacity to function as an effective filter against attempts to link God and presently experienceable reality by means of direct extrapolation. This follows as a direct corollary of its inhabitation of the dialectic between faith (in promise) and experience. The crucial point is this: it can only admit of the resolution of this dialectic through the eschatological transformation of reality. The projection of God's existence on the basis of present reality, which lies at the heart of Classical Theism, is thus called in question.[166] Classical Theism merely offers an alternative interpretation of reality which only serves to collapse the question of theodicy by explaining it away rather than bringing it to a genuine conclusion. Atheism's projection of God's non-existence by the same method may also be rejected.[167] Moltmann's common complaint against so-called protest atheism is that it loses sight of the one to whom protest is made. Not only does this collapse the question of theodicy, but it also undermines the dignity of the sufferer.[168] Following Albert Camus (*The Rebel*), Moltmann maintains that even the revolt must be maintained against someone.[169] He thus asks provocatively, in terms of another literary allusion, "But what keeps Ivan Karamazov's protest alive?".[170] The question of theodicy, therefore provides an environment in which a specifically eschatological theology, that is, one thought of for the sake of the trajectory of the Christ-event, can flourish purged of competing alternatives.[171]

Despite both the comprehensiveness and appropriateness of this question in relation to the issue of christological relevance, it is not without its limitations. While it provides an excellent route

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166. CG 207-219.

167. CG 219-227.

168. See, for example, HP 33f; CG 219-227; TKG 47-49.

169. HP 34.

170. CG 223.

171. Cf. TasE 1-11.

by which relevance can be constructed in relation to that which is indisputably negative, it is obviously inapplicable to that which is experienced as an unqualified good. It also affords little guidance in the more commonly encountered situations of moral ambiguity. By this I mean a situation where the best that can be achieved is itself of ambiguous worth. Ethical dilemmas provide a common example of this phenomenon. Often the best possible outcome is a carefully weighed 'cost-benefit analysis' or, further down the scale, 'the lesser of two evils'. This observation, I suggest, may help to explain a puzzling feature of Moltmann's own ethical deliberations: they sometimes lack the distinctive christological, and so eschatological focus, which is so characteristic of his theology in general. Consider the following example.

In the essay, "The Humanity of Living and Dying",[172] Moltmann deals with some of the consequences of modern medicine. To approach the question of abortion he erects a distinction between mere 'vitality', abstract existence, and 'humanity', fully human existence, on what appear to be general philosophical grounds.[173]

> "In the moment when the Mother, the parents, the family...develop a relationship of acceptance and affirmation for the embryo, the atmosphere of humanity is established in which this nascent life can become a humane life."[174]

This principle is open to huge abuse. It ultimately makes the value of life dependent upon the subjective reactions of others and not on an independently established intrinsic worth of that life itself.[175] More significantly, what we miss here is any theological-christological construction. Obvious connections exist. The mediation of the promised future of consummation to humanity oppressed by a hostile and isolating environment, enacted in the

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172. EH 158-171.

173. Moltmann informs us that this distinction is made "[i]n a position paper, written with three other Tübingen professors of theology" (EH 166).

174. EH 166.

175. It is true that Moltmann maintains that "an excessively personal argumentation is also inadequate", but his ground for this assertion is, "since the human nonrecognition and refusal of nascent life can be revoked." (EH 167). Notice, therefore, that value still depends upon acceptance, only a delay in acceptance is allowed for, not that value could be independently established.

crucified and suffering Christ, might have been prominent. This theological motif might have functioned as a basis for the independent value of life in such circumstances. Does not the crucified Jesus reveal true humanity precisely at the point of his rejection and non-acceptance, by accepting non-acceptance in order to overcome it? It is most significant that when this matter is touched on within the orbit of the theodicy question in Moltmann's later writings, and thus apart from an explicitly ethical nuance of ambiguity, it receives a very different treatment. Here, seen as a specific consequence of the problem of death, christological considerations are to the fore.

> "Because the hope of resurrection embraces the human being's whole life history...Each temporal Gestalt has the same dignity in God's sight...Fundamentally speaking, human beings mutilate themselves when embryos are devalued into mere 'human material', for every human being was once just such an embryo in need of protection."[176]

Situations of ambiguity, such as those presented in medical ethics, serve to highlight a related deficiency of the theodicy context. For all its inherent richness, it actually constitutes the imposition of a general template upon reality. The question of theodicy tends to refer to situations of near universal applicability rather than those which afflict only individuals or small communities. It may thus function to prevent perception of a particular context in its detailed actuality and so work against the interest of particular relevance. It is perhaps significant in this respect that, in *The Way of Jesus Christ,* Moltmann is primarily interested in the necessity and possibility of a *universal*[177] *contextual* theology[178] aligned towards the "total misery of the present".[179] This possibility is occasioned by what he terms "[t]he End-time condition of world history"[180] in which all living things on earth, including the

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176. WJC 268.

177. Universal here would mean, I suggest, universal applicability. We have distinguished this from that which is eschatologically universal in the sense that it has to do with a new totality of being.

178. R. Bauckham, "Moltmann's Messianic Christology", S.J.T. Vol.44 (1991), p.523.

179. WJC 64.

180. WJC 45.

human race, have become ephemeral .[181]

> "The antinomies of modern civilisation are drawing human beings and nature deeper and deeper into a common destiny...In the danger of annihilation that is hanging over us, God's salvation is the healing and survival of the whole threatened earth and all individual created beings, in their common peril."[182]

Although Moltmann erects a distinction between the eternal metaphysical situation of human beings before God and their real concrete misery, the danger is that, by reason of a concentration upon that which is universally applicable, concrete misery still masks the *variation* in the peculiar circumstances of each particular context. In other words, concrete misery simply becomes a co-relative of the metaphysical situation rather than a dialectical expansion of it. Only such expansion would guarantee that relevance-construction reflects the multifarious nature of reality as well as that which all parts share in common.

The great danger of yoking the construction of relevance to the general template of theodicy, is that when this perspective fails to find an exact appropriateness the principles employed will be derived apart from the christological source. Our example from medical ethics demonstrated this in an extreme form. Here christology was not mentioned at all. But the same phenomenon can happen more subtly when, even though the language of christology is used, it is no longer determinative.

An interesting example of this feature is afforded by Moltmann's ethical deliberations on the nature of the "community of human beings, animals and plants".[183] To appreciate the significance of this discussion it is important to read it in context. In the immediately preceding section Moltmann considers the relationship of Jesus to the evolutionary process. Here, application of a theodicy model of relevance, to evolution's wasteful and destructive aspects, produces the expected motif of Jesus' solidarity with and transformative intention towards

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181. WJC 46.

182. WJC 46

183. WJC 307-312.

evolution's casualties.[184] Christ is understood both as evolution's victim and its coming redeemer. However, when Moltmann then moves to consider the ethical basis of the community of creation, these christological principles just established appear to find no place. Significantly, perception of the harsh realities of the evolutionary process also seems to have been lost from view, suggesting that the theodicy context is not now of uppermost concern. Rather it is immediate pragmatic concerns which seem to determine Moltmann's decision to comprehend this community as one which requires to be "codified as a community *based on law* in the covenant of God's creation".[185] The outcome is a completely uncharacteristic predilection for a *protological* approach which is completely blind to the ambiguities of the evolutionary process which Moltmann has previously articulated.

> "...God wants all those he has created to live in peace with one another '*each according to its kind*'...(Gen. 1:11,21,24). The extermination of whole plant and animal species must therefore be viewed as sacrilege, and punished".[186]

Significantly, the christological focus which *is* present centres upon the motif of reconciliation. Contrary to his usual tendency, Moltmann here follows the deutero-Pauline rather than the Pauline emphasis; the latter being that which is dominant in the previous christological section.[187] The significance of this observation is that a notion of reconciliation is capable of operating within a protological environment. Reconciliation can take place for the sake of restoring some original condition. While I am not suggesting that this is what Moltmann consciously intends, it is noteworthy that the motif of reconciliation is used here without coordination with the outstanding prospect of redemption as its consummatory goal. Elsewhere, this is what one would expect to find. A specifically christological-eschatological approach would have been able to establish the same general ethical imperative. It could have

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184. WJC 294. Moltmann is not, however, unaware of its constructive side and in fact can go so far as to describe Jesus as "...the moving power in the evolution of creation" (p.286).

185. WJC 308, my emphasis.

186. WJC 311, emphasis mine. Cf. *Creating a Just Future: The Politics of Peace and the Ethics of Creation in a Threatened World*, Tr. Bowden, J., (London: SCM, 1989), p.70; henceforth, CJF, which utilises the notion of God as original owner of the world.

187. WJC 284-286.

done so, more importantly, without implying a simplistic equivalence between God's ultimate intention, equated with origins (note the Genesis passage quoted above), and present possibilities. This equivalence illegitimately glosses over the tension which exists between the present, irreducibly conflictual reality of evolutionary process and competition, and the hoped-for-future of the transfiguring of the community of creation into blissful co-existence.

Our exposure of the potential weaknesses of an over-reliance upon the problem of theodicy for the construction of christological relevance underlines the necessity for developing a hermeneutic model which will enable present experience, *as it is concretely encountered in all its peculiarity*, to engage hermeneutically with the biblical presentation of Jesus as significant. It is tentatively suggested that the methodology of relevance-construction offered above can achieve this aim. Built on Moltmann's own christological insights, it is capable of enabling this essential interaction to occur more successfully than is accomplished in Moltmann's own practice. This is because it avoids a weakness in Moltmann's theology which we have already noted. It does not rely only upon the cross as the point of engagement of God's presence and future with the world. The dominance of this motif, even into Moltmann's later theology,[188] means that theodicy is virtually the only christologically driven mechanism he has for the construction of Jesus' relevance. Our proposed method breaks out of this prison. Not only can it accord greater weight to the incarnation as a whole, but its decisive advantage stems from the role we have ascribed to the theological imagination. Only through use of the informed imagination can the gap be bridged between general principles discerned in the biblical portrayal of Jesus and the concrete circumstances of the present. And the construction of relevance turns precisely on the degree of success with which this can be achieved.

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188. See chapter 5.6

7. *The pertinence of a developing concern for mutual relationships*

We have observed that the early domination of the hermeneutic movement from biblical text to context, characteristic of *Theology of Hope*, is balanced, in principle at least, by *The Crucified God* which christologically grounds the complementary movement from present context to promissory text. Even so, it is not until Moltmann's second series of "systematic contributions to theology"[189] that this companion movement comes to real structural prominence. Leaving aside for a moment our particular concern with christology, we might highlight the following examples in which context becomes the point of departure for Moltmann's theological endeavours. The *first* substantive chapter of *God in Creation* is concerned to describe the lineaments of the 'ecological crisis' in relation to which a doctrine of creation will need to prove its relevance.[190] *The Spirit of Life* opens with a phenomenological analysis of general human experience as a route to awareness of particular experiences of the Spirit. And here, in marked contrast to *Theology of Hope*, this quest leads to the enlistment of Parmenides and his emphasis on eternity in support of Moltmann's position.

> "Experiences of God can be so intensive that, as Parmenides said, 'the beginnings are obliterated and the ending vanishes' and the eternal present fills everything".[191]

Experience thus comes to condition Moltmann's theological formulation. *The Coming of God* could be read, virtually in its entirety, as an attempt to engage the eschatological principles of Moltmann's earlier work with the contexts of individual life[192], political history[193], and

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189. TKG xi.

190. GinC 20-52. In this volume the first chapter is really more of an introduction which offers outline sketches of theological motifs later employed.

191. SofL 18. By contrast in *Theology of Hope* Moltmann asserts: "If the idea of self-revelation is not to change tacitly into an expression for the God of Parmenides, then it must have an open eye to the statements of promise" (TH 58). Parmenides is inseparably connected with the rejected notion of the 'epiphany of the eternal present' (TH 84), which amounts to a transposition of eschatology into eternity.

192. CofG part II.

193. CofG part III.

ecological concern.[194] It is against this background that we may now examine *The Way of Jesus Christ* and Moltmann's return to the territory of christology. Two factors are of immediate interest. First, an observation of structure: Moltmann's account of the present context again *precedes* the development of his christology. At the point where he establishes his own model, over against cosmological and anthropological christology, an elaboration of "The Contradictions of Modern Civilisation"[195] comes before Moltmann's explication of "The Theme and Scheme of Eschatological Christology Today".[196] Second, an observation of content: in the same volume we find Moltmann asserting that the *context* in which Jesus finds himself actually determines Jesus' self-understanding. This determinative context is described in terms of his experiences *both* of God as 'Abba', and of his contemporaries.

> "In his relationship to this Abba God [pneumatologically mediated], Jesus experiences himself as God's child."[197]
>
> "It was in his reciprocal relationships with the faith of the people concerned that the miracles of the messianic era came about. It was in his reciprocal relationships with men and women disciples who followed him that Jesus discovered his messianic secret."[198]

Therefore, whether it be the present context in which Jesus must be understood, or the historical context in which Christ was originally understood and came to understand himself, what we see in Moltmann is a growing concern with the *relationship* between Christ and the environment in which he comes to significance.

Another illustration of this tendency to give prominence to a hermeneutic path which begins from context is Moltmann's description of the complex interaction between christology and christopraxis. Theoretical construction and practical experience are conjoined in a process of

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194. CofG part IV.

195. WJC 63-69. These contradictions are those of the intrinsic perpetuation of the Third World, the system of nuclear deterrence and the growing ecological crisis.

196. WJC 69-72.

197. WJC 142f.

198. WJC 146. See also see pp.145-149 and compare this with p.111.

mutual conditioning and illumination.

> "Their intertwinings are so complex that they resist the imposition of any simple pattern. Christological theory is not a reflection of Christian praxis. Christian praxis is not the application of a christological theory. The christological theory which is concerned with the knowledge of Christ in his meaning for us today is itself a praxis, and we have to answer for it as such. And the Christian praxis of faith has already in itself cognitive significance".[199]

Given that the notion of the incarnation of the future in Christ, present in Moltmann's early theology, had not led him to develop this concern with context before, a new factor, over and above this, must be at work in Moltmann's later theology which explains its presence. This new development is, I suggest, a metaphysics of relationality.[200]

There is, I suggest, a hermeneutic circle which operates at the level of the entire Moltmannian corpus. Moltmann's early focus on christology[201] leads to the development of a conception of God as Trinity constructed on the basis of the history of Christ and experience of the Spirit. The Trinity is understood as the ultimate, and necessary, interpretive horizon of these phenomena.[202] Within this horizon, the notion of mutually-conditioning relationships comes to particular focus in what Moltmann terms a 'social doctrine of the Trinity'.[203] This rubric of understanding then persists into his explication of the relationship between God and the world in his 'ecological doctrine of creation'[204]. And, which is most significant for our present purposes, it continues into his return to a concentrated examination of the theme of christology.[205] Here, a perception of Jesus as 'social person'[206] comes to new prominence as

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199. WJC 41f.

200. Cf. GinC 50.

201. *Theology of Hope; The Crucified God.*

202. This is begun in *The Crucified God*, developed in *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* and finds its fullest explication in *Trinity and the Kingdom of God.*

203. TKG xvi.

204. *God in Creation.*

205. *The Way of Jesus Christ.*

206. E.g., WJC 149 (c).

the perspective of mutual relations highlights facets of the biblical narrative which resonate with this concern. The social person is the one irreducibly formed in relation, who cannot, therefore, be considered in isolation.

This focus upon mutuality, therefore, entails appropriate epistemological consequences. Modern analytical thought, which seeks to separate individual phenomena from the context in which they occur in order to gain a more exact understanding of their distinctive nature, must be replaced by "integrating and integral thinking". The assumption will be that,

> "...objects can be known and understood very much better if they are seen in their relationships and coordinations with their particular environments and surrounds".[207]

Jesus, therefore, cannot be understood in abstraction from that with which he is in relation. This insight serves to highlight the already existing conception of Jesus' solidarity with reality which reaches its zenith in the cross. It also allows more significance to be given to the incarnation in general. This may explain, therefore, why in *The Way of Jesus Christ*, Jesus' messianic mission receives considerably more attention than in his early work. Moreover, such christological relations will, according to the principle of mutuality, tend towards equal and reciprocal ones.[208] If Jesus is thus in relationship with *both* the eschatological future of the new creation via proleptic actualisation, *and* present reality via the incarnation, according to this principle each relation must be given equal weight. In terms of the hermeneutic model which we set out in *figure 6* above, this new principle may thus exert a pressure towards according equal emphasis to both 'backward' and 'forward' hermeneutical movements across the discontinuity occasioned by the *novum* of the resurrection. Over against Moltmann's early work it will, therefore, act to promote the hermeneutic path which begins from context. Only

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207. GinC 2.

208. The expression 'tend towards' is used advisedly. Consider the following passage in which, while mutuality is emphasised, the persistence of one-sided relations is acknowledged. "In this network of relationships, 'making', 'preserving', 'maintaining' and 'perfecting' are certainly the great *one-sided* relationships; but 'indwelling', 'sym-pathizing', 'participating', 'accompanying', 'enduring', 'delighting' and 'glorifying' are relationships of *mutuality* which describe a cosmic community of living between God the Spirit and all his created beings" (GinC 14). The significance of this passage was first brought to my attention by Dr. Paul Fiddes.

Moltmann can say if the connection we have discerned was ever consciously made by him. But what we have demonstrated, I suggest, is that in the metaphysics of relationality his work contains a factor capable of according greater prominence to the context in which Jesus comes to find relevance and meaning; and this at the level of root methodology.

There is one further potential development of the hermeneutic process which deserves to be highlighted. It concerns the relational function of the Spirit. I wish to suggest that in *The Spirit of Life* we may discern a similar and related hermeneutic structure to the one we have described between the biblical narrative of Jesus and the various contexts of present circumstances.

Here the relationship presented is that between revelation and experience of God. In an attempt to offer a mediating synthesis of the antithetical emphases of Schleiermacher and Barth, revelation and experience are presented as mutually reinforcing, and indispensable, complements.[209]

> "...I cannot see that there is any fundamental alternative between God's revelation to human beings, and human experience of God. How is a man or woman supposed to be able to talk about God if God does not reveal himself? How are men and women supposed to be able to talk about God of whom there is no human experience? It is only in the narrow concepts of modern philosophy that 'revelation' and 'experience' are antitheses."[210]

We are tantalised, however, by the way in which two strands are developed from this insight which, if combined, might advance an account of the construction of christological relevance. They are, however, left disappointingly unconnected. First, in the presentation of a phenomenological analysis of experience, mentioned above, Moltmann advances the following thesis. The immanent transcendence of the Spirit in creation[211] makes possible "an awareness

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209. SofL 5-8.

210. SofL 6.

211. This, of course, is itself a construction developed in the wake of a concern for mutually conditioning relationships.

of God in, with and beneath the experience of life".[212] Almost immediately we are also informed that,

> "The experience of the Spirit is never without the remembrance of Christ, and never without the expectation of his future".[213]

These two statements cry out to be linked together. Doing so would produce an account of the pneumatological mediation of the crucial hermeneutic relationship which lies at the heart of the construction of Jesus' relevance. The action of the Spirit could be understood to promote the necessary mutual interplay between the context of present experience, and the promissory text of the history and future of Jesus Christ. This would afford a substantial deepening of the hermeneutic process we have outlined; a development for which we deliberately left room in the reflections of the previous chapter.[214] Our reflections on the inescapable role of the imagination could also be developed pneumatologically. For is it not the wings of the Spirit which drive the flight of the theological imagination?

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212. SofL 17, cf. p.34.

213. SofL 17.

214. See the conclusion to chapter 2 section 1.

PART TWO: CONTENT
THE FUTURE OF JESUS CHRIST

Our quest is to unfold the way in which Moltmann's christology discloses the eschatological structure of his theology. So far we have allowed methodological considerations primacy of place. We have traced out how certain root assumptions shape the broad contours of Moltmann's presentation of Jesus' eschatological significance. The time has now come to give principal attention to the actual christological product which his methodological preferences create. I now wish to move in from the boundaries which structure what is said to an exploration of that which they encompass. This does not mean that methodological considerations can now be left to one side. Just as in Part One it proved impossible to examine method without reference to content, so now the content of Moltmann's christology can hardly be examined without attention to method. The difference will be that examination of method will now be at the service of detailed exegesis and critical analysis. Our prime consideration will now be not *how* does Moltmann say what he says but *what* does he say. But we shall not be content simply to remain within the scholarly terrain of analysis and assessment. Where tensions are found in Moltmann's presentation, and where his account is perceived to run into problems, I shall again seek to make constructive proposals for the way these problems could be tackled within the framework of Moltmann's root theological assumptions.

The principal aim of Part Two is to explore the succession of christologically determined models of the relationship between eschatology and history that can be found in moving from *Theology of Hope* to *The Coming of God*. These models should not be seen as separate and alternative accounts, as a kind of typology of options. Rather they represent the building blocks of Moltmann's overall scheme, the stages of his development. Significantly, Moltmann assures us that this is a development in which earlier notions act as the presupposition for later expansions.[1] Examining these models in series, therefore, will not only enable us to appreciate

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1. For example in preface to *The Coming of God* Moltmann writes, "This eschatology, written thirty years after the *Theology of Hope* (1964; ET 1967), is entirely in line with that doctrine of hope" (p.xii).

the full extent of Moltmann's Christological conditioning of eschatology, but will also allow us to test out his assumption that each stage coinheres perfectly with each other.

The models, which are presented in broadly chronological order, reveal an important pattern of working. The ultimate point of origination and orientation for each lies, I maintain, in the resurrection of the crucified Jesus. In the first stage, represented by *Theology of Hope* Moltmann works *forward* from the resurrection towards the eschaton. In the second stage, *The Crucified God*, he principally (though not exclusively) works *backward* from the resurrection, and the future it anticipates, to the cross and the historical mission of Jesus. These two stages are explored in chapter 4. In chapter 5 we examine the third stage. Begun in *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* and most fully articulated in *The Way of Jesus Christ,* the predominant movement here is forward again, but this time in a way that encompasses the whole history of Christ with God from Spirit-determined beginnings towards the hoped-for parousia. Yet here it remains the case that Christ's birth in the Spirit and his parousia are *both* perceived in the light of his resurrection. Finally, in chapter 6, we investigate Moltmann's mature consideration of the way in which the parousia of Christ determines the relationship between eschatology and history in *The Coming of God*. This demands a return to a backward perspective in which the time of creation is understood in the light of God's coming 'eternity'. This pattern of argumentation, I suggest, implies that the real centre of gravity of Moltmann's theology, throughout the process of its development, remains the resurrection of the crucified Jesus. It is this which decisively colours Moltmann's understanding of the relationship between eschatology and history.

In Part Two we shall discover that the dialectical conception of the relationship between cross and resurrection which dominates *Theology of Hope* is never surrendered.[2] Rather, changes in the perspective from which it is examined mean that, over time, the elements of continuity

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2. See, for example, the following: "Just as the raised Christ does not *develop* out of the crucified and dead Christ, the *novum ultimum*...does not *issue* from the history of the old. Between the old and the new, the New Testament sets the death of Christ" (CofG 28).

which exist within the discontinuity between death and life, between the old and the eschatologically new, come to fuller expression. This shifting perspective is occasioned by a broadening of the focus of Moltmann's attention beyond the Christ event of cross and resurrection to include the whole of Jesus' eschatological history from prophetic prefigurement to expected parousia. It is a process of expansion made explicit in the preface of *The Way of Jesus Christ*. Acknowledging that the sole focus of his first two major volumes was indeed the resurrection and the cross of Christ, he writes as follows:

> "This focus was partly due to the time at which the books were written, and their context in the history of theology. I am now surrendering this standpoint in order to set 'the eschatological history' of Jesus in a holistic christology".[3]

If Moltmann is to be understood correctly here, it is essential not to confuse the abandonment of a *sole* focus on the Christ event with the surrender of the Christ event as a *decisive* focus. Its prominence is certainly far more significant than that of a feature once required by a particular set of theological and historical circumstances.[4] My thesis will be that the resurrection of the crucified Christ remains, for Moltmann, the pivotal centre of God's eschatological process with creation but, viewed within the overall continuity of this process, the early focus on discontinuity, occasioned by the irruption of the *novum* into history, though not abandoned appears softened.

Engagement with Moltmann will also lead to the construction of my own christological model. This will be required to resolve tensions in Moltmann's presentation. This model will, I hope, enable us to clarify what is meant by the 'future' of Jesus Christ.

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3. WJC 3.

4. Moltmann has very recently written in intimate terms about the genesis of his theological commitment. "Let me speak personally for a moment...For me theology springs from a divine passion - it is the open wound of God in one's own life...But for me theology also springs from God's love of life...These are also Christ's two experiences of God, the kingdom of God and the cross, and because of that they are the foundations of theology as well: God's delight and God's pain. It is out of the tension between these two that hope is born for the kingdom" (*A Passion for God's Reign*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), p.2). Here, then, Moltmann suggests that his own theology springs from the mediation of the dialectic of the cross and resurrection of Christ. We may thus be certain that the Christ event remains at the centre of his theology.

4.0 THE CENTRAL MOTIFS OF MOLTMANN'S EARLY CHRISTOLOGY

4.1 THE FUTURE AS THE RESOLUTION OF JESUS' DIALECTICAL IDENTITY

1 Identity in contradiction

For Moltmann the relationship between history and eschatology is disclosed in the relationship between the cross and resurrection of Jesus. This is true both of Moltmann's early and later work.[1] Despite the implication of the seemingly innocuous 'and' which links cross 'and' resurrection, they are not comparable events; they do not belong to the same category. Between them, Moltmann maintains, lies a radical antithesis and so a qualitative difference.[2] Accordingly, the same qualitative difference must characterise the relationship between history and eschatology. In the light of our foregoing chapters, this statement can come as no surprise. We have already established that for Moltmann the resurrection is an event of eschatological promise; an event in which God's previous promises are liberated from preconditions for fulfilment and 'set-in-force'.[3] Furthermore, we have established that Moltmann understands promise to contradict presently existing reality. If, therefore, the cross may be understood as the occasion of Jesus' identification and solidarity with the negative elements of present reality, a dialectical relation between Jesus' cross and resurrection must follow. How precisely Moltmann understands this dialectic is expounded in a brief section of programmatic importance[4] which occupies both the physical and conceptual centre of *Theology of Hope*. It concerns 'the identity of the Lord who appears as risen with the crucified Christ'.[5] Moltmann suggests that the language of resurrection in the Easter proclamation is necessitated

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1. Compare, for example, TH 197 with WJC 213f.

2. WJC 213.

3. See especially chapter 2.

4. This is also the conclusion of J.A. Irish, "Moltmann's Theology of Contradiction", *Theology Today*, Vol. 32 (1975/6), 21-31.

5. TH 197-202.

by "the two mutually radically contradictory experiences of the cross and the appearances of Jesus".[6] In depicting the nature of this theologically provocative contradiction Moltmann employs a graphic set of paired opposites. As we shall discover, the vocabulary of this depiction is indicative of the sources that have influenced his presentation. The contradiction between cross and resurrection is that between "the god-forsakenness of God's ambassador" and "the nearness of God in the god-forsaken one".[7] It is the contrast between "an absolute *nihil* embracing also God" and "the divineness of God in the crucified and dead Christ - that is, a new totality which annihilates the total *nihil*".[8] More straightforwardly it is the opposition between,

> "death and life, nothing and everything, godlessness and the divinity of God".[9]

Moltmann's phraseology, used to describe this collision of opposites, points to his appropriation of Hegel. It was one of Moltmann's Göttingen teachers, Hans Joachim Iwand, who first introduced him to Hegel's understanding of the modern experience of the world as the 'death of God'; as a universal Good Friday which accords with Jesus' historical Good Friday.[10] For Hegel this modern experience is not only one of God's absence, it also includes the perception of the 'abyss of nothingness into which all being sinks';[11] an experience of the power of transience and death. By the same route Moltmann also became familiar with the understanding of history as a dialectical process which Hegel developed in response to this experience. Meeks puts the matter well; for Hegel the resurrection of Jesus indicates that

> "God is related to reality by his contradiction of the *nihil*, the power of death, to which all reality is

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6. TH 197.

7. TH 198.

8. TH 198.

9. TH 198.

10. Meeks, *Origins*, p.34-36. Cf. Hegel, *Glauben und Wissen*.

11. Hegel, *Glauben und Wissen*.

subjected".[12]

The resurrection thus concerns the negation of the negative, both in terms of the absence of God and of death. Hegel thus provides Moltmann both with a vocabulary for the contradiction between cross and resurrection and, along with this, a way of relating the Christ event to reality. However, whereas in Hegel reality becomes merely the medium for the pictorial representation of a process immanent within the being of God (Absolute Spirit),[13] Moltmann gives full weight to the realm of history. This is what one would expect given his desire to ascribe methodological priority to the particular. Resolution of the dialectic therefore lies in a process which involves the whole of reality; it cannot leave the historical realm unaffected. Hegel's understanding is thus opened up eschatologically. The synthesis of this dialectical process lies not, as in Hegel, in the resurrection itself, but rather in an as yet outstanding future. This will be a future realised by the resolution of the dialectic of promise and presently existing reality. It will be a future, therefore, that cannot be contained within the plane of present creation. Instead it is a future which equates to the qualitatively distinct new creation. In other words, resolution of this dialectic, while it affects the historical realm and does not leave it out of account, is not open to the immanent processes of history themselves. Thus for Moltmann, eschatology cannot be a way of speaking of the mere *telos* of the immanent historical process. We shall have reason to explore this statement more fully below.

The elucidation of this radical contradiction between the experience of Jesus' crucifixion and risen appearances raises the critical question of Jesus' identity. As Moltmann asks:

> "how can it be possible to identify both experiences in one and the same person without resolving either the one experience or the other and making it of no account?".[14]

Given that it is this very contradiction which constitutes the driving force behind the Easter

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12. *Origins*, p.36.

13. See Moltmann's critique of Hegel on this point at TH 171f.

14. TH 198.

proclamation that Jesus (the *same* person) has been raised (and therefore *transformed*) from the dead, it is understandable that Moltmann holds it to be inadmissible that the question of Jesus' problematic identity can be solved through the collapse of this tension. Each of these experiences of Jesus' crucifixion and risen appearance must, therefore, be accorded equal weight. Consequently, Moltmann can claim that,

> "The fundamental event in the Easter appearances...lies in the revelation of the identity and continuity of Jesus in the total contradiction of cross and resurrection, of god-forsakenness and the nearness of God".[15]

Without such a notion of identity in total contradiction the whole Easter proclamation of Jesus' resurrection cannot be sustained. If this notion of dialectical identity thus constitutes the contingent particularity of revelation with which theology has to wrestle, illegitimate resolution of this enigma of Jesus' identity will clearly lead to a position which cannot claim specifically Christian identity. In a brief but highly important section Moltmann draws attention to three such erroneous solutions which offer a premature resolution of Jesus' dialectical identity.[16] They are labelled according to the christological positions towards which their logic tends. Significantly, they implicitly contain understandings of the relationship between history and eschatology which Moltmann will be forced to reject. In relating these false options I shall make these implicit relationships explicit.

(i) *Docetism*: What are taken as visions of the "heavenly being of the risen and exalted Lord"[17] swallow up and occlude memories of the godlessness of the cross. The cross is not overcome, it is simply no longer of consequence. This pattern would suggest that eschatology swallows up history which is thus rendered unimportant and essentially meaningless in face of the eschatologically 'new thing'. It would amount to an eschatology which had to do with the replacement rather than the consummation of creation.

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15. TH 199.

16. TH 199f.

17. TH 199.

(ii) *Ebionitism*: The resurrection appearances simply serve to confirm the claims of the dead prophet Jesus. Thus a line of continuity may be traced from the words of Jesus to the proclamation of the church which effectively bypasses the cross and resurrection. His words live on even though he does not. In this way Easter no longer concerns anything new which happened to Jesus but rather the birth of faith in Jesus' message. Though Moltmann does not articulate this, it is as if the cross is regarded as an unfortunate tragedy which need not interrupt reception of Jesus' proclamation. This pattern would suggest that eschatology is merely a way of affirming the immanent processes of history. Eschatology would be reduced to an evolutionary this-worldly hope which could have nothing to say to the problem of transience and death. It would mean the transposition of eschatology into time.[18]

(iii) *Modalism*: Cross and resurrection are merely two modes of being of one eternal and unchangeable person whose substance in itself lies beyond earthly death and risen life. It is a position that "perceives neither the deadliness of death nor the startling newness of his resurrection".[19] This pattern would suggest the transposition of eschatology into eternity.[20] Only the eternal realm would be finally real. It would accord with a notion of the immortality of the soul which is indifferent to the processes of history and the lived life[21] and which has no essential need of the language of resurrection.

The inability of these attempts to legitimately resolve the dialectic constituted by Jesus' cross and resurrection, leads Moltmann to conclude that Jesus' identity can only be understood *in* but not above or beyond this dialectic.

> "It is formally a question of a dialectical identity which exists only through the contradiction, and of a

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18. Cf. CofG 6-13.

19. TH 200.

20. Cf. CofG 13-22.

21. See, for example, CofG 58-60.

dialectic in which exists the identity."[22]

While this dialectic can find no legitimate resolution within the plane of its own contradiction, it is for Moltmann nevertheless an *open* dialectic. It is open in the direction of two dimensions inherent in the Christ event itself.

(i) First, it is open in the direction of the God who raises the dead Christ to life. It is through this act of God that the crucified may be identified as the one who is raised. Thus Moltmann suggests the point of identification between the "wholly dead and the wholly raised Christ" does not lie within Jesus himself but "*extra se* in the God who creates life and being out of nothing".[23] The Christ event therefore includes the revelation of the faithfulness and divinity of God. The Christ event is to be,

> "understood as the eschatological coming to pass of the faithfulness of God, and at the same time as the eschatological authentication of his promise and as the dawning of its fulfilment".[24]

God's faithfulness to his dead Christ affords the locus of continuity which renders the premature resolution of Jesus' dialectical identity simply within itself unnecessary. It is the reason why the dialectical elements may and, in fact, must be held together. The contradiction finds both its possibility and necessity in the God who thereby proves himself to be the ontological ground of the future of Jesus. And in the resurrection of the wholly dead Jesus, God demonstrates his divinity over even the non- (or no longer) existent.

It is interesting to observe, however, that Moltmann's borrowing of Hegelian terminology introduces a note of complication into this otherwise simple pattern of thought. In the resurrection Moltmann asserts that "...God confesses to God and reveals his faithfulness".[25]

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22. TH 200.

23. TH 200.

24. TH 201.

25. TH 200.

The effect of this worthy sounding addition is to introduce a *trinitarian* reflection into what had been an essentially *theistic* solution to the enigma of Jesus' dialectical identity. The complication it introduces is this. If God lies in fact not only above this dialectic as the agent of resurrection (theistic pattern), but also within it experiencing the contradiction of death and new life (trinitarian pattern), then where now is the continuity of identity of the trinitarian God to be anchored? In the eternity of the immanent Trinity? This is not the place to follow up this question but its occurrence points to an important area of tension in Moltmann's account of Jesus' relation to God to which we shall have occasion repeatedly to return.

(ii) The second dimension of openness of Jesus' dialectical identity is the eschatological future proleptically realised in his resurrection. Jesus possesses an "eschatological identity"[26] which comes to resolution only in the eschaton of the new creation.

> "The reconciling synthesis of cross and resurrection can be expected and hoped for solely in a totality of new being."[27]

The contradiction between promise and reality is overcome when reality conforms to the prospect held out to it in promise. Jesus' identity is thus open in the direction of fulfilment of the promise it constitutes. Thus Jesus, we might say, comes to himself in the new creation of the world.

It is this observation, I submit, which holds the key to accepting Moltmann's position that Jesus' identity in the Christ event constitutes, of itself, an inescapable dialectic. This need not obviously be the case. Elsewhere we have spoken of the resurrection as the refutation of the refutation of Jesus occasioned by his godforsaken death.[28] Could not the resurrection then be seen as a point of synthesis? Could it not be understood as the resolution of the dialectic which existed between Jesus' historical mission, in which the kingdom was anticipated, and his

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26. TH 202.

27. TH 226.

28. Chapter 2.

godforsaken death which constituted the antithesis of the kingdom of God's nearness and grace? Clearly, in a process of dialectical resolution everything depends upon where the process is said to begin, it depends upon which point is labelled the 'thesis'. Is the christological 'thesis' the historical mission of Jesus, or is it his crucifixion? The answer for Moltmann is that it can be both. The structure of dialectical resolution exists at more than one level in Moltmann's theology and a key part of our task will be the mapping and coordinating of these patterns. If Jesus' history were simply understood within the confines of his own person then the resurrection of the crucified one could be seen as a moment of synthesis. But Jesus' significance inherently extends beyond himself. For Moltmann Jesus is not just a representative person in which the future of creation is merely illustrated ahead of time. He is, what we might term, an *inclusive person*. Unlike the representative person, the inclusive person cannot be detached from that which they illuminate because it occurs in and through them. Accordingly, Moltmann can write,

> "[Jesus'] identity in cross and resurrection points the direction for coming events *and makes a path for them*".[29]

This same understanding is expressed through Moltmann's appropriation of Hegelian conceptions, with appropriate eschatological modification, for his interpretation of the Christ event.

> "...Jesus' resurrection was not seen as a private Easter for his private Good Friday, but as the beginning *and source* of the abolition of the universal Good Friday, of that god-forsakennes of the world which comes to light in the deadliness of the death on the cross."[30]

Jesus' dialectical identity, grounded in the Christ event, will only come to a resolution when the reality in solidarity with which Jesus died is itself the locus of the manifestation of the glory of God's divinity. This will happen when creation becomes the new creation proleptically 'spotlighted'[31] in his resurrection. Jesus' dialectical identity points beyond itself to the

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29. TH 201, my emphasis.

30. TH 211, my emphasis.

31. TH 191, 193.

resurrection of all reality for which he will be the *source. The eschatological future, therefore, happens in the resolution of Jesus' dialectical identity*. This is related to and congruent with the position we developed in chapter 3. There we stated that the eschatological future lies in the direction of the trajectory described by the dialectic of Jesus containability and uncontainability; a trajectory subsisting within Jesus' identity.[32]

It would be possible, I suggest, to link the two dimensions of openness pertaining to Jesus' dialectical identity, those of God and the future, by means of a notion of the incarnation. Jesus' identity as inclusive person is rooted in the history of God with the world; his identity is this history. It is the history of God's identification with the world (in the cross) for the sake of the world's transformation into correspondence with God (proleptically achieved in the resurrection). The eschatological future must therefore be thought of as irreducibly relational since the consummation of Jesus' identity leads not to some abstract future state, but constitutes the consummation of God's history, God's relation, with the world. This insight forms the kernel of a model I shall be attempting to construct as this chapter proceeds.

It is Jesus' inherent link with *both* reality as it is and reality as it will be which renders the dialectic of his identity presently irresolvable. It cannot be resolved apart from the transformation of reality into congruence with the prospect held out by the Christ event.[33] It is this observation which explains Moltmann's sustained hostility to modalism. Modalism can bring Jesus' identity to resolution, by perceiving cross and resurrection as modi of the person of Christ, only by leaving the cosmos out of account. As Moltmann states, if the dialectic of cross and resurrection is resolved simply within Jesus himself, so that the crucified raises himself apart from God, it could only result in the problematic proclamation of the birth of a

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32. As will shortly become clear, our term trajectory may also be equated with Moltmann's language of 'inner tendency' (see 4.1.2).

33. R. Bauckham's expression that the crucified Christ 'represents' the whole of present reality here proves to be insufficient (*The Theology of Jürgen Moltmann*, pp.5, 83, 101). Through Jesus' ontological link with present creation in his incarnation, Jesus also includes this reality as part of his incarnate, dialectical identity. That is why his identity cannot reach final resolution apart from the new creation of present reality. Interestingly in Bauckham's earlier article "Moltmann's Eschatology of the Cross" (*The Scottish Journal of Theology*, Vol 30/4 (1977)) this element of inclusivity was present (p.302).

new cultic Lord. It would be problematic because while such a figure might be ascribed power in relation to his own death, he would apparently have no answer to the continuing lordship of death in the exterior world occupied by men and women.[34] In this model, then, accomplished lordship and the unredeemed nature of the world make an uncomfortable pairing. Rather hope for the world demands perceiving Jesus' identity as irresolvable apart from the world's redemption. The process of the resolution of Jesus' dialectical identity must have a future. Accordingly, Moltmann can speak of the cross as sign of eschatological openness.[35] In the resurrection not all has yet been achieved. The world on which the cross stands[36] still awaits the annihilation of death which the resurrection promises. Only then will the cross find its soteriological answer.

1.2 Latency and tendency

The risen Jesus thus has an outstanding future. More is to be expected of him than has so far been achieved. In describing this process of the future Moltmann utilises the vocabulary of Ernst Bloch. Bloch provides Moltmann with a model of the appropriation of Hegel's dialectical process which is critical of the dehistoricising propensity of Hegel.[37] Following the early Marx, Bloch sees the dialectical process of reality as leading towards a 'home of identity' in which the antithesis between humanity and nature will be overcome. Provoking the criticism of 'orthodox' Marxists, Bloch further perceives the reality engaged in this process as open, dynamic and non-mechanistic in its mode of development.[38] Consequently, because this process is not susceptible to exact analysis, he resorts to the terms 'latency' and 'tendency' to

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34. TH 201.

35. TH 172.

36. Cf. TH 21.

37. See Meeks, *Origins*, p.106. What follows is largely indebted to Meeks' exegesis of Bloch.

38. Francis P. Fiorenza, "Dialectical Theology and Hope, II", *Heythrop Journal*, Vol 9 (1968), pp.386, 389.

articulate it.[39] If latency speaks of the hiddenness of the goal of the process, tendency is used as a category which mediates between the subjective decisions of human beings and the objective, real possibilities of the world. Tendency thus speaks of a process immanent within reality in which subjective and objective elements are united in a willed transformation of a transformable world.

Moltmann appropriates the terms latency and tendency to describe the process of the future opened up in the resolution of Jesus' eschatological identity. For Moltmann the future of Christ is known,

> "in striving to bring out the latencies and tendencies of the Christ event of the crucifixion and resurrection, and in seeking to estimate the possibilities opened up in this event".[40]

It is in this way, Moltmann suggests, that the 'intention of God'[41] in raising Christ from death is recognised and explicated. Yet what exactly does Moltmann intend to convey by the terms latency and tendency? It would be tempting simply to systematise Moltmann's claim that we are to take "the *absconditum sub cruce* as *latency* and the *revelatum in resurrectione* as *tendency*".[42] This might suggest that the process of the future has its goal hidden in the cross yet revealed in the resurrection. However, closer examination of Moltmann's work reveals a more complex apportionment of these terms. Latency does indeed appear to stand for the as yet hidden goal of the eschatological future opened up in the Christ event. But it is a goal which remains hidden even in the resurrection.[43] The language of hiddenness thus becomes a way of affirming the as yet incompleteness of this process even for Jesus himself. The term tendency is used to describe this eschatological process itself, but includes within it a differentiation.

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39. See, for example, *The Principle of Hope* Vol 1, Tr. Plaice, N., Plaice, S., & Knight, P., (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986) p.307.

40. TH 203.

41. TH 194, 203.

42. TH 203. Bauckham, *Moltmann*, pp.37-41 appears to fall into this trap.

43. See, for example, TH 212.

Moltmann can speak of an 'inner' and an 'outer' tendency of the Christ event.[44] The inner tendency is Christ's future lordship over all things including death. This entails the universal manifestation of the eternal life and the justice of God which are latent in the risen Christ.[45] In other words inner tendency is the eschatological process which finds its goal in the new creation.[46] The outer tendency of the Christ event is constituted by the human response created in the wake of this future prospect. It is the mission of the church which, in obedience to the future, seeks to create an anticipatory transformation of the world in the direction of what is promised. Consequently, Moltmann writes,

> "Thus hopes and anticipations of the future are not a transfiguring glow superimposed upon a darkened existence, but are realistic ways of perceiving the scope of our real possibilities, and as such they set everything in motion and keep it in a state of change".[47]

The outer tendency of mission might be taken to indicate the creation of anticipatory reconciliations of the dialectic of cross and resurrection, whereas inner tendency is the process which leads to the full resolving synthesis of this dialectic. The term tendency therefore covers two distinct processes which share a commonality of orientation. Yet, if this much is clear, frustratingly the exact relationship between the two remains obscure.[48] The contradiction which exists for Moltmann between the promise of new creation and the immanent potentialities of the existing world must mean that the inner tendency of the Christ event transcends every possible worldly process. As Moltmann states, the prospect of resurrection as a form of *creation ex nihilo* lies beyond possible changes to existing reality. The reconciling synthesis of cross and resurrection cannot be expected of any immanent chain of cause and

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44. TH 194.

45. TH 216.

46. Moltmann defines this process of the future over against two rejected positions: first, in differentiation from Kantian transcendentalism in which the future remains eternally open as an orientating notion for practical living and thus never comes to a consummation; second, in distinction from the pre-set and fixed notion of the future to be found in the cosmological pattern of apocalyptic ages (TH 194f).

47. TH 25.

48. As D. Sturm observes: "The kingdom of God is both an *imperative* whose realisation depends on human action and an *indicative* of a promised event that depends on divine action" ("Praxis and Promise: On the Ethics of Political Theology", *Ethics*, Vol 92/4 (1982), p.749). But how he asks, without offering an answer, are these related?

effect but only "in a totality of new being".[49]

> "The resurrection of Christ does not mean a possibility within the world and its history, but a new possibility altogether for the world, for existence and for history."[50]

It is therefore unclear what the outer tendency of mission can contribute to this eschatological process beyond creating anticipatory images of a future which lies beyond its potential to achieve.[51] Yet Moltmann can hint that the relationship between the two processes is more substantive than this. The person of hope, "summoned by the divine promise to the transforming of the world" acts "in the service of reconciliation".[52]

> "[I]n sympathy with the misery of being he anticipates the redeeming future of being and so *lays the foundation* of its reconciliation, justification and stability."[53]

Such a statement might suggest that there is some form of causal relationship between human action and the creation of the redeemed future. Yet the only causal relationship Moltmann explicitly allows in *Theology of Hope* is in the reverse direction.

> "The promise which announces the *eschaton*...is the motive power, the mainspring, the driving force and the torture of history."[54]

It is the future which already shapes the present by way of the anticipations it provokes of itself.[55] An important contributory factor to the ambiguity which colours the relationship between inner and outer tendency may well be the limitations inherent in the adoption of

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49. TH 226.

50. TH 179.

51. Cf. R. Alves, *A Theology of Human Hope*, p.66.

52. TH 289f.

53. TH 290, my emphasis.

54. TH 165. Cf., "The Christian hope is directed towards...a new creation...It thereby opens a future outlook which embraces all things, including also death, and into this it can and must also take the limited hopes of a renewal of life, stimulating them, relativizing them, giving them direction" (TH 33f).

55. J.J. O'Donnell (*Trinity and Temporality*, Oxford: OUP, 1983) suggests that this is because Moltmann follows Calvin's notion of the sovereignty of God: God is the ultimate actor in the drama of salvation (pp.152f). O'Donnell also draws attention to the fact that Moltmann's earliest writings were on Calvinism (see the Introduction).

Bloch's terminology.[56] For Bloch tendency is simply a process immanent in reality driven forward in the interaction of the objective and subjective possibilities of the world. Thus while the term accords well with Moltmann's conception of mission, it has had to be considerably stretched from its original sense to cover the eschatological process of the future. The result of Moltmann's extension of this one term to describe two distinct processes is that when Moltmann talks about, for example, "the open realm of possibilities that lies ahead"[57] and into which tendency presses, it remains unclear whether he means divine possibilities or creaturely possibilities awakened by the Christ event. What is required, and here of course Bloch can offer Moltmann no assistance, is an explicit account of the interrelationship between the new and original usage of the term.

Moltmann's account of the role of the Spirit in the eschatological process of the future also contributes to this ambiguity since the Spirit's action is perceived to drive forward *both* inner and outer tendency. The latency of eternal life, proleptically realised in the resurrection of the crucified, is mediated to creation, suggests Moltmann (following Paul[58]), in the working of the Holy Spirit.

> "The Spirit subjects man to the tendency of the things which are latent in the resurrection of Jesus and which are the intended goal of the future of the risen Lord."[59]

But how are we to understand tendency in this instance? On the one hand, Moltmann informs us that this "tendency of the Spirit" is a process of grace, brought about not in objective time, nor by human activity, but as,

> "The inner necessity of the Christ event itself, the tendency of which is finally to bring out in all things the eternal life latent in him and the justice of God latent in him".[60]

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56. See R. Bauckham, *Moltmann*, p.22.

57. TH 213.

58. Romans 8:11.

59. TH 212.

60. TH 216.

The Spirit, we might say, integrates creation into the Christ event and so into the prospect of the future of Christ. The Spirit actualises the potential openness of Christ's eschatological history for our inclusion within it and brings that history to its conclusion in the synthesis of the new creation. For Jesus was conformed to the pattern of present existence in his sufferings and death, so that creation might be brought into conformity with his future of glorification.[61] In this way the Spirit mediates to creation the transcendent soteriological possibilities of God opened up in the Christ event.

Yet, on the other hand, Moltmann can imply that the "tendencies of the Spirit" are to be found at work in creating a present response to the future. This takes place in the universal mission of the church, in hunger for divine righteousness which leads to a struggle for public and bodily obedience, and in love of the transitory and imperfect creation.[62] The action of the Spirit here, therefore, appears to conform to the pattern of thought which sees promise as creating history; God's transcendent possibilities call forth the sympathetic taking up of immanent possibilities on the part of the community of hope. But what remains unclear is what contribution the Spirit-led mission makes, if any, to the future of the new creation. What we miss is an account of the relationship between the Spirit's action *within* history and the Spirit's action which leads to the *transcending of the present world* in new creation. The result is to place a question mark against the value of the world's own emergent processes as these are sustained and enabled by God.

This is a problem inherent in Moltmann's dialectical understanding of the soteriological future. At the extreme, Moltmann's emphasis on contradiction leads to an unduly negative assessment of the present world.

"Present and future, experience and hope, stand in contradiction to each other in Christian

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61. TH 212.

62. TH 225.

> eschatology...Everywhere in the New Testament Christian hope is directed towards what is not yet visible; it is consequently a 'hoping against hope' and thereby brands the visible realm of present experience as a god-forsaken, transient reality that is to be left behind."[63]

Yet the continuity of identity between the crucified and risen Christ speaks against such an extreme position. It suggests that the new creation is the consummation of the old not its replacement by some unrelated new reality. Indeed, it is because the eschatological future, despite its newness, is the outstanding future for *this* present reality that it can exert the very causal effect upon the present that Moltmann maintains. Only so can it act by "awakening hopes" concerning the future and "establishing resistance" against that which is contrary to its prospect.[64] This must imply, therefore, that the crucified Jesus can only be understood to reveal and illuminate the negative aspects of present reality. Over against Hegel, the world cannot be comprehensively categorised by the experience of the 'death of God'. Bauckham is therefore correct in asserting that the total contradiction between cross and resurrection must refer not to creation and its promised new creation as such.[65] It refers rather to the total contrast which the Christ event reveals between two trends: the *trend of creation* towards death and nothingness by reason of the problem of transience; and the *trend of promise* towards the prospect of eternal life which is held out to creation in the resurrection of Jesus. The problem with Moltmann's dialectical conception of the eschatological future is thus as follows. While the language of contradiction can articulate the relationship of this future to present negatives, it is not able to say anything about its relationship to present positives. This observation sheds light on the ambiguous place of mission in relation to the construction of the eschatological future, for mission is just such a present positive created in the wake of the Christ event. We met precisely this same problem before when considering Moltmann's use of the question of theodicy in relation to Jesus' particular relevance.[66] As this chapter unfolds we shall be interested to see whether other christological models of the relationship between history and

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63. TH 18.

64. TH 227.

65. Bauckham, 1987, p.42.

66. Chapter 3.

eschatology can cope with the question of the contribution that creation can make to its own future more effectively.

1.3 Defending the openness of Jesus' future

It will be clear from the analysis offered above that Moltmann's insistence on Jesus' still outstanding future is grounded in his understanding of the dialectical relation between Jesus' cross and resurrection: an as yet unreconciled dialectic points to an expected future synthesis. Defence of this awaited prospect explains Moltmann's polemic against both Pannenberg[67] and Barth[68] who, in different ways, reduce the outstanding future of Jesus to the purely noetic level.

For Pannenberg history constitutes the locus of an indirect self-revelation of God. The full revelation of God via this medium will only be possible once history is complete, that is from the perspective of history's end. Consequently, if Jesus' resurrection is interpreted as the end of history in the midst of history then, within the horizon of this model, Jesus may be understood as the anticipatory locus of the revelation of God.[69] Moltmann's objection to this scheme is that it renders Jesus' the purely proleptic illustration of a future which will happen in any case *independently of him*. Accordingly Moltmann protests:

> "If it were solely the risen 'destiny' of Jesus that constituted the forestalling of the end of all history and the anticipation of the 'destiny' still awaiting all men, then the risen Jesus himself would have no further future. Nor would it be for Jesus himself that those who knew him would wait, but only for the repetition of his destiny in themselves."[70]

But against the corollary that humanity finds its future in a destiny like Jesus', Moltmann insists that humanity finds its future *in* him. We are to wait for our future by waiting for

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67. See especially TH 76-84.

68. See especially TH 227-229.

69. See *Jesus - God and Man*, pp.66-73.

70. TH 82.

Christ's future. Here then we connect once again with the prospect of an outstanding future which arises from understanding Jesus as, what we have termed, an *inclusive person*. Jesus is unabstractable from the 'destiny' of the world.

For Moltmann, this outstanding future of Christ ultimately equates with his parousia. This he understands, in a phrase of Paul Schütz, as the 'presence of what is coming towards us, so to speak an arriving future'.[71] Notice, and we shall explore this observation more fully later, that the image of movement contained in this phrase works in the *opposite direction* from that of the inner tendency of the Christ event. It is this feature which will later cause us to ask about the relationship between the becoming and the coming of Christ.[72]

It is in connection with the parousia expectation that Moltmann engages Barth in dialogue. Moltmann inquires whether this future of Jesus can be understood within the expectational category '*novum*'.

> "Does [Jesus'] future...bring something new, or merely a universal repetition of what has already happened in the history of Jesus Christ?"[73]

For the Barth of *Dogmatics in Outline*[74] the future of Jesus does not bring another 'turning-point' but rather the universal unveiling of what has already been achieved in Christ once and for all. But to Moltmann's mind, this position commits the error of interpreting the Christ event primarily within the category of fulfilment rather than perceiving it as the event of the eschatological validation of God's promises. Accordingly, over against Barth, Moltmann argues that the future of Christ must be expected from as yet outstanding events which bring the promise constituted by the Christ event to fulfilment. The future of Christ brings

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71. TH 227.

72. See chapter 6.1.

73. TH 227.

74. London: SCM, 1949, pp.134f.

> "[n]ot a mere repetition of his history, and not only an unveiling of it, but something which has do far *not yet happened through Christ.*"[75]

It is as if the Christ event constitutes the *promise* that Jesus will be the *source* of the future; not as its passive facilitator but as its active agent. This would imply that the parousia of Christ must be understood as his *future act*. Only then will the outstanding future arrive which, according to Moltmann, consists in the following: the fulfilment of the promised righteousness of God in all things; the resurrection of the dead; and the unopposed lordship of the crucified Jesus in the new creation.[76]

1.4 Questions

In this section I have argued that the irresolvable nature of Jesus' dialectical identity, which grounds his outstanding future prospect, can only be maintained if Jesus is regarded as an inclusive person. Only if Jesus' identity is grounded in the process of God's history with the world, in its components of identifying solidarity and soteriological transformation, can his identity be seen as inherently eschatological. Yet *Theology of Hope* contains two puzzling strands which remain in tension with this principle. These strands will be briefly articulated now so that we might be in a position to measure how well Moltmann's developing christological models provide satisfactory solutions to these tensions.

(i) Perhaps out of respect for Barth, Moltmann concludes the dialogue we have examined by offering an interpretation of Barth's principle that 'the Alpha and the Omega are the same thing'. Moltmann writes,

> "To be sure, the Alpha and the Omega are the same as far as the Person are concerned...(Rev. 1:8). But

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75. TH 228f, my emphasis. Cf., "all statements and judgements about [Christ] must at once imply something about the future which is to be expected from him" (TH 17).

76. See TH 202-224. Here again we see the effect of Moltmann's preferential application of the interpretive horizon of theodicy to the Christ event (see Chapter 3).

> they are not the same where the reality of the event is concerned...'the former things' are not yet passed away".[77]

Yet this principle would have the effect of separating Christ from the events which are to take place through him. It would bestow an eternal identity upon him rather than, as Moltmann as maintained, an 'eschatological identity'.[78] It would appear to constitute the permanent resolution, and so negation, of his dialectical identity. It would seem to come dangerously close to the modalist position he elsewhere rejects. Yet, significantly, when Moltmann earlier describes Jesus' dialectical identity in *Theology of Hope* he characterises it as a tension between *what* Christ was and *what* he will be.[79] The implication would thus be that the *who* is the same. But Moltmann can also use the expression "who he will be and what is to be expected from him".[80] As we shall discover, this suggests that Moltmann's understanding of the identity of Jesus is more complex than he explicitly states.

(ii) In an attempt to secure the character of the eschatological future as yet outstanding, Moltmann can draw on the 'eschatological subordinationism' present in Paul's extension of the resurrection kerygma in I Corinthians 15:23-28. The coming lordship of Christ over all things is itself to be surpassed in the all-embracing lordship of God.[81] The argument thus runs as follows: the future must be outstanding because it extends even beyond Jesus.[82] Yet this theistic pattern is in tension with the implicit trinitarianism of Jesus' inclusive identity. More obviously, it contradicts Moltmann's insistence on Jesus as the source and ground of the eschatological future. This is the very argument which we have seen him use against

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77. TH 229.

78. Cf. TH 202.

79. TH 84f.

80. TH 17.

81. See TH 163.

82. TH 201. Here Moltmann grounds this insight in that dimension of the openness of Jesus' dialectical identity which points beyond himself to the divinity of the God who raises him from death.

Pannenberg. I wish to suggest that the very dialectic that grounds Jesus' outstanding future inherently speaks against the eschatological redundancy (subordinationism) which Moltmann can sometimes use to support this future. The Jesus of a dialectical identity is, in some respect, already an incarnate figure. He is one whose identity is grounded in the eschatological process of God with the world.

4.2. *THE INCARNATION OF THE FUTURE*

1 *Futurum and adventus*

In the latter half of the decade which saw the publication of *Theology of Hope* Moltmann introduced an important clarification of his understanding of the distinction between the temporal future and the eschatological future. He did this by a careful delineation of the two terms *futurum* and *adventus*.[83] Since their introduction it is important to observe that these terms, and the understanding they convey, have formed an abiding feature of his thinking.[84] It is not that these terms become a vehicle for new ideas which cannot find an implicit grounding in *Theology of Hope*. Rather their importance lies in the way in which they help eliminate ambiguity and so sharpen the focus of Moltmann's thinking.

(i) *Futurum*: This is the future which develops out of the past and the present.[85] It is a future which *becomes* as a result of "the actualisation of the primordial potential"[86] inherent in creation. It is a future which emerges from the selective realisation of the immanent possibilities of the world. Future in this sense is effectively what everyone commonly understands by the term. As such, it is a notion of future which coinheres with our general experience of transience. As Moltmann rightly indicates, "that which is not yet, will one day no longer be".[87] Future in this sense is inevitably doomed to one day become past and thence to remain past. As this somewhat gloomy conclusion reveals to the extent that this future can

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83. W. -D. Marsch (Ed.), *Diskussion über die »Theologie der Hoffnung« von Jürgen Moltmann* (Munich: Christian Kaiser, 1967) pp.210-212; TasE pp.11-16. Christopher Morse informs us that this discussion arose in Moltmann's mind as a result of his participation in the Christian-Marxist dialogue of the late 1960's (*The Logic of Promise*, p.15).

84. EH 52f; FofC 29f; GinC 132-135; WJC 317f, 320; CofG 23-29. These terms have proved to be of general theological use. See, for example, how S. May employs them in his dialogue with science-fiction (*Stardust and Ashes*, London: SPCK, 1998, pp.120f).

85. GinC 133.

86. TasE 12.

87. CofG 25.

be known in advance it is approximated by the method of *extrapolation*.[88] Because the future develops out of the present, the trends of the present may be continued into the future in the form of prediction. Of course predictions can be wrong in detail.[89] But, when it comes to such fundamental patterns as the mortality of each living present moment as it comes to share the unalterability of that which is past, the results of extrapolation appear secure. Thus if our concern is not simply what the weather will be next week, but rather the redemption of transient creation, in the sense of its finding a healed and transfigured permanence, *futurum* cannot become a ground of enduring hope.[90] This conclusion forms the basis of Moltmann's critique of Bloch's notion of 'tendency' which, as we saw in the previous section, had somewhat problematically influenced Moltmann's thinking about the process of the future of Jesus. *Futurum* accords precisely with Bloch's understanding of the future.[91] One of the results, therefore, of Moltmann's clarification of his terminology is the generation of an increasing critical distance from the work of Bloch.[92] If eschatology is supremely to do with soteriology, as I will argue, then *futurum*, because it cannot support a hope for the overcoming of transience, cannot be the ground of eschatology.

(ii) *Adventus*:[93] Given that Moltmann does wish to speak about an eschatological future of Jesus which is the ground of Christian soteriology he manifestly requires a different concept of the future. This is what the future as *adventus* affords. We observed above that already in *Theology of Hope* the future of Christ ultimately equates with his parousia, with an arriving future.[94] This insight is now developed more fully. *Adventus* is the future which is *coming*, the

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88. TasE 14. This is precisely how weather forecasts are constructed.

89. One need only think of the notorious example of Michael Fish and the hurricane of October 1987.

90. GinC 133; CofG 25.

91. See especially TasE 12.

92. See, for example, EH 36-39.

93. Moltmann can also use the German term *Zukunft* which is a literal translation of the Latin, particularly in his earlier work.

94. TH 227.

future which is on its way to present reality.[95] It is the future which is to be expected of the coming of God.[96] Significantly, therefore, it does not depend on the possibilities inherent in creation, but arrives out of the possibilities of God. It can thus be a future for which not even its possibility exists by the standard present reality. And this means that it can bring forth the radically new (*novum*) and unexpected. Clearly, if this is the case, then the method of extrapolation is inappropriate here. Rather Moltmann suggests this future can only be known through *anticipation*. What precisely Moltmann means by this will be examined shortly. Strikingly, *adventus* is a future which is to come to all the modes of time, past, present and *futurum,* in redemptive transformation.[97] This statement is of crucial importance. It reveals that *adventus* enjoys an "ontological priority"[98] over the modes of time. *Adventus* by transcending past, present and *futurum* can thus be God's mode to act on past, present and *futurum*.[99] This means, therefore, that from the vantage point of *adventus* the transience of time is no longer an issue; it can no longer have its isolating irreversible effect. It can thus be overcome. Consequently, we might think of *adventus* as the answer to the question, '*When* must God be in order to be able to redeem what has become in the world's unfolding history?' Presumably because *adventus* is thus the mode of God's saving action Moltmann also perceives it as the mode of God's being. This has a very significant result.

> "If the mode of God's being is future, God cannot be thought of as the future of the contemporary present, but must also be understood as the future of past presence. Therefore, the future as mode of God's being also contains that which formally was called his eternity. As the power of the future over every historical presence, God can be understood without the abstractions of the traditional metaphysics of time and history

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95. GinC 133.

96. TasE 13. Moltmann grounds this insight exegetically in Revelation 1:4 where the phrase describing God 'who is to come' takes the place of the expected 'who will be' (see, for example, TasE 13; GinC 133f; CofG 23f). Without wishing to open up the whole area of Moltmann's use of scripture it is worth indicating that this change of phrase is indeed extremely significant and suggests that God awaits us from the future. As such it accords with the whole theme of Revelation which explores what God's coming in Christ will mean. See, for example, G.R. Beasley-Murray, *Revelation*, (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1974) p.54.

97. TasE 13 n.19.

98. TasE 13.

99. TasE 13.

as the eternal one."[100]

As our investigation proceeds we shall have reason to ask about the relationship between a traditionally conceived notion of God's eternity and the eschatological future.[101] In the above quotation Moltmann affords us a useful indication of how he understands this relationship. For now let us put the matter briefly: just as eternity transcends time so does *adventus*. The difference would appear to be that whereas eternity has a constant, unchanging relationship to time, *adventus* as, to use an expression of Moltmann's later work, a 'coming eternity' is distinguished by a changing relationship to time. By this I mean that it can come to *transform* time. But, we notice, not out of the possibilities inherent in time, but solely out of its own possibilities and so on its own terms. I have already suggested that creation possesses a 'forward-openness' for this possibility.[102] So, although beyond its own immanent possibilities, its transformation need not result in the imposition of alien meaning upon creation.[103]

Although Moltmann's discussion of Jesus as the incarnation of the future in *The Crucified God* is conducted without any mention of an understanding of the eschatological future as *adventus* over against *futurum*, this equation is, I suggest, vital to the success of his argument. As a preliminary to understanding how Jesus as the incarnation of the future connects with the other structural features of Moltmann's theology which we have explored, it will be useful at this point to briefly sketch the relationship between *adventus* and these other delineations of the eschatological future.

The future prospect held out in the resolution of Jesus' dialectical identity examined in the previous section may be equated with *adventus*. In that earlier discussion we saw that the logic of dialectical resolution of a contradiction between present reality, with its trend towards death

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100. TasE 14f.

101. See especially chapter 6.

102. Chapter 3.4.

103. Moltmann speaks about the 'transformability of the world' (TH 288). Cf. R. Bauckham, *Moltmann*, p.22.

and nothingness (cross), and the prospect of its universal resurrection, as a form of *creatio ex nihilo* (resurrection), lay beyond any immanent chain of cause and effect. Thus the future so indicated clearly lies beyond *futurum*. Of itself, however, this does not automatically establish an equivalence with Moltmann's definition of the future as *adventus*. To establish this link, consider the following. The notion of resurrection essentially conveys a future for that which is past, and by extension, for all future (*futurum*) times which will become past. Moreover, if Jesus is the source of this future then all reality is thus related to the *same* future prospect held out in his resurrection. The prospect of the resurrection of reality in which Jesus' eschatological identity comes to resolution is thus a single future which transcends the process of temporal becoming. It shares an equivalent structure with *adventus*. In demonstrating this equivalence I have resisted the short-circuit route of simply connecting the parousia of Christ with the coming of God. Such a connection is of course made by Moltmann, and is important as we shall see. But my concern here has been to demonstrate, in an outline fashion, an underlying parallel of logic.

If the argument offered above is accepted then it follows immediately that the future of the new creation is to be equated with *adventus*. Interestingly, Moltmann's 1970 summary of the central argument of *Theology of Hope* perceives that this "one final future" is to be actualised in the coming of God to dwell with all people.[104] This expansion which relates the future to God's coming presence raises an important problem. We now appear to have two models of the process of new creation which clearly demand to be related together. On the one hand, the new creation results from God's transfiguring indwelling in creation, and, on the other, from the participation of creation in Jesus' death and resurrection. Exactly how these two motifs may be related together is a question we shall reserve for later.[105]

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104. EH 50. Similarly Moltmann can also state that the "ultimate and universal new thing of the future" (note the singulars) is occasioned by "the earthly and visible inhabitation of God in a new creation" (RRF 33, part of the text of a lecture given in the USA in 1968).

105. See chapter 6.

Adventus may also be equated with the notion of a transcendent future which we discerned to be a corollary of Moltmann's understanding of the process of promise-development. An underlying continuity of promissory identity was seen to be implied by the way in which past promises of God could successfully undergo reinterpretation by being used as a horizon of interpretation for an experienced *novum*. The inner identity of every promise was seen to be grounded in a common future to which each promise pointed with varying degrees of precision. This common future was therefore understood to transcend the temporal process of history in which each promise was issued.[106] We identified this common future as the transformation of creation into congruence with the God of promise. Significantly, this concept of the transcendent future which emerges out of promise-development accords very well with a defining difference which Moltmann perceives between *adventus* and *futurum*. It revolves around the different ways in which these two concepts of the future are related to the transience of time. Whereas *futurum* suffers the fate of transience, so that what is future from the perspective of the present will one day be past and thus irretrievably lost, the future as *adventus* can actually be found in the past in the form of anticipation. As a result of its transcendent relationship to time *adventus* can have announced itself to the past in the form of the "previously promised".[107] In this way past promises and past promissory actions can be understood as the source of *anticipations* of *adventus* in so far as they constitute the loci of the announcement of this future.

2.2 Retrospective projection

In the light of these preliminary considerations we are now in a position to examine what I consider to be the foundational argument of *The Crucified God*. Found in chapters four and five of this book it also proves to be of pivotal significance to the whole of Moltmann's theological endeavour from this work onwards. In seeking to gain a comprehensive

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106. See Chapter 2 for full details of the argument.

107. TasE 14.

understanding of the crucified Jesus, Moltmann resolves to approach the cross from two complementary and so reciprocally related directions. The first, the perspective of history, is uncontroversial. It seeks to comprehend the crucified Jesus in the light of his life and ministry. Here the past throws light upon the future. The second approach is perhaps more controversial. This seeks to comprehend the crucified Jesus from the perspective of eschatology. Now the future is held to throw light on the past. This perspective looks back to the cross from the vantage point of his resurrection.[108]

> "If we are to understand the truth about Jesus according to the witness of the New Testament, we must take two courses at the same time: we must read his history both forwards and backwards, and relate both readings, the ontic-historical and the noetic-eschatological, to each other and identify the results we achieve."[109]

We shall now explore the basis of this method of reading history backwards, and why it should lead to results that require to be identified with the historical perspective.

Moltmann's writing discloses two key considerations for the successful and legitimate application of this method. The first assumes the continuity of identity of the crucified and risen Jesus. It is the unity of Jesus' person and history which enables both forward-historical and backward-eschatological perspectives to be related: they have to do with the same person and, in the cross, with the same pivotal event. In an epigrammatic formula which parallells the trinitarian formula of Rahner.[110] Moltmann asserts:

> "The risen Christ *is* the crucified Jesus, and *vice versa*".[111]

The second legitimating consideration has to do with the nature of the resurrection itself. It has

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108. CG 112. In chapter 2 we already established the determinative power of the *novum* in initiating the move back across the breach to Jesus' historical mission. See especially *figure 5* (chapter 2.7) which shows the *novum* of Jesus' 'appearance'-as-living' as the point of origin for the interpretation of Jesus.

109. CG 162.

110. "The 'economic' Trinity is the 'immanent' Trinity and the 'immanent' Trinity is the 'economic Trinity'" (*The Trinity*, London: Burns and Oats, 1970, p.22). See chapter 7 for Moltmann's trinitarian application of this formula.

111. CG 160.

to do with the *quality* of the eschatological. The resurrection is the anticipation of "God's qualitatively new future",[112] it is the "the beginning of the eschatological transformation of the world by its creator".[113] Consequently the eschatological does not follow the historical as if it were just the next stage in a quasi-linear process of development.

> "The 'future' of which the first real anticipation was seen in [Jesus'] resurrection was not understood as future history and thus as part of transitoriness, but eschatologically as the future of history".[114]

Although the terms *futurum* and *adventus* are not employed in this quotation, it should be clear from the definition of these terms offered above that they capture precisely the distinction Moltmann desires to erect here. The eschatological has to do with the 'future of history', with a future which thus transcends history. It has to do with *adventus*. Notice also that the eschatological is defined over against mere 'future history' which is subject to transience: *futurum*. This interpretation is confirmed by the way in which Moltmann describes Jesus' resurrection as his being raised into the glory of the coming God.[115] This quality of the eschatological which transcends history explains Moltmann's insistence that the resurrection affects the whole person and history of Jesus.

> "[T]he resurrection affects not only his death or his cross in itself, but his whole person and therefore also his life, preaching and ministry. It is not his death which is lifted up into the divine life...it is the crucified Jesus who, according to the Easter testimony, is raised and exalted to become the lord of the future of God."[116]

That the eschatological transcends the historical also explains why the eschatological has to do with final definitions; with definitions which reveal what is and has been the case across the whole process of the unfolding of history. Moltmann makes this explicit in the case of God.

> "...God has finally, in the end-time, defined himself through the resurrection of Jesus as *the God who*

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112. CG 163.

113. CG 162.

114. CG 163.

115. CG 168.

116. CG 126.

raises the dead."[117]

But for Moltmann the resurrection also constitutes the definition of the person of Jesus in a parallel way. This is why it is not only possible, but in Moltmann's opinion necessary, to read Jesus' history backwards. Moltmann's fundamental axiom, that the eschatological future (*adventus*) reveals, explains and determines the origin of Jesus, follows from this transcendence of the eschatological future over history.

> "In the historical account, birth precedes life, and life precedes death. The past can be narrated, and every narration, like enumeration, begins at the beginning and proceeds to the end. But in the direction of eschatological anticipation, the last must become first, the future precedes the past, the end reveals the beginning and objective time-relationships are reversed."[118]

Thus whereas in ordinary historical terms a person's origin should explain their future, Moltmann argues that in the case of Jesus whom God raised from death,

> "his future determines and explains his origin and his end his beginning".[119]

It is this conclusion that fundamentally grounds Moltmann's method of reading history backwards or, what I shall term, a method of *retrospective projection.*[120] That which is revealed of Jesus' identity in the resurrection may be assumed to be true of him from his origin;[121] since what is revealed is that which transcends the process of time. Accordingly it provides an augmenting, complementary perspective to that of conventional historical enquiry.

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117. CG 188.

118. CG 113. Cf. HP 54 n.18 which reveals the extent to which Moltmann's phraseology here is indebted to the work of Käsemann.

119. CG 164.

120. The phrase 'retrospective projection' may appear a little clumsy. It could, of course be replaced with the one word retrojection. However, I have elected to use it because it seems to capture more explicitly, and thus perhaps more effectively, what is entailed in Moltmann's method.

121. Cf. Pannenberg who speaks of a 'retroactive force' rather than merely retrospective force. For Pannenberg Jesus, it seems, requires the resurrection in order to be himself; it makes him who he is (*Jesus - God and Man*, pp. 135-138). On this point see S.J. Grenz, *Reason for Hope*, (Oxford: OUP, 1990), p.119. R. Olson has commented that such a notion of retroactivity has more in common with adoptionism rather than classical incarnational theology ("The human self-realisation of God", *Perspectives in Religious Studies*, Vol 13 (1986), p.221). In any case it would appear to undercut what Moltmann intends by his use of what I have termed retrospective projection. See Moltmann's somewhat blunted critique at CG 181 and more focussed remarks at WJC 76.

The fundamental logic of the method of retrospective projection would appear to be: if now, then before.

> "[F]or Easter faith resurrection by God qualifies the person of Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ of God".[122]
>
> "By his resurrection Jesus is qualified in his person to be the Christ of God. So his suffering and death must be understood to be the suffering and death of the Christ of God."[123]

Notice that for this method to be successful, at least within the dimension of that which is projected back, there can be no degree of change or becoming with time. Only that which remains constant with respect to time, only that which transcends the temporal plane can be the subject of such a method. As Moltmann affirms, the designation of Jesus as 'Christ' and 'Lord' "could not be dated from his resurrection on".[124] It is not that one person is changed into another, so that we have the problem of two persons, one historical (Jesus) and one eschatological (Christ).[125] It is rather that the permanent identity of the one Jesus is revealed in the resurrection. The resurrection says *who* Jesus *is*.[126]

> "So the crucified Christ has not changed into a risen and glorified figure. Rather, his resurrection qualifies the one who has been crucified as the Christ".[127]

For Moltmann's trinitarian reflections, much depends on the way in which the designation of Jesus as the 'Son of God' falls within the orbit of this same method. Here Paul is an important ally.

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122. CG 180f

123. CG 182.

124. CG 181. Cf., "If the resurrection event is an eschatological one, then the risen one cannot be what he is only from the time of his resurrection. He must also have this same identity in his suffering and death on the cross, in his proclamation and ministry, in his whole life from the very beginning" (WJC 170).

125. CG 181.

126. Cf. Pannenberg, *Jesus-God and Man*, who speaks of 'revelatory identity' (p.133).

127. CG 182. Cf. RRF 44 n.4.

> "...Paul himself constantly associated this Easter formula of the Son of God with the sending of the Son and his sacrifice by the Father in his *eschatological retrospect* on the life and death of Jesus".[128]

The resurrection which, in an early credal fragment, is seen to constitute Jesus as the Son of God (Rom 1:4) is then used by Paul to disclose who Jesus was from the beginning of his sending into the world (Gal 4:4) and in his being 'given up' by God for the sake of the world (Rom 8:32). Again the same logic appears to have operated: if now (resurrection), then before (historical mission).

2.3 Jesus: the incarnation of the future

If the method of retrospective projection can be successfully applied to Jesus' identity then his identity must transcend time. More particularly, from what we have so far established, it would appear that it must be rooted in *adventus*.[129] What this means may be explored by investigating what for our purposes is the most important result of Moltmann's use of the method of retrospective projection. Its utilisation yields the highly significant result that Jesus must be understood as "the incarnation of the coming God".[130] And further, since the future results from God's coming, Jesus must be conceived as the incarnation of the eschatological future.[131]

At this point we might pause to observe that in the first half of this chapter our exploration of the nature of Jesus' dialectical identity led us to conclude that this understanding of his identity could only be maintained if Jesus was understood as some form of inclusive person. Now, I suggest, in *The Crucified God*, we find Moltmann explicitly expressing and developing this idea which lay hidden in the structure of the argument of *Theology of Hope*. An elucidation of

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128. CG 191, my emphasis.

129. See TasE 15 where Moltmann interprets the NT declaration of Jesus' sameness (Hebrews 13:8) by explicitly linking this with *adventus* to become an expression of Jesus' exalted lordship over time.

130. CG 184.

131. CG 184. Cf., CPS 74.

this development now follows.

For Moltmann the resurrection reveals that "God has identified himself, his judgement and his kingdom with the crucified Jesus".[132] Therefore, arguing in the reverse direction, Moltmann asserts,

> "the resurrection of the crucified Jesus into the coming glory of God contains within itself the process of the incarnation of the coming God and his glory in the crucified Jesus".[133]

On first impression this argument looks as though it is based on a sleight of hand. *Identification with another* revealed in the resurrection becomes *identity with another* when retrospectively projected back on to the crucified Jesus. Moltmann's writings reveal, however, that he is consciously aware of the obvious distinction between these two statements. This is to be seen in the essay 'Theology as Eschatology' (1968) which anticipates much of the central argument of *The Crucified God*. Here he distinguishes between two complementary theological modes of argument which parallel the distinction between the historical and eschatological perspectives of *The Crucified God*. In the first mode, which he terms 'eschatological christology',[134] the dominant movement of thought is forward from the resurrection towards the ultimate future of God. Describing the results of this perspective he writes,

> "If we start with the resurrection, we must say that God in his being does not become identical with Jesus, but identifies with Jesus through an act of his will".[135]

Moltmann suggests that this distinction finds expression in the New Testament differentiation between God and the Lord. In Paul's account of the resurrection process[136] it is clear that the reign of the risen Christ is limited. It extends between his resurrection and the defeat of death

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132. CG 169.

133. CG 169, cf., "The coming God has been made flesh in Jesus of Nazareth" (*Ibid.*).

134. TasE 30.

135. TasE 24.

136. 1 Corinthians 15:23-28.

in the resurrection of reality. It is, therefore, also provisional: it prepares for the final sovereign reign of God. To describe this understanding Moltmann adopts Brunner's phrase. The form of christology expressed here may be labelled as 'eschatological subordinationism'.[137] Jesus serves the interest of God, but is not part of God's definition and being. He possesses a functional, not an ontological connection with God and his future. Yet Moltmann wishes to assert that such 'eschatological subordinationism' arising from the perspective of 'eschatological christology' can at best be described as one-sided. Its notion of a Christ who must become redundant and eventually disappear verges, he suggests, on the absurd.[138] Rather this approach needs to be deepened by a second mode of theological argument, that of 'christological eschatology'.[139] It is this second mode which overcomes the puzzling use of eschatological subordinationsim that we earlier discerned in *Theology of Hope*.[140] In this complementary perspective the movement of thought is in the reverse direction; from the future of God toward the history of Jesus which culminates in his cross. This is then the structure of retrospective projection. In the light of this perspective Moltmann can make the following counter-balancing assertion,

"Jesus is not only the 'stand-in' of God's future, but conversely also the incarnation of God's future".[141]

As has already been asserted, to be the incarnation of God's future equates to being the incarnation of the coming God himself. In this statement then Moltmann is drawing the same conclusion as we have already observed him to make in *The Crucified God*. How then do these two perspectives of eschatological christology and christological eschatology, and the ideas

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137. *Das Ewige als Zukunft und Gegenwart* (1965), p.227, cited at TasE p.25.

138. TasE 26.

139. TasE 30.

140. See section 1.4 above.

141. TasE 27. Cf. Pannenberg's retroactive argument which operates from the revelation of God in Jesus' resurrection. If in the resurrection Jesus reveals God fully, as a forestalling of the end of history, Jesus must be 'one with the being of God' (*Jesus - God and Man* pp. 69, 127-137). Moltmann argues, however, that resurrection is an anticipation rather than a revelation of the end, and, more than this, that it is an anticipation of the *coming* God. I am grateful to Dr Paul Fiddes for this insight.

they are held to entail, conceptually fit together? This is a question to which Moltmann does not give an explicit answer. To construct an answer, therefore, we must attempt to draw together a number of strands which Moltmann leaves only implicitly connected.

The key to unlocking this puzzle lies in observing the reciprocal relationship which pertains between *anticipation* and *incarnation* in Moltmann's thought. Consider the following example.

> "In historical terms Christ can be called the *anticipation* of the coming God on the basis of his resurrection from the dead. In eschatological terms, however, he must be called the *incarnation* of the coming God in our flesh and in his death on the cross."[142]

This piece of logical deduction follows if we supply the missing assumption that it is rooted in the relationship between *adventus* and time. And understanding how this assumption applies will show why eschatological christology, which only sees Jesus as the coming God's 'stand in',[143] the one whose task is simply to preserve space for God in creation until he comes, is inadequate.

Ordinarily, anticipation of something becomes redundant once that something has arrived. But this seemingly obvious relationship is derived from the common experience of anticipation of that which is *futurum*. What, however, would it mean for something to be the locus of the anticipation of *adventus*? In fact, as we have seen, for Moltmann anticipation is the precise term which he employs for advanced knowledge of *adventus*. When, therefore, Moltmann speaks of Jesus as the anticipation of the coming God, it is surely this particular relationship between anticipation and *adventus* which he has in mind. Accordingly, we may assume that Jesus must be understood as an anticipation of *adventus*. Now we have already established that *adventus*, the coming transforming future of God, is that which transcends the temporal process. As such, where *adventus* is held to be manifested it must disclose that which holds true for all moments in time. This, we observed, is the revelatory axiom upon which

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142. CG 184.

143. TasE 25. Here Moltmann adopts a phrase of Käsemann.

retrospective projection depends. If, therefore, the resurrection may be understood as the supreme example of the intersection of *adventus* with time under the conditions of history, then this revelatory axiom must be especially applicable to his resurrection. Consequently for Moltmann, as we saw, Jesus' future disclosed in the resurrection reveals his origin. Utilising this insight, if Jesus is raised into the future of God then he must have his origin in the future of God. Consequently it follows that Jesus can only anticipate the future because the future is the locus of who he is. We may therefore conclude that, in contradistinction to the ordinary experience of anticipation of *futurum*, anticipation as the anticipation of *adventus* implies the incarnation of that which is anticipated.

This relationship could be said to hold in a weak sense of every promissory word and action to be found in the history of God's promise. If they disclose *adventus* by means of anticipation then they 'incarnate' this future in word or reality. But if Jesus' resurrection constitutes the supreme displacement of the eschatological future into history, the supreme affirmation of promise, the final definition of the God *whose being is the form of the future*, then 'incarnation' applies in a qualitatively distinct way to Jesus. The arrival of this future cannot, therefore, make Jesus redundant, rather it brings him to himself. And if Jesus is essentially connected to the future which is nothing less than the coming of God to creation, then he must also be essentially connected to God.

The question then becomes how exactly is Jesus essentially connected to God. Interestingly 'Theology as Eschatology' already contains a sophisticated answer to this question which integrates the results of both the approaches of eschatological christology and christological eschatology. Although only presented in outline terms it is the trinitarian relationship between the Father and the Son which is held to provide a solution. Returning to 1 Corinthians 15: 23-28 which had been previously employed as a witness for 'eschatological subordinationism', Moltmann now makes the exegetical observation that,

> "...Jesus will turn over the kingdom not just to 'God', but to 'God, the Father'".[144]

Although this text viewed in isolation would be incapable of supporting this notion, Moltmann appears to use it to intimate that Jesus relationship to the kingdom, to the eschatological future, is far from functional because the form which the kingdom takes is ontologically grounded in the relationship between Jesus and the Father.[145] This is a conclusion for which Moltmann could garner much NT evidence. Put succinctly salvation is seen, especially by Paul, as constituted in creation's participation in the Son's relationship to the Father actualised through the Spirit.

> "[W]hen the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!' So through God you are no longer a slave but a son..."[146]

A trinitarian perspective therefore allows the functional outlook of eschatological christology to be integrated with the ontological conclusion that Jesus is the incarnation of the coming God afforded by christological eschatology. *It suggests that there is an ontological underpinning of Jesus' function in relation to the future of God's coming.* It can also hold together the distinction and unity between Jesus and God respectively generated by these perspectives. A trinitarian perspective can affirm an identity in differentiation.

2.4 Jesus the unchanging source of change?

The soteriology offered by *The Crucified God* is profoundly rooted in the method of retrospective projection. Before we embark upon an analysis of this connection it will be helpful to signal in advance why this exploration will, in the context of our present discussion,

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144. TasE 27

145. This is, however, made explicit in TKG 71-74, 121.

146. Galatians 4:4-7. Cf., "[Y]ou have received the spirit of sonship. When we cry, 'Abba! Father!' it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ..." (Romans 8:15-17). Romans 8:21-23 also displays a similar pattern with a cosmological breadth.

hold a particular interest. Moltmann's soteriology is essentially about *change*. It is about the transformation of creation to become new creation. This transformation is, however, to be effected through Jesus, a person whose essential identity, according to retrospective projection, must be *unchanging*. More particularly, this transformation of creation is to be effected, as the first half of this chapter disclosed, in and through the resolution of Jesus' dialectical identity. Just how these ideas are to be held together is not something Moltmann discusses. In fact, his writings suggest an enduring degree of contradiction and confusion about this issue. As we already observed (section 4.1.4), we are left wondering whether Jesus' identity is about constant being or eschatological becoming. And if the former, how does the unchanging become the source of change? Yet, despite this confusion, I will argue that the necessary intellectual motifs to bring about a solution to these apparent tensions can be found within Moltmann's work.

Moltmann's soteriology arises from appreciating how Jesus' cross and resurrection mutually condition the significance of each other. The first effect of the Easter manifestation of Jesus as the Christ, argues Moltmann, is to render the cross a riddle and a mystery.[147] The resurrection demands that the cross receive theological attention. It does so since, by revealing *who* it is who dies on the cross via retrospective projection, the resurrection raises the question of the 'why?' of his death with particular urgency. Moltmann is undoubtedly correct that the earliest strata of the NT point to the answer of a primal 'for us' in relation to this question. This answer then receives later, secondary expansion in a multitude of forms: for our sins;[148] for our justification;[149] for our reconciliation.[150] But the exclusivity of the 'for us' could not have been constructed apart from an understanding of *who* had died. This is what I take Moltmann mean to mean when he writes,

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147. CG 181.

148. 1 Corinthians 15:3b, as Moltmann points out, contains an early (pre-Pauline) credal statement to this effect.

149. Romans 5:9.

150. Romans 5:10.

> "Only in the light of his resurrection from the dead does his death gain that special, unique saving significance which it cannot achieve otherwise, even in the light of the life that he lived".[151]

Yet if the resurrection demands that the cross find significance, the significance of the cross thus generated renders the resurrection soteriologically relevant.

> "[H]is death on the cross 'for us'...makes relevant his resurrection 'before us'".[152]

As a result of Jesus' cross, the resurrection becomes more than simply the enacted model of a detached utopia. This is vital if the resurrection is to have saving significance. For while the symbol of a desirable future might stimulate the actions of those who already possess the power to shape their own destiny, it would remain irrelevant to the vast majority of humanity. It would have no meaning for the hopeless, the dying and those closed in upon themselves (in Luther's phrase *homo incurvatus in se*).[153] The cross becomes the ground of the soteriological significance of the resurrection by becoming the means through which the future it proleptically realises is *mediated* to those in solidarity with whom Jesus died.

> "Through his suffering and death, the risen Christ brings righteousness and life to the unrighteous and the dying. Thus the cross of Christ modifies the resurrection of Christ under the conditions of the suffering of the world so that it changes from being a purely future event to being an event of liberating love."[154]

Arguing once more from the resurrection to the cross, utilising retrospective projection, the notion of mediation can be deepened further. Jesus *mediates* the future of God's coming to a world as yet at odds with this future because he is the *incarnation* of the future of the redeeming kingdom of God.[155] He is this future present in the midst of the world's suffering.[156]

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151. CG 182.

152. CG 183.

153. CG 186.

154. CG 185.

155. CG 184.

156. Cf. CG 5.

In Moltmann's soteriology, therefore, cross and resurrection mutually condition the significance of each other by means of retrospective projection. We may summarise Moltmann's argument by enlisting the aid of his pithy expression:

> "[Jesus'] prolepsis forms the basis of his pro-existence and in it becomes significant for us."[157]

Moltmann's soteriology is thus an *eschatologia crucis*:[158] the Christ event of cross and resurrection reveals a *future for us*. If either cross or resurrection should be collapsed into the mere manifestation of the significance of the other, and nothing more, this soteriological account would collapse along with such an attenuation.

If the world was already in its end-state perfection there would be no need for soteriology. All language of salvation is the language of protest. It is born of a dissatisfaction with the present and a desire that things should be otherwise than they are. If we might characterise Moltmann's soteriological hope as being that creation should find equilibrium (conformity) with the being of God, then present reality would, in these terms, have to be marked by disequilibrium. Promise, which discloses the saving future, is for Moltmann, we remember, in contradiction to present reality. If therefore Jesus' identity is essentially grounded in *adventus*, in this coming future of equilibrium with God, his solidarity with present creation through incarnation must lead him into disequilibrium with his own identity. This is a direct corollary of Moltmann's theology though it is not a conclusion which he explicitly draws. Here then is an interesting find. The very soteriology which was built upon retrospective projection which assumes that Jesus can undergo no change, carries the implication, once established, that especially the Jesus of the cross must be said to be changed with respect to his essential identity.[159] It is interesting that although Moltmann does not make this explicit logical

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157. CG 184f.

158. TH 160; CG 5.

159. Just what this term is intend to convey will become clearer as the argument proceeds. We have not yet brought to light the considerations that would enable us to define it more closely. In fact, this will only be finally possible in chapter 6.

connection, his work does display strands which affirm this conclusion. The rest of this chapter will be engaged in attempting to advance this argument further by examining two such strands and their attendant corollaries: first what I have earlier termed Jesus' ec-centric identity; and second the tension between Jesus' being and becoming. In the process, they will lead us to lay the foundations for a christological model capable of integrating together Moltmann's apparently contradictory claims.

2.5 Jesus' ec-centric identity revisited

In chapter 2 we explored in detail how Moltmann's hermeneutic of promise-development operated in respect of the interpretive relationship between the church's understanding of Jesus' historical mission and the *novum* of his risen appearance. The effect was to render Jesus' identity ec-centric; centred not in the present of his mission nor even in his risen appearance but in the future of ultimate fulfilment variously disclosed by these promissory components of his 'history'.

> "The life, words and actions of the Jesus of the synoptic gospels are centred not on himself, but on the future which is called the 'kingdom of God'. His God and Father is to reveal him as the one who he truly is."[160]

Thus Moltmann understands that "the centre of [Jesus'] existence is outside himself"[161]. Jesus' ec-centricity results, I suggest, from his role as mediator of the eschatological future. It results from his soteriological 'connection' with both present reality and the saving future. This implies that the process of salvation is grounded in an eschatological process of becoming in Jesus' identity as he moves toward a 'centric' existence in the future. Indeed, Moltmann can state both that in Jesus' mission "he spoke in relation to the future which his identity would bring about",[162] and that Jesus "exists for the sake of the one who he is to

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160. CG 104.

161. CG 106; cf. p.105.

162. CG 104.

be".[163] It would be possible, therefore, in the light of our foregoing discussion, to make the following connection. The disequilibrium between Jesus and his essential identity, which we predicted would be soteriologically necessary, is to be found in Moltmann's work in the form of Jesus' ec-centric existence. Jesus' becomes ec-centric because he is the incarnation of the future in a world as yet out of equilibrium with this future. Furthermore, the notion of ec-centric existence suggests a way to bring together two stands of thought in apparent tension: the implication of retrospective projection that Jesus' identity remains constant with respect to time; and the corollary of Moltmann's soteriology of a process of eschatological becoming in Jesus' identity. Jesus is not engaged in a process of pure development, but is *in the process of becoming in time who he is in adventus*. This simple deduction is not one which Moltmann explicitly makes.

Developing this statement further allows us to reconcile both the insistence of *Theology of Hope* on a Jesus with an outstanding future brought about through the resolution of his dialectical identity, with the firm assumption of *The Crucified God* that Jesus' identity remains constant. In principle we may ground the constancy of Jesus' identity necessary for retrospective projection in the constancy of the goal of the resolution of Jesus' dialectical identity. This is because the goal of such a process, the synthesis, must lie on a higher level, and so 'transcend', the process of dialectical resolution itself. Jesus comes to himself, we earlier concluded, when the creation in solidarity with which he died is transformed into the new creation proleptically realised in his resurrection. The model of the future as the resolution of Jesus' dialectical identity thus implies that Jesus' comes to himself in the arrival of *adventus*, in the future constituted by the coming of God. If the goal of Jesus' dialectical becoming thus transcends the process of that becoming (as the synthesis transcends the dialectic it resolves) then we may say that in this model Jesus is in the process of becoming who he is.

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163. CG 106. This an expression which Moltmann explicitly borrows from O. Weber, *Grundlagen der Dogmatik* II, (1962) p.75.

Notice, however, that in this model, of the future as the dialectical resolution of Jesus' identity, the resurrection does not equate with the goal itself. The risen Christ is still on the way to becoming himself. Yet, in retrospective projection the assumption was made that the resurrection reveals who Jesus *is* and that this disclosure may simply be projected back into the cross and Jesus' historical mission. Do we not then have a tension here? In fact this tension need not undermine the synthesis between *Theology of Hope* and *The Crucified God* which we are attempting to construct, but it does reveal a lack of precision in Moltmann's work. To fully work through the problems entailed in Moltmann's theology is a task that will last until the end of Part Two. But, by way of providing some orientation for the way ahead, and to advance our immediate argument, three problem areas may be identified which require clarification.

(i) First, part of the difficulty lies in the way in which Moltmann uses the term *adventus*. On the one hand it stands for the mode of God's being; it is the locus of God's transcendence over time.[164] On the other hand Moltmann employs it to describe the future result of God's coming to creation. It is thus a cipher for the new creation. These two uses of *adventus* are closely linked, in fact very closely bound together. This is because the future of creation is occasioned by its transformation into conformity with the being of God. God transforms creation, we might say, by coming to creation as he is. But, despite the closeness of this connection, these two uses are not quite identical. One refers to what *is* true for God in his mode of being, and the other to what *will come to be* true for creation in God's arrival. Recognising that this ambiguity exists will, it is hoped, prevent misunderstanding of what is intended by the term *adventus* in advance of a closer examination of the problem.[165] However, we have already made sufficient progress to be able to see how this ambiguity hides Moltmann's second problem area.

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164. TasE 13f; CofG 24.

165. See chapter 6.

(ii) The resurrection of Jesus may be understood, I suggest, as the intersection of *adventus* with time, under the conditions of history. Moreover, it may be thus understood in *both* of the senses of *adventus* we have just outlined. Yet it is impossible to demonstrate this without engaging in a systematic consideration of the relationship between Jesus' human and divine natures. This is just what Moltmann does not do. His explicit reason for declining to do so turns on his belief that the language of natures is in danger of importing into christology alien conceptions of humanity and divinity that conflict with what must be said on the basis of the concrete history of Christ. In particular, he is aware that in the patristic era the assumed notion of God's impassibility prevented full weight being given to what the crucified Christ might reveal about the passibility of God.[166] But his refusal to engage in constructive systematic reflection in this area, albeit with suitable modification, leads to confusion. He can both disparage the two natures' doctrine and yet find himself having to adopt the language of nature all within the space of two pages.[167] But in relation to our immediate concern it means that Moltmann cannot distinguish between what the resurrection reveals about *adventus* in the two distinct senses we have defined above. He is unable do this because he is unable to distinguish between Jesus' divine nature and his incarnate identity. For Jesus' divine nature the resurrection is the revelation of who he is in *adventus*; who he is in his divine mode of being. In this way the resurrection is the locus of the *revelation* of *adventus* in our first sense (mode of God's being). As such, it legitimates the retrospective projection which Moltmann deploys in *The Crucified God*. But for Jesus' humanity the resurrection constitutes the prolepsis in time of the transformation of creation to new creation. The resurrection is in this way the locus of *anticipation* of *adventus* in the second sense of our definition (new creation). Yet, in the one person of the incarnate Christ both these senses coinhere together. Because of his incarnation, because of the divine Son's ontological connection with the world, even if for his divinity the resurrection means that he becomes who he already is, yet, as an *incarnate person*, he cannot fully come to himself until the whole of creation with which he is connected corresponds to his

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166. See especially CG 227f, 267-278.

167. TKG 120f.

divine mode of being. Jesus cannot be himself until creation corresponds with himself. And, as we shall see, this is only finally achieved by the Spirit's integration of creation into Jesus' history. Consequently, the outstanding resolution of Jesus' dialectical identity at the centre of *Theology of Hope* is the product of Jesus' incarnate identity as we had already suspected. Jesus is not yet who he will be for creation in his parousia. As Moltmann will later affirm:

> "The resurrection of the crucified One is the anticipation of his parousia in glory, and his parousia is the fulfilment of his resurrection".[168]

(iii) Moltmann's third difficulty follows from the lack of conceptual clarity revealed in the first and second problem areas. In his utilisation of retrospective projection he fails to explicitly distinguish between grounding this in, on the one hand, the resurrection as the presence of God's *adventus* (under the conditions of history), and on the other, the resurrection as the presence of eternity. This error arises, I suggest, because in and of itself the method of retrospective projection cannot easily distinguish between these two assumptions. Retrospective projection would operate exceedingly well on the basis of an eternity-time relation. For clearly, that which is eternal can be retrospectively projected across time from the point of its disclosure. And an eternity-time relation would certainly be one way of ruling out any degree of becoming in the dimension of that projected which would undermine this method. Significantly, in Moltmann's later work he does indeed appear to ground the legitimacy of this method in just this relationship.

> "[I]f the crucified Christ has been raised into the eschatological life of the new creation, then the raising of Jesus cannot be understood as simply one more event in his life, an event which took place historically, after his death. His death is a historical event...But his raising is much more: it is eschatological. The eschatological moment of his raising from the dead must therefore also be understood as God's eternal moment".[169]

The assumption of an eternity-time relationship also seems to lie beneath the surface of

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168. WJC 320.

169. WJC 76. Cf. p.49.

Moltmann's enlistment of an Aristotelian epistemological principle to justify this method.[170]

> "According to the ancient theological doctrine, the order of knowing (*ratio cognoscendi*) works in the opposite direction from the order of being (*ratio essendi*). What is the last thing for human knowledge is first with regard to being. Whereas Jesus is not recognisable as the Son of God until his death on the cross and his resurrection, in the order of being he is Son of God before this history takes place."[171]

Aristotle assumes an eternal unmoved mover, the first in being, who is known from the effects he produces in time as their cause. It is a pattern of the transcendence of the eternal over time.

This principle, or better an adaptation of it, may however be legitimately used without the destruction of a genuine eschatological future by way of the 'short-circuiting' effect of a classical notion of eternity. The future may be said to reveal the origin if the future concerned is *adventus*. As we have already observed, Moltmann considers *adventus* to share something of eternity's relationship to time. It transcends time. But *adventus* is distinguished from eternity by having a 'history' with respect to time: it is coming. Thus, on the one hand *adventus* does transcend time and so can be used as the basis of retrospective projection. Yet, on the other, it can still legitimate an eschatological relation of development between itself and time. It is coming. What Moltmann does, therefore, by failing to explicitly distinguish between the resurrection and the presence of eternity in his use of retrospective projection, is to run the risk of foreclosing on Jesus' outstanding future. By suggesting that the resurrection reveals who Jesus *is*, without further clarification, he is in danger of turning 'coming', promised in the resurrection, into 'arrival'.

If we maintain the distinction between the resurrection and the final arrival of the eschatological future, while seeing the resurrection as the supreme moment of its anticipation and disclosure, then we can talk meaningfully of the risen and crucified Christ as being in the

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170. Without explicit mention of Aristotle, R.D. Zimmy has questioned whether the form of argument we have labelled retrospective projection is not more reminiscent of the assumed "presence of static essences" associated with Greek thought than with the patterns of Hebrew thought ("The Meaning of the Crucifixion and the Resurrection in Moltmann's 'The Crucified God'", *Modern Churchman* Vol 21 No 1 (1977) pp.8f.).

171. CG 91. Cf., WJC 49, 77.

process of becoming who he will be for creation (the emphasis of *Theology of Hope*) *and* of the resurrection as being the moment of revelation of who he is (the emphasis of *The Crucified God*).

This postulate, however, carries a supremely important corollary. If the resurrection is the preeminent moment of the revelation of Jesus' identity, and, the resurrection is dialectically related to the cross, then we may not argue directly to Jesus' ultimate identity from the cross itself. This also entails that the method of retrospective projection must be engaged in with some subtlety. An elucidation of these points will be in order.

Moltmann himself offers an example of the degree of sophistication I have in mind in one of the instances of the method of recapitulation that we met in chapter 2. According to Mark 15:34, Jesus died with a sense of profound abandonment by God: he died as the godforsaken one. In this way his death was in marked contrast with the experience of his life. For Jesus' proclamation of the nearness of the kingdom was grounded in his own experience of the closeness of God. This was an experience, Moltmann suggests, which went beyond Israel's experience of a relationship mediated through covenant.

> "Note in passing that Jesus often called God exclusively 'My Father'. This is the expression of a fellowship with God which is not mediated through the covenant, the nation and tradition, and must be therefore be termed a direct relationship."[172]

The cross therefore leaves a profound question mark over the nature of Jesus' relationship with God which demands to be revisited (recapitulated) in the light of his resurrection. Moltmann expresses this necessity in trinitarian terms as follows:

> "If, abandoned by his God and Father, he was raised through the 'glory of the Father', then eschatological faith in the cross of Jesus Christ must acknowledge the theological trial between God and God. The cross of the Son divides God from God to the utmost degree of enmity and distinction. The resurrection of the Son abandoned by God unites God with God in the most intimate fellowship."[173]

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172. CG 147.

173. CG 152.

Thus, utilising the method of retrospective projection from resurrection to cross Moltmann asks,

> "How is the Easter day fellowship of God with God to be conceived in the Good Friday cross?"[174]

Simply to project back the fellowship of the resurrection onto the cross without some appreciation of *context distinction* would simply cancel out the godforsakenness of the cross. It would negate and undo history. It would imply that the impression of godforsakenness was simply mistaken. Instead, Moltmann is careful to recognise a co-ordinate of this fellowship which exists within the context of the absence of fellowship. This is the *conformity of will* exhibited in the cross between the forsaking Father and the Son who voluntarily surrenders himself to death.[175] These is but one surrendering movement in the cross mediated by the Spirit.[176]

Used with this degree of sophistication, so that history is not obliterated, retrospective projection enables the godforsakenness of the cross is to be understood against the background of a *normative* relationship of fellowship revealed in the resurrection. In this way it may be employed to discern the degree to which Jesus' solidarity with present creation leads him into disequilibrium with his essential identity. Solidarity with creation in a state of alienation from God leads him to be out of step with his essential identity which is grounded in supreme fellowship with God. It is this 'out of stepness', this disequilibrium, which leads to a notion of his identity being engaged in a process of dialectical resolution. The Jesus of the cross is thus the 'incarnation of the future'; the 'incarnation of the coming God'. Moreover, he is these things in the very circumstances of their negation. Incarnation is thus a way of holding together the identity of opposites: traditionally God and humanity; here God as creation's future, and

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174. CG 152.

175. CG 191f.

176. TKG 82.

creation's alienated present.

If, then, the resurrection of Jesus is the supreme discloser of *adventus* then the primary, though not the only, movement of interpretation must be from the resurrection to the cross. It is the resurrection which discloses what is the normative case; a norm which transcends the process of time. A secondary movement of argument from the cross to the resurrection will then disclose something of the nature of the eschatological process in which Jesus' identity is involved. To disregard this logical implication, to argue that the cross is the primary point of disclosure of Jesus' identity (and so of God's identity) would lead to some very strange conclusions. It would suggest, in the case we have examined, that alienation rather than fellowship was a normative part of Jesus' identity. When Moltmann makes statements such as, "The pain of the cross determines the inner life of the triune God from eternity to eternity",[177] he is, I suggest, committing just this error. But the determining christological flaw in logic is already present in *The Crucified God*.

> "...God represents and reveals himself in the surrender of Jesus and his passion and death on the cross. But where God represents and reveals himself, he also identifies and defines himself."[178]

2.6 An emerging model

The argument of this second half of the chapter has been rather complex. We have been attempting, by degrees, to isolate and then relate together the various theological motifs associated with the notion of Jesus as the incarnation of the future. These are motifs which in Moltmann's work, however, largely remain only implicitly connected, or else in relationships of tension. It might be helpful, therefore, to offer a summary, albeit in outline, of the Christological model which is emerging when these motifs are connected in accordance with the suggestions I have so far made. For the sake of simplicity we shall begin by concentrating

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177. TKG 161. See chapter 7 where we take up this statement again.

178. CG 192.

on Jesus' divine nature. In the following section we shall then develop these insights further by asking about Jesus' humanity.

Jesus' mode of being, like that of God, is future. This is because Jesus' identity is rooted in the being of God. To say that Jesus has his essential identity in the future sounds strange and abstract. This is because we are conditioned to think of the future as *futurum*. From our perspective *futurum* is as yet non-existent and therefore remote. Consequently the future heard in this sense would not appear to be a very promising locus of being. The future in question, however, must be conceived as *adventus*. This is the locus of God's ability through Jesus and in the power of the Spirit to act upon the past, present and *futurum* of the temporal creation so as to transfigure it into congruence with his own being. It may be distinguished from eternity in the classic sense because its relationship with time will not remain as it presently is; it will come to transform time. Because the future of creation resides in its conformity with God's mode of being, this mode of being may be labelled as future. God *is* the *future* of creation. More specifically, the Son's relationship with the Father is the form of the new creation which God will bring about through Jesus, that is, through himself. Thus far all I have done is follow out the implications of Moltmann's equating Jesus with God via the method of retrospective projection analysed above.

To conceive of Jesus' mode of being as *adventus*, however, entails that his future discloses his origin. This follows from the transcendence of *adventus* over time. Thus, from the perspective of creation, the resolution of Jesus' dialectical identity orientated upon the goal of *adventus* implies an original 'unfurling'[179] of Jesus' essential identity into time.[180] Here I am assuming that the *qualitative* distinction between time and *adventus* allows time to subsist within *adventus* much as is classically assumed about the relationship between time and

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179. This term was suggested to me by Rowan Williams.

180. Moltmann uses this same structure of argument in *The Way of Jesus Christ*: "Christ's exaltation and presence are the cognitive ground for his incarnation and history; while the incarnation and history are the 'true' ground for his exaltation and presence" (p.77). However, his following of the patristic form of this argument (previously articulated at p.49) leads him to base its logic in the relationship between eternity and time.

eternity. Through the unfurling of his identity into time in incarnation, Jesus becomes conformed to the pattern of the present existence of creation. More specifically, because creation as it presently exists is alienated from God, Jesus' solidarity with creation, involves his unfurled identity in a certain amount of 'change' with respect to its form in *adventus*. The orientation of Jesus' life is therefore characterised by a vector of becoming as he moves towards who he is in *adventus* under the conditions of time. It is in the wake of this movement of becoming that Jesus' historical mission takes place. As the incarnation of the future, and just because he is the ground of this future, Jesus *anticipates* through his person, words and actions the future that is coming to creation. This process of becoming also means that, judged from the perspective of creation, Jesus is perceived to be not yet himself. He is perceived to be irreducibly open to the future of the kingdom; his existence centred not in his present self but in the future which he proclaims in word and action. As Moltmann suggests, Jesus is "the kingdom of God in person".[181]

Jesus' distorting solidarity with creation reaches its zenith in the cross in which he identifies with the negative aspects of present reality: its alienation from God manifested in its sinfulness, suffering and in its enslavement to death (transience). The cross thus represents, if you will, the deepest moment of incarnation. As such it guarantees that the mediation of the saving future, incarnate in Jesus, is to be actualised for *all* creation even in its negativity and its inexorable trend towards nothingness. Yet, if the cross is about Jesus being conformed to the world in all its negativity, then the resurrection is about the proleptic transformation of the world into conformity with Jesus' essential identity. Here we might paraphrase the famous patristic axiom: 'He became as we are so that we might become what he is'.[182] The resurrection signals a decisive point in the process of the resolution of Jesus' dialectical identity; a process rendered necessary though his incarnation in time. It is the supreme anticipation of the resolution in which he becomes himself, and in which creation, now

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181. *Jesus Christ for Today's World*, Tr. Kohl, M., (London: SCM, 1994), p.7.

182. Irenaeus, *Against the Heresies*, Bk V.Pref. On this see J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, (London: A.&C. Black, 1977), p.172.

ontologically connected to him because of the incarnation, is transformed into his likeness. Conceiving of salvation as creation's participation in the Son's relationship to the Father (through the Spirit) makes this relationship between Jesus' realisation of his identity and the soteriological transformation of creation clear. The *same* path traced by the process of Jesus' becoming who he is, is for creation a path of transformation into conformity with Jesus' original pattern of existence. Jesus is thus in process of becoming himself whereas creation is in process of becoming something it was not before. Jesus' 'history' begins and ends in the same place; *adventus*. Creation, however, begins and ends in different places: time and participation in *adventus*. Salvation through the resolution of Jesus' dialectical identity is thus a process which combines a transformation for creation with the 'undoing' of a transformation for Jesus. In this way, I suggest, we can conceive of a soteriological *change* to creation effected in and through an overall *constancy* in Jesus' being. Consequently we have achieved a basis on which to resolve this tension that we earlier discerned in Moltmann's soteriological account.

2.7 Jesus' being and becoming

To this basic structure of argument we must add another level of complexity. It will be a vital addition. Paradoxically it will also lead to a clarification of the ideas so far advanced. Here we must begin to take up the question of the relationship between Jesus' humanity and divinity which Moltmann refuses to address. The necessity of engaging in this task is disclosed in Moltmann's writings by a tension between the being and becoming of Jesus.

Thus far I have argued that the language of Jesus' becoming and being are both necessitated by Moltmann's christology. A process of the resolution of Jesus' dialectical identity speaks of becoming. The method of retrospective projection from the resurrection as the supreme anticipation of *adventus* assumes a constant being. Furthermore I have demonstrated how the two may be related together. Jesus' being in *adventus* is unfurled into time in incarnation and Jesus as the incarnation of the future is set on a process of becoming who he is. However, in

Moltmann's later work where, as we shall see, the emphasis increasingly falls on Jesus' process of becoming,[183] statements can be found which suggest that Jesus' being and becoming are irreconcilable opposites. Compare the following two statements from *The Way of Jesus Christ* which are made within two pages of each other.

> "...Jesus' personhood does not exist in isolation, *per se*; *nor is it determined and fixed from eternity*. It acquires its form in living relationships and reciprocities, and becomes an open identity in the course of Jesus' history."[184]
>
> "*Who he truly is*, is to be manifested in his death and resurrection."[185]

The second statement is in exactly the form of statements made in *The Crucified God* which signal that the resurrection is the point of disclosure to be used in retrospective projection across Jesus' whole historical mission. Yet if the first statement is correct, and Jesus' personhood is completely open and in a process of development, such a method is invalidated. Rather, to be compatible with the first, the second quotation should begin: 'Who he has truly become'. Is it possible, however, to construct an understanding in which both statements can be held together in their present form? I wish to suggest that it is.

To succeed the step we must take is to systematically distinguish between what may be said of Jesus' human and divine nature. I have already indicated something of the confusion which arises from both Moltmann's unwillingness and inconsistency in using the term 'nature'. The point is very definitely not that a conception of the incarnation of God in Jesus is unimportant to Moltmann. It is central to his theological proposals, and the more so as his work progresses from its earlier to its later phases. Moltmann's trinitarian reflections, which first come to real expression in *The Crucified God*, must assume the incarnation of God in Jesus. How else could

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183. Cf. the title of Moltmann's 1989 volume. *The Way of Jesus Christ* is chosen in part to convey just this impression. "The symbol of the way embodies the aspect of process, and brings out christology's alignment towards its goal" (WJC xiv).

184. WJC 136, my emphasis.

185. WJC 138, my emphasis.

he perceive the cross as an event "between God and God"?[186] It is equally clear from Moltmann's writings that Jesus is genuinely human. In fact, in *The Way of Jesus Christ* the emphasis falls so much on Jesus' becoming humanity that we are almost left to infer his identity as the divine Son. As Richard Bauckham comments,

> "...Moltmann seems to see Jesus as a human being whose relationship to the Father in the Spirit makes him the unique Son of God. Presumably it is this relationship which constitutes Jesus' identity with the eternal Son, but Moltmann offers only the merest hint of this".[187]

This is an insight we shall seek to develop further as we undertake to do what Moltmann has not done: attempt to give an explicit account of how Jesus' divine and human natures might be related. The aim will be to integrate the insights which Moltmann affords by means of the independent theological proposals that I shall make. Before this, however, in fairness to Moltmann, we should clarify further why Moltmann does not adopt the language of 'natures' and why his proposed alternative will not do.

It is possible that Moltmann's reluctance to use the term 'nature' stems from his unwillingness to root the reality of creation in general, and humanity in particular, in what we might describe as an immanent ontology. This unwillingness is driven by his eschatology. The future of salvation, and the orientation towards the future which this hope creates, are not grounded in the 'essence' of creation, its immanent potentialities, but solely in the God of promise.[188] The place of 'nature' is thus taken by history, or mission, seen as the immanent correspondent within present creation of the eschatological future grounded in God. Correspondingly Moltmann writes:

> "Seen theologically, the axiom of historicism - 'man does not have a nature but a history' - can be accepted when we define what man's history is. According to the biblical conception, man is identified and determined in and through that history in which he is incorporated by God's covenant and promise. His

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186. CG 151. Cf., "Consequently, what happened on the cross must be understood as an event between God and the Son of God. In the action of the Father in delivering up his Son to suffering and godless death, *God is acting in himself*" (CG 192, my emphasis).

187. "Moltmann's Messianic Christology", *Scottish Journal of Theology*, Vol. 44, (1991) p.527.

188. See Meeks, *Origin*, p.112f.

'essence', and that means his identity and continuity, is determined by the call of God".[189]

Moltmann's later development of a through-going metaphysics of relationality would only act to undergird this notion. A person is identified in their relationships and supremely in their relationship to God. Perhaps this is why Moltmann seeks to replace the language of two natures with the language of two relationships.

> "What the dogmatic doctrine of the two natures termed 'Christ's divinity' really means Jesus as 'only begotten Son' in his exclusiveness and uniqueness. What is called 'Christ's humanity' really has to do with Jesus as 'the first-born among many brethren'. For the one person of Jesus Christ is not a matter of two metaphysically different 'natures'. It is an expression of his exclusive relationship to the Father, by reason of his origin, and his inclusive relationship to his many brothers and sisters."[190]

Moltmann's alternative notion of an exclusive and inclusive relationship results from part of the biblical datum to which a conception of the incarnation needs to appeal. But its inadequacy, as it presently stands, is revealed as soon as one desires to speak of the trinitarian God's action in relation to the world. In the doctrine of creation, for example, to assert that the Father created the world through the Son in the Spirit[191] makes necessary a distinction between the role of the eternal divine Son in creation and Jesus' humanity as created. To express these internal relationships within the one person of Jesus, the language of 'natures', or something which fulfils the same purpose of distinguishing God and the world, will be required. Moltmann's formulation cannot successfully achieve this goal. What he terms Jesus' exclusive relationship to the Father, masks the relation of Christ's *divinity* to creation. Correspondingly, his inclusive relationship to creation masks the relation of Jesus' *humanity* to the Father and the Spirit.

Given then that the language of natures (or some functional equivalent) appears to be required, how might we develop such language to accommodate what Moltmann wants to say about the being and becoming of Jesus?

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189. HP 105.

190. TKG 120.

191. Cf. TKG 111-114.

To say that Jesus is in the eschatological process of *becoming* who he *already is* makes sense in respect of his divine nature. It makes sense of an essential identity which is grounded in *adventus* and so fixed with respect to time. The logic of retrospective projection built on the assumption that "[Jesus'] future *determines* and explains his origin"[192] also fits this pattern of thought. If Jesus is in process of newly becoming who he originally is, then that the future goal already determines this process of becoming appears reasonable.[193] But the same cannot be asserted of a human person. To say of the human Jesus that his path of becoming does not shape but is rather completely shaped ('determined') by his future would destroy the *emergent* quality of human becoming which is its essential characteristic. The value of creation resides in its contingent unfolding. It is just because its future is open and at stake that the actions of the past and those of the present have a particular significance. In other words *futurum* may not of itself be a category of eschatological salvation, but it is the category of creation's present meaning and value. The same applies in the particular case of a human life. We become in time. We define ourselves through a contingent selection of the possibilities and opportunities which lie before us. Our seeming mistakes come to define us as well as our apparent successes. What then would become of the value of human decision and action, through which we determine ourselves, if present life was merely the trial run at becoming an identity which is already fixed? What would be the value of choice if all choices ultimately led to the same conclusion because God had determined 'in advance' exactly who we are and so who the process of salvation should make us become? Notice, therefore, that a process of becoming in and of itself is not sufficient to ground the inherent significance of human life. What is required is *contingent becoming*. This is not to suggest, however, that our freedom in becoming is not conditioned in manifold and complex ways. Our genetic make-up, our environment (of especially our up-bringing) in terms of significant relationships, geography,

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192. CG 164.

193. Moltmann appears to draw this connection between Jesus' divinity and his existence as an eschatological person. In *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* he writes: "In the light of his crucifixion and resurrection it is impossible simply to talk about the divine person of Christ; one must speak more precisely about his eschatological person" (p.74).

and our past experiences, all condition human freedom. In fact, they make it *our* unique field of freedom. But within this conditioning, unless some genuine degree of openness and contingency remains, the value of human life is irrevocably undermined.[194]

Consequently, unless the becoming of Jesus' humanity is marked by this same degree of genuine openness the resulting christology will collapse into docetism. A Jesus who simply becomes who he already is may appear to be fully human, he may appear to undergo a process of contingent development, but in reality there could be no genuine development at all. Accordingly we may interpret Moltmann's first statement cited above that "Jesus' personhood...is not determined and fixed from eternity" as being an accurate affirmation of what must be true if Jesus' authentic humanity is to be secured.

It is important to realise in addition that the method of retrospective projection is simply inappropriate for human persons. Consider the example of a person who at the age of seventy acts with remarkable bravery and courage. Would it be legitimate to then project this revelation of courage back into that person's earlier years? Would it make sense to say that because of this incident, despite all the evidence to the contrary, this person must always have been marked out by a singular bravery? Such a conclusion might be correct, but it would be unlikely to be accepted unless there was remarkable evidence which ruled out the common sense possibility of development and becoming in that person over time. If Jesus' humanity, therefore, possesses an authentic open freedom for becoming, extreme caution will also be required in the use of retrospective projection in respect of him. It will have to pay close attention to the process of development of a forward-openness[195] for such projection in the narratives of Jesus' historical mission.

Yet Jesus is, according to Chalcedon, not two different kinds of person, one divine and one

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194. It is this fact which constitutes the tragedy of such degenerative conditions as Alzheimer's disease which, in effect, robs people of their humanity. They lose the sphere of *willed* freedom.

195. See chapter 3 where the meaning of this term was defined and explored.

human. Rather he is one person in two natures. How then are we to make sense of the different rules which appear to apply to Jesus, according to whether the divine or human nature is primarily in view? Here it is only right to indicate that Moltmann's work does contain a hint of how this intellectual puzzle might be solved.

> "the history of [Jesus'] Being presupposes the relationships of this Being to the Spirit and to the Father. Jesus grows into these relationships...in the history of the Spirit with him."[196]

This quotation suggests that the continuity which pertains between Jesus' divine and human natures in respect of his identity as one person is his defining relationships with the Father and the Spirit. The divine Son is who he is because of his relationships with the Father and the Spirit. We are here assuming much about the relational nature of personhood, but if this assumption is allowed to stand much then falls into place. What then of Jesus' humanity? His relationships with the Father and the Spirit into which he *grows* form, if you will, the key constituents of the environment of his person which constitute the defining constraints upon his freedom, and so form his identity. How Jesus grows into these relationships need not be prescribed in advance. There is thus not only room for development of his humanity but room for *contingent* development. There may well be an infinite number of solutions to the exact form which his humanity can take within this defining environment. He could have been taller or shorter, male or female, influenced more by his mother or his father, more introvert or extrovert. His growth too is real. Said of him at a particular moment of development it may make sense to say that he is becoming the Christ. Additionally, if his humanity is in the process of growing into a relationship with the Father and the Spirit, then he is growing into conformity with God and so into the eschatological prospect for creation. We might therefore also say that he is becoming the incarnation of the future.

It would be very wrong, however to give the impression that there are two separate histories of development in Jesus. If Jesus is human and divine 'without division or separation' then there

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196. WJC 78. In interpreting this quotation I am making the assumption that the use of a capital letter for 'Being' indicates that Jesus divinity is hereby indicated.

can only be a shared history of development. Incarnation demands no less. It is this uniquely shared history, I suggest, which guarantees the unity of Christ's person. But it is a shared history with a common goal *yet with different starting points*. Jesus' divinity has a 'pre-history' which is also a 'simultaneous history'; the history of unfurlment. The Son's being in *adventus* is unfurled into time. Sharing the same history as his divine nature through incarnation, Jesus' humanity nevertheless journeys towards a new and open goal with respect to his beginning. It is a journey of pure becoming. Moreover it is a becoming which can include the contingent. This holds even though Jesus' divinity, which is heading for the same goal, is in process of newly becoming what it already is. We might express this shared history in a different way. It is only as the incarnate person, as both human and divine that Jesus' identity is engaged in a process of dialectical resolution. This was our earlier conclusion in examining *Theology of Hope*. The cross as Jesus' solidarity with all that is negative in present creation holds exactly the same meaning for both his humanity and divinity. But his resurrection, though it is clearly the anticipation of a common goal, holds different meanings for his humanity and divinity. For his divinity it is the anticipation of the reintegration of the person who was unfurled into time. It is the anticipation of becoming who he is. For his humanity it is the anticipation of the summation and transfiguring of what has become in time: the prolepsis of new creation.

Let us be clear. The soteriological future which this christology implies is not one in which the eschatological future is completely open. If the future is constituted by the transformation of creation into congruence with God, then at least the *form* of this future is already given: it is the pattern of God's own life. But to have determined the form of something is not necessarily to have determined its *content*. Here I am taking up and adapting a distinction first introduced by P. Fiddes.[197] If the soteriological future is not to mean the replacement of creation, then this content of the future will have to be determined by what has become in time.[198] If Jesus' humanity is the locus of the prolepsis of this promised transformation of creation then it too

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197. *The Creative Suffering of God* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988) pp.102-106.

198. *Contra* D.J. Schuurman who perceives only the discontinuity which pertains between present creation and its eschatological future (*adventus*) in Moltmann's thought (*Creation, Eschaton, and Ethics*, p.94).

must share this same relationship between becoming in time and the eschatological future. But with one distinguishing exception. This form which the future will take is already the ground of his identity in time; the identity into which he contingently grows. This is why Jesus, even in his human nature, must be considered the source, not merely the example, of the future. We are to participate in the pattern of Jesus' humanity in its relation to the Father and the Spirit.

The christological model which we have been constructing could also be expressed with the help of trinitarian terminology. The model we have constructed so far could also be articulated by speaking of an immanent and an economic Son.[199] To adopt such language, of course, does not mean that there are two Sons. Rather it is way of speaking about the one Son who is both in *adventus* and in time. The incarnation, although it is often popularly portrayed in this way, does not involve the Son in a journey into time in the sense that he is no longer in *adventus*. It rather signals his being in an additional, qualitatively distinct sphere which subsists 'within' the original.[200] This terminology enables, perhaps, a more exact expression of what is being implied when it is stated that Jesus is in the process of becoming who he is. This statement contains two affirmations. First that the economic Son is in the process of becoming reintegrated with the immanent Son. Second, that the economic Son's humanity is in the process of growing into conformity with the pattern of being of the immanent Son. And this happens, we have asserted, in such a way that the content of the contingent path of his becoming is taken up into and affirmed in this process. Again, whereas, in this model, the immanent Son undergoes no change with respect to time, the economic Son undergoes a process of change within sameness. Accordingly at certain points in his history, and most importantly on the cross, the economic Son can appear to be 'out of step' with the immanent Son. There is thus a certain degree of 'elasticity' which must be postulated in the

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199. Cf. D.G. Attfield's quite different attempt, on the basis of a model of various levels of human consciousness, to distinguish between the divine Son's incarnate and disincarnate roles with respect to creation ("Can God be Crucified?", *The Scottish Journal of Theology*, Vol 30/1 (1977), pp.54-57). What his attempt has in common with mine is a desire not to collapse God into the process of the world's becoming.

200. Cf. St Athanasius, "The Word was not hedged in by His body, nor did His presence in the body prevent His being present elsewhere as well. When He moved His body He did not cease also to direct the universe" (*On the Incarnation*, (Oxford: Mobray, 1982) p.45).

correspondence between *adventus* and time. It follows, therefore, that the being of the immanent Son cannot equally well be read off from each point of the economic Son's history. The supreme disclosure of the being of the immanent Son is afforded in the goal of the resolution of the dialectical identity of the economic Son. This is simply because this is the process by which the economic Son is reintegrated into the immanent Son. Given that the resurrection constitutes the supreme anticipation of this goal, the resurrection must become the primary datum from which an understanding of the immanent being of the Son is constructed. The resurrection on this account should, therefore, be the ultimate starting point for all theological arguments.

5.0 THE MESSIANIC ANTICIPATION OF THE FUTURE

1. Distinguishing the messianic from the eschatological

In Chapter 2 we examined the process of promise-development. Within this process past promissory reality is used to construct a meaning for an experienced *novum* by being utilised as a horizon of interpretation. In this way the *novum*, as 'specific', comes to gain a particular significance through mutual interaction with the imposed horizon. Thus, in the hermeneutic of promise-development, past promissory reality is accorded the importance of constraining the range of meaning which can be imparted to an experienced *novum*. Applying these principles to the cycle of promise-development which we discerned to operate *within* Jesus' person and history led to an important result. It suggested that remembrance of Jesus' historical mission could likewise be used to constrain the meaning of Jesus' risen appearance. We therefore concluded that christology developed within such a promissory perspective could not help but reckon with the significance of Jesus' historical mission.

The Crucified God displays an interest in the earthly mission of Jesus which fits precisely this pattern. Jesus' life is important because it assists the task of correctly interpreting the meaning of the Christ event. But, beginning in *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* and developed further in *The Way of Jesus Christ* is an interest in Jesus' historical mission which moves beyond this. The mission of Jesus progresses from being a necessary preliminary for appropriate understanding of the Christ event of cross and resurrection, to being seen as a distinct stage in the eschatological history of Jesus with God. As such a stage, it clearly remains connected with the Christ event that follows. But it is now accorded an additional intrinsic value. It discloses the impact of the eschatological future on present creation *within the limits of history*; that is, within the limits of the structure of present creation. Exploring this disclosure will be the focus of our interest in this section. But we should also note that this distinctive relation of Jesus' historical mission to present reality means that it can also be used,

as Moltmann does, as a source for ethical reflection to guide Christian praxis.[1]

What the term 'messianic' means arises for Moltmann from the hermeneutic of promise-development. It arises from the interaction between "the unique figure of Jesus, his message and his special divine history"[2] as 'specific', and the horizon of interpretation of "the messianic promise of the Old Testament".[3] This horizon of remembered promise is itself the product of earlier iterations of the promise-development cycle. It stems from the prophetic activity which sought to surmount the historical breach occasioned by Israel's experience of first the Assyrian and then Babylonian exiles. This was effected by a searching of past tradition for intimations of God's *qualitatively new* beginning.[4] Historical recollection of the Davidic king who is called to rule on behalf of God and to represent God's presence, is transformed into the hope and promise of a coming messiah king. Yet because the crisis of exile ruptures any sense of historical continuity, the future hoped for is not comparable with the past. The messiah will be more than a restored Davidic figure.

> "What expands and deepens the specific recollection of David so greatly are the dimensions of hope for the final, and therefore enduring, coming of the God of promise himself, the God of compassionate justice and righteousness."[5]

Thus according to Isaiah 11 the messianic figure brings righteousness to the poor of humanity and peace to the whole of creation. Moltmann draws upon Micah 4, however, to suggest that the vision of the messianic kingdom of peace is still to be located *within history*. The coming of peace between nations he observes,

> "is to happen 'in the last days' - that is, in the days of the messiah...So this is not an eschatological vision

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1. WJC 116-136.

2. WJC 1.

3. WJC 1.

4. WJC 10, 23.

5. WJC 10.

> of a world beyond history. It is a messianic vision of *history in the future*".[6]

This inherent connection between the messianic and the historical in Moltmann's thought is confirmed by his rejection of the strand of Buber's thought (which has been generally influential for Moltmann's account) that sees messianism as projecting hope into 'an absolute future'.[7] Moltmann writes,

> "But this 'absolute future' is no longer historical. It is the eschatological future. And it is the eschatological future because it is the eternal future, which is always future and never becomes present."[8]

Moltmann is fearful that the loss of an inherent connection between messianic hope and history will turn messianism into a form of "moral idealism"[9]. It would, we might observe, signal the triumph of Kant once again. The messianic would become a transcendental category equally related and unrelated to all time. It would offer a sense of orientation for human moral action but, restricted in this way to the subjective realm, it could no longer be related to the entirety of present reality. It is true, however, that in and of itself relevance to history is not sufficient to distinguish between what Moltmann generally terms eschatological and what he is here designating messianic. The eschatological is not an eternity indifferent to time in the classical sense. The distinction he has in mind is, however, clarified when he writes with more precision:

> "Unlike Buber, we are therefore distinguishing between the messianic future *in* history, or at the end of history, and the eschatological future *of* this whole history - that is between 'the Last Days' and the new eternal aeon."[10]

Moltmann's understanding of the 'timing' of the realm of the messianic is important. It essentially concerns what we might describe as a *re-patterning of history in history*. The

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6. WJC 11. Moltmann's terminology is not, however, always consistent. At the top of p.11 he can call the messianic an 'eschatological hope' when drawing on the work of von Rad.

7. WJC 12.

8. WJC 12.

9. WJC 12.

10. WJC 21.

messianic horizon is therefore, in this regard at least, wholly appropriate to Jesus' historical mission. Yet we must remember that since the 'specific' in a process of interpretation has the determinative power to shape and mould any horizon applied to it, the particular detail of Jesus' words and deeds will come to give the term messianic as applied to his mission a distinctive and defining content. What then is the relationship between Jesus' messianic mission and both the history which preceded it on the one hand, and the eschatological future which will surpass it on the other?

According to Mark's Gospel, following his baptism Jesus begins his public ministry with the proclamation of the nearness of the kingdom of God.

> "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."[11]

The question is: how near is 'at hand' (*eggus*)? In answer, Moltmann is influenced by Luther's translation: 'has come close'. The kingdom of God,

> "has come so close that the signs of the messianic era are already visible: the sick are healed, demons driven out, the lame walk, the deaf hear, the poor have the gospel preached to them. It is so close that we can already pray to God as 'Abba', dear Father. It is so close that the Torah has to be messianically interpreted through the Sermon on the Mount, and can find fulfilment in the discipleship of Christ".[12]

What this means in terms of eschatological structure is more precisely disclosed in the relationship between what Moltmann terms the lordship or rule of God in history and the eschatological kingdom of God which transcends history. What is messianic is aligned with the former.

> "What can actually be experienced is the immediate lordship of God in the liberating of those who have been bound".[13]

What distinguishes the messianic from the eschatological is that only the latter concerns the

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11. Mark 1:15.

12. WJC 97. Cf. HD 102.

13. WJC 97.

conquest of the power of transience and death.[14] What is messianic occurs within the present time of transience. The most sophisticated treatment of the relationship between God's rule in history and his eschatological kingdom is to be found in *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*.[15] I wish to suggest that the scheme delineated in this volume exercises, albeit often implicitly, a determining control over Moltmann's understanding of the messianic mediation of the eschatological future to history.[16]

The liberating rule of God in history, Moltmann asserts, is effected through "the word of promise and the Spirit of freedom".[17] It is a rule, however, which is disputed and contradicted; a rule which meets with resistance. As such, it is inherently orientated upon a point at which God's rule will be undisputed. Accordingly,

> "The eschatological fulfilment of the liberating lordship of God in history is termed the kingdom of God".[18]

It is this inherent connection of fulfilment which permits Moltmann to define their relationship as follows:

> "The liberating rule of God can be understood as the *immanence* of the eschatological kingdom, and the coming kingdom can be interpreted as the *transcendence* of the believed and experienced rule of God in the present".[19]

By regarding history as an open system, that is one in which development takes place through the contingent realisation of potentialities,[20] Moltmann can offer the following further refinement of this relationship.

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14. WJC 97; CPS 195.

15. CPS 189-196. WJC 97-99 is only a summary of this earlier treatment with slight embellishment.

16. Cf., "The messianic concept represents a categorical mediation between the kingdom of God and history" (CPS 193).

17. CPS 190.

18. CPS 190.

19. CPS 190, my emphasis.

20. See FofC 190 n.14 where Moltmann delineates what he believes to be the defining characteristics of an open system.

> "[W]e are bound to understand the kingdom of God in the liberating rule of God as a transforming power *immanent* in that system, and the rule of God in the kingdom of God as a future *transcending* the system."[21]

Although Moltmann does not use these categories, the understanding he proposes here comes very close to defining the relationship between that which is messianic and that which is eschatological in terms of the relationship between *futurum* and *adventus*. *Futurum*, the reader will remember, is that future which emerges from the selective realisation of possibilities inherent in creation. If that which is messianic is brought about by the immanent transformation of reality within the open system of history, then it clearly shares a close affinity with *futurum*.[22] Whereas, if the kingdom of God is a future which transcends the system of history then it shares this structural relationship with *adventus*. That we have understood Moltmann aright here is suggested by a brief passage in his essay "Trends in Eschatology".[23] Here Moltmann writes,

> "If this future or *Adventus*[24] is made present in Christ, then and because of that the present determined by him becomes the germ of what is to come and gains a *futurum* which corresponds to this *adventus*".[25]

We must be careful, however, not to use this quotation in a misleading way. In this passage Moltmann is not talking about the relationship between Jesus and the effect of his messianic mission on history, but about the Christ event of passion and resurrection and its consequent effect on the experience of believers. If we decide to construct a parallel between these two relationships, as I suggest we should, then we have made an interesting find. But the more immediate purpose of the quotation is to show that *adventus* can be understood by Moltmann as the *cause* of its own anticipations (correspondences) which are developed within the dimension

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21. CPS 190, my emphasis.

22.Why this is only a close affinity and not an exact correspondence is explained in the following section.

23. FofC 29-31.

24. Moltmann actually uses the alternative schema *Zukunft* - *Futur* in this passage for which I have substituted the more common terms *adventus* and *futurum*. That Moltmann understands them as exact equivalents is made plain in the text.

25. FofC 30.

of *futurum*. And this insight sheds light on how we should interpret Jesus' messianic mission and its relationship to the eschatological future.

Moltmann suggests, as we have seen, that it is "the kingdom of God *in* the liberating rule of God" which acts as "a transforming power immanent in [the] system [of history]".[26] If Jesus is understood as the incarnation of God's future, of the eschatological kingdom, then his messianic mission may be understood as introducing God's liberating rule through the immanent transformation of history via his own words and actions. But notice that this will be a transformation immanent within the system of history. That is, it will be limited by the power of transience and death. It will be a mission which creates anticipations and correspondences to the future of the kingdom but *under the limits of history*.

Correlating the relationship of messianic mission to the eschatological kingdom of God by way of its parallel structure with the *futurum-adventus* relation leads to another important conclusion. It indicates that the kingdom of God transcends its own immanent, and anticipatory, transformations of history. In Jesus' messianic mission, therefore, the causal relation is from the eschatological future to present anticipation not *vice versa*. It is not that Jesus' mission leads to the construction of the eschatological future, it is rather that the eschatological future immanent in him leads to his messianic mission. Through messianic mediation, therefore, Moltmann can argue that the eschatological future is thus already present in history. It is present to the extent that it becomes a power which determines and shapes the present.[27] It is present in the form of self-anticipation. Here again, then, we met the reciprocal pattern of incarnation and anticipation already encountered in the previous chapter.

> "An *anticipation* is not yet a fulfilment. But it is already the *presence* of the future in the conditions of history. It is a fragment of the coming whole. It is a payment made in advance of complete fulfilment and part-possession of what is still to come."[28]

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26. CPS 190.

27. CPS 192.

28. CPS 193, my emphasis.

It might seem that because the kingdom of God as *adventus* transcends history, and because messianic anticipations thus have no causal influence upon the eschatological future, that this implies that the realm of history can contribute nothing to this future. Furthermore, it might therefore seem that Moltmann's language of anticipation as a 'part-possession' of the future, which looks as if it is based on an ontological connection between part and whole, is mistaken. Moltmann does not tackle these possible misunderstandings overtly, but his theological position does contain the necessary clarifying motifs. These misleading impressions only arise if it is forgotten that the transcendence of the eschatological future is not that of an abstract noun but that of a verb.[29] The future transcends all time because it comes to transform all time. It is the divine future "which brings the Wholly Other as what-makes-wholly-other".[30] The eschatological future does not lie athwart the times of history as an already complete entity. Rather, it results from the transformation of *what has become in time* into conformity with the being of God. It is true that, according to the logic we have discerned, the transformation of creation which results in the kingdom of God must transcend the transformations within history which characterise messianic anticipation. But both forms of transformation share a common vector and a common cause. They are both transformations of the becoming process of history into correspondence with the being of God, through God. Messianic anticipation takes place simultaneously with the realisation of present possibilities to form the *futurum*. Its re-patterning of the possible suffers from the fate of transience. The sick, for example who are healed as part of Jesus' messianic mission can fall foul of sickness again. But the transient images of the future constructed within the dimension of history correspond to the eschatological future because they are the product of the same transforming power of this future within the constraint of present existence. The eschatological future results when this constraint is overcome. This happens when God's transforming power affects all time, past, present and

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29. FofC 11.

30. FofC 30. Here Moltmann consciously engages in a word-play on a favourite Barthian expression which is thereby 'eschatologised'.

futurum and so when transience, and the conditions which flow from transience,[31] are surmounted. Messianic anticipation and the eschatological future of the kingdom thus share a continuity grounded in the transforming efficacy of God. They are distinguished by their relation to the boundary of death (transience). In the light of this discussion history may be said to contribute to the kingdom of God not because it is the cause of the kingdom but rather because the content of the kingdom is contingently dependent upon what has become in time.[32] If this is the case for time generally, then it must also hold for the messianic anticipations of the future formed in time. At this stage of the development of Moltmann's eschatological structure we thus reach a point at which Moltmann could answer the complaint of R. Alves. There is a way in which history can contribute to the kingdom of God.[33] Having established the basic relationship between the messianic and the eschatological, it will be appropriate now to examine the nature of the messianic re-patterning of history in more detail.

2. *Pneumatological christology*

As we observed in the previous chapter, *Theology of Hope* already perceives that the Holy Spirit acts to mediate the promised future to the present. The Spirit acts to conform present creation to the eschatological future. This activity of the Spirit was seen to be effective on two levels. These were at the level of the overall eschatological process of transformation which brings about the kingdom of God (inner tendency), and at the level of enabling a human response which seeks to create present anticipations of this future (mission, or outer tendency). From *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* onwards, this somewhat fragmentary account of the Spirit's role receives ever developing attention. We shall initially be interested in the way Moltmann develops the second of these two levels of activity since it is this one which most clearly corresponds with the later notion of messianic anticipation.

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31. See chapter 1.

32. Here again we take up and apply P. Fiddes' distinction between the form and content of the eschatological future (*The Creative Suffering of God*, pp.102-106).

33. Cf. *A Theology of Human Hope*, p.66. See chapter 4.1.2.

We have established that messianic anticipation of the future takes the form of God's liberating rule in history. This is effected for Moltmann through both the word of promise and the activity of the Spirit.[34] Both the proclamation of promise, in the form of the gospel, and the Spirit mediate the presence of the coming kingdom of God in history. Promise calls people out of conformity with the present reality and sets them on a path towards the future. But it is the Spirit who, through the creation of "faith and obedience, new fellowship and liberating action",[35] actualises the pursuit of this path of anticipation. The Spirit "works *in history* as the creator of a new future",[36] creating present realisations of the eschatological kingdom. In language reminiscent of Bloch we are informed that this process is effected through the realisation of "the subjective and objective potentialities of history".[37] But additionally, and distinctively, Moltmann asserts that the Spirit also "wakes sleeping, suppressed or otherwise imprisoned potentialities and activates them for the divine rule".[38] Moltmann summarises his understanding as follows:

> "No reality or potentiality that was in creation at the beginning is suppressed by the Spirit. As the perfecting power of God he makes enslaved creation live and fills everything with the powers of the new creation".[39]

This expansion of Moltmann's position confirms our earlier suspicion that messianic anticipation, effected through the Spirit, is close to his understanding of the development of *futurum*. But *futurum* does not, however, correspond exactly with that conception. Here, therefore, Moltmann opens up a critical distance over against Bloch. The distinction arises from the Spirit's activity of unlocking imprisoned potentiality. This presumably results in the realisation of possibilities which creation possesses but which it is not independently able to

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34. CPS 190.

35. CPS 191.

36. CPS 191, my emphasis.

37. CPS 191.

38. CPS 191.

39. CPS 191.

realise. Consequently, messianic anticipation on this understanding could, without over-stepping the boundaries of history, lead to the realisation of that which by the standard of creation appears impossible. Indeed, without explicitly establishing this connection Moltmann offers some examples.

> "[The Spirit of God] creates faith where there is nothing else to believe in; he creates love where there is nothing lovable; he creates hope where there is nothing to hope for."[40]

If we can thus distinguish the messianic from the unfolding of *futurum* as such, then, in the activity of the Spirit, we have found a way to distinguish the quality of messianic time from time and history in general.[41]

Does Moltmann intend us to understand that it is this same efficacy of the Spirit in history which drives the messianic mission of Jesus forward? Such would appear to be the case. But in *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* this connection remains essentially implicit. We may unfold it, however, in the following way.

At a point earlier in this book than the discussion on which we have been concentrating Moltmann makes the following observation. Isaiah 61:1 indicates that the messianic prophet is someone who, anointed by the power of the Spirit, introduces the proximity of God's rule.[42] Moltmann describes the effect of this proximity in a phrase of Karl Marx: 'petrified conditions begin to dance'.[43] By this he intends to express the awakening of the slumbering potentialities of creation, "including the potentialities in [reality] open to the creator" through the power of

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40. CPS 191. Cf. PP 123f.

41. This distinction will hold, I suggest, even in the light of Moltmann's later theology which sees the Spirit as the principle of all creation's unfolding possibilities (see, for example, GinC 99-101). It simply means that, as Moltmann does, a difference must be discerned between various levels of the Spirit's activity in creation, for example between the Spirit as creative energy and saving power (WJC 91).

42. CPS 77f.

43. CPS 78.

the Spirit.[44] If, as Luke 4:16-21 implies, Jesus' mission is to be understood within the horizon of Isaiah's messianic prophet[45] then the way is open to comprehend his mission as unfolding within the Spirit's mediation of the future to the present as detailed in Moltmann's later section and examined above. When the poor hear the good news, when the captives are released, when the blind recover their sight, when the oppressed are set at liberty, it is because imprisoned possibilities in creation are released through the power of the Spirit. What, however, is largely implicit in *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* becomes the explicit starting point of Moltmann's treatment of Jesus' messianic mission in *The Way of Jesus Christ*[46] and is taken further in *The Spirit of Life*.

Moltmann opens the development of his pneumatological christology in *The Way of Jesus Christ* with the following programmatic statement.

> "Jesus' history as the Christ does not begin with Jesus himself. It begins with the *ruach*/the Holy Spirit."[47]

The work of the Spirit is the theological precondition and premise for the history of Jesus.[48] The Spirit, we might say, is the power of actualisation of Jesus' messianic ministry.[49] Jesus' unique imbuement with the Spirit[50] constitutes him as the end-time Messiah who brings about the messianic sabbath.[51] This concept of the messianic sabbath is Moltmann's favoured way of describing the quality of time experienced in Jesus' historical mission.[52] It is a quality marked

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44. CPS 373 n.23.

45. Cf. CPS 76.

46. Chapter III.

47. WJC 73.

48. SofL 60; TKG 74f.

49. Cf. "If the fullness of Yahweh's *ruach*/the Holy Spirit was alive in Jesus, then this energy is also the worker of all his works" (WJC 91). The term 'co-worker' would, however, seem more appropriate.

50. WJC 94.

51. WJC 91. Cf., SofL 53.

52. See especially GinC 290-292.

out by the range of Jesus' undertakings through the co-operative activity of the Spirit in which the eschatological kingdom is anticipated.[53] Of these undertakings we might briefly summarise the following to which Moltmann draws particular attention. They all comprise a distinctive patterning of the possibilities of creation. And their inner connection lies, I suggest, in the experience of God's nearness or proximity[54] through which these possibilities are realised.[55]

(a) Jesus' proclamation of the gospel constitutes a verbal prolepsis of salvation. "[S]alvation runs ahead of itself and appears in the gospel".[56] In line with our suggestion that the incarnation of *adventus* in time causes anticipations of itself, Moltmann asserts that the gospel may be considered as "the beginning in word of the epiphany of the coming God".[57] The gospel announces the direct lordship of God to the poor; to those who, in the context of human violence, suffer most from the experience of God's remoteness. This announcement of God's proximity to the poor, therefore, bestows upon them a new dignity.[58]

(b) In Jesus' shared meals with those deemed to be outcasts by the contemporary society, Jesus anticipates the creative righteousness of God which makes just the unjust. As Matthew 22:2-10 implies, he thus anticipates the messianic banquet.[59] In this activity of proleptic acceptance, the proximity of God reveals itself in Jesus' open and public friendship.[60]

(c) Jesus' apparent freedom toward the sabbath, results not from some higher ethics, but from

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53. Moltmann can refer to Jesus as the *Anticipator regni Dei* (HD 102).

54. Cf. Mark 1:15.

55. This connection is already made clear at WJC 97 which is cited above (5.1).

56. WJC 95.

57. WJC 95. Cf. CPS 77.

58. WJC 99-102. Cf. CPS 78-80.

59. WJC 112-116.

60. CPS 116-121. Cf. *The Open Church: Invitation to a Messianic Lifestyle*, Tr. Meeks, M.D., (London: SCM, 1978), pp.54-63.

his sense of the unparalleled closeness of God. It is this proximity of God which signals the presence of the messianic era; the messianic sabbath. Jesus' liberty towards the law is thus a liberty promised by the prophets; an expected liberty.[61] In this context, the so-called 'sermon on the mount' may be seen as the ethic of the messianic community through which it distinguishes itself from the prevailing conception of God's righteousness. It is an ethic, we might say, which acts as a 'sign of the times'. More generally, Jesus' address in Matthew 5-7 may be understood as the messianic interpretation of the law for the Gentiles[62] which is applicable in this new situation of God's proximity.

(d) The proximity of God's lordship, introduced in Jesus' mission through the mediation of the Spirit, drives out of creation the forces which act in opposition to God's will.[63] Moltmann detects two related sides to this movement which foreshadow the dimensions of salvation. On the personal side Jesus' healing of the sick corresponds to the hoped-for resurrection of the dead. On the cosmic side Jesus' expulsion of demons (which Moltmann interprets as forces of the destruction of life) corresponds to the annihilation of transience and death.[64] This twofold pattern of correspondence, between a 'now' and a 'then', reinforces the understanding of the relationship between the messianic anticipation of the eschatological future, and the eschatological future itself, that we established above. The distinction between healing (messianic) and salvation (eschatological) is disclosed in their respective relation to the power of death. In Jesus' messianic mission even those such as Lazarus[65] who are raised from the dead do not achieve a permanent victory over death.[66] Resurrection which marks an end to

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61. GinC 291f. Moltmann alludes to Isaiah 61:1-4.

62. WJC 123-125.

63. WJC 104.

64. WJC 109.

65. John 11:1-44.

66. WJC 108. In this respect it is significant, I suggest, that the grave clothes which still bind the risen Lazarus (v.44) are left behind in the tomb by the risen Jesus (John 20:7).

death lies beyond the power of the messianic. Moltmann suggests, therefore, that Jesus' miracles are not to be seen as "irritating marvels in an untransformable world"[67] but as fore-tokens of the new creation which constitutes the all-comprehensive salvation of bodily life.[68]

3. The inherently eschatological orientation of the Spirit

It is a feature of Moltmann's theology that he tends to regard the activity of the Spirit as inherently eschatological. He can ground this conviction in exegesis.

> "[I]t cannot be forgotten that in the whole of the New Testament the Spirit is understood eschatologically. He is the power of new creation...His present efficacy is the rebirth of men and women. His future goal is the raising up of the kingdom of glory."[69]

The Spirit is presented as the medium of continuity of the eschatological history of God. It is the Spirit who drives the history of God's promise forward from the prophetic prefigurement of the future, through its messianic anticipation and finally, as the quotation above demonstrates, to its goal of ultimate fulfilment in the eschatological kingdom.[70] Accordingly, Moltmann proposes that it is in the continuity of the Spirit's activity that John the Baptist and then Jesus find their place in the eschatological history of God's kingdom.[71] The internal reason for the distinctiveness of their respective ministries also lies in their varying experiences of the Spirit; more precisely in Jesus' unique baptismal experience.[72] Significantly, this distinction with regard to the Spirit suggests to Moltmann that they belong to different eschatological eras.

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67. WJC 109.

68. WJC 107.

69. TKG 89. Cf. CPS 205.

70. Cf. WJC 4.

71. WJC 87.

72. WJC 89.

> "It is the difference between the last time before the dawning of the kingdom of God, and the first time in that kingdom."[73]

Moltmann can also imply that the eschatological process towards the realisation of the kingdom can be seen as one of the advancing occupation of the Spirit in the spaces of the world. Again the Spirit is thus understood as the medium of continuity of this eschatological process.

> "[W]ith [Jesus'] coming God's Spirit takes up his dwelling in the world; first of all in the messianic Son, through his birth - then in the fellowship of the children of God, through their rebirth...then through the rebirth of the whole cosmos."[74]

What Moltmann does not do, however, in his construction of pneumatological christology is spell out explicitly why the Spirit should possess this inherent eschatological orientation; why the Spirit should, in Bultmann's phrase, be understood as 'the power of futurity'.[75] Yet scattered across Moltmann's writings are all the theological motifs required to produce such an account. In order to assist our exegesis of Moltmann, I therefore propose to outline a model which will draw upon Moltmann's understanding of this issue. I will also attempt to co-ordinate this with ideas developed in the previous chapter.

The goal which constitutes the eschatological future is, according to Moltmann, the transformation of creation into conformity with the being of God. In more precise trinitarian terms, this goal results from the enabling of creation to participate in the Son's relationship with the Father. The eschatological future, therefore, has an inherent relational content grounded in God's trinitarian relationality. It is within this horizon that we need to understand what Moltmann says about the eschatological nature of the Spirit. For the divine Spirit is the actualiser of this relationship between the Son and the Father which constitutes the inner content of the hoped-for Kingdom of God.

> "The divine Spirit who indwells Jesus, initiates and makes possible the relationship of the Father to the

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73. WJC 91. This is a conclusion Moltmann draws from his reading of Matthew 11:11.

74. WJC 86.

75. CPS 34.

> Son, and of the Son to the Father. In the Spirit, God experiences Jesus as the messianic child, and Jesus experiences God as 'Abba'."[76]

It would be compatible with Moltmann's position to assert that this role of the Spirit, witnessed within the economy of redemption, is grounded in the nature of the Spirit's role in the immanent Trinity.[77] Certainly he seems to see the relationship between Father and Son as constitutive for both persons and therefore as 'preceding' the history of Jesus and Abba in time.[78] If this relationship may be accounted 'pre-existent'[79] then surely so must the mediating role of the Spirit through which it is effected. Thus if the Spirit acts in time in accordance with the nature of his being in *adventus*, from the perspective of creation the Spirit will appear to be inherently eschatological in orientation. The Spirit will be the mediator of creation's Son-type relationship with the Father which, when fully realised, will transform creation into the new creation. It is this hoped-for quality of relationship between God and creation which I take to be the inner content of Moltmann's notion of the eschatological presence of the coming God.

> "To throw open the circulatory movement of the divine light[80] and the divine relationships, and to take men and women, with the whole creation, into the life-stream of the triune God: that is the meaning of creation, reconciliation and glorification."[81]

In essence, therefore, the Spirit may be regarded as inherently eschatological because the future of the world is constituted by the life of God.[82] The future, we might say, will be

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76. WJC 92. Cf. "...the Spirit is the real determining subject of this special relationship of Jesus' to God, and of God's to Jesus" (SofL 61).

77. It is because of Moltmann's confusion over exactly what the term immanent Trinity designates (see chapter 7) which, I suggest, prevents Moltmann from making this crucial move in an explicit and unambiguous way.

78. WJC 143. Cf. HTG 33-36.

79. WJC 143.

80. The German original also has 'göttlichen Lichtes', but 'divine life' would seem to make more sense.

81. TKG 178.

82. In one sense this idea is not new. The whole of classical trinitarian theology depends upon the notion that God brings about the eschatological salvation of the world by being himself. Only so could the process of redemption, to which scripture bears witness, be a source of God's authentic self-revelation. These are ideas we shall wish to take further in chapter 7.

coloured by relationships of a particular quality. This equation between the future and relationships suggests that the developing interest in the importance of relationships generally, that marks Moltmann's later theology, may be grounded in the outworking of one of his root eschatological assumptions. For Moltmann the eschatological future has always been constituted by the transfiguration of creation into conformity with the coming of God. This was already true for *Theology of Hope*.[83] Consequently, following Moltmann's sustained foray into trinitarian theology occasioned by *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God,* it is not surprising that his subsequent eschatological reflections should be coloured by the emphasis on relationality which this undertaking generated. It is a development which follows from understanding the coming God as specifically the coming *trinitarian* God. And, it is in Moltmann's developing interest in pneumatology, I suggest, that we see the effect of this new emphasis on relationality most clearly demonstrated. For according to the account we have constructed, based in Moltmann's own work, in the Spirit eschatology and relationality are intrinsically connected. Accordingly, in Moltmann's pneumatological christology the Spirit is perceived to be not only the actualiser of Jesus' 'being-in-history',[84] the one in whose power he creates messianic anticipations of the future and who drives forward Jesus' process of becoming. The Spirit is also the actualiser of Jesus' 'being-in-relationship'.[85] These two interrelated aspects of the Spirit's interaction with Jesus will now be explored.

4. Jesus' being and becoming in history

We have discerned that the eschatological future is to be marked out by a particular quality of relationship mediated by the Spirit. It is to be characterised by creation's participation in the Son's relationship with the Father. This hoped-for experience of God's *presence* finds its anticipation under the conditions of history in the experience of God's *proximity*. Again it is

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83. See, for example TH 106.

84. WJC 136.

85. WJC 136.

the Spirit which mediates this messianic experience. It is as if, grounded in the Spirit's defining activity in the immanent Trinity, the Spirit works in time to create a correspondence with the future he will realise in *adventus*. The coming God is anticipated in the experience of God's approaching nearness.[86] It is this movement of the Spirit towards the construction of correspondence between time and *adventus* which drives forward Jesus' messianic mission. As we identified, it was the realisation of God's proximity which characterised the common element in the various facets of Jesus' mission. In fact, suggests Moltmann, Jesus' eschatological proclamation of the kingdom originates in Jesus' experience of the nearness of God.[87] It is his experience of God as 'Abba' which both initiates and determines the content of his missionary activity. It is an experience mediated by the Spirit.[88]

> "When Jesus proclaims the 'imminent' kingdom of God (Mark 1:15), he is proclaiming the intimate nearness of God the Father, the nearness which is described through the name Abba...He demonstrates the nearness of the kingdom of God...through signs of grace to distraught men and women, and through miracles of health for life that has been sick."[89]

It is because the Spirit mediates the presence of God (as proximity) which is also the content of the future, that Jesus' quality of relationship with his 'Abba' initiates his messianic mission. The Spirit as the principle of God's nearness is also the 'principle of futurity'.

Jesus' experience of the eschatological drive of the Spirit toward the realisation of an ever-deeper relationship with God does not, however, constitute an arbitrary imposition on his history. Rather, I suggest, the move from an experience of God's proximity to an experience of God's presence equates precisely with the process of *Jesus' becoming who he is* described in the previous chapter. If the Spirit mediates Jesus' sense of nearness to the Father, and his relationship with the Father is constitutive of his 'pre-existent' identity, then the path from proximity to presence traces out the path of the process by which Jesus is to become himself.

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86. Cf. EH 60.

87. TKG 70,74.

88. WJC 78.

89. WJC 90f.

> "[T]he history of [Christ's] Being presupposes the relationships of this Being to the Spirit and to the Father. Jesus grows into these relationships...in the history of the Spirit with him."[90]

The reader will remember that to this path of Jesus' becoming we attached the following soteriological model: Jesus became like us so that we might become like him. As the incarnation of the future, as the incarnation of a certain quality of relationship with the Father, Jesus conforms himself to the present mode of the being of creation characterised by alienation from God. This solidarity with creation means that, in the process of his becoming in time who he is in *adventus*, mediated by the Spirit, creation may also taken forward toward the future constituted by conformity with his mode of being in relation with the Father. A sense of God's proximity marks the furthest point attainable along this path from alienation to presence under the conditions of history. That is why a sense of God's proximity characterises the *messianic* anticipation of the future. It follows from this soteriological model that if the Spirit is understood as the mediator of Jesus' process of becoming, then the Spirit may also be perceived as the mediator of creation's transformation to new creation. This is the case not only because the Spirit moves Jesus' history forward, but also, as we shall later see, because the Spirit mediates the inclusion of creation in this history. We therefore arrive again at the reason why Moltmann, following Paul, should see the Spirit as inherently eschatological, that is, as the beginning and fore-taste of the coming kingdom of glory.[91] The Spirit is the power of the future.

Significantly, the same relationship between being and becoming which we discerned to operate in the case of Jesus as the incarnation of the future, can also be discerned in Moltmann's presentation of the relationship between Christ and the Spirit. We shall now briefly elucidate this assertion.

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90. WJC 78.

91. SofL 74.

Moltmann's understanding of the relationship between Christ and the Spirit is constructed on the basis of retrospective projection from the resurrection.

> "If Christ is present now in the eternal Spirit of God, then his history must have been determined by this Spirit from the very beginning."[92]

On the basis of the evidence of the biblical tradition, Moltmann reconstructs the stages of a process which evidently traced the Spirit's connection with Jesus further and further back. Initially this is traced from the resurrection to Jesus' baptism (Mark 1:10), then to his birth (Luke 2:40), then to his conception (Luke 1:35) and finally to 'eternity' (John 1:1).[93] This a process confirmed by the forward-openness for this interpretation occasioned by remembrance of the working of the Spirit in Jesus' historical mission.[94] Despite Moltmann's undifferentiated use of the word 'eternity', the process he describes here equates with our earlier contention that the resurrection is the primary locus of the revelation of *adventus*. The resurrection thus reveals a relationship between the Son and the Spirit which transcends time. Consequently, when we find Moltmann speaking of a process of becoming in this relationship, we can only assume that this must be a becoming in time of what already exists in *adventus*.

In the case of Jesus we suggested that his process of becoming is initiated through his solidarity with the world. In the case of the Spirit it appears that this process is initiated by the Spirit's solidarity with Jesus. Moltmann can therefore speak of,

> "a *kenosis of the Holy Spirit*, which emptied itself and descended from the eternity of God, taking up its dwelling in this vulnerable and mortal human being Jesus".[95]

The consequence of this emptying is a shared history between Jesus and the Spirit in which, Moltmann postulates,

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92. WJC 77. Moltmann suggests that the notion of Christ's presence in the Spirit stems originally from the historical conjunction of his risen appearances with experiences of the Spirit's activity (WJC 218).

93. WJC 78.

94. WJC 78.

95. WJC 93.

"*the Spirit of God* becomes definitively *the Spirit of Christ*".[96]

That is, the Spirit becomes in the history of Christ precisely what retrospective projection from the resurrection suggests must be the case in *adventus*; that is, what must be the case in God's mode of being that transcends time. Jesus' soteriological process of becoming like us so that we might become like him must therefore be seen as disclosing a trinitarian process of becoming. Not only is the Son seen to be in movement, but the Spirit, in his relationship with Jesus, becomes in time who he is in relation to the Son in God's coming eternity. Just as we suggested in the case of the Son, so in the case of the Spirit it will be necessary, therefore, to make a distinction between the economic and immanent Spirit. Developing these insights further in chapter 7 will lead to conceiving of a corresponding process of becoming in the economic Trinity as such. And, beyond that, to postulating that the necessary locus of continuity required to ground the Trinity's identity during this process of becoming must be located in the 'coming eternity' of the immanent Trinity.[97]

5. Jesus' being-in-relation

The emphasis on Jesus' relationality, which characterises Moltmann's later work, is, however, marked by a distinct ambiguity. Does Jesus' messianic mission take place through a necessary contribution *from others*, or does it take place *for others* and on their behalf? That is, does Jesus act as the result of his reciprocal, mutual relationships with others through wh ich his sense of identity is constructed? Or does he act in a unilateral fashion for others out of his own innate sense of being? We shall explore this ambiguity further.

On the one hand, Moltmann can assert that Jesus' sense of identity and understanding of his messianic mission arises out of reciprocal relationships with those with whom he engages. For

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96. SofL 62. Cf. WJC 94.

97. In chapters 6 and 7 we shall develop the view that the movement of becoming seen in the economic Trinity discloses a movement of coming in the immanent Trinity. There we will suggest that the Spirit is the mediator of God's ever new coming to himself in self-relatedness.

example, Moltmann proposes that the effect of the faith and expectation of certain women was to lead Jesus to 'surpass himself'; to grow beyond himself and into God's messiah.[98] Thus, through Jesus' encounter with the Canaanite woman,[99] he is led to discern that the magnanimity of God extends beyond the limits of Israel's territory.[100] Commenting on this and other such incidents Moltmann observes,

> "For the synoptic gospels, what these women do for Jesus is apparently *just as important* as what Jesus does for them".[101]

Similarly, when examining Jesus' relationship with the poor (the people - *ochlos*) Moltmann detects the same interplay of reciprocity. The divine compassion is awakened in Jesus through the suffering of the poor.[102] Moreover, Moltmann asserts that the kingdom of God dawns,

> "in the *interplay* between Jesus and the people. Jesus brings the gospel to the poor, and discovers the kingdom of God among the poor. The poor need him, and he depends on them".[103]

This interplay of relations is mediated through the Spirit.

> "[Jesus] received the Spirit for the sick whom he healed, for the sinners whose sins he forgave, for the poor whose fellowship he sought, for the women and men whom he called into his discipleship...So in a whole diversity of ways the Spirit constitutes the social person of Jesus as the Christ of God."[104]

This quotation, however, also serves to show the ambiguity in Moltmann's presentation. For, on the other hand, if Jesus acts soteriologically 'for' others, then is there not a component of this relationship, at least, which is more accurately understood in unilateral rather than reciprocal terms? Moltmann's treatment of the Last Supper confirms the presence of this

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98. WJC 111.

99. Matthew 15:21-28.

100. WJC 146.

101. WJC 146, my emphasis.

102. WJC 148.

103. WJC 102, my emphasis. Cf. p.100.

104. WJC 94.

seemingly required unilateral strand. Here Jesus acts simply out of himself. Yet significantly, as the following quotation shows, Moltmann maintains that what the Last Supper reveals about Jesus' action casts its light back onto his messianic mission as a whole.

> "Here [in the Last Supper] the kingdom of God which he has made present to the poor becomes wholly concentrated on his bodily person. He, the giver of the feast, is himself the gift of the feast. Here Jesus truly is 'the kingdom of God in person'...We may say in retrospect that something of the ultimate theological meaning of Jesus' supper is also present everywhere where Jesus is present in person, and sits down at table with sinners and tax collectors."[105]

This ambiguity which results from a tension in Moltmann's presentation of Jesus' reciprocal and unilateral relations could be resolved, I suggest, by the introduction of a distinction between Jesus as the *agent of the eschatological future*, and Jesus as a *locus of the anticipation of that future*. These two elements are, of course, connected. And to achieve such a necessary connection in differentiation I suggest that they should be interpreted in line with the relationship proposed between Jesus' divine and human natures that we set out in the previous chapter. In the model now proposed I shall also seek to take up and refine Moltmann's suggestion that Jesus' divine and human natures may be understood in terms of exclusive and inclusive relationships.[106] My difference with Moltmann will be that I do not hold that this is all that needs to be said on the subject.[107]

The unilateral work of salvation, the opening up of time to participate in the coming eternity of God, can ultimately only be the work of God. Describing it thus reminds us that it lies beyond the immanent possibilities of creation. If Jesus is the *agent* of this future's coming then he is so because he is divine. To suggest otherwise is to begin down a path which must inevitably lead to Pelagianism. It would be to accord more to human potential than can be sustained. Yet we have asserted that Jesus' (economic) divinity, in solidarity with his human nature, is in the process of becoming. We might therefore expect to see in Jesus' earthly life a

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105. WJC 116.

106. TKG 120.

107. See also chapter 4.2.7.

process by which unilateral relationships become increasingly important with time. Perhaps this then is how we could make sense of Moltmann's treatment of the Last Supper. Jesus' unilateral action is most clearly seen here because this moment marks a decisive stage in his becoming 'the kingdom of God in person'. It is a becoming of that which, speaking of his (immanent) divine nature, he already is.

To this understanding of Jesus' divine agency we must, however, add another consideration. In his humanity Jesus is supremely open for reciprocal relationships. Moreover, it is through the quality of these relationships, I suggest, that something of the nature of the new creation is anticipated. Considered under this aspect of his being, Jesus may be perceived as the supreme locus of messianic anticipation of the eschatological future.

Let us, however, be clear. In this model there can be no case of simplistic apportionment: unilateral relations equate to Jesus' divinity; reciprocal relations equate to his humanity. Jesus' unity of person must argue against this. Here, therefore, is where Moltmann's suggestion of replacing the language of two natures with two relations runs up against its limit. Instead, Jesus' unity of person demands that his openness for reciprocity is something in which his divinity also participates. It just does not do so to the extent of exhaustively defining its nature in this form of relationship. Consequently, I maintain, Jesus constitutes the locus of the revelation that creation can affect God, but not to the point when God's relationship with creation becomes necessary for his own self-realisation.[108] Likewise Jesus can act unilaterally 'for others' in his humanity, but not to the point of achieving the eschatological future. Human activity cannot build the kingdom of God if it concerns the defeat of transience. What it can do is prepare the way for the coming of the kingdom.[109]

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108. This affirmation will be assumed and developed in chapter 6.

109. Just what such a preparation might mean is explored in chapter 6. Interestingly, away from an explicitly christological context, Moltmann can speak about a distinction in unity of human and divine action. "The creative action of God and the action of human beings in response to that are indeed not on the same level, since God is God and human beings are human beings. But no one may separate these two levels which God himself has brought together" (CJF 6). The christological model I am constructing could, I submit, offer such insights a firm grounding.

These proposals will remain incomplete, however, unless we add another level of depth. It is necessary to see both Jesus' unilateral and reciprocal relations as meditated via the Spirit. It is this which bestows upon them their inner content.

The Spirit is the power of futurity, we earlier suggested, because the eschatological future consists in the new quality of relationship with God which it is the Spirit's 'nature' to effect. This is the relationship of sonship (and daughterhood). The process by which creation comes to share in that which is Jesus the Son's essential possession must clearly be the unilateral work of God. It is a work effected in and through Jesus and mediated by the Spirit. But the new creation will consist of more than the 'vertical' relationship of each part of creation with the divine life. Participation in the trinitarian being of God will also mean that the 'horizontal' relationships within creation will also come to be coloured by the same quality of relationship as characterises that between the Father and the Son in the Spirit.[110] Consequently, these intra-(new) creation relationships will also be mediated by the Spirit. What we see, therefore, in the reciprocal relationships between Jesus and others which come into being in the wake of his messianic mission (pursued in the power of the Spirit) is an anticipation of this future of new creation in history.

In line with these suggestions, we could think of the Spirit as mediating the connection between Jesus' unilateral and reciprocal relations as follows. In the Spirit, Jesus' mutually conditioning relationships with others serve the process of Jesus' contingent becoming who he is. The

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110. I use this formulation instead of 'the trinitarian persons' because I am sensitive to the critique of Moltmann's social doctrine of the Trinity raised by R. Bauckham (*The Theology of Jürgen Moltmann*, pp.162-5). Bauckham detects a tension in Moltmann's theology between the presentation of the Spirit as but one member of a divine community of equals and the Spirit's specific economic role as the mediator of the Father - Son relation and so the soteriological power of God's inclusive unity. To my mind, however, Bauckham goes too far along the line of making the economic appearance all-determining for knowledge of God with the result that he risks collapse into a modalism he does not intend. The persons of the Son and the Spirit are reduced to specific abilities of God: "The Spirit *is* God's ability to be an open fellowship...just as the Son is God's ability to be incarnate as a human person" (p.164). Trinitarian theology does, however, entail risking statements about the immanent Trinity on the basis of the economic Trinity; it involves predicating an 'as well as' in God's inner being. Sometimes, in the creation of theological models, it is necessary to press this 'as well as' beyond the 'economic data' providing the resulting speculations do not conflict with but help illuminate that 'data'. Perhaps, therefore, on this basis, some form of social doctrine of the Trinity could be constructed . This, though, lies beyond the scope of our present task.

mediation of the Spirit thus holds together two things. First, Jesus' contingent relations with others which help shape his identity and through which anticipations of the future are created. Second, Jesus' development towards the relationship with his 'Abba' in which his identity fundamentally subsists. Anticipations of the future (in Jesus' mutual relations with others) are thus created in the wake of Jesus' journey towards himself (toward the realisation of his identity as Son of his Abba). Yet, we must remember, it is this journey of Jesus towards himself which opens up the possibility of salvation. It is only through the participation of creation in this process of Jesus' becoming, a participation grounded in the incarnation and mediated by the Spirit, that the salvation of creation is achieved. Salvation, therefore, is ultimately the unilateral achievement of God.

These reflections, therefore, give us a way to hold together both that salvation is the unilateral work of God and that the content of the new creation is shaped by what has contingently become in time. For, just as the Spirit mediates Jesus' contingent becoming into the 'form' of the Son's divinity, so the Spirit will mediate the transformation of creation into the form of the divine life in such a way that its contingency is preserved. One process is the exact analogy of the other because the Spirit is the mediator of both. It is the Spirit who enables us to share in Jesus' history of becoming which is itself mediated by the Spirit.

Jesus' messianic mission is thus marked by a complex of Spirit-mediated relations. The Spirit not only mediates Jesus' relationship with the Father, but also Jesus' relationship with the Father to others. Additionally, the Spirit also mediates the relationship between Jesus and those whom he encounters, and so the relations between those who form the messianic community of anticipation.[111] The Spirit is both the power through which Jesus anticipates the future on the path to becoming himself, and the power through which Jesus is able to communicate his anticipatory experience of the future to others. We therefore find ourselves reaching the same conclusion: the Spirit is 'the power of futurity' because the future will be grounded in the

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111. The Spirit is 'God's love poured into our hearts' (Rom. 5:5).

quality of relationships which the Spirit enables.

6. *Jesus' inclusive and exclusive suffering and death*

Moltmann's use of the concept of anticipation is not, however, restricted to his treatment of Jesus' messianic mission. Having now examined this mission in some detail, it will be appropriate to broaden the scope of our investigation. We shall do this by examining Moltmann's treatment of the cross and resurrection of Christ in *The Way of Jesus Christ* under this same rubric of anticipation. If we are careful to distinguish between what I shall term 'levels of anticipation',[112] then we can also view the cross and resurrection as stages of progression on Jesus' way to the future. In returning to this familiar territory of the Christ event we shall be concerned, however, only to highlight those elements of his later treatment which may be considered developments of his earlier presentation.

Moltmann's understanding of the cross in the eschatological perspective of the resurrection developed in *The Crucified God*, is taken further in *The Way of Jesus Christ* by viewing it within the apocalyptic horizon of end-time suffering.[113] Moltmann argues that this interpretive horizon is warranted in the light of both a forward and backward perspective on Jesus' history. It is necessitated by Jesus' proclamation of the imminence of God's kingdom which leads him into conflict with the powers of the present world-time centred in Jerusalem.[114] This is a conflict to be discerned in Jesus' prophetic enactment of the destruction of the temple and in his confrontation with Rome in the form of Pontius Pilate.[115] Here, it is as if the contradiction between promise and reality, so characteristic of Moltmann's theology, is personified in Jesus' experience. Jesus is the promise in person, and his suffering betokens the end of a world which cannot exist in permanent contradiction to God. However, congruent with Moltmann's notion

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112. See section 5.8 for details.

113. WJC 151f. Moltmann clearly perceives this as a continuous development: "in taking as my subject the apocalyptic horizon of Christ's sufferings, I am presupposing these earlier interpretations [CG, TKG] and adding to them" (WJC 153).

114. WJC 153.

115. WJC 154. See also pp.160-164 where this notion is expanded and explored further.

of the future as dialectical resolution, Jesus' apocalyptic sufferings do not signal the world's destruction but are the birth pangs of its new creation. Accordingly Moltmann writes,

> "Apocalyptic has nothing to do with Manichaeism. It is hope in the Creator of a new creation".[116]

Moltmann also maintains that this same apocalyptic horizon can be justified by arguing from the resurrection backwards. If Jesus' resurrection may be understood as the prolepsis of the general resurrection of the dead, then his death may be interpreted as the anticipation of the universal fate of death which afflicts all present reality.[117] More particularly Moltmann argues,

> "[a]s an anticipation of universal death, Golgotha is the anticipation of the end of the world and the beginning of the world that is new. It is the anticipation of divine judgement out of which the kingdom of righteousness and justice proceeds."[118]

Jesus' suffering and death, therefore, must be interpreted within the same universal horizon as is projected by the resurrection. The cross discloses the end of all that is in relation to the promised new beginning of all that is. Accordingly, Moltmann interprets Jesus' passion as taking place *pars pro toto*.[119] Grounded in this insight, though without rigorous systematic differentiation, Moltmann appears to discern three aspects to Jesus' apocalyptic sufferings and death.

> "Jesus suffers them in *solidarity* with others, and *vicariously* for many, and *proleptically* for the whole suffering creation."[120]

Clearly, however, these three aspects, the with, for and before, of Jesus' suffering, cannot all lie on the same level. If Jesus suffers the expected end-time sufferings so that everyone is

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116. WJC 153.

117. WJC 155.

118. WJC 155.

119. WJC 155.

120. WJC 152, my emphasis.

liberated from their threat and has the prospect of the new creation opened up to them,[121] then the proleptic element of this event is rendered 'out of date' by the vicarious element. That which it anticipates is no longer to be our fate. Additionally, if Jesus' suffering changes the meaning of our suffering in what sense can a relationship of solidarity be established between his suffering and ours? Such a relationship can only be established, I suggest, if solidarity is understood to be the point of entry into a vicariously effective process. That is, as the basis of applicability of such a process. This is, I presume, how one is to interpret Moltmann's claim that Jesus' suffering and death have an inclusive and exclusive dimension.[122] Jesus' suffering on our behalf is soteriologically effective because his suffering includes what we presently suffer. Although Moltmann claims in *The Way of Jesus Christ* that it is an emphasis on the inclusive dimension of Jesus' passion which marks it out from his previous treatment of the subject,[123] presumably there can be no effective vicarious action without this dimension of inclusivity. Rather, when in this volume Moltmann speaks of the 'openness' of Christ's sufferings[124] and death[125] for fellowship with others, we should rather see him as unfolding, in an explicit manner, the range of inclusivity which Jesus' vicarious action must be held to entail. As we saw in the previous chapter, the potential for such inclusivity was already established in *Theology of Hope* through Moltmann's appropriation of Hegel's speculative Good Friday. Both the apocalyptic horizon now utilised and Hegel's speculative Good Friday earlier employed, are ways of establishing inclusivity by means of the projection of a universally encompassing, and so universally applicable, horizon.

Moltmann understands a fellowship with Christ's sufferings to exist for,

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121. WJC 155.

122. WJC 152. Cf. pp. 208f.

123. WJC 152.

124. WJC 152, 155-157.

125. WJC 160-170.

"the sufferings which inevitably arise from the antithesis between the Christ event and the nature of this aeon"[126].

We might translate this qualification of applicability as follows. Christ's sufferings include all those which can be seen to arise from the contradiction between the promise held out in the Christ event and present reality. In this way Moltmann can extend this category beyond the bounds of those whose suffering is explicitly linked to Christ: those whose suffering is occasioned by apostolic existence (2 Corinthians 4:10) and membership of the body of Christ.[127] Christ's sufferings can now also include all who suffer because the present world is not as God intends that it shall be. They thus include the sufferings of the weak: the poor and even the fragile creation itself. That is, Christ's sufferings include that which arises from "the struggle for power which is the trademark of 'this world'".[128] In this way Moltmann extends the category of 'end-time' sufferings to cover the whole range of what he earlier terms 'the contradictions of scientific and technological civilisation'.[129] The victims of the injustices of the present economic system, of the exploitation of nature (including nature as a victim itself), and the system of nuclear deterrence consequently all witness to God's indictment of present reality.[130] Here we have an excellent example of the construction of what we earlier termed Jesus' particular relevance.[131] Though, as is typical of Moltmann's theology, it is constructed within the horizon of the question of theodicy. Jesus' pole of containability, in his suffering and death, is constrained within the circumstances of the present in order to create a trajectory of hope. In Moltmann's terms, through Jesus' vicarious and representative suffering he "throws open...the future of the new creation".[132]

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126. WJC 155.

127. WJC 156f.

128. WJC 157.

129. WJC 63-69. Cf. p.157.

130. WJC 157.

131. See Chapter 3.

132. WJC 155.

By a symmetrical argument, *The Way of Jesus Christ* also sees Moltmann explicitly expand the extent of the inclusivity of Christ's death. Jesus dies the death of one who has become a perceived threat to political and social order.[133] He also dies the death of a Jew. As the N.T. use of the suffering servant motif demonstrates, Jesus enters into the suffering and fate of Israel. This observation leads Moltmann to argue that,

> "it is not merely possible to see Golgotha and Auschwitz in a single perspective; it is actually necessary".[134]

Additionally, Jesus dies the death of a slave; the death of the poor who have no rights.[135] And, in accordance with the emphasis which most clearly demonstrates that here we are in the orbit of Moltmann's later theology, Jesus dies the death of everything that lives but is subject to the law of transience.

> "[Jesus] died in solidarity with the whole sighing creation, human and non-human".[136]

Interestingly, Moltmann distinguishes his position here from the classical patristic position of Augustine. Jesus, as the sinless Son of God, is not essentially immortal.[137] Rather, Moltmann argues that it is only Jesus' inherent mortality which allows his death to be the ground of the mediation of new creation to all transient reality.

Having now perceived something of the inclusivity that Moltmann ascribes to Jesus' suffering and death, in what sense does he understand these as exclusive?

> "The exclusive side is the unique, human and divine suffering of the lonely Christ. This acquires its

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133. WJC 163f.

134. WJC 168.

135. WJC 168f.

136. WJC 169.

137. WJC 169. Cf. HTG 138-140.

universal significance through the expression of its vicarious power.[138]

How should one interpret this definition of exclusivity? Presumably by understanding it as indicating the dimension of Jesus' relationship with God as 'Abba' mediated by the Spirit. I make this assumption because this dimension certainly appears to be implied in Moltmann's treatment of Jesus death as that of Israel's messiah[139] and as God's child.[140]

"...Jesus *is* Israel's messiah...but on the foundation of his *special* experience of God".[141]

"...in his 'Abba' prayer Jesus experienced himself as child of the divine Father."[142]

We may equate Moltmann's language of exclusivity used here with our earlier discussion concerning Jesus' unilateral relationships. It would yield the following results. The relation of the one person of Jesus to the Father explains why the dimension of exclusivity concerns both Jesus' humanity and divinity as the above quotation implied. Additionally, the action of Jesus' divinity in solidarity with his humanity provides the inner ground for the vicarious efficacy of Jesus' suffering and death.

The area of discussion made conspicuous by its absence, however, in Moltmann's treatment of Jesus' inclusive and exclusive sufferings is that of the Spirit. For not only does the Spirit mediate the relation which we have understood to constitute Jesus' uniqueness, but the Spirit is also the means by which the whole of creation is able to participate in his unique history thus rendering it inclusive. In other words, the Spirit relates Jesus to 'Abba' *and* the creation to the history of Jesus' experience of God as 'Abba'. In the absence of this dimension of the Spirit, Moltmann is forced to establish the inclusivity of Jesus' suffering and death by more or less exact historical parallel; he must find historical resonances between past and present. In this

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138. WJC 208f

139. WJC 164f.

140. WJC 165-167.

141. WJC 165.

142. WJC 165.

way, as we saw, he attempts to relate the sufferings of the non-human creation with the situation of the poor under the subsuming category of the weak. Although this method is valid in part, it could be considerably deepened and extended by taking account of the Spirit's role as outlined above. This would also avoid the problem of using general templates derived from Jesus' history which are incapable of being accommodated to the individually varying circumstances of the particular contexts of today. In *God in Creation* Moltmann develops an understanding of the Spirit as the principle of individuation.[143] Had he combined this insight with the Spirit's role of mediating between creation and Jesus' history, so that this could be conceived in an individually sensitive way, he would have produced a model better able to sustain his laudable intention of establishing the particular relevance of Jesus to the suffering circumstances of our present age.

7. The transition from death to resurrection

Our comments about the deficiency of Moltmann's account of Jesus' inclusivity should not, however, be taken to suggest that in Moltmann's later treatment of Jesus' suffering and death the dimension of pneumatology is absent. It is present in the form of an extension of Moltmann's understanding of the Spirit as the medium of continuity of Jesus' eschatological history. It was this dimension which we examined earlier in connection with Jesus' historical mission. In *The Spirit of Life* Moltmann sets out to construct a *pneumatologia crucis* largely on the basis of exegetical allusions in Mark's Gospel.[144] The Spirit is the strength in which Jesus can give himself up to death vicariously for many.[145] It is the Spirit which leads him forward to the point where is death becomes inevitable. In death the Spirit is breathed out or yielded up.[146] These insights are then combined with the notion of Hebrews 9:14 that it was

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143. GinC 100.

144. SofL 62-65. Here Moltmann is apparently dependent on the work of one of his Tübingen doctoral students L. Dabney. The title of his dissertation translates as: The kenosis of the Spirit: continuity between creation and redemption in the work of the Holy Spirit (p. 321 n.15, see also p.xi).

145. SofL 64.

146. SofL 64.

through the 'eternal Spirit', or 'indestructible life', that Jesus was enabled to offer himself up to death. The result is that Moltmann is able to discern, in the Spirit, the ground of continuity between Jesus' death and resurrection. This is because the Spirit, as the power of indestructible life, is also that through which Jesus' rebirth to life is effected. Consequently Moltmann writes:

> "Looked at pneumatologically, Christ's death and rebirth belong within a single moment. They are one event. They are not two different acts performed by God in Jesus".[147]

The reader of Moltmann who progressed directly from *Theology of Hope* to *The Spirit of Life* could be forgiven for assuming that, in respect of this last quotation, this second text had a different author. As we saw in *Theology of Hope*, the whole notion of the eschatological future was grounded in the massive discontinuity which Moltmann perceived to exist between Jesus' cross and resurrection. This future transcended the temporal plane precisely because it was constituted by the resolution of the dialectic between cross and resurrection, between history and promise. Now we find Moltmann asserting that between the cross and resurrection there exists the continuity of a single event. How is this seeming tension between his earlier and later positions to be resolved? Before we can suggest a solution to this particular conundrum we need to connect what Moltmann says here with the stress on continuity which characterises Moltmann's treatment of the resurrection in *The Way of Jesus Christ*. Here Moltmann speaks of "'Christ's transition' to the new creation".[148] However, the full significance of this conception of 'transition' will not be recognised unless it is seen in the context of Moltmann's earlier discussion in *The Way of Jesus Christ* on the category of universal history. Moltmann believes that this category has been made both possible and necessary by the resurrection which constitutes the event of the end of *all* history in the midst of history.[149]

Aware that concepts of the nature of history are themselves conditioned by the time and

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147. SofL 65.

148. WJC 256-259.

149. WJC 235. Cf. Pannenberg, *Jesus - God and Man*, p.69.

circumstances of their construction, Moltmann suggests that an endurable and universally applicable notion of history will have to be constructed from 'metahistorical concepts'.[150] To achieve this he postulates that a sense of history only exists when a difference is perceived between 'the sphere of experience' and 'the horizon of expectation'.[151] This leads him to conclude that,

> "[p]ast and future become distinguishable in the *transition* of the present".[152]

Transition, understood in this way, is thus a metahistorical concept which can be applied to every experience of history in general. It speaks of a movement, an exodus, from an experienced old reality to an expected new reality. In particular, suggests Moltmann, it may also be applied to the sense of history which results from the 'surplus' of God's promise over experienced fulfilment.[153] Here we return, by means of the category of transition, to Moltmann's fundamental claim of *Theology of Hope* that promise creates history. Moreover, Jesus' resurrection may also be comprehended within this category of transition. As constituting a future for the one who was past, it represents "a totally unique interlocking of future and past".[154] It is thus a unique transition, but a transition nonetheless in respect of the way this term has been defined. Consequently, utilising this concept, Moltmann can conceive of Jesus' resurrection, and by extension the participation of creation in Jesus' resurrection, as an on-going process.[155]

> "This process has its foundation in Christ, its dynamic in the Spirit, and its future in the bodily new creation of all things. Resurrection means...what is in the making: the *transition* from death to life."[156]

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150. WJC 236.

151. WJC 236. Moltmann's footnote (p.371 n.33) reveals that these are the terms of R. Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft. Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten* (Frankfurt, 1979) pp.349ff.

152. WJC 237, my emphasis.

153. WJC 238. Cf. TH 106-112. Full details of this effect of promise are to be found in chapter 2.

154. WJC 239.

155. WJC 241.

156. WJC 241, my emphasis.

It will already be clear, therefore, that the category of transition has the potential to speak of a *continuity* of process in the relationship between death and life.

This potentiality to speak of continuity is exploited to the full when Moltmann turns to consider the ecological significance of Jesus' resurrection. This he does initially by recalling that history, in its broadest sense, is occasioned by the interaction between human society and nature.[157] Viewing Jesus' resurrection within this horizon of "the ecological conditions of history in nature"[158] means, he suggests, that the emphasis falls less on God's act in history in and for his dead Christ (as this is viewed in isolation from the natural context of history - a product of the Enlightenment cleavage between subject and object[159]), than on "the bodily character of the Christ who died and rose again".[160] This in turn necessitates a corresponding move from "the historical-eschatological theology of the resurrection to the historical-ecological theology of rebirth".[161] It demands, Moltmann concludes, the adoption of a 'pneumatological-trinitarian' perspective in which Jesus' resurrection is perceived as his rebirth from the life-giving Spirit.[162] The Spirit thus becomes the ground of bodily continuity.

Intriguingly, Moltmann maintains that for this theology of Christ's dying and rebirth in the Spirit, natural metaphors are more appropriate than those from the realm of history.[163] He offers no reason, however, by which this appropriateness may be justified. What connection exists? I suggest that here we have the coming together of two notions simply as a result of the

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157. In the characteristic fashion of Moltmann this perspective is established as that which mediates between a dialectic of paired opposites: modern anthropocentricism and postmodern cosmocentricism (WJC 245).

158. WJC 247.

159. Moltmann can also suggest that 'after Auschwitz' this bifurcation of reality can no longer have any relevance (CJF 26).

160. WJC 247.

161. WJC 247.

162. WJC 248.

163. WJC 248. Moltmann repeats this assertion at SofL 65.

way they are utilised by Moltmann and not because of any inherent necessity. The first is that of the effect of his chosen horizon of the bodily future of creation. Within this horizon natural metaphors are bound to be selectively highlighted.[164] The second is that his concern to establish bodily continuity between creation and new creation leads him to the pneumatological dimension in which, as we have seen, he tends to discern the continuity of the eschatological process. The action of the Spirit and natural metaphors are thus thrust together. We should notice, however, that there can be no intrinsic link between the Spirit and the horizon of nature. As Romans 8:11 demonstrates, the Spirit is the power of God's efficacy in the eschatological act of the raising Jesus from the dead which, according to Moltmann's definition, belongs within the horizon of 'history'. More curiously still, the category of transition appears, within the orbit of Moltmann's ecological concern, to be used as a category appropriate to his preferred natural metaphors. Yet, as we saw, the category of transition was constructed specifically as a concept applicable to history; the very realm he now asserts is not relevant to his theology of rebirth. Unperturbed by this, however, Moltmann elects to link his interpretation of Jesus' resurrection within the category of transition to the idea of the Spirit as a factor of bodily continuity. Thus, commenting on 1 Corinthians 15 where Paul utilises the analogy of a grain of wheat to unfold the relationship between death and resurrection, Moltmann maintains that this speaks of,

> "a *transition*, not a total breach and a new beginning".[165]

Similarly, Moltmann comments as follows upon the bodily process of transformation which Philippians 3:21 suggests the resurrection entails.

> "Here again, these images present death and life, not as a breaking off and a new beginning, but as a *transition*...Dying and coming to life are two elements in a transformation process of the new creation of all things."[166]

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164. See chapter 2 where we established the nature and basis for this effect of interpretive horizons.

165. WJC 249.

166. WJC 249f.

The net result is the production of an understanding of the cross and resurrection as but different elements of one event. This, as the reader will immediately observe, equates exactly with the conception of the Christ event produced by Moltmann's *pneumatologia crucis* in *The Spirit of Life* which originally provoked this discussion.

In the light of *Theology of Hope*, what then are we to make of the statement that between death and life there does not exist a total breach but rather a process of development? First, it is vital to appreciate that whatever Moltmann does mean by this it does not constitute a denial of his dialectical understanding of the relationship between the cross and resurrection. This understanding is still present. In fact, an important example can be found in the midst of the discussion from *The Way of Jesus Christ* which we have been analysing. It concerns Moltmann's objection to Troeltsch's epistemological principle of analogy. This principle, when applied to Jesus' resurrection, appears to render the resurrection as 'event' highly questionable since no analogy for its occurrence yet exists. Over against Troeltsch Moltmann enlists the support of Anaxagoras who held that knowledge of one thing is only arrived at through knowledge of its opposite. Hence he writes, significantly for our purposes,

> "The perception of the dead Christ in the eternal livingness of God has to be understood as the most profound and most primal form of knowledge of the other - namely 'the Wholly Other'; for there is no greater antithesis than that between absolute death and eternal life."[167]

It could be argued that this reassertion of the dialectic between death and life simply marks an expedient return to an older understanding that Moltmann's current line of argument should have led him to abandon. I, however, wish to maintain that it is more complex than this. The clue comes in a fundamentally undeveloped statement at a later point in *The Way of Jesus Christ* when Moltmann is again concerned with the continuity of process of the resurrection. He writes:

> "Christian faith starts from the assumption that it is impossible to reconcile life and death without the future

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167. WJC 245.

of God".[168]

It is now my intention to build upon this insight in the light of our foregoing discussion. The category of transition was, the reader will recall, an explicitly metahistorical category. It was a category which stood outside historical change so that by it historical changes could be recognised. To speak about transition in this sense, therefore, must entail adopting an interpretive standpoint outside history. It must entail the discovery of a vantage point that transcends history. The only dimension within Moltmann's theology which transcends history is that of the coming eternity of God; the dimension of 'the future of God'. It is from the perspective of God that continuity between death and life may be asserted. This was already true of *Theology of Hope*. As we saw, the continuity of identity of the crucified and risen Christ was located by Moltmann outside of Christ himself in the *God* who raised him from death.[169] To see the Spirit as the medium of continuity of Jesus' eschatological history is, in effect, simply a trinitarian extension of this same basic insight. However, a continuity established from the perspective of God does not negate the massive discontinuity between life and death which exists from the vantage point of history. Within the horizon of creation, no possibility exists for the overcoming of transience. There can be no continuum within the realisation of immanent possibility which leads from death to life. Thus, when adopting a perspective within history Moltmann can speak of "transitionless transitions"[170] when referring to the experience of historical breach which, for the process of promise-development, forms the inner reason why the saving future must be perceived as qualitatively distinct from the plane of history.[171] Consequently, all language of a resurrection process, all speech of bodily continuity, all talk of a 'transition' from creation to new creation already stems from the adoption of God's perspective of the transcendent future. It is continuity perceived only, as it were, by looking from God's future backward into history. Discontinuity, therefore, marks

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168. WJC 264.

169. TH 200; see chapter 4.1.1.

170. WJC 22.

171. See chapter 2 for a full description of this mechanism.

the perspective of creation; continuity characterises the perspective of God.

The language of continuity and discontinuity when discoursing about the eschatological future is inescapable. Without continuity the new creation becomes the replacement of creation, not its redeemed counterpart. Without discontinuity, measured against the potentiality of creation, there can be no soteriological defeat of transience in a new creation. Continuity and discontinuity seen within different interpretive horizons, those of God and creation respectively, are therefore not in tension. Rather they are inescapable complements. It is thus not the case that in Moltmann's later theology, despite its elements of confusion, the language of continuity *replaces* the earlier language of discontinuity. It is rather that the movement from his earlier to his later theology is marked by a *change of emphasis of perspective*. The elements of continuity which in his earlier period received scant attention come to greater prominence in his later period; but not, we notice, by negating his earlier insights.[172] Moltmann's development is one of growing comprehensiveness rather than of false start and new beginning. It is a progress in which complementary not rival horizons of interpretation are added with time. The two horizons we have described can be seen to come together when Moltmann writes:

> "Historical identity [continuity judged from the perspective of the eschaton] and eschatological transformation [discontinuity judged from the perspective of history] do not exclude one another, but are two sides of the one, single transition to eternal life."[173]

Transformation always includes an irreducible degree of discontinuity. Otherwise it would be a form of evolution. And continuity of identity can only be guaranteed by that which itself is not undergoing the process of transformation: God.

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172. Moltmann's willingness to stress the dimension of continuity can, however, lead him into paradoxical statements. For example he can state that mortal life "is open for *analogy* with the *wholly other*, eternal life" (WJC 250, my emphasis). But what this quotation does clearly demonstrate is that the dimension of discontinuity has not been negated by this new emphasis. The problem is rather that the relationship between the two dimensions of continuity and discontinuity has not been thought through carefully.

173. WJC 262, my additions in square brackets.

8. *Levels of anticipation*

In including Moltmann's later treatment of the Christ event under the rubric of anticipation we asserted earlier that it would be important to distinguish between levels of anticipation. It will now be appropriate to briefly explore the way in which Moltmann implicitly achieves this.

In his discourse concerning the significance of the Last Supper Moltmann, as we earlier observed, suggests that in this event the kingdom of God is present only in Jesus' person.[174] Significantly for our present purposes, he also makes the following tantalising remark.

> "In his death the kingdom of God has not merely 'come very close', as it does in his proclamation. It is actually there."[175]

This statement is intriguing because it clearly distinguishes the quality of presence of God's kingdom in Jesus' death from that in Jesus' messianic mission. The language of proximity, 'come very close', is replaced by presence; 'actually there'. Yet clearly this statement cannot be taken at face value. If the kingdom was 'actually there' in Jesus' death, this would signal that the goal of the eschatological process had been realised. Manifestly this is not what Moltmann wishes to assert. Sadly, Moltmann offers us no account of exactly what kind of 'thereness' he has in mind. How might we interpret this statement?

It would be possible to accord this statement meaning by interpreting it in the light of Jesus' process of becoming. We have asserted that Jesus is the incarnation of the future in the sense that his relationship with the Father in *adventus* constitutes the form of the eschatological future of creation. In time, we maintained, as a result of his solidarity with the present form of creation, Jesus is in the process of becoming himself. Jesus' messianic mission takes place in the wake of this process which is mediated through the Spirit. The kingdom is anticipated to the extent that people are drawn into the experience of God's proximity, that is, to the extent that they come to experience something of Jesus' own relation to the Father which is the inner

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174. WJC 205.

175. WJC 205. This is why, Moltmann suggests, the cross mediates God's presence to those who live far from God.

structure of the kingdom. The cross may therefore be understood as a higher realisation of the presence of the kingdom, over against Jesus' messianic mission, if it signals the realisation of Jesus' relation to the Father at a higher level. Consequently, if the obedience which the cross displays may be conceived as the supreme manifestation of Jesus' sonship, as the confession of the Gentile centurion in Mark's Gospel suggests,[176] then in the self-offering of the cross Jesus becomes as much himself as is possible under the conditions of history.[177] More strikingly, Jesus realises his identity in the very obedience that leads him into his deepest conformity with the world which is profoundly alienated from his form of being. Perhaps here then we can make sense of Moltmann's enlistment of Anaxagoras and speak of the revelation of Christ in his opposite. Because Jesus' experience of the cross is unique to him, it also makes sense to speak of Jesus here as the kingdom of God in person. The cross is Jesus' unilateral accomplishment.

Manifestly, in the cross the boundary of historical potentiality, the boundary of the distinctive patterning of the possibilities of creation, has still not been crossed. It is the crossing of this boundary which distinguishes the level of the anticipation of the eschatological future to be found in Jesus' resurrection.

Moltmann shows that he is aware of this qualitative distinction as early as the essay 'Theology as Eschatology' where he distinguishes between what he terms the 'Word-prolepsis' of the gospel and the 'reality-prolepsis' of the resurrection.[178] The resurrection is an eschatological event not a historical event.[179] In Jesus' resurrection, in this one person, the limitations of the possibilities of present creation are overcome. The resurrection is not a new, even unique re-patterning of the immanent potentialities of the world. It is rather a new possibility for the

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176. Mark 15:39; assuming that the more difficult reading of 'the Son' is more likely to be genuine.

177. Hebrews 5:8,9 similarly speaks of the perfection of Jesus' sonship through suffering,.

178. TasE 20.

179. WJC 76.

whole of creation in *toto*. This much was already clear in *Theology of Hope*.

> "The resurrection of Christ does not mean a new possibility within the world and its history, but a new possibility altogether for the world, for existence and for history."[180]

Clearly then, the resurrection of Jesus takes us beyond the bounds of what we have discerned to be Moltmann's understanding of the messianic. The resurrection represents, if you will, a higher level anticipation of the kingdom than Jesus' messianic mission. Though Moltmann does not draw attention to this, it is this very distinction in anticipatory level which means that the resurrection cannot simply be taken as the divine verification of the authenticity of Jesus' proclamation.[181] The resurrection does not simply constitute a point of synthesis as the reconciliation of the dialectic between Jesus' mission of God's proximity and his death marked by God's absence. Rather it constitutes a more intense promise of the future of creation as the result of God's transfiguring presence. It stands therefore in a heightened tension with present reality; a tension which demonstrates that the synthesis of the new creation lies beyond the boundary of present creation.

9. Jesus' diachronic resurrection

This higher level prolepsis of Jesus' resurrection may be explored further by examining a distinctive and highly significant motif contained within *The Way of Jesus Christ*. It concerns the adverb 'diachronically' as applied to Jesus' resurrection. Central to Moltmann's thought is the conviction, as we have seen, that in the resurrection Jesus "has been raised into the eschatological life of the new creation".[182] In this volume, however, Moltmann persistently equates the eschatological era of the new creation with the "immediate presence of eternity".[183] At certain places in the book, though not in a rigorous and exhaustive fashion,

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180. TH 179.

181. Cf. this very strand of verification in Pannenberg's interpretation of the significance of Jesus' resurrection (*Jesus - God and Man*, pp.67f).

182. WJC 76.

183. WJC 49. Cf. pp.76, 239.

the nature of the eternity applicable to the new creation is distinguished from what Moltmann terms God's absolute eternity.[184] Speaking of the expectation of the end-time Moltmann asserts,

> "This not the absolute eternity of God. It is the relative eternity or aeonic time of the transfigured new creation in which death, and therefore transitory time as well, will be no more".[185]

The relative eternity of the new creation, we are later informed,

> "is not an *eternity of essence*; it is a *communicated eternity*, which consists in participation in God's essential eternity".[186]

This noticeably freer use of the term eternity clearly colours the way in which Moltmann elects to speak about Jesus' resurrection.

> "In time, Jesus is raised 'on the third day' after his death, but as the immediate presence of eternity his raising is simultaneous to all the moments of his life."[187]

Precisely what Moltmann understands to be entailed by this is spelled out in the following statement:

> "the raising did not merely happen *synchronically* to the dead Jesus; it also happened *diachronically* to the whole Jesus in all moments and aspects of his life and proclamation".[188]

The resurrection is thus not something which simply affected the dead and dying Jesus. The eschatological moment of resurrection does not therefore lie temporally 'after' his death as the continuation of a linear story. Rather, the moment of resurrection transcends the temporal moments of Jesus' life and is thus able to affect them all. While, therefore, the term 'diachronic' may be new, in essence it simply appears to express what is contained within the notion that Jesus is raised into *adventus*; into the coming eternity of God. This future, we

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184. This whole area is subjected to close scrutiny in the following chapter.

185. WJC 158.

186. WJC 330.

187. WJC 49.

188. WJC 76.

asserted, transcends all time because it comes to transform all time. Consequently *adventus* could also be described as affecting time diachronically across the whole plane of temporal extension.

Yet at this point in our comparison between earlier and later terminology we uncover an inherent ambiguity in Moltmann's language in *The Way of Jesus Christ*. Whereas the use of *adventus* always has the sense of occasioning the eschatological transformation of creation, Moltmann's application of the term diachronic can sometimes lead him very close to an articulation of the future which amounts to the eternalisation of time. To examine the cause and effect of this ambiguity we need initially to return to Moltmann's application of the term diachronic to Jesus' resurrection.

On the basis of the fact that a diachronically effective resurrection should mean that the risen Christ is experienced as "the whole Christ", that is as being present in every aspect of his historical life, Moltmann sets up two boundary conditions. These serve to govern the relationship between experience of Jesus' risen presence and remembrance of his history that should pertain on this assumption.

(i) "Nothing can be experienced of his presence which contradicts his history. Otherwise it would not be Jesus whose presence is experienced in the Spirit".[189]

(ii) "[N]othing can be remembered about Jesus' history which contradicts his experienced presence; for that presence would not then be the presence of the risen and exalted Lord".[190]

The resurrection, Moltmann asserts, can thus have no 'retroactive power' on Jesus'

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189. WJC 76.

190. WJC 76.

history.[191] There must be perfect conformity. Anyone who has read *Theology of Hope* cannot fail to be struck by this last statement. There the whole point at issue is not a lack of contradiction between the crucified and risen Christ but precisely the existence of contradiction. Here, it appears, conformity has replaced dialectic. But these boundary conditions are also in tension with other ideas expressed within *The Way of Jesus Christ*. If, as I have maintained, Moltmann's christology must assume the process of Jesus' becoming in time who he is in *adventus*, then the relationship between Jesus' messianic mission and the resurrection (leaving aside for one moment Jesus' solidarity with the world in his apocalyptic sufferings) will be that between a *becoming* person and a person who has proleptically *become*. This will be a far more subtle relationship than one of simplistic conformity between present experience and remembrance. It will need to include, for example, the whole notion of forward-openness that we have elsewhere explored.[192] What then is taking place here in Moltmann's thinking? The clue, I suggest, lies in his different uses of the word 'simultaneous'. This reveals itself most clearly in Moltmann's application of a diachronic conception of Jesus' resurrection to the broader question of the nature of the new creation. Consider the following two quotations both taken from the same page of *The Way of Jesus Christ*.

> "What is eschatological is the new creation of all things which were and are and will be. What is eschatological is the bringing back of all things out of their past, and the gathering of them into the kingdom of glory. What is eschatological is the raising of the body and the whole of nature. What is eschatological is that eternity of the new creation which *all things in time will experience simultaneously* when time ends."[193]

> "The linear time of evolution will be carried into a unique and then final eschatological cycle: into the return of all the parts in the eternal aeon of the new creation of all things. Eschatological future is to be understood *diachronically*: *it is simultaneous to all the times*, and in being so it represents eternity for all things."[194]

The concept of simultaneity has been introduced into Moltmann's discourse, I suspect, as a

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191. This a statement which Moltmann makes in explicit rejection of Pannenberg's notion of retroactivity (see WJC 352 n.9). See also chapter 4.2.2.

192. Chapter 2.

193. WJC 303, emphasis mine.

194. WJC 303, emphasis mine.

result of his embracing of the language of eternity. Yet in these two quotations it is used in two quite different ways: one is compatible with the notion of the eschatological transformation of reality; the other is more in tune with the future as an eternalisation of time. In the first quotation we are informed that the eschatological future will be simultaneously experienced by all moments of time. This suggests, therefore, that the eschatological future will be simultaneous with the *fulfilment* of each temporal moment. Consequently, this understanding of the relationship between eschatology and time allows for the transformation of creation into something other than it was before. Such a notion would be perfectly compatible with an understanding of the eschatological future as *adventus*. A future which transcends the temporal plane must, in its coming to time, affect all time at once. That is one could say, if rather messily, that it affects time at the same 'time' (simultaneously) when 'time' is here measured with respect to *adventus*. In the second quotation Moltmann's use of simultaneous is quite different. The eschatological future is no longer simultaneous with the fulfilment of time but with time itself. Even his choice of a cyclical image in this quotation speaks of the *recapitulation* of the past which would be more compatible with its eternalisation than with its soteriological transformation.

For the sake of clarity, as we discuss this further, let us label the usage of 'simultaneous' in the first quotation eschatological, and in the second eternal. A glance back at the description of Moltmann's account of Jesus' diachronic resurrection will demonstrate that this root usage belongs to the eternal category. The eschatological moment of resurrection is "God's eternal moment",[195] it is "simultaneous to all moments of his life".[196] Why should this be? The boundary conditions that we isolated above were essentially to do with the continuity of Jesus' identity between historical remembrance and risen presence. In this context the notion of the eternalisation of a lived life has strong advantages. It can easily secure a continuity of identity. Indeed, in the previous chapter we saw how Moltmann's use of the method of retrospective

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195. WJC 76.

196. WJC 49.

projection, also based upon the assumption of a continuity of identity, likewise led him to an uncritical adoption of the logic of eternity.[197] I therefore suspect that Moltmann's undifferentiated use of eternity for the eschatological future[198] has allowed him unconsciously to utilise its beneficial ability to secure a continuity of identity here, yet without apparently recognising the destructiveness of this eternal relation for eschatological transformation. Consequently, the tension between the two quotations examined above can be explained as follows. In the first, where the term diachronic is not used, Moltmann can express the relation of the eschatological future to time in a way which is compatible with his abiding intention. In the second, his linking of the new creation with his account of Jesus' resurrection through the term diachronic, leads him to inadvertently express this relation in the form of eternalisation.

An example of this same phenomenon of a seemingly inappropriate use of eternalisation can be found in Moltmann's treatment of what the new creation will mean for the life of an individual.

> "If the whole human being is going to rise, he will rise with his whole life history, and be simultaneously in all his temporal Gestalts, and recognise himself in them. What is spread out and split up into its component parts in a person's lifetime comes together and coincides it eternity, and becomes one."[199]

Here again, this appears to be an eternal usage of simultaneity with the predominant motif being that of recapitulation. While such a conception will guarantee continuity of identity between time and God's future what it fails to provide for is any soteriological transformation, or consummation of the life lived in time. What we miss, therefore, is any notion that the eschatological future might provide for the soteriological completion of fragmented lives, or indeed of lives hardly lived at all because of early death or crippling suffering. To be soteriologically effective the resurrection must have to do not only with the no-longer-existent,

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197. See chapter 4.2.5.

198. Moltmann appears, for example, to be able to use the terms eschatology and eternity interchangeably: "History and eschatology cannot be added together, for if they are, either history is dissolved into eternity or eschatology is overtaken by history" (WJC 214).

199. WJC 267f.

but also with the imperfectly-existent and even the never-was-existent. These latter two categories being connected by the fact that creation's imperfection turns what should have been into what never was. The absence of these considerations is made all the more prominent here because of their explicit presence in *The Coming of God*.[200] Moreover, as we shall explore further in the following chapter, the whole of Moltmann's theology should drive in the direction of their inclusion.

This exploration serves to underline that the whole of Moltmann's theology is essentially dependent on a dialectical conception of the relationship between the cross and resurrection of Christ. The future contradicts (as well as affirms) the present; that is why it is soteriological. The future thus offers something more than is presently the case. To describe Jesus' resurrection as affecting his life diachronically need not, however, be incompatible with this fundamental dialectical conception. This is provided that it is not motivated by an apparently classical notion of eternity; a notion which we have consistently observed Moltmann elsewhere to reject.[201] When considering Jesus' resurrection the idea of *diachronic summation* of what has become in time is not sufficient. It needs to be augmented by the notion of the *diachronic transformation* of Jesus. For, through his solidarity with present creation, he has been led to share in the abyss of nothingness in the cross. Of course, such a conception of transformation demands a more complex understanding of Jesus' continuity of identity. It leads to a dialectical conception of this identity. But, as we saw in the previous chapter, Moltmann has adequate tools to deal with this complexity. It is indicative of the fact that the need for this complexity is not fully recognised that, when Jesus humiliation is mentioned in Moltmann's discussion of Jesus' diachronic resurrection, it is so under the rubric of a form of correspondence. Jesus' risen presence and remembered past are related via a mirror image; exaltation as the

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200. CofG 116-118. See also pp.105f.

201. In *The Way of Jesus Christ* this is again made explicit in Moltmann's rejection of the early Barth's resolution of Jesus' resurrection into the vertical dimension of God's eternal presence (pp.230-232), and in his repudiation of an eternalised conception of Jesus' parousia (pp.317f).

corresponding inverse of humiliation.[202] It seems clear that had Moltmann's dialectical conception of Jesus' resurrection been allowed to exercise a greater control over his thinking in this discussion, then the unhelpful note of the future as the cyclical eternalisation of creation would not have been introduced.

We introduced the motif of Moltmann's diachronic conception of the resurrection by suggesting that it could contribute to our analysis of the need for a distinction in levels of anticipation of the eschatological future. Understood within what I take to be the mainstream of Moltmann's thought, the diachronic emphasis that Jesus' resurrection affects every moment of his life serves to underline the need for this distinction. It demonstrates that the prolepsis of the future which Jesus' resurrection affords lies at a higher level than Jesus' messianic mission. This is because it constitutes the gathering of the elements of this mission into the resurrection transformation which itself transcends the temporal plane. The resurrection of Jesus anticipates the transforming *presence* of the coming God by means of the transfiguration of the whole of the life which had disclosed God's *proximity*. The resurrection thus constitutes the transformation of an already anticipatory reality to form a higher level anticipation. It belongs, we might say, to a more advanced stage of the eschatological process of God's awaited approach to present reality. If however, Moltmann's diachronic conception of the resurrection is understood within the framework of eternity the whole rationale for an anticipatory structure collapses. What need is there of a messianic anticipation of the future, distinguishable from the ordinary run of history, if the future is but an eternalisation of the products of time? History itself would provide sufficient prolepsis for such a prospect.

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202. WJC 77.

6.0 THE PAROUSIA OF CHRIST

1. Jesus' coming in relation to his becoming

Eschatology is irreducibly related to the transformation of time. As Moltmann has it,

> "[The] eschaton means a change in the transcendental conditions of time...Without a transformation of time like this, eschatology cannot be thought".[1]

Yet it is an incontrovertible fact that the new creation of the world, hoped-for on the basis of the promissory history of Christ, has not yet happened. This necessary transformation of time has yet to take place. As Moltmann himself is forced to admit, "we still live and die in an unredeemed world".[2] There is a great irony here. Something of the significance of the impact of Jesus' history can be demonstrated from the way in which his birth came to be used as the primary point of reference in the measurement of time. Yet the time which has 'flowed'[3] from the era BC into the first two thousand years of the era AD is the linear time of the calendar. The time that existed before his birth is therefore assumed to be entirely comparable with the time that has existed since his resurrection. Thus Jesus Christ, the one in whom it is hoped creation will be redeemed and thus time itself transformed, is used to mark the relentless 'flow' of homogeneous time. The history of Christ appears to have made no difference.[4]

The whole trajectory of Jesus' promissory history is aligned towards the new creation. It is

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1. CofG 26.

2. CofG 104.

3. In speaking of time in this way we have to ensure that we are not guilty of falling into the 'myth of passage' identified by the philosopher D.C. Williams. If we speak of time flowing or moving then we appear to need to measure this movement against an inaccessible 'hypertime'. However, such everyday language is grounded in concrete existential experience: that of the irreversibility of time. Used with due care, therefore, it is not totally misleading language. A useful and accessible account of this issue is offered by Alan Torrance in *Christ and Context*, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993) pp.198-200. Here Torrance uses this philosophical approach to gain critical leverage against Moltmann's understanding of the redemptive counter-movement. Moltmann's response is brusque: "As Old-European as I am, I still believe that there is a 'before' and an 'after'...because future can become present and then past, but past cannot become future again...there is an irreversibility and I think every living creature knows about that" (*Christ and Context*, pp.207f).

4. So it is that the scoffers in 2 Peter assert, not without some justification, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things have continued as they were from the beginning of creation". (2 Peter 3:4)

thus orientated towards a desired end that is not yet present. Jesus has engaged in his messianic mission, suffered the apocalyptic end-time sufferings in his death, been raised into the coming glory of God in his resurrection and yet the visible world remains as it was. If we are not to conclude that the alleged significance of Jesus' history is fictitious, then we can only draw the conclusion that Jesus' history is not yet finished. There is more to be expected of him than has hitherto been manifested. In this way it is entirely comprehensible that Moltmann should hold that without a completing future of Christ all that has gone before can only appear as meaningless fragments.[5] This completing future of Jesus Christ is his parousia; his coming in glory.

> "Christ's parousia is not a dispensable appendage to the history of Christ. It is the goal of that history, for it is its completion."[6]

It is the parousia of Christ which will occasion the awaited transformation of time.

As this chapter proceeds we will wish to ask in detail what such a change might mean. But that such a change is required, and so the necessity of this parousia expectation, may be established simply enough. Inherent in our experience of time is the problem of transience. This reveals itself most obviously in the existence of death. Without an overcoming of death and transience redemption in new creation cannot be conceived. The past requires to discover a saving future. Such a future cannot be offered by future time, by *futurum*, which only brings future transience. It demands nothing less than the transformation of time in *adventus*. The parousia of Christ and eschatology are thus intrinsically linked together.

The parousia, however, is more than the end of the story without which what has gone before is frustratingly left in the air. As Moltmann rightly observes

> "[i]t is the keystone supporting the whole of christology, and this also makes it the key to the understanding

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5. CPS 131.

6. WJC 316. Cf. EG 33.

of the history of Christ".[7]

It is not simply that promise demands final fulfilment, that the promissory history of Jesus makes no sense without the redemption of that promise. It is rather, according to the retrospective logic that the future determines and explains the origin,[8] that only the perspective offered by fulfilment makes final sense of promise. Accordingly, only in the light of the end, only with the arrival of the hoped-for future, can the anticipations of that future created in the wake of Jesus' eschatological history be fully understood. What went before has to be understood in the light of the end, not vice-versa. This also means, therefore, that the parousia signals the final realisation of Christ's person.[9] According to the christological suggestions we have made in previous two chapters, the parousia constitutes the point at which Jesus' process of becoming who he is, initiated in the incarnation, is seen to reach its ultimate conclusion.

For this reason, in comparison with the consummatory parousia of Christ, Moltmann can consign the whole of Jesus' history until this point to the category of "the dynamism of the provisional".[10] Its provisionality and dynamism are grounded in the same feature: Christ's history points inherently beyond itself to a future which is not yet present. The parousia of Christ coincides with the presence of this future because it is its cause. And in this chapter we shall be interested to examine just what is the nature of this causal relation.

While Moltmann's distinction between the parousia of Christ and the rest of his eschatological history in terms of consummatory completion is clear, there is evidence of confusion in other aspect of his presentation of this relationship. Moltmann never offers a systematic explanation of the fundamental relationship between what we might term the becoming and coming of

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7. WJC 316.

8. See chapter 4.2.2.

9. "Because the eschatological 'person' of Christ is always defined in the light of the parousia, the parousia also belongs to the doctrine about Christ's person, not merely the doctrine about his work" (WJC 316).

10. CPS 131, cf. WJC 320.

Christ. On the one hand Moltmann speaks of Christ as on the way to his future. Indeed, it is this motif which forms the title of his second series' volume on christology.[11] The Christ on the way is "the Christ-in-his-becoming" and "the Christ in the movement of God's eschatological history".[12] Thus, thinking forward, as it were, from Jesus' resurrection Moltmann can assert:

> "The risen Lord is on the way to his rule".[13]

The language of becoming suggests progress in time and a journey from the present towards the future. Yet, on the other hand, Moltmann can speak of Jesus as the coming one,[14] the one who, in his parousia comes to all history, past, present and *futurum*. This, as Moltmann makes clear in his discussion of the redemptive 'counter-movement'[15] is a motion which runs from the eschatological future to every once-present time. It runs 'counter' to the time of creation. The problem which the language of the becoming and coming of Christ creates is thus that we seem to have one person, the risen and ascended Christ, moving in two opposite directions: with the flow of time, as it were, and against it. Yet, far from explaining how this might be possible, Moltmann does not even seem to discern a problem. He appears to treat these movements as perfectly compatible complements.

> "The coming One is in the process of his coming and can be grasped only in that light: as on the road and walking with us."[16]

Yet how can Christ be both simultaneously walking with us in time towards the future and yet

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11. In the preface of *The Way of Jesus Christ* Moltmann informs us that this motif has been chosen to bring out a three-fold emphasis. This comprises: first, the eschatological orientation of Jesus' history from his birth in the Spirit to his parousia; second, the eschatological conditioning of present knowledge; and third, the ethical implications of christology in christopraxis (p.xiv).

12. WJC 33. Cf. WJC 139; HD 101.

13. WJC 33.

14. WJC 33, 303.

15. WJC 302-5.

16. WJC 33.

coming towards us from the eschatological future?

In order to disentangle Moltmann's intuitive ideas it is necessary, I suggest, to refine further the relationship between the anticipation and arrival of the eschatological future. This may be achieved by bringing together our opening observations about the recalcitrant continuance of the time of transience, with the consummatory relation of Christ's parousia to the rest of his history. Doing this suggests the following conclusion. The inner distinction between anticipation and arrival of the eschatological future is grounded in their relation to the nature of time. Anticipation takes place within time, whereas the eschatological future signals the transformation of time. An elucidation of this conclusion will be in order.

The anticipation of the eschatological future, though it lays the foundation for the transformation of time,[17] happens within the context of the present structure of time. This was what we discerned in our examination of the messianic anticipation of the future contained in Jesus' historical mission. It concerned a re-patterning of the possibilities of history *in history*. And this qualification, that the system of history was not transcended, also held good when we examined the inner quality of the messianic era in terms of the Spirit's ability to unlock imprisoned, created possibility. As we observed, while this action of the Spirit could result in the occurrence of what would otherwise have remained impossible, the structure of transient time was not breached; the sick who were healed, even Lazarus who was raised from death,[18] could fall foul of sickness and death again. But does not the resurrection of the crucified Jesus transcend the limits of time? Of course, for Jesus himself this is the case. If 'death has no more dominion over him'[19] then the time of transience has also lost its claim on him. Yet Jesus' resurrection is the prolepsis of the new creation, rather than the new creation itself, because the risen Christ, while not himself limited to the time of the present world, nevertheless

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17. See section 3 of this chapter.

18. John 11:17-44.

19. Romans 6:9.

appears in that time which remains as it was. The resurrection, notice, can be dated with respect to his crucifixion; it happens on the third day.[20] We may therefore understand the resurrection as thus the incarnation of the transformation of time, *in time*. It is the presence of the transforming future of *adventus* in the *context of time*; there are temporally-conditioned witnesses of the risen Christ. In this way it still falls within the category of anticipation albeit that it constitutes the highest level of anticipation available.[21] After Jesus' resurrection the temporal structure of the world remains intact. But in the parousia of Christ we move beyond contextual manifestation of the transformation of time in time, to the transformation of time itself.[22] The parousia signals the transformation of temporal reality so that it becomes consonant with the future which has been anticipated through contextual manifestation within it. In the new creation the 'time' of the risen Jesus, that has defeated transience, becomes the 'time' of all creation. And when this happens temporal creation cannot remain as it was.

This fundamental difference between the contextual manifestation of *adventus* (anticipation) and the transformation of time by *adventus* (arrival of the eschatological future) points to the fundamental discontinuity which must pertain between the parousia of Christ and rest of his eschatological history. It is this discontinuity, I suggest, which we can use to make sense of Moltmann's language of the becoming and coming of Christ and so resolve the tension we have seen to colour Moltmann's use of these terms. Because the whole of Jesus' history, from his incarnation and birth up to and including his resurrection, takes place within the context of time, it forms a temporal progression. Jesus' history does indeed become; he is clearly on the way to his future. Given, therefore, that we must still speak of the risen Christ and the

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20. Whatever symbolic significance is undoubtedly carried by the phrase 'the third day' it, together with Luke's equally symbolic schema of a forty day period of risen appearances, point to the conviction that to encounter the risen Christ is not to be transported out of time but to meet the one who has overcome time in time.

21. See chapter 5.8.

22. The theory of relativity leads to the conclusion that the universe may contain a number of time systems within itself which while all sharing the same directional orientation may not be related to each other by means of a shared 'present moment' (Cf. T.Peters, *God as Trinity*, pp.156f). Recognising this complication does not however alter our basic argument. The parousia signals the transformation of all temporal reality and so every possible system of time. It is the transformation of time by its creator.

working of the Spirit in the context of the continuation of time, it is understandable that Jesus' history should be conceived as a continuing vector into the future; a road that continues. It thus makes sense to speak of the risen Christ who is on the way to his rule and the risen Christ who, through the mediation of the Spirit, still walks with us towards the future. But, strictly speaking, this historical language of becoming, used of the risen Christ, is potentially misleading. The future towards which Jesus journeys does not lie in the temporal future at all. To speak in this way is to confuse *futurum* with *adventus*. There is no temporal continuum linking Jesus' continuing risen presence now, with us in time, with the new creation that the completion of his eschatological history will bring. This is for the simple reason that the completion of his history signals the transformation of time. It is this lack of continuum, this necessary discontinuity, that the language of Jesus' coming accurately captures. Jesus does not become until he comes, rather the risen Christ participates in two distinct realms. He participates in *adventus*, the coming eternity of God, by virtue of his resurrection and ascension. He is thus coming towards us. And he participates in time via the Spirit's mediation of his presence, and therefore may be understood to be journeying with us.

Within the framework of this solution to the relationship between Jesus' becoming and coming we can, however, develop a more complete answer. To achieve this we need to return to the model of Jesus' becoming and being that I have been constructing in the previous two chapters. As before it will be important that we carefully differentiate between what is appropriate to Jesus' divine and human natures respectively. To begin with I shall summarise what we have already established though within the basic framework of the solution outlined above.

Jesus' pre-existent identity is grounded in the *adventus* of God; in God's mode of being. He is the divine Son of the Father. By means of the incarnation Jesus' divine nature comes to subsist within an additional realm to *adventus*. It is unfurled into time through the divine person becoming inseparably connected to an 'assumed' human nature.[23] The incarnation thus means

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23. This should be understood in terms of *enhypostasia* rather than *anhypostasia*.

that the one person of the divine-human Jesus is conformed to the pattern of present temporal reality. Accordingly, he undergoes a temporal process of becoming. But this process of becoming though contingent in content, has a definite form.[24] Through the mediation of the Holy Spirit, he grows into the relationship with the Father that defines his divine nature in *adventus*. And, because this Son-type relationship with the Father is the inner form of the new creation, in the wake of this process of becoming anticipations are created of the redemptive future of creation. This process of temporal becoming comes up against its limit in the cross. The anticipations of the future which Jesus' messianic mission inaugurate lead him into confrontation with the 'powers of the present time' in Jerusalem. Here, on the cross, out of obedience to his Father, and thus in actualisation of his being as Son, Jesus is conformed to the present world in all its negativity; in its godforsaken alienation from God and its transience. Jesus dies and is buried. Accordingly he has no immanent future. The continuation of his 'history' in resurrection, therefore, no longer falls under the category of temporal becoming. The resurrection we should say *comes* to the crucified Jesus. This is because in the resurrection, and for this one person, *adventus* comes to intersect time. The ascension of Christ may be conceived as the completion of Jesus' entry into *adventus*. It signals the removal of Jesus from the direct participation in time which the incarnation had occasioned.[25] From now on, the risen Christ's presence in time is mediated via the Holy Spirit. This Spirit-mediated presence of Christ can in this way be regarded as the prolongation of the incarnation of Christ in time.

What does this entry into *adventus* mean for Jesus? Here, unlike Moltmann, we must be careful to distinguish between Jesus' divine and human natures. Jesus' unity of person, I have suggested, is grounded in a unique history with a common goal shared by both his divine and

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24. Here, once again, I take up the eschatological distinction introduced by Paul Fiddes in *The Creative Suffering of God*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), pp.102-106.

25. The incarnation of the Son is not necessary to God's creative relationship with the world and so to God's 'background' relationship to the world's time. The incarnation, and the post-Pentecostal indwelling of the Spirit, is necessary, however to the world's redemption. It is through these actions of the Son and the Spirit that creation moves to the higher level of new creation by precisely a change in God's presence in creation. For more detail see below.

human natures. Yet because Jesus' divine nature 'pre-exists' his human nature, it also possesses a 'pre-history' before this shared history. Jesus' two natures, therefore, have different starting points in relation to their shared history. Jesus' divine nature begins in *adventus*; Jesus' human nature in time. The key point to realise is that this *same* event of entry in *adventus* will have *different* meanings for each nature by virtue of this difference in starting point.

For Jesus' divine nature his entry into *adventus*, occasioned by his resurrection and ascension, means a return to where he began. It means that he has become himself. Now, if Jesus essential identity is defined in *adventus*, then his being may be equated with his coming.[26] Thus for Jesus' divine nature we could say that *Jesus' becoming in time subsists within his coming in adventus*. This follows directly from the transcendence of *adventus* over time. It is simply another way of saying, in line with our earlier thought, that the divine Jesus is in process of becoming who he is. This is a pattern of relationship that in many, though as we shall see not all respects, corresponds to the relationship between eternity and time. Temporal becoming subsists within that which transcends time.

For Jesus' human nature, however, the relationship is different. His entry into *adventus* signals not a return to where he began but a completely new experience. It means the eschatological summation and transformation of what has contingently become in time. The contingently lived life of Jesus' human nature is transformed into final conformity with the pattern of the Son's divine being as coming. For Jesus' humanity, therefore, *transformation into conformity with the Son's coming results in his eschatological becoming*. What happens to Jesus' human nature is thus the precise prolepsis of the new creation: what has become in time is gathered and transformed into conformity with the coming God. For Jesus' human nature, therefore, the result of his entry into *adventus* must be understood not in terms of the relationship between eternity and time, but in terms of the relationship between eschatology (understood as the

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26. This is, of course what Moltmann does maintain about the being of God in general. Cf. TasE 9-16, GinC 133, CofG 23f *et passim*.

consummation of creation) and history.

What our model affords us, I submit, is thus a way of linking together what in Moltmann's work often appear as two rival schema: that of time and 'eternity'; and history and eschatology. The former by way of consideration of Jesus' divinity, the latter by way of consideration of Jesus' humanity. This is a highly significant conclusion which we will later have reason to explore more fully. For the moment it will be important to remind ourselves of the fundamental difference between eternity as classically understood[27] and *adventus*. Whereas eternity has an unchanging relationship with time, *adventus* comes to transform time into conformity with itself. It transcends all time because it will transform all time. Accordingly, if we define our terms carefully, it could be said that *adventus* has a 'history': *adventus* comes to time. Its 'history' is the difference between its coming and its arrival. But, it is important to notice that this is not a coming, and thus a history, measurable with respect to time. While time endures, *adventus* has an unchanging relationship with time: it is coming. In its arrival, however, time itself is transformed. Thus the movement of *adventus*, its 'history', is only measurable with respect to itself. We might draw two conclusions from this observation. First, the eschatological becoming of creation to form the new creation (proleptically realised in Jesus' human nature) is not a temporal becoming because it is measurable only against *adventus* not time. Second, the one person of the risen Christ still has a 'history', a future. But this is the future of *adventus* and, therefore, not a future, a becoming, in time (*futurum*).

If we now step back from this discussion it will be possible to observe that from Moltmann's simple language of becoming and coming we have discerned four types of process.

(i) There is the *coming* of Christ's divinity in which subsists his (historical and eschatological) becoming in solidarity with his human nature.

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27. The classic notion of eternity is offered by Boethius: "*interminabilis vitae tota simil et perfecta possessio*" (*De Consolatione*, V.6). We might translate this as 'complete, simultaneous and perfect possession of unending life'. The notion of simultaneity here is meant to rule out any sense of temporality or successiveness. For God there can be no past or future, no before or after; there is simply being.

(ii) There is the *eschatological becoming* of Jesus' humanity (not measurable against the axis of time) engendered by conformity with the being of Jesus' divinity as coming. Without the christological grounding we have given it, this kind of relation can be seen in Moltmann's work.

> "The eschatology of the coming God calls to life the history of new human becoming, which is a becoming without passing away, a becoming into lasting being in the coming presence of God".[28]

(iii) There is the *historical* (temporal) *becoming* of Jesus on the way from his birth to his crucifixion in which his messianic mission takes place.

(iv) And finally there is the risen Christ's *participation* via the Spirit in the *temporal becoming* of the world. This comes to explicit expression in the church which, in obedience to the promised future, seeks to create anticipations of that future in the present.

This would be an opportune moment to observe that *Theology of Hope* already contained a theological construction capable of distinguishing between becoming in the sense of (ii) and (iv) above. In that volume the orientation of the process of the resolution of Jesus' dialectical identity was described by use of the term 'tendency'. But Moltmann distinguished between two forms of tendency. They were: inner tendency, which leads towards the synthesis of new creation itself; and outer tendency, which Moltmann equated with the mission of the church in time. These could be related to our definitions as follows. In correspondence with (iv), the risen Christ is 'on his way' to the future with us in the outer tendency of mission. But, in parallel with (ii), the inner tendency of the Christ event of cross and resurrection only reaches its goal in the eschatological becoming of creation to new creation engendered by Christ's coming. This eschatological becoming of sense (ii) could also be related to a motif of Moltmann's later theology explored in the previous chapter: the category of 'transition'. There we concluded that transition was a metahistorical category that described the continuity of

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28. CofG 24.

process of Jesus' progression from death to life, not from within time, but from the vantage point of *adventus*. Transition, therefore, equates to eschatological becoming as we have defined it here. We have thus found a way to reconcile Moltmann's language of the becoming and coming of Christ in such a way that each term may have its own distinctive meaning. We have also shown how Moltmann's own best insights may be integrated into this pattern of thought.[29]

2. *The eschatological 'de-restriction' of God*

The parousia of Christ constitutes the transformatory intersection of the coming future with the temporal plane of creation. It issues in the new creation. But how exactly is this point of intersection to be conceived? By linking together theological motifs in Moltmann's own work we have begun to construct a christological answer to this question in terms of the relationship between *adventus* and time. However, in Moltmann's later work we find a distinctive answer to this same question constructed from what, I will suggest, is a different starting point. It yields the notion of the eschatological de-restriction of God. If we are to understand and appreciate the origins of this answer, we will need to begin by following the route which leads Moltmann to this solution quite closely. Initially, this will mean traversing some already familiar ground.

According to Moltmann the expectation of Christ's parousia has been stifled by two different errors. It has been distorted through its transposition both into time and into eternity.[30] It has suffered, not surprisingly therefore, from its accommodation to the same errors which Moltmann detects to have befallen Christian eschatology itself.

Temporalisation: Founded on Schweitzer's work,[31] the so-called school of 'consistent

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29. Moltmann also equates Christ's becoming with Christ as the ground of the evolutionary process (WJC 303). Christ presumably becomes with the evolutionary process in time. Little explanation of what Moltmann might wish to imply by the term *Christus evolutor* is offered (see WJC 290f), and it lies beyond the scope of this present work to attempt clarification.

30. TH 37-39, 45-69, CofG 6-22. See also chapter 2.3.

31. *Vom Reimaris zu Wrede. Eine Geschicte der Leden-Jesu-Forschung*, (1906).

eschatology' could only conceive of the parousia taking place within the imminent temporal future.[32] They accordingly dismissed it as refuted by 1900 years of continued history. But as Moltmann correctly points out, a purely temporal event could hardly bring about the transformation of time demanded of the parousia expectation.

> "[I]f Christ's parousia takes place in time, then it is transient, like every other temporal future; it cannot be thought together with the 'end of time'. Nor can this be the expectation of a coming kingdom that 'shall have no end'."[33]

If it belongs to the temporal future, then one day it will also have become part of the temporal past leaving time itself unchanged.

Eternalisation: Moltmann finds Karl Barth guilty of this error.[34] His mistake is structurally the same as the error made by Kant's transcendental eschatology.[35] The parousia is no longer expected of the temporal future, rather it shares eternity's equal confrontation of every moment of time. Moltmann demonstrates the point with a favourite quotation from Barth's *Der Römerbrief*:

> "Incomparable, the eternal moment confronts all moments, just because it is the transcendental meaning of all moments".[36]

In *The Coming of God* Moltmann explains that this error of eternalisation results from a failure to distinguish between the 'now' of faith's response to God's promise in the Gospel and the 'then' of the eschatological fulfilment of new creation.[37] But, whatever its cause, its result is

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32. WJC 316.

33. WJC 316f.

34. WJC 379, n.6 reveals that P. Althaus, R. Bultmann, K Rahner and C.H. Dodd are also charged with making the same mistake.

35. TH 45-58.

36. Cited at WJC 317. Cf. CofG 14. Somewhat unfairly, in his discussion with Barth, Moltmann opts for the emphases of Barth's early theology rather than the mature statements of *Church Dogmatics*. Where appropriate, I shall attempt to redress this deficiency.

37. CofG 292-294, cf., 19.

to render the transformation of time inconceivable.

> "[I]f Christ's parousia is equated with God's eternity, then there is no moment at which it can enter time. Then there is no future end of time".[38]

Eternity, which is held to be simultaneous with every time, clearly cannot enter time at a particular point in time.

Moltmann therefore needs to conceive of a way in which the parousia can both enter time, so as to make transformatory contact with it, and yet signal the end of the present form of time. In his own words he needs to conceive of the,

> "'eschatological moment' which ends time in time in such a way that Christ's parousia and his kingdom can be thought of simultaneously as the end of time and the beginning of eternity".[39]

Moltmann's solution to this conundrum is intriguing. It leads him to take up and develop Isaac Luria's doctrine of God's self-contraction (*zimzum*) which is a persistent feature of his second series of volumes.[40] His tactic is to conceive of the end of time in God's coming eternity by means of an inversion of his conception of the original issuing of time from God's eternity.

In *God in Creation* Moltmann confronted Augustine's famous dilemma concerning the beginning of time in relation to God's eternity.[41] Augustine's solution was to suggest that the world is created not in time, which would imply a problematic time before creation, but *with* time (*cum tempore*). Time comes into being with creation itself. But, as Moltmann points out, this still seems to suggest that time's point of origination resides in God's eternity. The result

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38. WJC 318.

39. WJC 318, cf. 328. For now we shall let this undifferentiated use of the word 'eternity' pass even though it seems to contradict the terms of a solution which we have seen Moltmann construct. Later we shall wish to confront this very point.

40. See TKG 108-111; GinC 86-93, 114-117, 156f; WJC 328-330; CofG 381-2, 294-5. For an analysis of Moltmann's highly selective use of Luria see C. Deane-Drummond, *Ecology in Jürgen Moltmann's Theology*, pp.202-205.

41. pp.112-117. Cf. Augustine, *Confessions*, XI.

is to make God the eternal creator of time and thus render creation eternal as well.[42] Augustine's dilemma is essentially insoluble, Moltmann observes, because for him eternity and time are defined over against one another as absolute opposites: time and timelessness; changeability and unchangeability.[43] Consequently it is not possible to mediate between them. To find a solution, Moltmann suggests the following:

> "We therefore have to proceed from the assumption that it was only a self-alteration of eternity which made created time possible and made room for it".[44]

This self-alteration that permits a transition from eternity to time is to be found, Moltmann proposes, in God's self-determination to be the world's creator. And Moltmann's favoured way of conceiving this is in terms of the notion of God's self-contraction (*zimzum*). His argument runs thus. If anything is to exist which is distinguishable from God's own being, then the omnipresent God has to withdraw into himself in order to make room for this other.[45] If I understand Moltmann correctly, he seems to understand this self-contraction in the following way. It is as if God is conceived as a solid sphere in which space is opened up at its centre by the contraction of material towards its outer surface. The space, the *nihil,* for creation is thus opened up *within* God while being distinct from God.[46] This spatial metaphor is then applied to the eternity-time relation.

> "God withdrew his eternity into himself in order to take time for his creation and to leave his creation its own particular time."[47]

Moltmann thus conceives of a three level structure in which each level seems to belong to a discrete order of being. The three levels comprise God's essential eternity, the time of

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42. GinC 116.

43. GinC 114, cf. CofG 281.

44. GinC p.114.

45. TKG 108f.

46. Cf., TKG 109.

47. GinC 114. Cf. WJC 329; CofG 282.

creation and a mediating third term; God's time for creation.[48] Moltmann can therefore assert, building upon Augustine, that

> "God created the world with *its* time - in *his* time".[49]

Here the 'his time' refers to God's time for creation initiated through God's self-contraction.[50]

The Way of Jesus Christ and *The Coming God* see Moltmann apply this schema to the question of the ending of time. God's initial self-restriction is held to point to an eschatological de-restriction. In these volumes Moltmann's model also receives refinement through the provision of a more comprehensive terminology.

God's self-restriction of his eternity, which makes room for his time for creation, is labelled the *primordial moment*.[51] In this moment are contained and prepared all the possibilities that God will unfurl into the time of creation. Although Moltmann is never unequivocal on this subject, we should probably conceive of this moment as existing in what Moltmann defines as aeonic time. Certainly he can refer to it, following Orthodox tradition, as the primordial aeon.[52] Aeonic time, he elsewhere informs us, is a relative eternity, or cyclical reversible time, that participates in, while being distinct from, God's absolute eternity.[53] We shall be examining this concept of aeonic time more fully below. The 'primordial moment' belongs, therefore, to God's prior preparedness for creation. The first moment of the time of creation itself, however, Moltmann labels the '*moment of inception*'.

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48. GinC 114, 116.

49. GinC 117.

50. Just what Moltmann might intend by the phrase 'God's time' is explored in section 6 of this chapter.

51. WJC 328; CofG 282.

52. CofG 282, cf. WJC 329. At CofG 378 n.62 he explicitly acknowledges the specific influence of D. Staniloae, *Orthodoxe Dogmatik I*, who in turn follows the seventh century theologian Maximus the Confessor. It is clear from the quotation of Staniloae given, that Maximus himself certainly did conceive of the 'primordial moment' in these terms. I can only assume Moltmann agrees.

53. WJC 330f; CofG 282.

> "The primordial moment contains within itself eternity's readiness for time, while in the moment of inception time issues from eternity and, in the wake of the creation process, fans out as created time into before and after, future, present and past."[54]

The transient, and so irreversible, time of creation 'flows' until the '*final moment*'.[55] This final moment marks the point at which "time passes over into eternity".[56] This transition and transformation of time is the consequence of the '*eschatological moment*'. Moltmann assures us that the eschatological moment is the 'mirror-image' of the primordial moment. Just as time issued from eternity, so now time passes over into eternity.[57] This mirror correspondence is also said to hold for God's self-determinate action.

> "Just as the primordial moment springs from God's creative resolve and from the divine self-restriction on which God determined in that resolve, so the eschatological moment will spring from the resolve to redeem and the 'derestriction' of God determined upon in that."[58]

God's de-restriction leads to God's new and indwelling presence within the creation which transfigures its form.[59]

> "[God] appears in his creation in the splendour of his unveiled glory."[60]

He thus reaches his eschatological goal of being 'all in all'.[61] God's new indwelling presence

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54. WJC 329. Cf. CofG 282.

55. CofG 295. In *The Way of Jesus Christ* this is also referred to as the 'last moment' (p.328).

56. CofG 295. Cf., WJC 330. In *The Coming of God* Moltmann appears to expand what it might mean for time to 'pass over' into eternity by his adoption of a millenarian expectation of a consummation *in history*. Thus he writes, "Millenarianism looks forward to future history, the history of the end; eschatology looks towards the future of history, the end of history. Consequently the two sides of eschatology belong together as goal and end, history's consummation and its rupture". (p.197) He explains his reason for the adoption of this expectation as follows: "the millenarian expectation mediates between world history here, and the end of the world and the new world there. It makes the end as transition imaginable" (p.201). The beginnings of this millenarian conception are to be found in TKG 235 n.44. He also sees millenarianism as protecting eschatology from any world denying tendency (p.197).

57. WJC 328.

58. CofG 294.

59. "The new creation is defined through a new divine presence within it." (CofG 295).

60. CofG 295.

61. WJC 329. Cf. I Corinthians 15:28.

leads to the recapitulation of the world, through the resurrection of the dead, as the irreversible time of transience is taken up into the aeonic time of the new creation. This happens through its participation in God's essential eternity.[62]

> "In 'the restoration of all things', all times will return and - transformed and transfigured - will be taken up into the aeon of the new creation."[63]

Moltmann therefore conceives of the eschatological moment as lying 'athwart' all time.

> "It will come not merely 'from ahead', as it were, but also 'from above'. It will happen not only *in* time but also *to* time."[64]

Let us note in passing now that, although Moltmann does not state this, his conception of the eschatological moment shares the same structural relation to time as *adventus*. We shall have reason to follow up this observation later.

What are we to make of this theological *tours de force* of Moltmann? Let us begin with that which is most obvious. Despite Moltmann's assurance that the primordial and eschatological moments are mirror images of one another, on which assumption the construction of his model was based, this simply cannot be the case. If they were, creation together with its time which first came into existence from the primordial moment would simply cease to exist at all in the eschatological moment. Moltmann apparently misses the great asymmetry that must pertain between creation's potential to become and its emergent actuality. Rather, as he himself is aware, the eschatological moment, if it is to be soteriological, must include the gathering and transfiguration of what has become in time. Precisely at this point, therefore, the eschatological moment must have a new content over the primordial moment. This required asymmetry could be put more starkly still. The respective pattern of these two moments is not God: creation; creation: God. It is rather God: creation; creation: new creation indwelt by

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62. WJC 330.

63. CofG 294.

64. WJC 327.

God!

If we move now from the obvious to the more profound we come across a very curious feature of this model of protological restriction and eschatological de-restriction: its strange presentation in detachment from Moltmann's christological reflections. It often seems to function as a virtually self-contained set of ideas which revolve around the causal consequences of God's presence and absence. Thus we are informed,

> "Separation from God, the wellspring of life, leads us through our isolation to experience temporality as transience, and to see death as its universal end".[65]

Whereas, as we have seen, the new creation results from the new divine presence within creation; its participation in the "inexhaustible fullness of God's life".[66] The nearness or the absence of God is thus accorded simple causal effect. But what is not explained by Moltmann is exactly how this de-restricting efficacy of God is related to the complex set of ideas he possesses about how the future of the new creation is mediated to creation through the eschatological history of Jesus Christ.

Moltmann's difficulty here, I suggest, flows from the fact that the doctrine of *zimzum* which he has taken over is essentially theistic; it stems from the Jewish Kabbalistic tradition.[67] It does not originate from the trinitarian implications of the history of Jesus Christ. As Moltmann relates, Isaac Luria's conception of God's primal self-contraction in readiness for creation stems from the notion of God's concentrated Shekinah presence in the temple.[68] It originates from the projection of a historical experience 'backward' to explain how anything can exist separately from the omnipresent God. Because Moltmann has sought to comprehend the nature of the end of time by an inversion of his account of creation's beginning, this same theistic

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65. CofG 292.

66. CofG 295, cf. 307.

67. TKG 108. C. Deane-Drummond also makes this suggestion (*Ecology*, p.204).

68. TKG 109.

pattern is thus projected into his eschatological considerations. It is highly significant, I suggest, that in nearly every case where the notions of protological restriction and eschatological de-restriction are employed Moltmann's language is simply of 'God' without further differentiation. In fairness to Moltmann, he does understand another of the implications of Shekinah theology as an important, even guiding, precursor to trinitarian thought.[69] This is the implication of God's self-differentiation for the sake of the redemptive process. In the development of these ideas Gershom Scholem and Franz Rosenzweig are major influences.[70] I am not arguing, therefore, that there can be no connection whatsoever between these ideas and Moltmann's more explicit christological reflections. Indeed, as I hope to show, the notion of God's presence and absence, rightly understood, can add a valuable additional dimension to the ideas we have so far considered. Rather, Moltmann's difficulty arises from the fact that the notion of *zimzum*, when employed, has been allowed to become the controlling framework within which Moltmann has sought to place his christological reflections. Instead, I wish to argue, that the reverse should have happened. Moltmann's christology should have been allowed to take the determinative place. As we saw in Part One, this is after all Moltmann's stated guiding methodological assumption. He desires to move from the christological particular to the theological universal.

As it stands the spatial *metaphor*[71] of restriction, and its co-relative de-restriction, has been allowed to become more than a metaphor. It has been raised to the status of a *model* that controls, rather than illustrates, Moltmann's thought. Something of the awkwardness that

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69. At CofG 302 Moltmann suggests the historical importance of Shekinah theology for the development of both the Christian doctrines of the incarnation of the *Logos* and indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

70. See, for example, TKG 27-30. In *The Coming of God* each of these figures is accorded the status of their own section (pp.36-41). Interestingly in the preface which Moltmann wrote for R. Bauckham's *Moltmann: Messianic theology in the making*, (Basingstoke: Marshall Pickering, 1987), he states, "Again and again, when seeking orientation, I have reached for Franz Rosenweig's *The Star of Redemption*" (p.ix).

71. Only in Moltmann's latest major volume *The Coming of God* does Moltmann explicitly state that the *zimzum* notion is metaphorical (p.282). Interestingly this volume also contains the first words of critique against this idea, significantly employing the phrase '*triune* God': "When the triune God restricts his omnipresence...he does not leave behind a vacuum, as the Kabbalistic doctrine of *zimzum* suggests. He throws open a space for those he has created, a space which corresponds to his inner indwellings" (pp.298f). Notice that here the critique is developed by allowing the *trinitarian* notion of perichoresis determinative control.

results from this can be seen when Moltmann attempts to explain what the primordial self-contraction of God means for God's inner trinitarian life.[72]

> "[T]he Father, through an alteration of his love for the Son (that is to say through a contraction of the Spirit), and the Son, through an alteration of his response to the Father's love (that is, through an inversion of the Spirit) have opened up the space , the time and the freedom for that 'outwards' into which the Father utters himself creatively through the Son."[73]

The spatial idea of shrinkage is so strong that Moltmann is led to the incomprehensible expressions of 'a contraction of the Spirit' and 'an inversion of the Spirit'. Even if it were possible to know what these expressions meant, they would, we note in passing, cause fundamental difficulties for the notion of God's self-revelation through Christ and the Spirit. If the act of creation results in an inner change to God, the God who is revealed in the economy of creation and redemption cannot correspond to God as he is in himself.

How then would Moltmann's model look if christological considerations were allowed methodological control? In answering this question it will helpful first to turn to an example in *God in Creation* where Moltmann attempts to fit christology into his model of God's self-restriction.[74]

The space which comes into being through the self-limitation of God, we are informed, is "literally God-forsaken space";[75] it is the *nihil* for God's *creatio ex nihilo*. Although only acquiring its 'menacing character' through the self-isolation of sinful creatures, the *nihil* so opened up already contains this possibility of becoming the 'annihilating Nothingness'. Nothingness used in this sense is then the non-being of God which not only threatens creation's

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72. Curiously, C. Deane-Drummond fails to observe this attempt and so incorrectly implies that it does not take place (*Ecology*, p.204).

73. TKG 111.

74. Moltmann states, "...we shall take up and employ the doctrine about God's self-limitation, and about Nothingness, in the messianic light of faith in the crucified Son of God" (GinC 86).

75. GinC 87.

existence, but also contradicts God the Creator.[76] The eschatological new creation results by God's overcoming of the annihilating Nothingness. It is the mechanism for this redemptive overcoming that is of interest for our present purpose. Moltmann states that it results from God's taking this deadly fate of creation upon himself so as to overcome the annihilating Nothingness in his own being.[77] More specifically this is achieved through the cross of Christ.

> "[I]n the sending and surrender of his own Son [God] exposes himself to the annihilating Nothingness , so that he may overcome it in himself and through himself".[78]

Consequently, in and through Jesus' God-forsakenness on the cross God "pervades the space of God-forsakenness with his presence".[79] This space of God-forsakenness being the very space opened up through God's initial self-restriction. The soteriological process is then completed (though we are given no details of exactly how in the text) in Jesus' path of exaltation from death to risen life. The result is that "God becomes omnipresent".[80]

What this account demonstrates, I suggest, is that the simple model of God's creative self-restriction and eschatological de-restriction is unable to accommodate, and is in fact in tension with, the soteriological history of Jesus Christ. Moltmann's account of the cross has the crucified Christ enter the primordial *nihil* so as to incorporate it into the being of God. But this creates two problems at least.[81] First, according to the *zimzum* model creation *already*

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76. GinC 88.

77. GinC 90.

78. GinC 91.

79. GinC 91.

80. GinC 91. Moltmann quotes Psalm 139: "If I make my bed in hell, thou art there" (v.8).

81. The *zimzum* proposal also has other problems. The crudity of its spatial image suggests that God and creation exist on the same level of being as each other and are thus in direct competition. Additionally B. Walsh questions both its exegetical base and logical necessity and observes that it is in tension with Moltmann's notion of God's effortless *creatio originalis* (e.g. GinC 210) ("Theology of Hope and the doctrine of creation", *The Evangelical Quarterly*, Vol 59/1 (1987) pp. 66 n.59, 72). The element of truth which this image does contain, however, is that the existence of creation must involve God in self-limitation. If creation is to enjoy the freedom of independent life, which unfolds in a contingent manner, rather than being an extension of God's own being, then God cannot be in direct control of all things.

exists *in* God.[82] God, therefore, already encompasses and includes the *nihil* in himself. Why then is Jesus' journey into this Nothingness of soteriological necessity? Why is there the need for Jesus' messianic mission, cross and resurrection? Why is there not simply eschatological de-restriction? The fundamental problem here is that the notion of God's *eschatological panentheism* characteristic of Moltmann's early theology[83], the hope of God's final inclusion of the world in his own life,[84] has been transposed, via the doctrine of *zimzum*, into a *protological panentheism*.[85] The end, therefore, is now to be found in the beginning. This, of course, results in a short-circuiting of the process of God's history with the world leading to the very form of *restitutio in integrum* that Moltmann elsewhere vehemently opposes.[86] For Moltmann the end is always more than the beginning; it is new.[87] The new element is precisely the gathering of creation into the life of God through, and not apart from, the actions of Christ and the Spirit.

Second, how are we to categorise Jesus' entry into Nothingness in terms of the model? Is it a partial de-restriction of God's presence? But if Jesus is the incarnation of the coming God, is it not necessary to affirm that in Jesus God is *wholly* present in creation yet under the conditions

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82. Cf., "But if creation *ad extra* takes place in the space freed by God himself, then in this case the reality outside God still remains *in* the God who has yielded up that 'outwards' in himself" (GinC 88f).

83. See, for example CG 277 for which the cross of Christ means that God "*begins* to *become* 'all in all'" (my emphasis).

84. Through the cross, "All human history...is taken up into this 'history of God', i.e. into the Trinity, and integrated into the future of the 'history of God'" (CG 246).

85. Now Moltmann asserts that the *zimzum* doctrine points to a truth greater than the difference between Creator and creature: "the truth that God *is* all in all" (GinC 89, my emphasis). Moltmann even explicitly equates this with the final form that creation is to take (*ibid.*).

86. GinC 262-265. Cf. particularly FofC 115-130,"Creation as an Open System", especially p.116.

87. In *The Coming of God* (1995) Moltmann can still state that the "future is God's mode of being in history...By virtue of hope for the coming God, the expected future acquires an inexhaustible 'added value' over against present and past in the experience of time" (p.24, cf. p.265)

of history and time?[88] Moltmann's own christology, unfolded in the preceding chapters, suggests that it cannot be a simple quantitative matter of God's presence and absence, but rather a process of *change of presence*.[89] There is an eschatologically orientated process that, in outline, moves from God's general presence in creation to God's particular presence in the temple, to God's presence in the incarnate Christ, to God's presence in individuals mediated by the Spirit, to God's final transfiguring indwelling in creation. It is not a simple matter of God being more or less present, it is about a change in *quality* of presence. And this change in quality of presence, I suggest, is necessarily mediated via the history of Christ and the Spirit.

Perhaps the central problem of the simple restriction- de-restriction model is that it makes it seem as if God's eschatological derestriction possesses a simple and direct causative effect: God comes to interpenetrate creation and the result is the transformation of creation.

> "The eschatological moment has two sides...God completes in himself his eschatological de-restriction of himself...[and]...Through this the temporal creation experiences its transformation into the eternal creation."[90]

But I wish to suggest that we should think in a more differentiated way. The Trinity will finally reveal itself to creation, and therefore become obviously manifest in creation, when creation is transformed into congruence with the Trinitarian God and participates in his inner-trinitarian life. Moltmann's language of the 'eschatological de-restriction' of God should simply be understood as a metaphor for this new obviousness, this new manifest presence, of God that will result. Moreover, as I have been arguing, creation's participation in the inner-trinitarian life of God, more precisely in the Son's relationship to the Father through the power of the Spirit, is

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88. Not to assert this is to fall into the trap associated with kenotic christology. Its most serious problem is that if God has 'emptied' himself in the incarnate Christ then, in Christ, we do not encounter God as he truly is. For more information see the excellent discussion in J. Macquarrie, *Jesus Christ in Modern Thought*, (London: SCM, 1990), pp.245-50. If Moltmann's soteriology demands the presence of *God* in the Nothingness then this approach would not appear to hold the answer. Worryingly, therefore, Moltmann's christology does have its explicitly kenotic moments (e.g. TKG 118f). Cf. the critique of J. McIntyre, "Review of GinC", *The Scottish Journal of Theology*, Vol 41/2 (1988), p.271.

89. There are instances, away from the context of the notion of *zimzum*, where Moltmann shows an awareness of this point. "Theologically, time is determined by the presence or absence of God - that is to say, by the *different modes of his presence* in time (CofG 200, my emphasis).

90. CofG 295.

enabled through the history of Christ and the Spirit. Consequently, 'de-restriction' is one of the *results* of this activity which leads to the new creation, not the *cause* of the new creation. To explore this more fully we shall need to return to the overall christological model I have been constructing and take it a stage further.

3. The trinitarian coming of God

The eschatological future, we have said, happens in the process of the resolution of Jesus' identity; the process of his becoming in time who he is in *adventus*. Broadly speaking this model has two parts to it. In the first part Jesus is conformed to the nature of present reality through the incarnation which reaches its deepest point in the cross. In the second part Jesus moves toward the realisation of his original identity which, because of the ontological connection made in the incarnation, will entail, through the action of the Spirit, the transformation of creation into the pattern of his original identity. This transformation of creation to new creation is proleptically realised in Jesus' risen humanity. Put simply this model suggests that Jesus becomes like us so that we can become like him.[91] Eschatologically, we will be transformed so as to participate in his relationship to the Father through the Spirit. The two parts of this model, the 'like us' and 'like him' are, however, far from mirror images. From the perspective of creation, and so from our present perspective, there is no continuous process that links them together. If the first part, conformity with the present nature of the world, can be imagined, from the incarnation onwards, as a temporally continuous process, the second part is quite different. It consists of two quite separate phases with which we are already familiar. They are the *anticipation* of the future 'like him', and the eschatological *realisation* of the future 'like him'. The eschatological realisation of this future takes place in Christ's parousia. The anticipation of this future, as we observed in the previous chapter, itself takes place at a number of levels,[92] the highest of which is Jesus' resurrection. In the opening

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91. Cf., Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Bk V, Preface.

92. Chapter 5.8.

section of this chapter I described in some detail the relationship between Christ's coming in the parousia and the rest of his anticipatory history under the conditions of time. I shall be assuming that relationship here, together with the differentiation that we made between the meaning of this relationship for Jesus' humanity and divinity. The aim will be to construct a trinitarian model of God's coming which will demonstrate why a simple de-restriction model of God's coming is untenable. In short, this is because God's actions in Christ and the Spirit in time are necessary to realise God's coming. God cannot be held to be coming 'in any case'.

I asserted earlier that in the resurrection Jesus is raised into *adventus*, the coming eternity of God. Thus although I have stated that the eschatological future happens in and through the resolution of Jesus' identity, in the resurrection and ascension Jesus seems to get ahead of the world. Thinking of Jesus' divinity, if his essential identity is grounded in *adventus*, and the resurrection signals his return to *adventus*, then has he not already, in this event, become who he is? His resolution appears to be complete yet creation is left much as it was. Paradoxically, we have to say that Jesus has indeed become who he is, but not yet come to be who he will be. He has become who he is for the whole of the extension of time. This is because *adventus* transcends the temporal plane. But he has not yet come to be who he will be because, in his parousia, he will come to be the one in whom the whole extension of the temporal plane is transformed. The 'not yet' in the previous sentence is there because, as was intimated above, *adventus* has a 'history'. It is the 'history' between Jesus' coming and his arrival. Strictly speaking, therefore, this 'not yet', belongs in the realm of *adventus*, not time. For, however far *futurum* may extend, it will not, of itself, result in the new creation.

Within time, however, there does exist an anticipation of this 'not yet' in *adventus*; an anticipation of the consequence of Christ's parousia. This anticipation exists in the action of the Spirit.[93] We have already examined why it should be that the Spirit has an inherently

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93. Cf. "In the Holy Spirit the transition from the gospel of Christ to the parousia of Christ takes place historically" (HTG 101).

eschatological structure.[94] The Spirit is the one through whom the Son's relationship to the Father, which is the form of the eschatological future, is mediated to creation. In this respect it is significant that it is the risen Christ who sends the Spirit[95]. This is because it is the Spirit who is the anticipator of the completion of Jesus' outstanding 'history'.[96] Already, through the action of the Spirit's integration of creation into Jesus' history, we come to participate in the life of the Trinity under the conditions of time. We can already participate in Jesus' relation to the Father through the Spirit.

> "[You] have received the spirit of sonship. When we cry, 'Abba! Father!' it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ."[97]

It is such present participation in the life of the Trinity which is the inner content of the reconciliation with God already achieved through Jesus' life, death and resurrection.[98]

In exploring the resolution of Jesus' dialectical identity in our earlier examination of *Theology of Hope*, I suggested that Jesus' outstanding future was grounded in his being an *inclusive* person.[99] That is, his identity cannot be thought in abstraction from that which will happen in and through him. In thinking about the parousia, Moltmann makes a similar point through the use of the term 'collective person'.

> "[I]t should be noted that on his day Christ is expected, not as a private person, but as a collective one. His future is also the future of those who are already 'in Christ' here and now. They also 'will appear with him in glory' (Col. 3:3-4)."[100]

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94. Chapter 5.3.

95. This point is made particularly clear in John's Gospel where, on the evening of Easter Day, he has the risen Christ breathe out the Spirit on the gathered disciples (John 20:19-23).

96. Cf. GinC 96.

97. Romans 8:15b,16.

98. Cf., 2 Corinthians 5:18f.

99. Chapter 4.1.1.

100. WJC 323.

In the light of our discussion above we can now suggest that while the enabling ground of Jesus' inclusivity is his incarnation, the power, if you will, of his inclusivity is the Spirit. Jesus cannot be conceived as an inclusive person apart from the integrative work of the Spirit through whom men and women, indeed the whole creation, is gathered into his history.[101] Yet here again, we have to differentiate between this work of the Spirit in anticipation and in realisation of the eschatological future. Just as Jesus' participation in time demanded his conformity to the pattern of the existing world, so *mutatis mutandis* the same holds for the Spirit.[102] The present activity of the Spirit, in integrating us into Jesus' history of death and resurrection[103] which opens up the possibility of participating in Jesus' relationship with the Father, takes place within the existing structure of time.[104] It thus falls under the rubric of anticipation. In the present world the Spirit too is in the process of becoming in time who he is in *adventus*. As the Spirit mediates the Father-Son relationship in *adventus*, so in time he mediates the Son's relation to the Father to us. When the Spirit does this same work of integration without the limitation of the structure of time, that is, when the Spirit becomes fully who he is in *adventus*, the result will be the new creation of all things.[105] The result will necessarily be the transformation of time. More precisely, the result will be our transformatory integration into Jesus' history to the point of catching up with what is already his possession: life in *adventus*. We could say, therefore, that the parousia of Christ will also be the parousia of the Spirit, it will be the event in which the Spirit finally becomes himself (newly again).

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101. For Moltmann's own analysis of this work of the Spirit see especially TKG 73, 89f, 122-128; GinC 242f; SofL 204.

102. Moltmann tends to speak about the kenosis of the Spirit on the basis that if God commits himself to his limited creation this must entail God in self-limitation (GinC 101f). In the *Spirit of Life*, the link between this conception and the notion of God's Shekinah is made explicit (p.51). Again we should probably see here the influence of Franz Rosenzweig (see SofL 49). I am attempting to make sense of these insights by starting *from* the history of Christ and the Spirit. An important example of the Spirit's conformity to the present to which Moltmann draws attention is the Spirit's participation in the yearning of creation for redemption (GinC 101). He grounds this exegetically, with some justification, in Romans 8:19-26.

103. See, for example, Romans 6:3-11.

104. Cf. "[P]neumatology presupposes christology, and prepares the way for eschatology" (SofL 18, cf. 69).

105. Cf. FofC 91; SofL 74. Cf. "[P]neumatology is developed historically and eschatologically, in the sense that the history of the church, the communion of saints and the forgiveness of sins are to be interpreted as the *history of the future*; while the eschatology of the resurrection of the body and life everlasting are to be seen as the *future of history*. That is why we understand this mediation of eschatology and history as the presence of the Holy Spirit" (CPS 198).

This model entails, I suggest, that Jesus is both the *source* and the *mediator* of the future. Jesus is the source of the future in his own divine person in the sense that his pattern of existence is the form that the future of creation will take. The future, we might say, resides in him. But Jesus also opens up a route of access for this future to contact alienated creation by means of his eschatological history. This is because his history connects creation's present form of existence, to which he was conformed, with his own essential form of existence in *adventus*. His history unfolds in his becoming himself. If this is correct, then the Spirit must accordingly be conceived as the *power* of the future. The Spirit is the power of actualisation of the future through the gathering of creation into Jesus' history.

To advance further, we now need to recall the relationship we established between Jesus' becoming and coming for his divine nature. We can initially simplify and concentrate on the divine nature because we are here considering the soteriological transformation of creation which is ultimately the work of God alone. Jesus' becoming, we asserted, subsists in his coming. Accordingly we can say that the anticipation of the future created in the wake of the becoming history of Christ and the Spirit subsists within their being who they are in *adventus*. The anticipation of the future does not, therefore, in and of itself create the future. But what it does do is construct a 'conduit' for the coming of God which enables his arrival. We have thus discovered a very significant element in the relationship between the anticipation and the arrival of the eschatological future. The anticipation of the future in Christ and the Spirit is the inescapably necessary *preparation* for the arrival of the eschatological future; it is the necessary means of its mediation to transient creation. We must say, therefore, that it is the anticipation of the future that makes it possible for the future to come. To put it starkly, it is God's action in Christ and the Spirit which gets *adventus* moving in relation to creation. The eschatological future can be said to be *coming* to creation because a path of access has been created. What creates the 'history' of *adventus*, its movement towards arrival, is thus the trinitarian actions of Father, Son and Spirit, which, we notice, subsist within God's being in

adventus.[106] This is why, to return to our point of departure, it is so wrong to give the impression that the new creation could be caused simply by God's de-restriction, as if God is coming to creation in any case. God's coming does not have simple, independent causal efficacy. God is coming because of his actions, in history, in Christ and the Spirit and not apart from these actions. To express this more effectively we could take up Irenaeus' image of the Son and the Spirit as the hands of the Father.[107] God is coming because he 'pulls' the world towards himself. In anticipation he prepares for this action by taking hold of the world. In the parousia of Christ, in the coming of *adventus* to time, he finally pulls the world to himself.[108] This final action of embrace, however, cannot be measured with respect to time. This is because the coming God will come *to* time; to all time. Clearly then, this cannot happen in time and so take up a certain amount of time. In this sense the passing of time in *futurum* does not bring God closer. Rather, as time 'passes', as the life of creation unfolds further, what we may say is that God takes an ever more extensive hold of the world. The statement that God is coming, therefore, remains equally valid for all times, even if the necessary preparation for this coming takes place in time. This distinction between God's 'taking hold' and his 'embrace' of the world thus corresponds to the difference between the continuation of time and the eschatological transformation of time.

The anticipation of the future created in the wake of Jesus' history is thus not merely an illustration, ahead of time, of what will happen to all eventually. It does not serve a merely noetic purpose. Nor, incidentally, is the resurrection of Jesus an advance example of the consequence of God's 'de-restriction' which is causally independent of him. No, Jesus' history of anticipation is rather, to adopt Moltmann's terminology, the inescapable 'messianic

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106. We note in passing that this must imply that the 'time' of the Trinity is *adventus*. For more detail see section 6 of this chapter.

107. See particularly *Against Heresies*, Book V.1.3. See also D. Minns, *Irenaeus*, (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1994), pp.78f.

108. We might equate this final embrace with Moltmann's language, rooted in 1 Corinthians 15:24, of the Son's eschatological handing over of the kingdom to the Father (see, for example, TKG 92).

preparation of the world for the kingdom of God'.[109] This is the reason why Jesus' history has a 'once-for-all'(*hapax*) character.[110] It takes place in time for the sake of all time. And, in the as yet outstanding completion of Jesus' history through the power of the Spirit, the world so prepared in time will be transformed in all its temporal extension. Here we discern the inner meaning of Moltmann's statement in *Theology of Hope*.

> "It is not merely said that Jesus is the first to arise and that believers will attain *like him* to resurrection, but it is proclaimed that he is himself the resurrection and the life and that consequently believers find their future *in* him and not merely *like* him. Hence they wait for their future by waiting for his future."[111]

Further, it is within the Christological structure we have established, I suggest, and not apart from it, that the notion of a soteriological movement from God's absence to God's presence conveyed by Moltmann's restriction - de-restriction model, should be understood. In chapter 5.4 we saw that Jesus' process of becoming who he is corresponded with a movement from the experience of God's proximity (conveyed to others in his messianic mission) to the experience of God's presence (proleptically realised for creation in his resurrection). We also saw that in Jesus' crucifixion, this path connected with the experience of God's absence in godforsakenness. What the terms 'absence', 'proximity' and 'presence' convey, I suggest, is not physical, spatial closeness, but quality of relationship. We might demonstrate this proposed correlation in the following way. As E. Jüngel has convincingly demonstrated, death, the end of existence and so the ultimate form of the experience of God's absence, may be equated with relationlessness.[112] The path from proximity to presence, on the other hand, anticipates the consummation of our inherently relational being[113] in a new depth of relationship both with God and, through God, with others.

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109. GinC 8.

110. Cf. Hebrews 9:26-28.

111. TH 82f. Here, of course, we meet once again the basis of Moltmann's disagreement with Pannenberg (see chapter 4.2.2-3).

112. *Death: The Riddle and the Mystery* (Edinburgh: St Andrew, 1975), p.78.

113. See, for example, M. Buber, *I and Thou*, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1958).

4. Envisioning the new creation: open future or cyclical repetition?

In mounting our critique of Moltmann's model of protological restriction and eschatological de-restriction we have effectively done the following. We have followed out, independently developing where necessary, the implications of the christological conditioning of his conception of the relationship between history and eschatology. We have then set this against motifs in his later theology which cannot find their inherent justification within this christological foundation. We can develop this process further by investigating the tension that exists in the vision of the new creation presented in Moltmann's earlier and later theology.

Moltmann, as we have seen, does not systematically distinguish between the divinity and humanity of Christ. This, I suggest, leads him into serious confusion. By making this distinction we have been able both to distinguish and hold together two schema that Moltmann confusingly entangles. These are the schema of the relationship between eternity and time on the one hand, and eschatology and history on the other. We shall now follow up this earlier insight in more detail.

From the perspective of Jesus' divinity, his resurrection and ascension issues in the re-integration in *adventus* of the identity that had been unfurled into time in the incarnation. The identity which, through the incarnation had participated 'simultaneously'[114] in two distinct realms, the one (time) subsisting in the other (*adventus*), now comes newly to itself[115] in one realm again. Across the extension of the temporal plane, this relationship shares a structural similarity with the classical notion of the relationship between time and eternity. In particular *adventus* transcends time and so possesses a constancy with respect to time. It was this, the reader will remember, which led to the possibility of retrospective projection.[116] But,

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114. Strictly speaking, of course, this use of simultaneous only makes sense from the perspective of *adventus* where notions of time can only be used in a heuristic and extended sense.

115. I am grateful to Dr Paul Fiddes for this insight into the necessary degree of newness in this return to self-identity.

116. See chapter 4.2.2.

unlike eternity, *adventus* is capable of movement; it has a 'history'. This is the 'history' from the coming of God to the arrival of God. The new creation is also new for God.[117] Yet, having said this, it does not change the form of God's essential identity grounded in the trinitarian relations of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is because the movement of *adventus* in relation to the whole temporal plane is, as we saw, engendered through God's becoming in time who he is in *adventus*. It is through God's *constancy* that the nature of his relationship with creation is *changed*. The new creation is new for God, therefore, in the sense that it constitutes a new quality of inclusion or participation within that life. Such 'newness' is already experienced for God in the proleptic inclusion of Jesus' humanity in the divine life. This happens both in time, by reason of the incarnation, and in *adventus,* occasioned by Jesus' resurrection and ascension. Both are forms of the subsistence of one quality of existence (creature), one ontological dimension, in another (creator). In both cases God's life discovers a new context in which to be himself in relation to others. It would be possible to say, therefore, that the range of content of God's life is thus extended. In the new creation God goes on being God, but now he does so in an enhanced relationship with the ontologically distinct realm of creation.[118]

Jesus' human nature[119] originates in time; it has a sheer beginning. There was a time when it was not. From this sheer beginning it develops in an emergent and contingent fashion. From

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117. In *The Coming of God* Moltmann speaks of 'divine eschatology' (p.326), i.e., that for which God himself waits and hopes. "The God who in Christ reconciles the world to himself is the *God on the way* to his glory and to the new creation of the world in his kingdom" (p.330).

118. Paul Fiddes in *The Creative Suffering of God*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988) makes a more bold proposal. He asserts that creation is necessary to the fulfilment of God's inner-trinitarian life (p.78). He consequently makes God's election of himself as creator as fundamental as his election of himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit: "as God chooses himself as Father, Son, and Spirit he also chooses us in an act of will in which there can be no otherwise". This certainly underscores the significance of creation. But, despite the protective 'no otherwise', does it do so at the expense of reducing the Godness of God to an antecedent principle of fellowship that comes to its highest expression in the new creation? See also section 6 of this chapter for a further clarification of the suggestions here put forward.

119. We have to speak here, in rather abstract terms, of Jesus' humanity. Though it would be tempting to speak of Jesus' human identity at this point, so as to draw a more obvious parallel with ourselves, this would be too simplistic. We cannot speak of Jesus' human identity as a separate entity because, if the divine-human Jesus is one person, he cannot have more than one identity. We thus need to avoid the problems associated with Nestorianism (even if not with Nestorius himself. See John Macquarrie, *Jesus Christ in Modern Thought*, (London: SCM, 1990) p162). He has rather one identity in two natures.

the perspective of Jesus' humanity, therefore, his resurrection and ascension constitute the consummation of his humanity in eschatological becoming. For Jesus' human nature his participation in *adventus* means the summation, integration and transfiguration of what has become in time. The consummation of Jesus' humanity thus issues in the realisation of its existence on a new, never-before-experienced, level. The end is incomparably more than the beginning. The relationship described by this process is, I submit, the eschatological relationship between history and the fulfilment of history (eschatology). The inner meaning of this fulfilment is the transformation of the contingent and emergent content of a human life into congruence with the form of the trinitarian being of God. It is the old made new; it is a new creation. In the new creation Jesus' humanity does not cease to be human. While it participates in the inner life of the trinitarian God it does not thereby become divine. Rather it experiences an enhancement of God's creative relationship towards it that brings it to the fullness of what it means to be human.

What I hope to have demonstrated in outline form above is that while Jesus' humanity and divinity share a common goal, by virtue of the unity of his person, this same goal has quite distinct meanings for each nature. Keeping these meanings separate prevents the error of inadvertently projecting one form of existence in the new creation onto the other. It is this error which, I suggest, Moltmann has committed. Clearly, systematic reflection upon what the new creation will mean for present creation should be grounded in the experience of Jesus' humanity. It should not be generated by an undifferentiated projection of the divine life of the Trinity onto the world. Though Moltmann does not utilise this kind of formal methodological reflection, it is interesting to observe that his early theology equates with the former, while his later theology tends to equate with the latter. A brief analysis of some pertinent examples will be in order.

The classic statement of Moltmann's conception of the structure of the new creation in his early theology is given in *The Future of Creation*. Here Moltmann defends the notion that creation is an open system. An open system is one which is subject to change and alteration;

one in which the goal attained at any one point is different from the original state.[120] It is also one in which future behaviour is not totally determined by previous behaviour.[121] Moltmann therefore asks the following significant question of the eschatological fulfilment of creation:

> "whether the completion of the process of creation is to be conceived as the final end of the open and opened systems. Is the kingdom of glory the universal system which has finally come to a close?".[122]

Moltmann's answer is an emphatic 'No!'.

> "If the process of creation is completed through God's indwelling, then the unlimited fullness of divine potentiality dwells in the new creation...The indwelling of the limitless fullness of God's potentialities therefore means the openness of all systems of life *par excellence*...It will therefore be permissible for us to assume that there will be time and history, future and possibility in the kingdom of glory...Instead of timeless eternity we would therefore do better to talk about eternal time, and instead of the end of history to speak about the end of pre-history and the beginning of the eternal history of God, man and nature. We must then, however, think of change without transience, time without past, and life without death."[123]

In the text itself this vision of the *open* future of the new creation is grounded in the nature of God.

> "[T]he being of God must no longer be thought of as the highest reality for all realised potentialities, but as the transcendent making-possible of all possible realities."[124]

It is, however, highly significant, I suggest, in the light of our methodological reflections above, that in *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* Moltmann can describe the life of the "risen, transfigured and transformed Christ"[125] in virtually identical terms. His 'festal' life is:

> "life without death, time without transience, and participation in the glory of God without hindrance".[126]

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120. FofC 118.

121. FofC 190, n.14.

122. FofC 126.

123. FofC 126. This same basic conception of the new creation can also be found in *God in Creation*. See, for example, pp.213f.

124. FofC 127.

125. CPS 113.

126. CPS 113.

Here, it seems to me, Moltmann is thinking about what it means for *creation* to participate in the life of God. And his implicit following of my suggested methodology leads to an uncompromisingly eschatological vision of the new creation. The new creation as the open system *par excellence* is the very antithesis of the eternalisation of creation. In fact, this vision of the future is so open, that is raises the question of whether it can properly constitute the fulfilment of creation.[127]

This vision of the structure of the new creation contrasts strongly with that to be found in *The Way of Jesus Christ* and *The Coming of God*. To be more specific, it contrasts with the vision of the future constructed within the orbit of Moltmann's model of God's eschatological 'de-restriction'. Here the notion of continued, if modified, linear progression gives way to the image of cyclical repetition. Now, the eschatological participation of creation in the absolute eternity of God leads to the aeon of relative eternity. Moltmann writes,

> "...created time, which is aligned towards the future, will be transformed into the circular movements of the aeonic time of the new creation. In the presence of God's absolute eternity, created time becomes the relative eternity of the new creation that corresponds to him. Cyclical and full of repetition are the hymns and dances in which created beings express their wondering love of God".[128]

The *Coming of God* refines this notion further. Here Moltmann explicitly rules out any 'time of futurity' in the new creation.[129] Rather there is "*cyclical* time" which constitutes a "reversible, symmetrical, unending and hence timeless form of time".[130] And, what is most significant, this is explicitly contrasted with the "open, a-symmetrical" system of creation.[131] Between Moltmann's earlier and later theology then there is a obvious shift: the open system of the new creation has become a closed, symmetrical system; the kingdom of glory with time,

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127. This was a question suggested to me in conversation with Dr Oliver O'Donovan.

128. WJC 331.

129. CofG 294.

130. CofG 282. Cf., p. 294.

131. CofG 283.

history, future and possibility has become a realm without the time of futurity. The eternalisation of creation has taken the place of an open eschatological future. Why has this shift taken place? It has happened, I suggest, because Moltmann has simply projected the meaning of the new creation *for God* onto creation without any differentiation.[132] And this has happened not only because Moltmann fails to distinguish between the divinity and the humanity of Christ, but also because his 'de-restriction' model, as we have seen, has been essentially constructed apart from the guiding christological reflections that informed his earlier thinking. The image of cyclical, symmetrical movement, though not without problems, is more appropriate, it seems to me, to the trinitarian being of God who possesses a constant pattern of life which comes to find expression and relationship within an additional realm of being; that of transfigured creation.[133] In fact, in *The Spirit of Life*, Moltmann does seem to conceive of the inner life of the Trinity in exactly this way.[134] But this vision of cyclical repetition is not, however, an appropriate description of what it means for creation to find redemption. Moltmann himself knows better than this even within *The Coming of God*. Thinking of the child who dies at birth or is killed in early life, or of those whose lives are stunted and cut short by hunger in Africa, leads Moltmann to the following statement:

> "The idea of 'the eternalisation of life as it has been lived' does not take in those who were neither

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132. Interestingly in this respect Moltmann's definition of God's eternity in *The Coming of God* as "the fullness of creative life" (p.281) parallels his description of eternal life for creation as "full-filled life" (p.291). This is because the major inspiration for *both* conceptions is the classic definition of eternity offered by Boethius in *De consolatione philosophiae*, V.6 (see CofG p.291). Significantly, Moltmann also speaks of the aeonic time of the new creation as "a mutual perichoresis between eternity and time" (CofG 295). Yet the notion of perichoresis in trinitarian theology is predicated on the consubstantiality of the three Persons. The use of this language here may, therefore, press towards an illegitimate collapse of the distinction between what is appropriate to God and what is appropriate for the ontologically distinct realm of redeemed creation. Cf. J. McIntyre, "Review of GinC", *Scottish Journal of Theology*, Vol 41/2 (1988), p.270f.

133. Cf. Barth's notion of God's eternal self-repetition. See, for example *Church Dogmatics* I/1, p.350. See also note 192.

134. In speaking of trinitarian doxology in which God is adored *for himself*, rather than for his acts in history, Moltmann writes of the movement of Father, Son and Holy Spirit appropriate to this action: "this is now the self-circling and self-reposing movement of perichoresis" (p.304). Moltmann explicitly links this with the circular movement of aeonic existence theologically ascribed to the angels.

permitted to live nor able to do so".[135]

His conclusion is significant.

> "So I would think that eternal life gives the broken and the impaired and those whose lives have been destroyed space and *time* and strength to live the life which they were intended for...I think it for the sake of the justice which I believe is God's concern and his first option."[136]

Moltmann's concern for theodicy in which, as we have seen,[137] he so often grounds the relevance of his theology, leads him to a soteriological vision of the new creation in which there is still 'time' for development. His christologically conditioned vision of the new creation in his early theology can meet this challenge. Ironically, the volume in which such questions of the hardly lived life first come to explicit expression contains a vision of the future unable to assist. Therefore despite the fact that the new creation arises from the eschatological participation of creation in the life of God, it is not sufficient to attempt to generate a vision of the new creation by simply projecting from God's own life in an undifferentiated fashion. This is the temptation inherent in Moltmann's model of eschatological de-restriction. Rather, it is necessary to distinguish between what the new creation will mean for God and for creation respectively. This can only be achieved on the basis of a systematic distinction between the humanity and divinity of Christ. While in Moltmann's early theology he intuitively seems to argue correctly from the humanity of the risen and transfigured Christ, without this systematic distinction between Jesus' divine and human natures he has no protection against the pressure

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135. CofG 118. Karl Barth's conception of the relationship between God's eternity and the time of creation falls, I suggest, into just this trap. Barth understands God's eternity as the simultaneous coincidence of creation's past, present and future. God's eternity is authentic time (*Church Dogmatics*, III/2 p.437). He also understands that God, in and through the work of Christ, becomes the 'beyond' of a person in death. Consequently he sees the eternal life of an individual as the revelation of the true meaning of that life from its beginning to its end. As he puts it, man's time will be revealed in "all its merited shame but also in its unmerited glory, and may thus be eternal life from and in God". (III/2 p.633). Thus while there is no danger in this conception that eternal life is unrelated to a person's temporal existence, it appears that God's eternity offers no new and open future over and above the revelation of the truth of past existence. What then is to befall those who in this lifetime, for whatever reason, lead frustrated, stunted and unrealised lives? Ultimately, Barth's problems stem from the way in which in understands Jesus' history as the centre of time. "Nothing which will be has not already taken place on Easter Day - included and anticipated in the person of the one man Jesus" (III/2 p.489).

136. CofG 118, my emphasis. This volume also preserves other echoes of Moltmann's earlier theological emphasis: "In God's creative future, the end will become the beginning, and the true creation is still to come and is ahead of us" (p.xi). This is far removed from any notion of eternalisation.

137. See chapter 3.5.

of influence of his later model of God's eschatological de-restriction. The pattern of God's life thus becomes all-determining in an inappropriate manner.

5. *Moltmann's own eternalisation of the parousia*

The reader of Moltmann is frustrated by his use of the term 'eternity'. This is especially the case in Moltmann's later theology. It would interesting to follow out the significance of this remark across the whole of Moltmann's theology.[138] But my present concern will be to defend it with the orbit of Moltmann's treatment of Christ's parousia. Why does someone who explicitly rejects an eternalised notion of Christ's parousia, as we saw above, persist in unfolding its nature and significance by use of the term eternity? It would be tempting to see this as simply another consequence that flows from Moltmann's adoption of the 'de-restriction' model for his determination of the 'eschatological moment'. The explanation would run as follows. Moltmann appears, somewhat uncritically, and despite his best insights, to adhere to the traditional association of the being of God with the term 'eternity'. Consequently, when Moltmann projects the life of God onto creation to form a vision of the new creation created by God's de-restriction, the term 'eternity' is also carried with it.

> "If God himself appears *in* his creation, then his eternity appears *in* the time of creation, and his omnipresence *in* creation's space. Consequently temporal creation will be transformed into eternal creation".[139]

Moltmann's problem is, however, deeper than this. His carelessness with the term 'eternity' also includes the explicitly christological reflections of *The Way of Jesus Christ* and later volumes. Here we need to make a connection with our earlier analysis of Moltmann's

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138. We have already observed something of the startling transformation that occurs between *Theology of Hope* and *The Spirit of Life* (Chapter 3.6). While for *Theology of Hope* the 'epiphany of the eternal present' is the enemy of the religion of promise (pp. 84f, 95-102), in *The Spirit of Life* the experience of God which foreshadows humanity's eschatological fulfilment is that of "the eternal present" (p.303) in which remembrance and expectation are forgotten (p.18). *The Coming of God* also preserves this later strand, finding an anticipation of eschatological eternity in the ecstatic experiences of life (pp.290f). For an interesting analysis of this shift and especially of the possible catalytic role played, surprisingly, by E. Bloch, see R. Bauckham, *The Theology of Jürgen Moltmann*, Ch. 11, especially pp.238-242.

139. CofG 280.

diachronic understanding of the resurrection.[140] Moltmann understands the parousia of Christ to constitute the fulfilment of his resurrection.

> "The resurrection of the crucified One is the anticipation of his parousia in glory, and his parousia is the fulfilment of his resurrection."[141]

Christ's risen appearances, which initiated faith in the Gospel, led to the expectation of Christ's universal appearance in his parousia.[142] The parousia is the universal Easter.[143] It is not surprising, therefore, that Moltmann understands the effect of the parousia of Christ on creation as parallel to the relationship between the risen Jesus and his earthly life. Consequently, his diachronic conception of the resurrection is transferred to the parousia, and with it Moltmann's confusion surrounding the use of term 'simultaneous'. In his language of the parousia it is, therefore, possible to discern both the eternal and eschatological usage of 'simultaneous' that we isolated before.[144]

> "As the end of time, the parousia *comes to all times simultaneously* in a single instant."[145]

This is the eschatological usage; the parousia is simultaneous with the transformation of each moment in Christ's arrival. Compare this, however, with the following.

> "Since it is the day of God's coming[146], it is rightly called 'the day of days'; for the eternity which appears on this day is *simultaneous to all the days*, and lights up all the nights of world history."[147]

Here the parousia is apparently simultaneous with the days of history. It would accordingly

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140. See Chapter 5.9.

141. WJC 320.

142. WJC 226.

143. WJC 323.

144. See chapter 5.9.

145. WJC 317, my emphasis.

146. Moltmann appears to use Lord and God interchangeably in the immediate context of this text.

147. WJC 327. The same use of simultaneous can also be found at CofG 280.

lead simply to the eternalisation of time. It should also lead Moltmann back into the problem he has already identified with an eternalisation of the parousia expectation. Against such an option he himself has already pointed out:

> "But if Christ's parousia is equated with God's eternity, then there is no moment at which it can enter time".[148]

Moltmann should, I suggest adhere to his concept of *adventus*. The eschatological, and in my view correct formulation of the simultaneity engendered by Christ's parousia, has exactly this form: it *comes* to all times. It is the coming future. Moreover, Moltmann's whole notion of the coming future is grounded in the hoped-for parousia of Christ. This is its origin and basis. Furthermore, when the term *adventus* was first introduced to the English-speaking world in the essay 'Theology as Eschatology' it was here explicitly conceived as a term that superseded the language of eternity.

> "[T]he future [*adventus*] as the mode of God's being also contains that which *formally* was called his eternity. As the power of the future over every historical presence, God can be understood *without* the abstractions of traditional metaphysics of time and history as the eternal one."[149]

It is a great irony, not to say pity, that when Moltmann comes in his later theology to give sustained theological reflection to Christ's parousia he should not allow the very concept of God built upon this expectation full systematic weight. Rather he elects to compromise it with an imported notion of eternity, that is, the very notion his concept of *adventus* was held to have moved beyond. Correspondingly, although the language of *adventus* makes a bold return near the beginning of *The Coming of God*,[150] as we have observed, it is not long before the language of eternity comes to dominate again. Thus, while early on we are confidently told that it is the transcendent future *(adventus)* that is the source of time whereas 'timeless-simultaneous eternity' abolishes time,[151] later Moltmann is asking, "How does time

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148. WJC 317. See also our earlier discussion of this point at section 2.

149. TasE 13, my emphasis.

150. CofG 25f.

151. CofG 26.

spring from eternity?"[152] to which his primordial restriction model is the answer!

6. *The problematic threefold structure of eternity, aeon and time*

Moltmann's confusion over eternity does not, however, rest here. There are points in Moltmann's theology where he does attempt to define and distinguish various notions of eternity and their respective relationships to time with greater care. Yet these attempts at definition remain unhelpfully isolated from one another. In this chapter we have already encountered two such attempts at differentiation. The first came in our analysis of Moltmann's employment of Isaac Luria's *zimzum* doctrine to resolve the question of the relationship between the temporal beginning of creation and God's eternity. There we observed how Moltmann's attempted solution led him to conceive of three distinct levels: (a) God's essential eternity; (b) God's time for creation opened by means of his restriction of his eternity within himself; and (c) creation's own time of transience. Our relaying of a second attempt arose in our discussion of Moltmann's conflicting visions of the new creation. Here the conception characteristic of Moltmann's later theology involved him in distinguishing between the absolute eternity of God, the relative eternity of the new creation and the time of present creation. Here the relative eternity, or 'aeon' of the new creation resulted, we were informed, from the participation of creation in God's essential eternity. Should these two three-level structures be equated? To do so would lead to an interesting result. It would suggest that for Moltmann God's own time for creation, which he never defines, is itself an aeonic, relative eternity which gains its nature from its participation in God's essential eternity. This would imply that quite apart from God's participation in time, God also 'simultaneously' exists on two levels:[153] absolute and relative eternity. We can cross check this result by means of a

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152. CofG 280.

153. God's existence on two levels is also suggested by Moltmann's treatment of the question of the relationship of the spatial extension of creation to God's omnipresence. Moltmann again draws upon Isaac Luria's *zimzum* doctrine to provide a parallel answer to his solution of God's relationship to time. "God restricts his eternity in order to take time for his creation and to leave it time. Analogously he restricts his omnipresence, in order to make room for his creation and to concede it space" (CofG 297). As *God in Creation* makes clear, this also results in a three level structure: "So the space of creation [created by God's self-contraction] precedes both creation and the spaces fashioned within creation, yet without being identical with the uncreated, eternal omnipresence of God" (p.156). Moltmann thus distinguishes three things: the essential "*absolute space*" of

third set of terms we have observed Moltmann to employ. These stem from Moltmann's attempt to understand God's eschatological de-restriction in the light of his primordial self-restriction. We saw Moltmann speak of the 'the primordial moment', 'the moment of inception', 'the final moment' and 'the eschatological moment'. The usefulness of this third set of terms is that they are linked, albeit by different means, to both the attempts at differentiation we have described above. Moltmann explicitly states that the relative eternity of the aeonic new creation is the direct consequence of the 'eschatological moment'.[154] In a rather more implicit way, because Moltmann holds that God's initial self-restriction constitutes the 'primordial moment'[155] it should be possible to connect this with the middle level of Moltmann's three level structure: God's time for creation. This is because God's time for creation is also held to be a direct result of God's initial self-restriction. Now, earlier we observed that Moltmann understands the primordial moment to be aeonic in structure, and therefore, presumably subsisting in relative eternity. Equating God's time for creation with the primordial moment, therefore, confirms our initial conclusion that God's time is to be understood as the aeonic time of relative eternity. These observations also imply that it is this relative eternity of God which comes to creation in the eschatological moment. Are we then to understand that *adventus*, the coming future of God, is equated in Moltmann's mind with God's time of relative eternity? Before we discuss the consequences that might follow from this insight, we must ascertain whether or not it is correct. I wish to suggest that we can achieve just this via Moltmann's account of heaven in *God in Creation*. For this will enable us to link *adventus* to Moltmann's three level structure via another, independent route.

So far we have said nothing about Moltmann's understanding of heaven. This might seem like an obvious omission in a chapter about Christ's parousia. After all, does not the Apostle's

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the omnipresent God; the "*space of creation*" opened up in God's self-contraction; and the "*relative places*" in which the things of creation exists and move (GinC 156f). Accordingly God must be held to exist on both the level of his essential omnipresence and in the 'space of creation' which Moltmann equates with his 'world-presence' (GinC 157).

154. WJC 329.

155. WJC 329; CofG 282.

Creed inform us that Christ's coming is initiated from heaven? To have introduced this subject earlier, however, would have constituted an unnecessary complication in an already complex set of ideas. To introduce it now, I contend, will assist our investigation.

It is a feature of Moltmann's later theology that he conceives of creation as necessarily a 'dual world'.[156] It consists of the visible realm of the earth (and presumably the rest of the universe), and the invisible realm of heaven. The necessary existence of heaven, for Moltmann, is rooted in his understanding of the earth as an open system. Heaven is the side of creation 'open to God' through which God's created potentialities are communicated to the earth: "heaven means God's potentiality *for* the earth".[157] Thus the existence of heaven and its communication with the earth prevents the latter from becoming a closed system without a genuinely open future.[158] Significantly for our purposes, when Moltmann describes this function of heaven in *God in Creation*, he does so in terms which possess a strong resonance with his later concept of the 'primordial moment'. It was, the reader will recall, the primordial moment that constituted God's readiness for creation in that it contained all the possibilities God was to unfurl into the time of creation. This means, I suggest, that it will be legitimate to attempt to correlate what is said here with Moltmann's later model. As a result of God's self-determination as creator:

> "God first of all creates for himself the possibility of the world's reality. He then goes forth from the kingdom of his positive potentiality, creating, forming and acting, and enters into the kingdom of actuality. This creative movement is expressed through the direction 'from heaven'."[159]

Significantly, he also distinguishes these creative potentialities of heaven from God's own essential being.

> "The potentialities and potencies of God which are described by the symbol 'heaven' are not the

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156. See especially, GinC 158-164.

157. GinC 165.

158. GinC 163.

159. GinC 165.

potentialities and potencies of his eternal essence *per se*. They are the potentialities and potencies of the God who has designated himself to be the creator of a world different from himself, which none the less communicates with him."[160]

In Moltmann's account of heaven, therefore, it is possible to discern the presence of our by now familiar three level structure. At the first level there are the potentialities and potencies of God's essential nature. At the second level there are the creative potentialities of heaven. These appear to equate with Moltmann's later conception of the primordial moment. And at the third level there is the earth (visible universe) as an open system. For ease of comprehension and comparison we might co-ordinate the pattern of three level structures we have discerned in tabular form.

Level 1	God's essential eternity	Potentialities and potencies of God's eternal essence	God's absolute eternity	God's eternity
Level 2	God's own time for creation	Creative potentialities of heaven	Aeonic relative eternity of new creation	primordial≡eschatological[161] moment moment
Level 3	Time of creation	Open system of Earth	Time of creation	Moment of ≡ final inception moment (Both exist in time)
Reference:	GinC 116f	GinC 166	WJC 330f	WJC 328f/ CofG 282,294f

So far all we have established is that Moltmann's understanding of the relationship between heaven and earth can be co-ordinated with the three level structure we have found elsewhere. We can now build on this observation by examining what we might call Moltmann's eschatology of heaven. He writes as follows:

"Understood in terms of time, [God's] heavenly presence is his eschatological presence: he is present in his kingdom, and his kingdom is the future of the earth, because it *comes to the earth* and through its future

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160. GinC 166.

161. Remember, that although we criticised Moltmann for equating the primordial and eschatological moments in terms of their relationship with the essential eternity of God, Moltmann himself described them as 'mirror-images' of each other (WJC 328).

transposes the earth into its history."[162]

Moltmann holds that the kingdom of glory, the eschatological future of new creation, is the realisation of the reconciliation of heaven and earth achieved in Christ (Eph. 1:10; Col. 1:16).[163] The resulting 'new heaven' and 'new earth' constitute, we are told, a new presence of God even over against his present heavenly presence.[164] As far as our quest to relate Moltmann's various terms together is concerned, these observations suggest the following. If the new creation issues from heaven *coming* to earth, and heaven holds the middle position in Moltmann's three-level structure, then this confirms our earlier impression that *adventus*, the coming future, is to be equated with Moltmann's later language of relative eternity.

There is one final check we can perform which is to examine what Moltmann says about the location of the risen and ascended Christ who is the subject of the parousia expectation. This again suggests that the location of the coming future must be the participative, relative eternity. In *The Way of Jesus Christ* Moltmann variously informs us that: Jesus is raised into "God's eternal moment";[165] that the risen body of Christ "partakes of God's eternity" and "lives in the heaven of God's creative potencies";[166] and that "Christ comes 'from heaven'".[167] Moreover, Moltmann writes,

> "The time of heaven is different from the earthly time of transience, since it is the cyclical time of the aeon. This relative temporal eternity which mirrors God's primordial eternity stands over against the transitory time of earth. When the heaven opens itself for the earth, this relative eternity will be

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162. GinC 183, my emphasis.

163. GinC 171.

164. Interestingly, in *The Way of Jesus Christ* this eschatology of heaven seems to have been forgotten. In this volume Moltmann can write that heaven is "the sphere of creation which *already totally corresponds* to God because it is *totally* pervaded by his glory" (p.332, my emphasis). What more then can be expected?

165. WJC 76.

166. WJC 258.

167. WJC 333. Interestingly, while *The Crucified God* could speak of Jesus being "raised into God's future" (p.168) or "into the coming glory of God" (p.169) and even of "the immanent Jesus transcended in into God" (p.169), it has this to say about heaven: "[Jesus] was not raised into heaven and in that sense eternalised or divinized" (p.168).

simultaneous to all the times of earth, and transitory time will be replaced on earth by aeonic time".[168]

Here then is the clinching evidence. If *adventus* is determined by Christ's parousia, and Christ comes to bring the relative eternity of heaven to earth, then *adventus*, for the later Moltmann, must equate with relative eternity.

What are we to make of all this? Let us go back to the beginning. Moltmann's original problem which launched him into the construction of a three-level structure was how to mediate between the essential eternity of God and time. Moltmann never defines what exactly he means by the expression 'essential eternity' but we may assume that it equates with the classical definition of eternity since the one he inherits this problem from is, as we saw, Augustine. Moltmann's solution is to employ his ubiquitous mediating method whereby he attempts to find a middle term to mediate between a dialectic of opposites. In this case his middle term, which creates the second level of his structure, is 'God's own time'. Does this solution work? I am not convinced that it does. His original problem was that an eternal God who creates seems to become an eternal creator and thus renders creation itself eternal. There seemed to be no way of escaping God's eternity when it was defined over against time as timelessness. But does Moltmann's solution fare any better? He speaks of God's self-alteration of his eternity. But if an essentially eternal God acts to alter his eternity does this not also become an eternal action? And so, in this way, does not God's time become eternal also? All Moltmann has done, I suggest, is to create a different version of his original problem on a higher level; he certainly has not solved it.

What is so interesting here is that Moltmann can elsewhere use his mediating method in a different and more successful way. An example is his debate with classical notions of God's impassibility. In this case he sets up the same three term pattern: on the one hand the patristic doctrine of God's essential incapacity for suffering; on the other the involuntary suffering of

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168. WJC 333. Notice that this quotation contains the unusual expression 'primordial eternity'. Given the context in which it is used, I do not think that this equates with the primordial moment so making it a new expression for God's own time. Rather, I suggest that it equates with God's essential eternity which is 'mirrored' in the relative eternity of heaven.

creatures from causes beyond their control; and, as the mediating term, the voluntary laying oneself open to another.[169] Having constructed this pattern Moltmann effective jettisons the unwanted term: he rejects the notion of God's essential incapacity for suffering. He assumes that God, the God revealed in the cross of Christ, is the God who voluntarily lays himself open to the others, out of love, and that this inevitably involves him in suffering. In other words, the mediation of the dialectic was simply a way of solving an intellectual puzzle which, once solved, leaves two terms of use. When Moltmann uses the same method with the problem of the relationship between God's essential eternity and time why does he not do the same? Why does he not reject God's essential eternity and speak instead about God's time for creation? The reason is because, on this occasion, his mediating method has been inseparably linked with his adoption of Isaac Luria's *zimzum* doctrine. If God withdraws his essential eternity into himself in order to make time for his creation, presumably, on this model, his essential eternity remains within the contracted self of God. Accordingly the concept of God's essential eternity, problematic as it is, cannot be so easily dispensed with. This then explains, I suggest, why, in Moltmann's subsequent writings, a notion of God's absolute eternity is found to persist.[170]

To avoid the problem of the self-alteration of eternity, Moltmann would have to assume that God already and eternally exists on two levels: those of absolute eternity and relative (aeonic) eternity. This would not be logically inconceivable. Keith Ward, for example, speaks of God's eternal generation of his own time.

> "God timelessly [and therefore eternally] generates, by necessity of his own nature, the infinite series of temporal states in which he freely acts."[171]

Indeed, in *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God* Moltmann does seem to conceive of two levels

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169. CG 230; TKG 23.

170. It is also possible that Moltmann's indebtedness to Orthodox theology for his concept of aeon leads him to import the (slightly different) three level structure which provides the framework for this term and so to retain the language of eternity. See, for example, the very clear presentation of this matter in V. Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, (Cambridge: James Clark & Co., 1957), pp.102f.

171. *Rational Theology and the Creativity of God*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1982), p.160.

of existence within God when he distinguishes between the *constitution* of the Trinity, in terms of relations of origin, and the inner *divine life* of the persons of the Trinity so constituted.[172] He seems to distinguish between an ontological order on the one hand, and a functional 'historical' order on the other.[173] Yet is such a two level conception of God's existence helpful? It would, in fact, lead Moltmann into other problems. Most fundamentally, it would suggest that the God who engages with creation in the economy of creation and redemption is not the same as God in himself. And this would contradict Moltmann's own principle of revelation which he uses against Barth's famous contention that God could have remained satisfied in his own life apart from creation.[174]

> "If God is the truth in that he corresponds entirely to himself, then his revelation can only be true if he entirely corresponds to himself in that revelation."[175]

We have already observed how Moltmann's adoption of Isaac Luria's *zimzum* doctrine leads him into a number of problems. Would it not be better to relegate this strictly to the level of metaphor so freeing up the possibility of simply dispensing with a notion of God's absolute eternity? Could not Moltmann simply have remained with the two-fold distinction in his early theology between the time of Creation and *adventus* as the mode of God's being? Let us explore this possibility.

God must be related to the time of creation. The incarnation suggests no less. If Jesus is the incarnation of the *adventus* of God in time then, in him, God and time relate. Alasdair Heron makes the point more generally. The incarnation implies that,

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172. TKG 176.

173. On this point see R. Olson, "Trinity and Eschatology: The Historical Being of God in Jürgen Moltmann and Wolfhart Pannenberg", S.J.T., Vol 36,(1983), pp.213-227. This two level distinction, however, seems to go against Moltmann's own theological insight that trinitarian personhood and relation are mutually defining. Hence Moltmann can write: "The constitution of the persons and their manifestations through their relations are two sides of the same thing" (TKG 173).

174. See especially *Church Dogmatics*, III/2 p.166.

175. TKG 53. Moltmann also takes up the same point with Barth in GinC 79-83.

> "He who is eternal must be seen as personal, as active, and as capable of entering into time and of taking temporality into himself".[176]

On the basis of the history of Christ he therefore concludes:

> "to speak of the time of God, of the temporality of the divine eternity, is preferable to imagining a mythical eternity which has nothing to do with time at all".[177]

Paul Fiddes has also drawn the same conclusion on the basis of the now widely held conviction, which he ably unfolds and defends, that God's relationship with the world involves him in suffering. In God's suffering of the actions of others, as these change God, Fiddes concludes God must experience "something corresponding to 'before' and 'after'".[178] As he says, "A suffering God is implicated in time".[179] This leads him to suggest that,

> "...God can indwell all systems of time because he has his own kind of 'time' or 'history' which is capable of intermeshing with them".[180]

Ted Peters also draws similar conclusions. He begins by pointing out that an eternal God, as this has been classically understood, can have no relation with temporal creation.

> "If eternity is defined as absence of succession, and if cause-effect relations are successive by nature, then it would appear that an eternal God could not cause temporal effects."[181]

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176. A.I.C. Heron, "The time of God", in, H. Deuser, *Gottes Zukunft - Zukunft der Welt*, (Munich: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1986), p.237.

177. "The time of God", p.239. Heron is much impressed by Karl Barth's attempt to liberate the concept of eternity from the Babylonian captivity of the abstract opposite of time (*Church Dogmatics*, II/1 p.593). For a penetrative, if rather dense, account of Barth's understanding of the relationship between eternity and time see: R.H. Roberts, "Barth's doctrine of time: its nature and implications", in *Karl Barth: Studies of his Theological Method*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979), pp.88-146.

178. *The Creative Suffering of God*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), p.99.

179. *The Creative Suffering of God.*, p.103.

180. *The Creative Suffering of God*, p.103. Fiddes' model of God's time is soteriologically conditioned. God can do what we cannot do: he can 'integrate' and 'harmonise' time which means, in respect of those who suffer the experience of the disintegration of past, present and future, he can 'heal' time (pp.103-5). Fiddes' model of God's time may, however, suffer from being too existentially based (he is influenced by Heidegger's *Being and Time*). It is not just our experience of time that is problematic, we require salvation from the cosmic problem of transience in which this existential problem is grounded. God's temporal experiences must, therefore, not only be more integrated than ours, his temporality must transcend all systems of created time.

181. T. Peters, *God as Trinity*, (Louisville: Westminster/ John Knox, 1993), p.152. For an exhaustive analysis of this point see N. Pike, *God and Timelessness*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970).

For Peters what we come to mean by 'eternity' is both God's inclusion and transcendence of time. The first notion is disclosed in the incarnation, the second in God's hoped-for eschatological consummation of time.[182] He therefore suggests,

> "Eternity needs to transcend time, to be sure; but it need not cancel or annihilate time."[183]

I wish to suggest that Moltmann's conception of *adventus*, the coming future of God, contains the necessary sense of movement which makes it possible for God to relate to the temporality of the world, while also possessing the transcendence necessary for the soteriological transformation of time. This latter point about transcendence has already been made at length several times in our investigation, so I shall now concentrate attention on the former point; God's 'history' in *adventus*.

In *The Experiment Hope* Moltmann responds to the critics who have alleged that it is one-sided only to emphasise the future as the mode of God's being as opposed to the past and present.[184] He suggests that this assertion derives from a misunderstanding concerning the 'future' which is meant.[185] As part of his elaboration of *adventus* in response, he distinguishes between God's future in this sense and the commonly held notion of eternity:

> "The future is, therefore, not a dimension of [God's] eternity, but his own movement in which he comes to

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182. *God as Trinity*, p.177.

183. *God as Trinity*, p.171. Peters, however, seems to hold to an eschatological ontology in which God *comes to be eternal* through his redemptive inclusion and transformation of time. "What we need to see here is that God's eternity cannot be understood as existing outside time. Rather, it consists in overcoming the destruction that normally accompanies passage...God's eternity is *gained* through the victory of resurrection and transformation" (p.175, my emphasis). He also speaks of eschatological fulfilment "retroactively" defining all reality: "The eschatological Christ will turn out to be the Logos by which the creation will have been structured all along. God's ultimate future will determine just what the past has been" (p.175). If taken literally, this would appear to negate the emergent value of creation and raise problems of how it is that God gains his original purchase over the past in need of redemption. Does Peters actually mean that God's ultimate future *retrospectively* reveals what has been the case?

184. See, for example, the criticism maintained by L. Gilkey (pp.81-109) and J. Macquarrie (pp.122f) in F. Herzog (Ed.), *The Future of Hope*, (New York: Herder & Herder, 1970).

185. EH 51.

> us...His actions in history in the past and the present are aimed at his coming and attain their significance from his future".[186]

In the text of *The Experiment Hope* this statement is not elaborated further. But it points towards the way in which we were able to unfold and develop the concept of *adventus* earlier in this chapter. We concluded above that God's coming to the whole temporal extension of creation is engendered through his actions in the history of Christ and the Spirit. Furthermore, we suggested that this history of Christ and the Spirit results from the process of God becoming in time who he is in *adventus*. For the divinity of Christ, and thus for the trinitarian God, his becoming subsists within his coming. God's actions in time, and God's eschatological transformation of time are thus grounded in the being of God. God's becoming which enables his coming is founded in the constancy of God's own being. Consequently, the movement of *adventus*, the 'history' of God, from coming to arrival, is grounded in the movement of the trinitarian persons themselves. *Adventus* is, if you will, the 'time' of the triune God.[187]

Correlating Moltmann's earlier and later work led to the conclusion that *adventus* should equate to the second level of Moltmann's three-level structure. This we variously connected with Moltmann's language of 'God's time for creation' and aeonic, relative eternity. This equation seems appropriate. Indeed, when examining Moltmann's later vision of the new creation as an aeonic relative eternity, I suggested that the images deployed of cyclical repetition were more appropriate to God than creation. This was because they seemed to fit the trinitarian being of God who, possessing a constant pattern of life, comes to express that

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186. EH 52.

187. Intriguingly, although our express purpose has been to disentangle the implications of Moltmann's own presuppositions, we find ourselves here in a position close to that of E. Jüngel in *The Doctrine of the Trinity: God's Being is in Becoming*, (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1976). See especially pp. 93-108. The major difference being that whereas Jüngel works primarily from God's becoming known in revelation through Christ, I am working from the becoming of God which leads to his eschatological coming. Jüngel writes: "So long as the becoming in which God's being is, is understood as the becoming *proper* to God's being, the statement 'God's being is in becoming' remains from the first guarded from the misunderstanding that God *would* first *become* that which he is, through his relationship to an other than himself. God therefore does not first become in the faith which he grants. But certainly God chooses to become in faith what he *already is*. And in so far God, in the self-relatedness of his being in becoming, is already ours in advance" (pp. 100f n.152). For a concise presentation of Jüngel's key ideas in this respect see J.J. O'Donnell, *The Mystery of the Triune God*, (London: Steer & Ward, 1987), pp.167-170.

life within, and in relationship with, an additional realm of being. The language of 'relative eternity' would also preserve the degree of transcendence of God's time over the time of creation necessary for soteriological transformation of the latter. All this suggests, therefore, that Moltmann's language of God's essential, absolute eternity is not necessary, in fact conflicts with his best insights, and should be jettisoned.

One problem remains with this suggestion. If the *adventus* of God can be described in terms of aeonic time, and the new creation results from the participation of creation in God's inner life, how are we to think of the new creation in ways that escape the notion of cyclical repetition. Again, we can take up one of Moltmann's own insights and develop it in accordance with the christologically determined proposals I have earlier put forward.

Concerned that his model of eschatological de-restriction should imply that creation somehow comes to be a part of God's own life (and this would indeed seem to be a danger of this conception)[188] Moltmann sets up the following defence.

> "A mutual indwelling of the world in God and God in the world will come into being. For this, it is neither necessary for the world to dissolve in God, as pantheism says, nor for God to be dissolved in the world, as atheism maintains. God remains God, and the world remains creation. Through their mutual indwellings, they remain unmingled and undivided, for God lives in creation in a God-like way, and the world lives in God in a world-like way."[189]

What would it mean for 'God to live in creation in a God-like way, and the world to live in God in a world-like way'?

The proposals I have made about the eschatological future have been derived from christology. What the eschatological future will mean for God and the world has been derived from what the one goal of Christ's person will mean for his divine and human natures respectively. This

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188. For example, B.J. Walsh worries that if the original self-restriction of God was necessary to afford creation independent existence in the beginning, then, when this restriction is ended, God and creation will be merged together ("Theology of Hope and the Doctrine of Creation", p.75).

189. CofG 307.

same future does not, I have suggested, hold exactly the same meaning for each nature. In expounding this difference I have so far concentrated simply on what, to use Moltmann's terminology, the 'eschatological moment' will mean for each nature. For Jesus' divine nature it will mean the re-integration of the identity originally unfurled in the incarnation so that it comes newly to itself. For Jesus' human nature it will mean the summation and transfiguration of what has contingently become in time. But what will the eschatological future hold for each nature from the 'eschatological moment' onwards? We have already suggested that for God it will mean the expression of his constant trinitarian being within, and in relationship with, the additional realm of created being. More precisely, it will bring this already existing expression to a new quality. It will constitute the subsistence of a new experience within, as it were, the same experience that he always has of himself.[190] Negatively this is a way of saying that God does not require creation to be himself.[191] All being discovers itself and comes to itself through relation. Created beings are formed in and through the nexus of relationships in which they live. And this, of course, includes their ontologically necessary relation with the *Creator ex nihilo*. But God's trinitarian uniqueness, the inner meaning of his aseity, is that he is his own context; he is his own nexus of relationships. Yet while God does not need creation to be himself he wills to communicate not only existence but also himself to a realm of being distinct from himself.

For the creation which comes to participate in the Son's relationship with the Father through the Spirit, the future of the new creation will be its only realm of being. It will not cease to be dependent upon God's creative will. Accordingly, God will hold the same meaning for creation as he did before; he will be the ground of the life and possibilities of creation. Yet he will be so now in an enhanced way. In saying this I am, therefore, agreeing with the vision of the new creation to be found in Moltmann's early theology. But I wish to understand this vision within

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190. The use of the word 'same' here could be taken to imply dull routine. Rather I intend it to suggest the constancy of God's inner life. This inner trinitarian life is, however, one of constant mutual manifestation of the divine persons in and through each other. This process of mutual glorification, already seen in the economic Trinity, points to the ever new return of each Person to themselves in and through the giving of themselves to each other in their unending relationships of love.

191. *Contra* the implication of J.J. O'Donnell, *Trinity and Temporality*, p.200.

the context of the meaning of the 'eschatological moment' for creation. For individuals the 'eschatological moment' will mean the summation and transfiguration of what each person has contingently become in time. It is this healed and integrated identity that will be offered this future of new possibilities. But this does not happen in such a manner that, through its 'linear' development, an identity unfolds so as to move further and further from its original form until that original identity becomes irrelevant to what has now become. This would not constitute the fulfilment of creation, but rather its gradual replacement. Nor does this future mean the 'cyclical' and endless repetition of what has become. It cannot mean the eternalisation of, as it were, its first redeemed state. As we saw earlier, this does not answer the soteriological need of those who have never really had the chance to live. In God's company human identity is always defined as much by its potentiality as it is by actuality. This is what it means for God to be the ground of life. So I therefore suggest that the future of the new creation will mean this: it will mean the spiral movement of the endless unfolding of the redeemed identity. Developing out of the base circle of the redeemed identity, and never transgressing its projected cylinder so as to conserve the identity of an individual, the new person spirals forwards into an open future forever coming to themselves again at a new level. In this manner, and in a way that is appropriate to creation, the created realm comes to participate in the nature of God's own inner life. For God's life consists of the endlessly new repetition of himself in love.[192] It is to this that creation owes its existence and its promised redemption.

Moltmann's conception of the new creation enjoying relative eternity through participation in God's essential eternity was not, as we saw, without problems. What happens to 'God's time for creation' once God's self-restriction has ended in de-restriction? Why is it God's essential eternity that creation now has to participate in rather than God's own time for the world? Moltmann has no answers to these questions. Where this conception is correct, however, is in suggesting that the experience of the participant in God's life need not be identical with God's

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192. Here I am drawing in part upon a fundamental insight of Karl Barth. "The name of Father, Son and Spirit means that God is the one God in threefold repetition, and this in such a way that the repetition is grounded in His Godhead, so that it implies no alteration in His Godhead, and yet in such a way also that He is the one God only in this repetition" (*Church Dogmatics* I/1 p.350).

own experience. God remains God and creation his creation. For God there is the fathomless richness of being. For us there is the hope of the unfolding of our being in new becoming. What for us will be a form of becoming is for God, already, his being. Again the difference of meaning derives from the difference of starting point in the respective histories of God and creation. What for God is the enhancement of what has always been, is for creation the fulfilment of what has come to be.

7.0 CONCLUSION: GOD BECOMES IN HIS COMING

It is the traditional expectation of a conclusion that it should bring an argument or line of enquiry to an end. I do not wish to be so predictable. Instead I propose to draw together the strands of this constructive analysis of Moltmann's eschatology by demonstrating their importance for a wider vista. Our main preoccupation until now has been christology. We have examined how Moltmann's developing christology structures his understanding of the relationship between history and eschatology. It is now appropriate that we should move to a broader perspective. This is the comprehensive horizon within which Moltmann comes to understand the significance of the history and outstanding future of Jesus Christ: the trinitarian history of God.[1]

This, of course, is not the first time in our investigation that the Trinity has been mentioned. As Moltmann himself affirms, it is impossible to relate the narrative of Jesus Christ without reference to the Father and the Spirit.

> "[Jesus'] history springs from the co-efficacy of the Father, the Son and the Spirit."[2]

In particular, we have agreed with Moltmann that the eschatological goal of the new creation must have an inherently trinitarian form. The effect of the Spirit's integration of creation into the history of the Son's becoming in time who he is in *adventus*, is to enable creation to participate in the Son's relationship with the Father. Our purpose now, however, will be to unfold the trinitarian implications of the eschatological christology we have developed in dialogue with Moltmann in a another way. It is my intention to use the suggestions I have made about how Christ's becoming and coming should be related together to clarify a particularly thorny problem in Moltmann's theology. This is the problem of the relationship between the economic and immanent Trinity. This may be understood, therefore, as a way of demonstrating the breadth of applicability of the christological proposals we have made. In

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1. See, for example, TKG 97; WJC xiii, 33.

2. TKG 64. Cf. *Humanity in God*, (London: SCM, 1984), pp.70-89.

addition, tackling this problem will also give us the opportunity of demonstrating how the theological motifs we have constructed in the course of our investigation circumnavigate some of the major criticisms which have been raised against Moltmann's theology itself. We shall begin with a brief examination of the pattern of these criticisms. For this pattern discloses Moltmann's fundamental theological weakness.[3]

The common complaint against Moltmann's early theology in *Theology of Hope* was that he had over emphasised the transcendence of the eschatological future. The future, you will remember, does not emerge from the historical process, but rather comes to history from ahead to contradict it. It is the 'future of history'. In what became the founding text of 'liberation theology', Gustavo Gutiérrez builds upon the assertion of R. Alves[4] that the hope of *Theology of Hope* is in fact docetic. That is, while the future is held to transform history, it does so without becoming involved in history.[5] Accordingly, Gutiérrez perceives the risk of Moltmann's theology to be that a 'Christianity of the Beyond', which tended to forget the world, will simply be replaced by a 'Christianity of the future' which "runs the risk of neglecting a miserable and unjust present and the struggle for liberation".[6] In other words, though this is in fact the opposite of Moltmann's intention, the transcendent quality of the eschatological future could become an excuse to do nothing in the face of present injustices. The coming God thus appears irrelevant to the present business of life. In a similar vein Peter Momose wonders whether "world history is fundamentally nothing other than a stage, on which hope...finds expression, but whose fate is finally decided by God alone".[7]

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3. Our approach here will necessary be somewhat 'broad brush'. I shall not be concerned to explore in detail whether each criticism is entirely justified, but rather demonstrate the broad direction of criticism that Moltmann's work has generated as it pertains to the particular question in mind: that of the relationship between the economic and immanent Trinity.

4. *A Theology of Human Hope*, (New York: Corpus, 1969), pp.59f.

5. *A Theology of Liberation*, (London: SCM, 1988, 2nd Ed.), p.124.

6. *A Theology of Liberation*, p.124f.

7. *Kreuzestheologie: Eine Auseinandersetzung mit Jürgen Moltmann*, (Freiburg/Basel/Vienna: Herder, 1978) p.158 as presented in J.J. O'Donnell, *Trinity and Temporality*, (Oxford: OUP, 1983), p.187.

The corrective to this portrayal of a God with future 'as his mode of being'[8] who is thereby uninvolved in history came, of course, in *The Crucified God*. In this volume, and in Moltmann's subsequent writings, God is understood to be so involved in history as to take up its godlessness, godforsakenness and transitoriness into his own trinitarian life. The central point of this process for Moltmann is, and has remained, the cross.

> "Because this death took place in the history between Father and Son on the cross on Golgotha...All human history, however much it may be determined by guilt and death, is taken up into this 'history of God', i.e. into the Trinity, and integrated into the future of the 'history of God'."[9]

Accordingly Moltmann could write:

> "the Trinity is no self-contained group in heaven, but an eschatological process open for men on earth which stems from the cross of Christ".[10]

Such statements as these led to criticism which, significantly for our purposes, appeared to make precisely the opposite complaint of that which he had earlier received. Now the problem was perceived to be that God was so involved in history that there was a danger of collapsing God and the world into a common process of becoming. Walther Kasper was one among many who feared that, in Hegelian fashion Moltmann had made the world necessary to the process of God's self-realisation;[11] God needed the world to become himself. More recently P. Molnar has suggested that Moltmann identifies God with creation by conceiving of a process orientated towards redemption which is common to both.[12]

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8. TasE 13; CofG 24.

9. CG 246.

10. CG p.249.

11. In M. Welker (Ed.), *Diskussion über Jürgen Moltmanns Buch »Der gekreuzigte Gott«*, (Munich: Christian Kaiser, 1979), p.146. As reported by R. Bauckham, *Moltmann*, p.106.

12. "The function of the Trinity in Moltmann's ecological doctrine of creation", *Journal of Theological Studies*, Vol 51 (1990), pp.676f. This otherwise incisive article is spoilt by some deliberate, polemically-driven misquotation of Moltmann. Cf. Molnar's "The Function of the Immanent Trinity in the Theology of Karl Barth" which also alleges, somewhat sweepingly, "...Moltmann literally cannot distinguish creatures from the Creator in any recognisable way" (*Scottish Journal of Theology*, Vol 42 (1989), p.383. Sadly this article also suffers from the same weakness.

What I find so interesting here is, not so much these earlier and later criticisms in and of themselves, but the fact that Moltmann could have laid himself open to two such opposite sets of complaint. The point is not that Moltmann's theology does not possess motifs capable of rebutting these criticisms; it does. The point is rather that although Moltmann asserts at various stages of his theology both God's eschatological transcendence and his historical becoming he does not appear to have made it clear how these two sides of his theology are related together. It is not that these counterbalancing themes require development in his theology; they are present. It is an account of their interrelationship that is needed. Thus S. Grenz and R. Olson incisively comment,

> "[Moltmann] speaks of the God of the eschatological future, the 'power of the future', the God with futurity as mode of being who is *coming* out of the future to contradict and transform the world. But he also talks about the suffering, struggling God of history whose unity as Father, Son and Spirit is still future to himself. How exactly these pictures of God cohere Moltmann leaves unexplained."[13]

Our analysis of Moltmann's eschatological structure has consistently revealed this same problem. In Part One, where we focussed upon hermeneutic issues, we found it necessary to give an account of how Jesus' universal significance could be related to his particular relevance. We had to do what Moltmann had not done: offer a comprehensive account of how the transcendence of Jesus' eschatological future could be related to the questions which emerged from the immanent history of the world. We did this by constructing a hermeneutic circle that connected together the dialectic of Jesus' *containability* within the present plane of creation by virtue of his incarnation, with his *uncontainability* as the ground and prolepsis of the promised new creation of all things. In Part Two, where we concentrated on the implications of Moltmann's developing christology, we again came up against the problem of the relationship between eschatological transcendence and historical becoming. It arose in the form of how Moltmann could both assume that Jesus' identity was constant (i.e. transcendent over time), so that it could be the subject of retrospective projection, yet also affirm Jesus' becoming in time. And again, in making sense of Moltmann's assertions we found it necessary to do what he had not done. Here it meant relating together Jesus' historical and eschatological

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13. *20th Century Theology: God and the World in a Transitional Age*, (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1992), p.185.

becoming with his hoped-for coming. It led to a notion that, speaking of Jesus' divinity, he was in the process of becoming in time who he already is in *adventus*. As we move now, in this concluding section, to consider the relationship between the immanent and economic Trinity I wish to suggest that what we find is precisely the same structural problem. That is, while God's transcendence over time and his becoming in time with creation can both be asserted, what is lacking is an explicit account of how these motifs should be related together. It is just this which our christological model of the relationship between Christ's becoming and coming, duly applied, can provide.

Before proceeding to explore the specifically trinitarian problem that we have set ourselves, we should first observe how the christological model we have proposed already helps avoid one of the charges against Moltmann's theology related above. It is the charge that Moltmann collapses God and the world into a common process. As the reader will remember, we found it necessary to introduce a distinction between what could properly be said of Jesus' humanity and divinity respectively, while carefully seeking to preserve the unity of Christ's person by means of the concept of a unique, shared history. This was necessary so that what was appropriate to the God and to creation could be disentangled. In particular it was necessary to carefully delineate the difference between pure becoming, in the case of Jesus' humanity, and a becoming what one already is in the case of Jesus' divinity. It is precisely by failing to make this distinction between the humanity and divinity of Christ that Moltmann runs the risk of collapsing the two together into a common process. Because he cannot distinguish between these two forms of becoming the effect is to predicate emergent becoming, more appropriate to the created realm, directly onto the divine being of God. The result is that God can appear to be no more than an ongoing, diachronic set of creative-redemptive moments.[14] God and the world thus appear to be engaged in an indistinguishable common process.

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14. In commenting upon Rahner's famous assertion that 'The "economic Trinity" is the "immanent Trinity" and *visa versa* (*Trinity*, (New York, 1970), p.22) C.M. LaCugna sees this as one possible interpretation of its meaning ("Re-conceiving the Trinity as the Mystery of Salvation", *Scottish Journal of Theology*, Vol 38 (1995), p.10.

In turning now to consider the relationship between the immanent and economic Trinity, I first wish to show how, in general terms, attempting to construct this relationship from the narrative of Christ's history with the Father and the Spirit presents a particular conundrum which is related to Moltmann's basic problem. It is the problem of relating what I shall describe as the epistemological and soteriological considerations of this relationship. The one history of Jesus Christ is used in two different ways.

It is used epistemologically to generate a notion of who God *is*. The basic assumption of revelation is stated classically by Karl Barth. The principle he employs is as follows: as God reveals himself in the economy of creation and redemption so God is "antecedently in Himself".[15] If God's acts in history are revealing of who he is in himself then it must be assumed that in the process of revelation God is not changed. The assumption must be that in history God corresponds with himself in, to adopt classical language, eternity. It is this assumption which lay behind the rejection of modalism. God does not merely appear in history as the hypostatic diversity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, he *is* this hypostatic diversity (in unity) in himself. The epistemological assumption of genuine revelation is thus grounded in God's constancy, sameness and self-correspondence. Only so is it possible to argue from God-for-us (the economic Trinity) to God-in-himself (the immanent Trinity). Moltmann is familiar with the irreducible need for this kind of argument. In fact in *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God* he italicises the following statement made on the basis that God's faithfulness means that 'he cannot deny himself'.[16]

> "Statements about the immanent Trinity must not contradict statements about the economic Trinity. Statements about the economic Trinity must correspond to doxological statements about the immanent Trinity."[17]

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15. See, for example, *Church Dogmatics*, I.1, pp. 384, 399, 448. Thus for example, when championing the filioque clause Barth writes: "that statements about the divine modes of being antecedently in themselves cannot be different in content from those that are to be made about their reality in revelation" (p.479). Moltmann himself makes mention of this classic phrase when he talks about a 'beforehand in himself' (see TKG 159; SofL 291).

16. TKG 153.

17. TKG 154. Cf. CG 240.

The second way in which the one history of Jesus Christ is used, at least by Moltmann, is to demonstrate God's soteriological engagement with the world. The economic Trinity is not simply the moving projection of the immanent Trinity seen on the screen of the world.[18] The Trinity actually makes soteriological contact with the world. Jesus' history is God's history and hence God must be held to participate *in* history. Moltmann's soteriology depends entirely on this assumption. Only so can God mediate the saving future, revealed and set in train in Christ's resurrection, to present reality via the crucified Jesus who reveals and includes the world's negativity.[19] Only so can God open his trinitarian relations, through the sending of the Son and the Spirit,[20] and supremely in the cross,[21] to include the history of the world within them.[22]

> "God experiences history in order to create history. He goes out of himself in order to gather to himself."[23]

In this regard Moltmann can quote Athanasius with approval: 'God became human so that human beings could become deified'.[24] The quintessence of the soteriological process revealed in the history of Christ is thus God's historical becoming in relation to the world. God saves by changing and being changed.

By now the reader will have realised the dilemma I have been unfolding. Both the epistemological and soteriological consideration of Jesus' history are equally vital. Yet they appear to be in direct tension with each other. Only if God remains the same in his engagement

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18. Here I whole-heartedly agree with Moltmann against precisely this conception held by, for example, H. McCabe. See "The Involvement of God", *New Blackfriars*, November 1985, pp.464-476. "The story of Jesus...is the projection of the trinitarian life of God on the rubbish dump of the world" (p.473).

19. See, for example, CG 178-187.

20. FofC 82-86. Cf. CPS 53-56.

21. CG 240-7.

22. FofC 88-92. Cf. CPS 57-62; CG 246.

23. FofC 95 = CPS 64. Cf. SofL 299.

24. SofL 299.

with the world can we be sure that it is *God* who saves. Yet God can only save by engaging in change; in historical becoming. Any solution of this dilemma I suggest must, therefore, satisfy two boundary conditions.

(i) Epistemological considerations may not predominate to the extent that they rob the economic Trinity of its significance by making it merely the reflection of the immanent Trinity, for this would undermine soteriological considerations.

(ii) Soteriological considerations may not predominate to the extent that they rob the immanent Trinity of its significance by making it merely the passive product of the economic Trinity's history, for this would undermine epistemological considerations. (It would also render the world necessary to God's own self-realisation thus undermining the independent significance of creation by making it instrumental to God's own needs.[25])

In other words if inference from the economic Trinity to the immanent Trinity is to be legitimate then the immanent Trinity must *determine* the economic Trinity. But, it may not do so to the point of prohibiting soteriological historical becoming within the economic Trinity. So far all we have done is define the boundaries of the problem. We have not yet attempted a solution. But Moltmann does not even explicitly acknowledge that there is a problem here to be solved. And, as I shall shortly describe, this apparent ignorance leads Moltmann into difficulty. Before examining these difficulties, however, I need to make it clear that the tension between these two boundary conditions relates to the Achilles heel of Moltmann's theology isolated above. This tension relates, in fact, to the question of the *relationship* between (eschatological) transcendence and historical becoming. For while the soteriological consideration, as I have described it following Moltmann, is bound up with the need for historical becoming in God, the epistemological consideration assumes the disclosure of an identity that transcends the temporal plane of creation.

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25. R. Bauckham also points to the disastrous way in which such a conception appears to render evil necessary to the realsiation of God's own life (*Moltmann*, p.107).

To demonstrate the nature of the problems which Moltmann creates for himself by not recognising this inherent tension between becoming and transcendence, I intend to concentrate primarily upon *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*. This is because in the space of just two pages[26] it is possible to observe Moltmann unconsciously propose three different patterns of relationship between the immanent and economic Trinity. Moreover, these are three patterns which, as expounded by Moltmann, are in manifest tension with each other. Using *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God* as our main framework I shall also indicate related problems in Moltmann's other writings to demonstrate that this is not simply an isolated phenomenon.

Pattern A: Noetic retroactive effect. Moltmann can argue in a wholly traditional fashion from the history of Christ with the Father and the Spirit back to the transcendent ground of this experience. Thus in *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* Moltmann can argue back from 'the Trinity in the sending', that is the Trinity as it is perceived in the historical missions of the Son and the Spirit, to 'the Trinity in the origin'. In this way the historical missions are held to indicate, as their transcendent ground, the eternal generation of the Son from the Father and the eternal spiration of the Spirit from the Father (and the Son).[27] Moltmann's reasoning here is that

> "The relation of the one who sends to the one sent...includes in itself an order of origin within the Trinity, and must be understood as that order's historical correspondence."[28]

In this pattern then the economic Trinity is held to reveal what is always true of the immanent Trinity. *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God* sees Moltmann apply this same logic to the cross of Christ which, since *The Crucified God*, he has held to be the central event of our knowledge

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26. TKG 160f.

27. In CPS Moltmann keeps his options open in respect of the filioque clause, but in later writings, when considering the 'constitution' of God as Trinity, he adopts the Eastern 'from the Father' (see, for example. TKG 178-190; SofL 306-309).

28. CPS 54; cf. FofC 84.

of the Trinity.[29]

> "If the central foundation of our knowledge is the cross, on which the Father delivered up the Son for us through the Spirit, then it is impossible to conceive of any Trinity of substance in the *transcendent primal ground* of this event, in which cross and self-giving are not present."[30]

Moltmann can also express this same conclusion in rather more stark terms.

> "The pain of the cross determines the inner life of the triune God from eternity to eternity."[31]

Pattern B: Ontic retroactive effect. But Moltmann can argue in quite a different way from the history of Christ to the immanent Trinity. Now Christ's history is not taken to reveal what is always the case, but rather the change in God caused through his participation in history.

> "The economic Trinity not only reveals the immanent Trinity; it also has a retroactive effect upon it."[32]

Moltmann spells out what this means with more precision when he writes:

> "the surrender of the Son for us on the cross has a retroactive effect on the Father and causes infinite pain."[33]

What this retroactive effect might mean for God is made even more clear by an earlier piece of Moltmann's writing.

> "The incarnation of the Son therefore brings about something 'new' even within the Trinity for God himself. After the Son's return the relationship between the Father and the Son is no longer entirely the same...Through his love for the Son, who suffers from sin and experiences sin itself in his death on the cross, God 'experiences' something which *belongs essentially to the redemption of the world*: he experiences pain."[34]

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29. See CG 235-249. "The theological concept for the perception of the crucified Christ is the doctrine of the Trinity. The material principle of the doctrine of the Trinity is the cross of Christ" (CG 240f).

30. TKG 160, my emphasis.

31. TKG 161. The context of this passage makes it clear that Moltmann is driven to this somewhat extreme statement by precisely the noetic considerations I have been describing.

32. TKG 160.

33. TKG 160.

34. FofC 93 = CPS 62, my emphasis.

It was this conviction that God as he is in himself experiences history and is changed by that experience which led Moltmann in *The Crucified God* to abandon any notion of a distinction between the economic and immanent Trinity. In this mode of reasoning, Moltmann understands God as happening in the history of Christ and the Spirit; there is no distinguishable God beyond.[35]

Before we move onto to consider pattern C, it is important that we should pause to observe the tension between patterns A and B. It is the tension between transcendence and historical becoming. To put it simply, one pattern of argument simply cancels out the other as these are presented by Moltmann. If 'the pain of the cross determines the life of the triune God from eternity to eternity' then clearly the experience of the cross can hardly constitute a new experience for God; it can have no retroactive effect since the effect is already present. And, from the other perspective, if the cross means that God experiences something new which 'essentially belongs to the redemption of the world', then this can hardly have been a permanent feature of God's own essential life. What Moltmann needs to explain, and what his writing lacks, is an explication of how these two patterns could meaningfully be related together. This same problem is to be found elsewhere in Moltmann's writings. It clouds the relationship between 'the Trinity in the origin' and 'the Trinity in the sending' alluded to above. This is because Moltmann can hold *both* that 'the Trinity in the sending' *opens up* 'the Trinity in the origin' for experience and history[36] and that 'the Trinity in the sending' reveals 'the Trinity in the origin' to be *eternally open* for such possibility.[37] Here what Moltmann has failed to do is systematically distinguish between 'the Trinity in the origin' as starting point,

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35. See CG 240, 245, 249.

36. FofC 86 = CPS 56.

37. FofC 85 = CPS 55.

and as eternal presupposition for the Trinity's experience of history.[38] Despite the shift in vocabulary, an exact correspondent of this same problem confuses Moltmann's later treatment of the trinitarian history of God in *The Spirit of Life*. The 'primordial, self-opening Trinity' is held to be two contradictory things. It is *both* the 'transcendent origin' of salvation history,[39] and, apparently, one stage of a "passage" towards "the patterns of the Trinity in its final consummation".[40] This becoming process is witnessed by Moltmann's assertion that in the final consummation "[t]he original hypostatic differentiations are ended and consummated in eternal perichoresis".[41] Again, transcendent ground and historical becoming are seen to be in tension.

Pattern C: Eschatological transcendence and immanent anticipation. There is also one other pattern of the relationship between the economic and immanent Trinity present in *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*. It is a sketchy, but tantalising, eschatological conception which is far more in keeping with the general tenor of Moltmann's early theology. Consider the following:

> "If it is the quintessence of doxology, then the doctrine of the immanent Trinity is part of eschatology as well. The economic Trinity *completes and perfects itself* to immanent Trinity when the history and experience of salvation are completed and perfected. When everything is 'in God' and 'God is all in all', then the economic Trinity is *raised into and transcended in* the immanent Trinity."[42]

Notice that in fact this short passage itself appears to contain two different conceptions. The first that 'the economic Trinity completes and perfects itself to immanent Trinity' seems to envisage the immanent Trinity as simply the end point of God's becoming history with the

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38. Thus R. Bauckham is led, quite understandably, to conclude that Moltmann is assuming an element of historical becoming in God and that consequently "the eschatological Trinity will not be the same as the Trinity in the Origin" (*Moltmann*, p.112). But there is a fundamental ambiguity in Moltmann's presentation here. More certainly such a conclusion would contradict Moltmann's eschatological principle that 'the future reveals and determines the origin' (Cf. CG 164, see also chapter 4.2.2).

39. SofL 308.

40. SofL 309.

41. SofL 308. And this despite the fact that on pp.305f Moltmann confidently informs us that the final form of the Trinity "does not put an end" to its earlier forms!

42. TKG p.161, my emphasis.

world.[43] We have already alluded to the consequences of such a pattern above. More significant, I suggest, is the second conception that 'the economic Trinity is raised into and transcended in the immanent Trinity'.[44] This is because it appears to interlock with the notion of God's eschatological transcendence over the system of history that we have already explored in preceding chapters. Of the eschatological future of *adventus*, God's mode of being,[45] Moltmann can say this:

> "Only a future which transcends the experiment of history itself can become a paradigm of transcendence and give the experiment 'history' a meaning...This experience of transcendence even transcends historical transcendence".[46]

If we therefore equate the immanent Trinity with God's mode of being as future and the economic Trinity with the liberating activity of God in history the following passage becomes highly suggestive.

> "[T]hrough God's lordship, the coming kingdom already throws its light ahead of itself into the history of struggle. We therefore have to understand the liberating activity of God as the *immanence* of the eschatological kingdom of God, and the coming kingdom as the *transcendence* of the present lordship of God. If we transpose these concepts of 'immanence' and 'transcendence' onto the historical level, we can say that the present lordship of God determines the *messianic era* and the future of the kingdom of God is the definition of *eschatological eternity*."[47]

The implication would be that while the immanent Trinity is to be identified with the coming God, the economic Trinity should be understood as the anticipation in history of the coming immanent Trinity. Given that the coming future, *adventus*, enjoys a transcendent relation over the whole of created time, this would appear to militate against the idea of any development or becoming in the immanent Trinity. As such it would accord with Moltmann's own pithy formula that,

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43. Cf., "the Trinity is thought of in the realm of its own glory as the consummation of its own trinitarian history" (HTG 104).

44. In interpreting this passage R. Olson only sees the first pattern of relationship not the second. He therefore assumes that in Moltmann the flow of action is only from the economic the immanent Trinity ("Trinity and Eschatology", *Scottish Journal of Theology*, Vol 36, pp.220f).

45. TasE 13; CofG 24.

46. FofC 15.

47. WJC 98. Cf. CPS 190.

"God's being is in his coming not in his becoming".[48]

Consequently, the economic activity of God's history of temporal interaction with the world would have to correspond at each stage, by means of the concept of anticipation, with the transcendent immanent Trinity. We might also notice that the passive form of the phrase that 'the economic Trinity is raised into and transcended in the immanent Trinity' implies that the primary locus of God's action is located in *adventus*. This phrase, with its use of the expression 'raised', also engenders an intriguing resonance. There is a remarkable similarity between the conditions which Moltmann lays down for a relationship of correspondence between the economic and immanent Trinity[49] and that between the risen Christ and his lived life as this is constructed in the orbit of Moltmann's diachronic conception of the resurrection.[50] Given that Jesus is raised into the transcendent future of *adventus* are we to understand that the immanent Trinity is the diachronic, eschatological summation of the economic Trinity? Such an understanding would correspond with the idea of the reintegration of the identity of the Son unfurled into time that we have earlier postulated. For the economic Trinity this final reintegration would coincide with the parousia of Christ. I shall assume this understanding of pattern C in the arguments that follow.

Having now described the three patterns of relationship between the economic and immanent Trinity presented within two pages of each other in *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, I wish to demonstrate how the christological proposals constructed in previous chapters could be used to successfully relate these patterns together. The proposed solution will also provide a way of satisfying both the epistemological and soteriological boundary conditions that I articulated above.

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48. GinC 133. Cf. CofG 23.

49. TKG 154; quoted above in connection with note 16.

50. WJC 76. See chapter 5.9.

Since we are concerned with the relationship between the immanent and economic Trinity, God-for-us and God-in-himself, we may concentrate our attention on the pattern of relationship which we constructed for Jesus' divinity.[51] To underwrite the use of retrospective projection from the resurrection back across Jesus' life and crucifixion, *and* to be able to affirm that the divine Son fully shared in the human Jesus' process of contingent becoming we made the following proposal in chapter 4.2. The Son becomes in time who he is in *adventus*. In chapter 5 we refined this further by examining the inescapable role of the Spirit in this process of becoming. There we discerned that the Spirit must also participate in a parallel process. Finally, in chapter 6, we refined this model further by observing that the Son's becoming must subsist within his coming. Transposing this model onto the Trinitarian being of God suggests that may construct the following stepped argument.

(i) Pattern A and pattern C share a common structure. They are both attempts to safeguard the authentic self-revelation of the God whose identity transcends the temporal process of the world. In doing so they both affirm that God is not dependent on the world to be himself. Pattern A looks towards a transcendent primal ground, Pattern C looks towards a transcendent eschatological ground. Given that, according to the logic of *adventus*, the future determines and explains the origin, the end the beginning[52], we may allow that as far as God's Trinitarian identity is concerned the products of patterns A and C are mutually reinforcing complements. In other words, the God who is the transcendent primal ground of the events of creation and redemption is the *same* God who eschatologically comes to creation to transfigure it into congruence with his own life. In this way the continuity God's identity throughout his engagement with the world is secured. We may thus be sure that the Trinitarian God we encounter in history is God as he really is in himself so satisfying our earlier epistemological consideration. The advance which the end, the new creation, represents for God over the

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51. In this sense I am complementing what was done in the previous chapter. There I indicated how the pattern appropriate to Jesus' humanity had the potential to determine a fitting relationship between creation and the eschatological new creation.

52. Cf. CG 164.

beginning is, however, that his constant trinitarian being now finds expression within the additional realm of created being. This constitutes the enhancement of what has always been.

(ii) Pattern B, which speaks of God's process of becoming, may be conceived as the product of the temporal unfurling of God's identity into time. This must be conceived in such a way as to respect God's hypostatic diversity. It happens through the incarnation of the Son, the indwelling of the Spirit and the Father's engagement with both temporal missions.[53] Following Moltmann we may see God's trinitarian history in time as having two major components. In the first God accommodates the pattern of his Trinitarian life to creation's state of alienation. This process reaches its zenith in the cross where, again following Moltmann, in the relationship between Father and Son, mediated by the Spirit, God suffers the world's contradiction of and to himself in himself. In the second component of his history, after having been conformed to the nature of creation, God moves to become conformed to his own inherent pattern of life. This happens at the highest level[54] within the context of history in the resurrection of the Son and in the integrating work of the Spirit.[55] Through these actions, that is, grounded in Christ's resurrection and enabled through the action of the Spirit, God takes creation with him in his becoming himself (again). God becomes like us so that, in his becoming himself again, God can finally transform creation into congruence with his own life. Pattern B may be used, therefore, to deduce God's process of historical becoming in Christ and the Spirit so satisfying our earlier soteriological consideration. It may not, however, be used, and here we differ from Moltmann, in an undifferentiated way to reveal God's 'eternal' being. In particular the suffering of the cross may not be used to predicate dialectical suffering

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53. Clearly such activities as the Father's sending of the Son and the Spirit and the raising of Christ though the Spirit are economic temporal actions. We must thus accord the Father his own peculiar, if ultimately mysterious, way of being engaged with time.

54. See chapter 5.8.

55. It is also present, of course, in the messianic mission of Jesus.

of God's being 'from eternity to eternity'.[56] The reason for this may be simply given. The cross is supremely about God's conformity with the world. That God is able and desires to conform himself to the world does tell us something about the love of God and the trinitarian diversity of God. But the pattern of conformity itself reveals what is true of alienated creation rather than what is true of God's own being. What may be said of God's own being is revealed in the anticipations of the future created in the wake of the temporal missions of the Son and the Spirit. This is because if the soteriological future essentially concerns creation's transformation into congruence with God, then it is, of course, God's soteriological movement of becoming who he is (which achieves this saving future) that is revelatory of his being. And the supreme anticipation of this saving future under the conditions of time is the resurrection. If we may invent a new term for Moltmann, it is thus 'the Trinity in the resurrection' which is most revelatory of God's transcendent identity. That is why in his christology, Moltmann is correct to source his retrospective projection from precisely this point of origin.[57]

(iii) Most importantly of all we must assert what Moltmann does not, that this economic becoming of God *subsists within his coming*. This is the vital statement of relationship that Moltmann omits. God does not leave *adventus* to journey into time despite the mythological implication of many Christmas carols. Rather God's trinitarian life comes to participate in an *additional* temporal realm which subsists within time-transcending *adventus*. At all points, therefore, the economic Trinity subsists within the immanent Trinity, in fact is this immanent Trinity in its temporal aspect. We may therefore allow for God's soteriological becoming in such a way that it does not change who God is in himself. The immanent Trinity may be held to determine the economic Trinity to the extent that it constitutes the permanent goal of the economic Trinity's process of anticipatory becoming. Only so can the economic Trinity be said to be in the process of becoming what it already is. Moreover, we may add that it is the

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56. Cf. J.P. Mackey who objects to Moltmann's projection of a 'pre-existent drama' of Calvary into the being of God (*The Christian Experience of God as Trinity*, (London: SCM, 1983), pp.236f, cf. p.208). R. Page also asks "why there should be pain in eternity" ("Review of TKG", *Scottish Journal of Theology*, Vol. 37 (1984), p.98).

57. As we established when examining the hermeneutic of promise-development in chapter 2, it is the *novum* that is the controlling initiator of such a process (see *figures 3* and *5* in chapter 2.7).

economic Trinity's anticipation of the immanent Trinity that mediates the coming of the immanent Trinity. Accordingly, God's unfurling of himself into conformity with creation, and his becoming who he (already) is in such a way that creation is caught up in this becoming movement, mean that, judged from the perspective of creation, God as he is in himself is coming. But does this mean, as Christopher Morse worries that once God has 'arrived' his being can no longer be said to be coming? And therefore that God's coming falsifies his own revelation? Morse writes:

> "One may sum up this ontological vision by saying that whereas now God is to come, in the consummation God comes to be. The question which must be put to Moltmann, however, is whether this new creative act on the part of God entails a change within God's own being".[58]

Here we must remember what we discerned in the previous chapter. If it is God's acting in history in such a way as to become who he already is that 'makes' *adventus* come, then this must mean that this coming movement is essentially part of God's own inner life. More precisely in the movement of the Father and the Son and the Spirit, God continually comes newly to himself. This takes place in the spiral of the Father's engendering and the Son's responding love as this is mediated in the Spirit, the bond of love.[59]

(iv) We have thus found a way to overcome the criticisms made of Moltmann's theology as reported at the outset of this conclusion. God does indeed transcend the temporal plane, but not in such a way that he is not deeply engaged in history. And on the path that opens up the way to creation's soteriological transformation God does indeed become with the world yet not in such a way that he has ceased to transcend this becoming process. God we must say becomes in his coming. Viewed in isolation Moltmann's moving language about the soteriological becoming of God can make it seem as if God and the world are simply two parts of *one* complex process.

> "Just as [God's] glory is offered to him out of the world by the Holy Spirit, so his unity to is presented to

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58. *The Logic of Promise*, p.123.

59. Cf. TKG 58f.

him through the unification of the world with himself in the Holy Spirit."[60]

But such a pronouncement is entirely comprehensible if we supply the framework which Moltmann explicitly fails to provide. Such becoming subsists in God's transcendent being as coming. It therefore describes not the dissolution of God in the world but the process of God's becoming who he already is in such a way as to soteriologically include creation in this movement. Moltmann is entirely correct to quote Athanasius: 'God became human so that human beings should be deified'.[61] He just fails to mention one vital qualification: God did so without ceasing to be himself. That God remains God grounds the eschatological future as irreducibly hopeful.

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60. FofC 92 = CPS 91.

61. SofL 299.

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