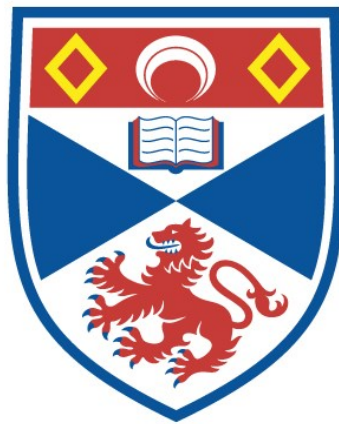


**WHITEHEAD'S VISION AND THE  
POSSIBILITIES FOR THE CHRISTOLOGICAL  
ADVENTURE**

Timothy James Squires

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD  
at the  
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### Abstract.

The intention of this thesis is to develop a Process christology which is valid and coherent with respect to the principles of Whitehead's Process philosophy and adequate with respect to Christian faith.

As indicated by the title, the study moves from Whitehead's vision to the christological adventure. Although this necessitates that the criteria are essentially philosophical, it is stressed that the discussion finds its inspiration in faith. For that reason the second chapter describes the Process christologies of Norman Pittenger, John Cobb, Schubert Ogden and David Griffin. That discussion isolates the major questions and issues which arise. Chapter three is an examination of the philosophical principles of Whitehead's vision. A central thesis of the work is that the theory of "initial aims" is inadequate to account for the idea of a Divine purpose relevant to human beings. I illustrate why this is so and, after presenting a Process theory of the "self", describe how the notion of purpose mediated in history is intelligible. Chapter four is a synthesis between the issues raised in the second chapter and the philosophical themes of chapter three. This chapter presents the christology which is valid with respect to Whitehead's vision. The following chapter observes that the Church is an essential aspect of Process christology, and then evaluates Christ and the Church with respect to some of the themes of Biblical and traditional christology. The intention is to justify its status as an appropriate expression of faith, although it is accepted that the essential subjectivity of faith renders an objective evaluation impossible.

The final chapter offers some concluding remarks, noting particularly how Process christology is a theology of liberation: freedom and responsibility.

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I certify that Timothy James Squires has fulfilled the conditions of the Resolution of the University Court, 1967, no.1 (as amended), and is qualified to submit this thesis in application for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Signature of supervisor.

I was admitted as a research student under Ordinance 350 (General No.12) on 1.10.84 and as a candidate for the degree of Ph.D. under Resolution of the University Court, 1967, no.1 (as amended) on 1.10.84.

The following thesis is based on results of research carried out by myself, is my own composition, and has not previously been presented for a higher degree. The research was carried out in the University of St. Andrews under the supervision of Professor D.W.D. Shaw.

Signature of candidate.

## Acknowledgements

With apologies to Whitehead for the abuse of his metaphor, a thesis of this nature is not entirely a solo flight into the unknown. It would be impossible to acknowledge the support of all those people who have assisted me in this task, but I must attempt to do so.

My family and friends have offered invaluable help and encouragement, enabling me to weather the storms of doubt and uncertainty.

The staff of the University Computing Laboratory and Libraries have always been quick to assist whenever I have flown into one of the plethora of problems which seem to arise when one borrows a book through Inter Library Loan or prints a draft copy of the text!

I acknowledge the Academic staff of the College for their interest and discussion about aspects of the study, and also the secretarial staff for their organisational talents.

I owe a special debt to my supervisor, Professor D.W.D.Shaw. His advice was always relevant, his criticism always constructive. And his patience unerring... from the Squash court to the Seminar room.

I do, of course, claim sole responsibility for the potential inadequacies in the ideas I present.

Contents.

Chapter 1.	Introduction.	1.
Chapter 2.	Inspiration: Faith	
	A presentation of the Christologies of;	
	Norman Pittenger.....	18.
	John B. Cobb.....	33.
	Schubert Ogden.....	51.
	David Griffin.....	58.
Chapter 3.	Analysis: Metaphysics	
	The microcosmic world: An analysis	
	of the principles of Process	
	philosophy.....	66.
	The macrocosmic world: A theory of	
	the human person.....	92.
Chapter 4.	Synthesis: Process christology	
	Jesus: the man.....	127.
	Jesus: for us.....	156.
Chapter 5.	Evaluation: Christ and the Church	
	The Church.....	190.
	An Evaluation of Process christology	
	with respect to Biblical and	
	traditional notions.....	209.
Chapter 6.	Conclusion: some personal comments	254.
Bibliography		

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**Introduction.**  
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"Medio tutissimus ibis" (1).

"A fool... is a man who never  
tried an experiment in his life." (2)

(1) Ovid. Metamorphoses ii.137.

(2) Erasmus Darwin. Letter from Maria Edgeworth to Sophy Ruxton. 9th. March 1792.

## Introduction.

These two quotations highlight, and vividly contrast, two possible approaches to a thesis of this nature. It is my belief that in order to even begin to do justice to Whitehead, it is desirable to follow the adventure of the second quotation rather than the safety of the middle way. This study is intended to be something of an experiment, an intention which I have attempted to encapsulate in the title.

A title is more than a mere device with which to interrupt the blank monotony of the opening page. It betrays - or perhaps more accurately, it ought to betray - the initial position of the author and the direction in which he intends to develop the discussion. I describe my initial position as "Whitehead's Vision", avoiding the more general "Process philosophy" for three reasons. First, as John Cobb notes, "Process philosophy in the broadest sense includes all modes of thought that see event, change or becoming as more fundamental categories for the understanding of the world than substance and being."(3). He mentions Heraclitus, Protagoras, Buddhist philosophy, Hume, Hegel, Bergson, Teilhard, James, Dewey, Heidegger and Sartre as being, in at least some respects, representatives of that philosophical theme. If we assume that Cobb's sample is accurate - a reasonable assumption - then a work which includes the term "Process" in its title is boasting of a relevance which extends to all those studying some aspects of that vast field. In contrast, the phrase "Whitehead's vision" conveys a more modest - and realistic - field of interest, concentrating on a specific aspect of Process thought. Having made that qualification, it is nevertheless true that the term "Process philosophy" has become a

(3) Concilium no.75. "Man in Process" p31. Hartshorne's list is even more extensive - "indeed, since Kant, and with the exceptions of Bradley, Royce, Russell, Nicolai Hartmann, Santayana, Weiss and Findlay, metaphysics or speculative philosophy has been almost exclusively process philosophy." p100, "Ideas and Theses of Process Philosophers" in AAR Studies in Religion no.5 1973.

## Introduction.

generic description for Whiteheadian philosophy: for this reason, and for the sake of convention and convenience, I shall use the term in the subsequent discussion. It will, however, carry the Whiteheadian connotation. Second, the use of the word "vision" is quite deliberate. Whitehead did not intend his philosophy to be considered as a closed, finalised "system" (4). To plagiarize Heraclitus' famous dictum, no man can use the same philosophy twice: as we have already noted "change" is the key word. But, once again, we immediately add a clause to this observation. For the sake of clarity it is quite legitimate to employ Whitehead's philosophy as if it were a "system". One must simply note those areas where either Whitehead himself left ambiguities or omissions, or where the "system" exhibits flaws which require further analysis. The third point in favour of the term "Whitehead's vision" is that it reflects my own personal bias towards the "Whiteheadian" aspects of Process thought. Partly because I agree with Sponheim that "Whitehead remains the normative and seminal thinker for process thought"(5), and partly because I find his presentation and method generative of inspiration for further investigation. As the discussion develops one notes several places of divergence among Process thinkers, at which point the tone of this discussion will tend to follow the Whiteheadian version or derivative. Of course, this is not to be taken as a slavish, or even a strict, adherence, it is simply meant to indicate the prevailing atmosphere into which the discussion is born and in which it must survive. Hopefully also, the atmosphere will be

(4) See, for example, Process and Reality (PR) p4, "Philosophers can never hope finally to formulate these metaphysical first principles." But Hocking (p16 "Whitehead as I knew Him" in Kline, G.L., (Ed) Alfred North Whitehead: Essays on his Philosophy, ANWEP) "His achievement is undoubtedly a system".

(5) Faith and Process p57. Note also Hartshorne's claim that, "to me it is really obvious that as metaphysician Whitehead has in this century had no superior, and I question if there has been even a close competitor." Creativity in American Philosophy. p103.

## Introduction.

conducive to a flourishing discussion! It will be noted that this study is not intended to be a survey of Whitehead's own thought, its phases of development or its final construction. For that reason it is not necessary to examine in any great detail questions the interests of which are solely internal to Whitehead. The interest in Whitehead lies with the impact of the overall effect, not with the delicate subtleties of the constituents (6). I now draw attention to the next part of the title, the phrase "the Possibilities for the Christological Adventure". Could this rather cumbersome phrase have been replaced by the concise "Christology"? I think that to have used the single word would have detracted quite dramatically from the intention behind the chosen title. This discussion is not primarily concerned with a christology, rather it considers the task of formulating christology. During our exploration of the mansion which is Whitehead's vision several routes for christology will be revealed - other doors will be closed. This study is concerned with the interplay between these possibilities, existing Process christologies and the potential of new directions. One of the key questions will be to ascertain by what criteria one is able to distinguish between valid and invalid christological options. In addition, the dynamic aspect of this activity - as opposed to the rather static state implied by the single word "christology" - reflects appropriately the motif of the first part of the title. No apology is necessary for the use of Whitehead's own word "Adventure", precisely because the intention here is to follow his own desire for adventurous thought. However, I remain conscious that adventure is not a licence to roam anywhere - one must avoid becoming one of the "damned fools" referred to by Whitehead (7).

(6) For example, one major question which concerned Dorothy Emmet is whether Whitehead intended to imply Platonic Ideas via his doctrine of Eternal Objects. Emmet, D. Whitehead's Philosophy of Organism, Chapter 5.

The dynamic of the title extends beyond that mentioned above. The title as a whole exhibits a vector quality. It flows from one topic to the next, from Whitehead's vision to the christological adventure. This is an asymmetrical movement, a point to which I return when I consider my method in more detail.

Prior to a description of the method it is necessary, or at least desirable, to offer some explanation of the motives behind this work. Why are the two aspects, "process" and "christology" worthwhile topics for study, and why is their product - conveniently labelled "process christology" - considered to be of value? In the world of the late twentieth century the idea of "thought for thought's sake" is an expensive luxury - somewhat difficult to reconcile to the starving millions, the threat of nuclear genocide or the possibilities for ecological disaster. At some stage, therefore, it is essential to demonstrate how and where a study of this kind is capable of contributing to the world beyond itself. This will be the subject - or at least the intention - of the final chapter. One notes that if that replies to the general criticism that metaphysics is merely a speculative irrelevance, it does not respond adequately to philosophical objections to Whitehead's form of metaphysics (8). In the present context it suffices to state an awareness of these objections and accept that Whitehead's philosophical method is not without criticism. There is one particular aspect of Whitehead's philosophy which must be given a

(7) See Price, L. Dialogues of Alfred North Whitehead p250 Also c.f. Mrs. Whitehead, "it is an adventure to be born." (ibid.)

(8) Lewis Ford (Explorations in Whitehead's Philosophy EWP p305ff.) considers just a few examples of the "contemporary revolt" against metaphysics. The positivist - linguistic veto, pragmatists who reject the notion of a priori deductions grounded on absolute "certainty" and, according to Ford, the "most pressing objection, the claim that it is too Leibnizian - that it is a dogmatic, pre-critical enterprise which refuses to take Kant's transcendental turn seriously." (p307). See also Emmet's chapter "Whitehead's Defence of Rationalism" ch II, op.cit.

## Introduction.

special mention. His use of language provokes intense reaction, "I am usually offended by an author who presumes to require me to learn a whole new vocabulary that is private to him (as Whitehead did in Process and Reality)."(9). Whitehead would not have intended to cause such offence. Although he does employ familiar terms in unfamiliar ways (such as "feeling"), he does so only in the interests of clarity and precision. One need not dwell on the problems of his esoteric terminology, it is sufficient to be aware of the difficulties which can arise.

Despite these objections, the philosophical (general and specific) and the linguistic, it is, nevertheless, quite justified to suggest, as the basic presupposition of this study, that Whitehead's vision is valid. It must be stressed that this does not involve any claim for final or dogmatic authority, merely an invitation to put his philosophy to work, to test the conceptuality in the world of experience. This is not sheer pragmatism because the pragmatic aspect is balanced by the four conditions which Whitehead considered crucial to a definition of metaphysics or to the ideal of speculative philosophy. He wrote, "the philosophical scheme should be coherent, logical, and, in respect to its interpretation, applicable and adequate."(10).

He defines these four conditions as follows. Coherence "means that the fundamental ideas.... presuppose each other so that in isolation they are meaningless... It is the ideal of speculative philosophy that its fundamental notions shall not seem capable of extraction from each

(9) Dixon, J.R., Psychology of Faith, pXIV. Dorothy Emmet wrote, "Whitehead's books, as a reviewer remarked, are written by Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, and when Dr. Jekyll begins a chapter you are never sure that Mr. Hyde is not going to finish it." ("Alfred North Whitehead", no.6 in a series "Makers of Modern Thought", The Student Movement June 1938. Found as a loose page in Thornton's Incarnate Lord.)

(10) PR p3.



## Introduction.

other."(11). The notion of "logical" is given its ordinary meaning, the "lack of contradiction". As Whitehead noted, these terms apply to the rational side of philosophy. The empirical side is covered by "applicable", implying that "some items of experience are interpretable" by the scheme, and "adequate" which insists that "there are not items incapable of such interpretation."(12).

It is important to note the interaction between the rational and the empirical (13). It is revealing to quote just two passages from Whitehead's major works.

"In the dark there are vague presences, doubtfully feared; in the silence, the irresistible causal efficacy of nature presses itself upon us; in the vagueness of the low hum of insects in an August woodland, the inflow into ourselves of feelings from enveloping nature overwhelms us; in the dim consciousness of half-asleep, the presentations of sense fade away, and we are left with the vague feeling of influences from vague things around us."(14).

"Nothing can be omitted, experience drunk and experience sober, experience sleeping and experience waking, experience drowsy and experience wide - awake, experience self - conscious and experience self - forgetful, experience intellectual and experience physical, experience religious and experience sceptical, experience anxious and experience care - free, experience anticipatory and experience retrospective, experience happy and experience grieving, experience dominated by emotion and experience under self - restraint, experience in the light and experience in the dark, experience normal and experience abnormal."(15).

Such poetic richness and the vivid appeal to incorporate the intensity and width of the vast spectrum of human experience illustrate

(11) PR p3.

(12) PR p3. Hartshorne notes that Pierce's splendid phrase "critical commonsensism" is equivalent to Whitehead's definition of metaphysics. Creativity in American Philosophy p284.

(13) This is highlighted by Christian who describes Whitehead's view of metaphysics as follows; It must,  
a) evoke the concrete experience with which it begins.  
b) construct a logical and coherent categorial scheme.  
c) use the abstract categories to interpret the concrete experiences. An Interpretation of Whitehead's Metaphysics p284.

(14) PR p176.

(15) Adventures of Ideas p226.

## Introduction.

the importance of the empirical in Whitehead's philosophical thought. I employ a quotation from James Crenshaw's book Old Testament Wisdom because, although he is not referring to Process thought, the sentiment he expresses therein is pertinent, "it believes that all essential answers can be learned in experience, pregnant with signs about reality itself. The human responsibility is to search for that insight and thus to learn to live in harmony with the cosmos. It follows that optimism is at the center."(16). This emphasis on human experience and human responsibility is the primary reason why Process thought is a worthwhile activity.

The second justification one can put forward in favour of the pursuit of, and adherence to, Process categories is that the philosophy relates well to other branches of knowledge. I refer particularly to the scientific enterprise. It is a dangerous business to make strong claims for interdisciplinary agreement and certainly I would not wish to do that here. What I do suggest is that Process conceptualities ask the right kind of questions, raising the appropriate issues in an appropriate language (17). Rather than attempting to claim exact agreement I point to the similarities of the search. Furthermore, to

(16) p18.

(17) For example, Hartshorne notes that, (Louvain Studies vol.7 no.2, 1978; "Can We Understand God"), "Quantum physics has uncovered evidence to suggest that strict determinism cannot be applied to atoms accepting that on the atomic level there is a real - though slight - power for free decision." He uses the term "psychicalism" to refer to this "freedom", a preferable term to "panpsychism" which does imply conscious "souls" occupying all things. Nevertheless, the latter remains a useful term "if the conditions of its use are understood."(Christian, op.cit. p20.). It is interesting to note that Whitehead appears to have developed his philosophy of Organism without knowledge of Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle. See Folse, H.J. "The Copenhagen Interpretation Of Quantum Theory and Whitehead's Philosophy of Organism."(Tulane Studies vol.xxiii 1974 p32: Studies in Process Philosophy 1. Whittemore, R.C.(ed). Also relevant, Heisenberg's Gifford lectures, Physics and Philosophy 1958.



## Introduction.

move away from the scientific enterprise, Whitehead's philosophy provides a metaphysical basis for understanding aesthetics, beauty or, more generally, those qualities usually attributed to the study of the Arts (18).

The third reason I give for adherence to Whiteheadian categories is simply that for me, they provide an explanation of "my" world. In May's expression it is verified by its "general success in practice." (19). Although on a wider philosophical basis that rather localised justification for this research may not be objectively valid, it retains an important subjective validity.

But that is only one side of the coin. It is also necessary to justify the concern for the christological adventure. I suggest three reasons. First, as a matter of empirical fact, millions of people have dedicated their lives to Jesus of Nazareth - or Christ - and it is no exaggeration to say that his effect on subsequent history is greater than that of any other individual. Why? It is essential that our philosophical activity attempts to provide an answer to that question. That is what Whitehead meant when he said that metaphysics had to be applicable and adequate. Second, and apart from the numerical force of the claims about Christ one must also note the nature of these claims. Christian faith makes some quite extraordinary suggestions about Jesus. Again, it would be quite foolhardy to accept (or dismiss!) them without due consideration of the original phenomenon. Thirdly, it is obvious that Christianity and the Church - considered merely as a socio-politico-economic force rather than a religious institution -

(18) See, for example, Process Studies 13/1 Spring 1983, a special issue dedicated to "The Arts, Aesthetics and Process Philosophy". A musical example is seen in "The Method of Abstraction: A Musical Analysis." *ibid.* 15/1 spring 1986, Stephen Schloesser.

(19) The Philosophy of Whitehead p47.

## Introduction.

remains a powerful and formative element in our society. And, as Whitehead noted, "the essence of Christianity is the appeal to the life of Christ... "(20). So, even if one's interest lies solely with "society" - the processes of its development and structure - one is led to consider this appeal to Christ and, ultimately therefore, back to Christ himself. It is this generalised concern which forces this discussion away from a consideration of a "christology": the argument contains no test by which to evaluate possible answers to the crucial question, which christology? Hence the concern here must be to examine the general issue, how might a christology be formulated within the vision of Whitehead? The prize for the successful completion of this venture is a "Process Christology", which will - it is hoped - benefit our understanding of the world. But that is to anticipate the future! Prior to that it is necessary to describe the method by which the task is to be performed.

As I have noted previously, the dynamics of the title are asymmetrical. The discussion will examine the implications of Whitehead's vision for the christological adventure. Not vice versa. This implicit affirmation of the primacy of philosophy over faith requires further consideration because it is a relationship which forms the basis of the method for this study. The relationship is complex and Sponheim's book Faith and Process is largely dedicated to an examination of these issues. The method can be represented in two ways. The first revolves around Neville's statement that, "the genuine theological issue is which conception of God is best, not which one corresponds to the object of theistic faith and worship which, for all that, might be false."(21). One notes that the criterion of adequacy of a theological

(20) Adventures of Ideas p167.

(21) Creativity and God p75.

## Introduction.

conception is not merely compatibility with "theistic faith and worship" but hinges upon that which is "best". Clearly, however, "best" is itself a relative term and as it stands it cannot be used as a criterion for anything. In order to translate Neville's claim into a functioning definition it is necessary to further define the idea of "best". Invoking Ogden continues the argument, "not only is it evident that Christian faith alone is an insufficient ground for theology's assertions, but it is also clear that such assertions cannot even be established as meaningful except by establishing a theistic metaphysics which is true independently of specifically Christian faith"(22). Neville's "best" becomes compatibility with Ogden's "theistic metaphysics". To rephrase this, the criterion employed in this study is a correspondence with a theistic metaphysics rather than with theistic faith.

There are two initial responses to this claim. First, it might be objected that this reduces "genuine theology" to metaphysics. Second, it leaves open one very obvious question: which theistic metaphysics? The reply is common to both these points because one of the conditions for the second requires that the first is not true. Genuine theology is not reducible to metaphysics - and any metaphysics which suggests that it is must be refuted. The essential reason why this is so is illuminated by a quotation from Mellert who says of religion, "its chief contribution is its familiarity with the particular... Philosophy by itself is always speculative and general, and as such is always plagued with the suspicion of inapplicability."(23).

It is at this stage that the discussion makes its primary leap of

(22) "The task of Philosophical Theology" in The Future of Philosophical Theology, Evans, R. (Ed.), p80.

(23) Mellert, R. What is Process Theology? p35.

## Introduction.

faith because, in response to the question of which metaphysics, I assume that Whitehead's vision provides a satisfactory solution. In defence of this it is pleaded that it is not a blind leap of faith. There are empirical reasons why Process philosophy is an adequate metaphysical basis for this study. Some of these reasons - the ones which tend to have direct relevance - will be discussed as the study progresses. This method contrasts with that of Ogletree, who writes, "the present task is to examine his (Hartshorne's) conclusions in the light of the Christian's confession of Jesus Christ. The intent is to show that a critical explication of the central motif of Christian faith confirms in general the results of his own inquiry." (24). Ogletree advocates "the central motif of faith" to be the criterion against which any philosophical inquiry should be judged. The latter part of his quotation abbreviates to "faith confirms philosophy", which is, essentially, the direct counterpart of Neville's requirement (25). One can generalize these two positions. Ogletree represents a "faith seeking understanding" approach, while Ogden's compatibility with theistic metaphysics is more in line with "philosophy finding faith".

Although a method such as Ogletree's has a value in, for example, providing a statement of faith in a respectable philosophical idiom, it is impotent to inspire real development within faith. It merely accepts "faith" as given. That limitation surely mitigates against Ogletree's study being considered as "genuine theology" because it fails to question itself in the hope of transcending its initial position and advocating real growth. It is, rather, a description of a philosophical study about theology - followed by an evaluation with respect to the

(24) "A Christological Assessment of Dipolar Theism". Process Philosophy and Christian Thought (PPCT) p337.

(25) It is worthwhile noting here that Neville himself does not actually abide by his own rule in respect to the formulation of his theology. This will be clear in chapter three.

## Introduction.

content of faith. Note Whitehead's own statement that "philosophy finds religion and modifies it... "(26), which is a significant contribution. It incorporates the sense in which the criteria are philosophical, the notion of real change and, most importantly, the form of the quotation illustrates that theology is not reducible to philosophy (27). Furthermore, it highlights the fact that the task of philosophy is an active one (the dynamic of the title) not a merely analytical exercise.

It is perhaps tempting to interpret this method as extolling the intellectual supremacy of speculative philosophy - nothing could be further from the truth! Note, for example, Whitehead's "the effort after the general characterization of the world around us is the romance of human thought."(28). The crucial point is that the speculation is - and must be - of the world. So when Sponheim correctly notes that "metaphysics - left to its own general pursuits - could not be expected to identify any particular in its unique significance"(29), the welcome implication is that philosophy must find religion. The simple fact that religion is a part of the world is a sufficient requirement that it is essential data. Or, as Cobb expresses the same point, "ultimately, then, data for theology must be sought in experience, and when knowledge of God is sought, experience of God must provide the data."(30).

(26) PR p15.

(27) But see Sponheim, op.cit. p330 footnote no. 85. "At times he comes near collapsing the distinction, as when he writes (Religion in the Making 31) that 'the doctrines of rational religion aim at being that metaphysics which can be derived from the supernormal experience of mankind in its moments of finest insight.'". It might be objected that I am confusing "religion" and "theology" in this analysis, in defence I only wish to avoid linguistic pedanticism.

(28) Nature and Life p1. (my emphasis.)

(29) op.cit. p263. Sponheim is making the same point as Mellert (note 23).

(30) "Theological Data and Method", Journal of Religion 33/3 1959 p215.



## Introduction.

Philosophy is not (necessarily - it can be!) an abstract arid threat to religious comfort. Rather, when employed correctly, it seeks the data of religion and modifies it with the intention of complementing and complimenting mankind's religious quest. The modification can be constructive: it is not the intention of philosophy to replace the data of religion. In another context, Whitehead wrote that "reason is the safeguard of the objectivity of religion: it secures for it the general coherence denied to hysteria."(31).

However, and referring to the quotation from Sponheim, how does one reach historical particulars from a consideration of abstract generalizations? Or, if one is concerned with the speculative categories of Process thought how is one led to nurture an interest in the person Jesus of Nazareth? Simply to say that in the study of Whiteheadian philosophy "nothing is omitted.." is, although valid, not a sufficient response. Clearly, for example, in this thesis the number of "omissions" is far greater than the number of "inclusions" - even if only religious topics are considered. How is it possible to justify - in the light of the requirement that nothing is omitted - that this study concentrates on Jesus, rather than, say, the Buddha, or one of any number of religious figures? Cultural conditioning? That is obviously a significant factor, the effects of Buddha in St. Andrews as I write this are (at least as far as I am aware) considerably less than the effects of the Christ. But there is more to the situation than merely that implied by the effect of one's environment, and this is where faith plays a particularly important role. Sponheim says, "while the topic is likely posed by faith, the handling of the topic seems largely controlled by metaphysical discussion" (32) which captures the sense in

(31) Religion in the Making p53.

(32) op.cit. p160.

## Introduction.

which faith provides the inspiration behind the issues which metaphysics "finds" and "modifies". Thus in a crucial sense, faith is prior to metaphysics because, without faith, metaphysics, at least as far as its relevance for religion is concerned, would be lost in a self-referential vacuum: data less.

The above description is perhaps a definition of "genuine theology". The movement from topics inspired by faith, through metaphysical analysis and, finally, the synthesis or re-construction which results from the "modifications". That at least is the intention which is hopefully reflected in the method employed here.

Before describing the precise layout of the thesis it is worthwhile looking at the methodological question from a slightly different angle. This second way of deriving the method, is based upon a central theme of Bultmann's thought - the difference between theology and philosophy. Bultmann suggested that the fundamental distinction lies in the fact that philosophy believes that man - as man - can attain authentic existence, whereas theology insists that "man cannot free himself from inauthenticity but that he can only be freed by being encountered by God's love"(33). The question one can ask here is to what extent this claim retains validity when the "philosophy" in question is that of Whitehead's vision? To rephrase that, does the Process philosophy of Whitehead promote an anthropology which supports authentic existence without an appeal to Christ? Or, is that central theme of Christianity merely a particular expression of something which is already an inherent motif of Process philosophical thinking?

In order to reply to those questions, it is necessary to present an account, from within the framework of Process philosophy and theology,

(33) Griffin A Process Christology p77.

## Introduction.

of the human person and ask whether this is deficient without the appeal to Christ. Of course, a corollary of this must be to show exactly how that appeal to Christ is able to function in the terms allowed by the philosophy. Here again, one notes that it is faith which promotes this question, for it is faith which is making the claim that authentic existence is possible only in relation to Christ. This claim of faith leads on to - indeed it provokes - the attention of philosophical enquiry which, in turn, must examine its own content and the content of faith.

From these two descriptions of the method it follows that the study must take a particular form. There are essentially three parts, the inspiration of faith, the analysis by philosophy and a synthesis. These are supplemented by an evaluation and a conclusion.

The first of these, the "inspiration" is designed to encapsulate the essence of the Christian faith. Not in order to present a definitive content to faith but to evoke and promote issues and debate for further discussion. One must recognise that having made the claim that the first section illustrates Christian faith, the manner in which this claim is manifested in practice is somewhat restricted - by the limits of time and space if not intention. For, what is Christian faith? In order to restrict the answer to that question to manageable proportions I shall employ the services of Process theologians who have been engaged in the field of christology. Inevitably this will introduce a degree of bias into what might be termed the "essential elements" of Christianity, but not without justification. Each of these theologians represents a strand of Christian tradition which, by virtue of their humanity and faith, they have interwoven into their Process christology. It is not a symptom of arrogance therefore that one can portray these thinkers as representatives of the Christian faith. The



## Introduction.

third chapter deals with the issues raised by the second, and analyses them in the terms of Whiteheadian philosophy. This, to employ Ogden's expression, is the chapter which describes the "theistic metaphysics". The fourth chapter is a synthesis between the Whiteheadian analysis and "faith" in which it is intended to develop a "Process Christology" loyal to the former and adequate to the latter. Chapter five is an attempt to evaluate this Process christology with respect to some of the traditional and Biblical issues, with the explicit hope of justifying its "faith" status. Chapter six offers some personal comments and conclusions about the study.

The philosophical discussion may, at times, appear to have lost all connection with the central christological theme of the work. During these times one should recall Sponheim's invitation, "put on your shoes, for though God may be here, we come not to worship but to work."(34).

(34) op.cit. p53.

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Inspiration: Faith.  
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It might seem rather trivial to state, but an adventure in christology must start somewhere. That is, there must be some material which we are able to discuss or, perhaps more precisely, a reason must exist which promotes the christological adventure. This content or motivating power is the inspiration of faith. It is the purpose of this chapter to introduce how Process theologians have handled the christological task and note how they combine statements of faith with their interpretation of Whitehead. It is not the intention here to analyse too critically these developments but rather to present them in such a way as to enable a harvest of ideas to be gathered which will promote the study in various directions in subsequent chapters. It is also worth mentioning that the presentation of Process christologies in this chapter is not intended to be a complete account but merely a survey of some of the important issues and themes which are relevant. These themes are the specific christological "particulars" which cannot be generated by the metaphysical categories, but must, of course, - and this is the subject of chapter three - be valid with respect to those categories.

The Process theologian who makes the most obvious statement of faith in his approach to christology is Norman Pittenger. He provides us with a complete and definitive account of his departure point, suggesting that christology is grounded upon three "essential elements". These are, "the firm conviction that in some fashion we meet God in the event of Jesus Christ. Second, there is the equally firm conviction that God is thus met in a genuine, historically conditioned, and entirely human being. Third there is the assurance that God, met in that man, and the man in whom God is met, are in relationship one with the other, in a manner or mode which is neither accidental nor incidental but the most complete interpenetration - and this means that

## The Inspiration: Faith.

the relationship or union, as the ancient formulations call it, must be conceived after the analogy of personal union rather than after some model which suggests a less secure and abiding togetherness of God and man."(1). One might ask to what extent these definitions do, in fact, represent valid starting points for christology. There is a sense in which they might equally well be considered to be conclusions to the christological adventure because they consist of definitions concerning Jesus Christ. In this context the three "essential elements" are regarded as faith's invitation to Process philosophy, the categories of which Pittenger then uses as a tool to develop and expound that belief into a rational "Christology". He justifies that step by advocating a "valid christocentrism - by which I mean that God - in - Christ, God defined by Christ, is normative for our understanding of the whole creation in its relationship with God and vice versa."(2). Christology, for Pittenger, is seen as being normative for mankind's understanding of more general issues relevant to creation's relation to the Creator. One of the most remarkable features of his christology is its consistency throughout his published works, a tribute to the "faith seeking understanding" method he employs. He makes one point very clear, "Let me confess that if I felt that the abiding assurances of my faith as a Christian could not thus fit in, I should have to decide whether to abandon the faith or abandon the conceptuality. In that case, as a Christian, I should feel obliged to abandon the conceptuality."(3). It

(1) Christology Reconsidered p7. The phrase "personal union" is the crux of Pittenger's Christology and will be clarified as the discussion proceeds. It is worth noting the shift (it is a shift in terminology rather than a change in intention) from the "four affirmations" in Word Incarnate p11.

1. Jesus is truly human.
2. Christ is truly divine.
3. Jesus Christ is one person.
4. Jesus Christ is intimately related to the more general action, presence and revelation of God.

(2) Christology Reconsidered p3.

The Inspiration: Faith.

is important to note that one of the corollaries of a "faith seeking understanding" approach is that one must possess a defined content to "faith" prior to the search for "understanding". That is why Pittenger's starting point, the three essential elements, reads as if it was a conclusion to christology. That requirement is a crucial one because it raises the "faith" question which concerns the origin and nature of the faith which is to be understood. For Pittenger, "faith" is understood to imply loyalty to the tradition of faith, the free spirit of Anglicanism, bound to the tradition but not imprisoned by it (4). Now the question has shifted: what is the tradition? At one level this problem is easily solved because the Anglican loyalty to tradition actually implies loyalty to the Anglican tradition which, for all its idiosyncracies, certainly has a defined content.

There are two points which must be made concerning this approach to christology. Its most beneficial aspect is that it enables one to get to grips immediately with the christological issues. When performed in and for a community of believers this is invaluable. Faith is made relevant and significant because it is given the "understanding" achieved when it is expounded by a rational system. On the other hand, and in this context a detrimental point, there is only a limited potential for theological growth because the method avoids confrontation with philosophical principles which are assumed to be normative. Its criteria are self-referential and there is no intention to challenge the truth of the "faith". That is what Pittenger states when he "confessed" to a willingness to "abandon the conceptuality" but not the faith (5). The issue is further complicated by the fact that faith, defined in some sense as a faithfulness to the tradition of faith,

(3) *ibid.* p144.

(4) See Christian Century 49 "What is Liberal Catholicism?"

The Inspiration: Faith.

suffers inevitably from a degree of inherent confusion. Pittenger quotes Wiles', "true continuity with the age of the Fathers is to be sought not so much in the repetition of their doctrinal conclusions or even in building upon them, but rather in the continuation of their doctrinal aims"(6). He continues, "the faithfulness is thus to the basic doctrinal aims, to the Patristic objectives rather than to the terminology, the specific world-view, or the specific formulations of our fathers in Christian faith (7). That, widely accepted, sense of continuity with the Fathers, or the tradition of the Church, is, as stated, entirely suited to Pittenger's task. The problem is, how does one define the "basic doctrinal aims" and, more importantly, how are they known? He is able to refer those questions to "tradition", it is the tradition of the Church which illustrates which tradition is normative and those which were rejected. I remain unconvinced that such a method does not involve an arbitrary decision concerning the resolution of those problems. We must however accept that Pittenger's aim is to "state the meaning of the old things - the scriptural witness, the experience of Christian worship, and the new life in Christ which constitutes salvation"(8) and note that the tool he employs is that provided by Process conceptualities. It must be stressed that the philosophy plays only a secondary role. It is merely the supporting cast which allows the lead performer to blossom. Its value lies solely

(5) Moltmann has commented that modern christology "assumes faith, but rarely states why one should have faith." (Crucified God p97). It is my intention to formulate christology in such a way that it does speak intelligibly to the "dilemma of the intellectual who inhabits the borderlands between belief and unbelief." (Sutherland, S., Faith and Ambiguity p1). The novels of Dostoyevsky eloquently evoke this ambiguity.

(6) Christology Reconsidered p4. See Making of Christian Doctrine, Wiles.M., p173.

(7) *ibid.* p5.

(8) *ibid.* p5.



## The Inspiration: Faith.

in its ability to articulate what is given as normative by the manifestation in Christ of the God - World relationship. We can conclude, therefore, that Pittenger's approach to christology is not the one I am advocating in this study. Whereas I have assumed Whitehead's vision to be "normative", he places "faith" in that position and subsequently uses the tools of philosophy to expound that faith. But, and this is more important, that difference in the method must not be allowed to detract from our examination of his christology.

He states, "everything that I am trying to say in these pages is to be regarded as nothing other than a variation on the theme of love"(9). This emphasis is derived from Scotist theology, for which the categories of Process are well adapted or, perhaps more accurately, adaptable (10). Furthermore, if his general theme is "love", the specific christological theme is that the incarnation is the exemplary instance of this love relationship. Or, to express that slightly differently, "... the relationship which is actualized in Jesus Christ is potential in men."(11). Pittenger is anxious to make the point that the God - Christ relationship is just one aspect of the more general God - World relationship. Christ does not stand outside the system, rather he exemplifies it, an echo of Whitehead's famous dictum about God.

It is not sufficient, however, simply to say that Christ is the exemplary instance of the God - World relationship. One must also show how, given the tools of Process philosophy, Pittenger explicates this

(9) *ibid.* p21.

(10) Scotist theology insists that the purpose of the incarnation was the manifestation of God's love for all men. See New Catholic Encyclopedia 4, Balic.C. For a brief account of why Process theologians generally prefer the tradition of Scotus see Mellert, R., *op.cit.* p86. Pittenger's emphasis on "love" highlights the extent to which his thought is underlined by Hartshorne's notion of a Social God.

(11) Word Incarnate p5.

The Inspiration: Faith.

idea. It is convenient, although somewhat artificial, to approach that issue from two angles. First, I consider how Pittenger deals with the person of Christ and second, how he understands Christ to be important for others. That is just one aspect of the distinction between christology and soteriology and it must be remembered that the survey does not seek to divorce one from the other: it is merely a matter of presentation.

Lewis Ford provides what is an adequate characterization of Pittenger's position when he describes it as a "total obedience" solution (12). That is, Jesus responded in total obedience to a Divine initiative. But it is all too easy to balance the Divine initiative with creaturely response simply by invoking the obedience of the latter to the invitation of the former. It is necessary to show how this obedience is credible in terms of the metaphysic. There are two aspects to this verification. He must be able to show how the Divine initiative is present and how the creature is able to respond.

Pittenger suggests that God acts in three ways. The initial aim, the "lure towards fulfilment" and the fact of mutual prehension, noting that these are all aspects of God's "loving persuasion."(13).

His use of the theory of the initial aim can be summarized by one of his sentences, "(Jesus) made his own subjective aim identical with the initial aim which God provided him."(14). This suggests that the individual man, Jesus, received from God an initial aim which he

(12) Ford, L., Lure of God p51. Pittenger's position follows the Antiochene school with its stress on the humanity of Jesus. An "obedience" solution to the christological problem (how to relate Jesus to God in a "special" way) identifies the human response of Jesus to be crucial.

(13) Christology Reconsidered p139.

(14) ibid. p59.



The Inspiration: Faith.

accepted as his own subjective aim. At this stage in the discussion it is sufficient to note that Pittenger is employing "initial aims" in direct connection with a human being. This raises the question, which will be examined in detail in chapter three, of whether it is a valid use of Process categories to combine the theory of initial aims with a Process account of a human person. The language of initial aims is part of the esoteric world of Whitehead's vision but in his next sentence Pittenger makes his point in the vernacular, "(Jesus) accepted for his own purpose the purpose which God had for him." He equates the two, but in the next chapter I shall question whether the macrocosmic perception of "purpose", relevant to a human individual, is capable of being conveyed by the microcosmic understanding of initial aims, without making additional comments. He continues, "this vocation or purpose was conveyed to him through such experiences as meditation upon the Jewish Scriptures, hearing the preaching of John the Baptist, undergoing John's baptism, etc." which expresses the sense in which "purpose" is mediated through society. Thus we can glimpse the difference between this mediated sense of purpose and the direct "initial aim which God provided him" notion which was implied earlier.

The second mode of God's action is described as the lure towards fulfilment, which is the lure towards the "realization of true selfhood."(15). Two comments must be made. Firstly, I think he has over emphasized the distinction between this lure and the provision of the initial aim. Whitehead wrote, "(God) is the lure for feeling, the eternal urge of desire. His particular relevance to each creative act... constitutes him the initial 'object of desire' establishing the initial phase of the subjective aim."(16). In the light of that

(15) *ibid.* p139.

(16) PR p344.

The Inspiration: Faith.

quotation it is difficult to understand Pittenger's description of the lure as the "other side, as it were, of the initial aim" because the lure is that which is given in the initial aim, the goal, the "object of desire". More important, however, is the second point. Pittenger introduces the notion of the "realization of true self-hood", which is crucially important. One of the tasks of chapter three must be to examine that notion and develop an account of how it is possible to realize true self-hood. Pittenger, it must be noted, does not attempt that analysis beyond his statement of the lure towards fulfilment.

His third point concerns the fact of mutual prehension between God and the world. God is present and active in every cause and in every effect so that one can say, "thus every occasion... is an incarnation of the divine dynamic which we call by the name of God"(17) or, in the words of Hopkins, "The world is charged with the grandeur of God."(18). Process theology is thoroughly incarnational. Thus, the christological problem which is particularly appropriate to Process thought is how God is present in Jesus in a special or unique way.

In terms of Pittenger's obedience solution it is evident that this "specialness" must exist "in the filial obedience of the man (Jesus) to the divine imperative, in the freely chosen decisions which the man made, in the response of 'yes' to the love that is God."(19). He is aware that the accusation that this is merely a moral union is relevant and he is correct to reply that, "in this respect the moral is the metaphysical - once we have come to see that love is not simply a matter of desirable human behaviour but is the very basis of the universe and the grounding reality in all creative advance."(20).

(17) PR p141.

(18) "God's Grandeur".

(19) Christology Reconsidered p143.

## The Inspiration: Faith.

The recurring theme in Pittenger's obedience christology is the balance between the divine initiative and the creature's response, the generation of possibilities and the freedom of actualization. He achieves equilibrium by concentrating on the quality of Jesus' response and it is that quality which makes God's presence in Jesus "special". In this way it is unproblematic for him to maintain the congruity of God's act with respect to Jesus and his action in the world. The example he gives is that of Mary, who exercised her freedom to respond to God, "fiat mihi secundum verbum tuam."(21). This inevitably implies a pelagian quality. I use the term as a description only, not as a judgement despite its unfortunate "heretical" connotations (22). Pittenger himself is anxious to avoid that label, the charge of being a "sophisticated modern version of the Pelagian heresy" is "entirely unjustified; in fact it is nonsense."(23). One can appreciate his point when he says "the flinging - about of such terms means nothing and proves nothing" but the corollary which follows is that if - as seems likely in a response based christology - the Process account does in fact involve pelagian ideas, the theologian need not fear that fact. One is inclined to suspect that Pittenger's loyalty to the eloquent, and, of course, anti-pelagian, tradition is the motivating factor here, rather than any significant theological reason to abandon the

(20) *ibid.* p143. This complicates the definition of Pittenger's method. If, as he says, his theology is a variation on the theme of love then, since love is the "grounding reality" and, being the moral, is therefore metaphysical, one can say that his theology is metaphysical. He closes the distinction between faith and philosophy because he defines "faith" in terms of love, and love is metaphysical. One should also be aware of the danger inherent in this emphasis on love. Love is a human emotion and unless one understands its use in a metaphysical sense as being more than - although it includes - that human meaning, one is left with an extreme anthropomorphic metaphysics.

(21) *ibid.* p82.

(22) See Griffin, A Process Christology p218.

(23) Christology Reconsidered p64.

The Inspiration: Faith.

descriptive term.

A further corollary of a "congruity" approach is the familiar "different in degree or kind" type question. Obviously, the reply must be that Jesus is different in degree. There can be no reason why that should be unacceptable to any sincere believer because, as Pittenger notes, "it is much more adequate to the faith than a portrayal of Jesus Christ as so different in kind from other instances of God's presence and activity in the affairs of men and in their experience that he becomes, to all intents and purposes, an anomaly."(24). An irrelevant Christ is no Christ at all. Although he dedicates a whole chapter to this issue, the problem can best be resolved by invoking the one principle that solves the problem with a minimum of effort. Process philosophy is a one - substance cosmology, implying that there is no difference in kind, "though there are gradations of importance, and diversities of function, yet in the principles which actuality exemplifies all are on the same level. The final facts are, all alike, actual entities."(25). Although that resolves the issue at its most fundamental level, the question remains, how different in degree? Pittenger is certainly correct when he notes that critics tend to assume that those who hold a degree - Christology must necessarily be talking about a very slight difference. On the contrary it is possible, as we shall see later, to propose a major difference in the "degree". Briefly, all actual entities are unique and furthermore they are interestingly unique. That is, their uniqueness is not merely due to a metaphysical abstraction but it is a significant difference. Each actual entity, for example, has a unique potential according to its unique spatio - temporal coordinates and its contribution (concrecence)

(24) Christology Reconsidered p111. See Hick, J., "Christology at the Cross Roads" in Prospect for Theology, Healey, F.G. (Ed).

(25) PR p18.

The Inspiration: Faith.

will be the one appropriate to its own situation. Hence there is a very real difference between the "most trivial puff of existence in far off empty space"(26) and the complexities of a highly developed society. But in a more important respect, to attempt to quantify the difference is to miss the point. Pittenger's emphasis is on response, or the manner in which an initiative is appropriated by a receiving subject. Consequently, the extent to which an individual regards Jesus as "different" is subject dependent. Just as the God - Jesus relationship depends upon Jesus' response to God, the Christian's relationship to Jesus is dependent upon that individual's appropriation of him. There is no degree of difference which is fixed on an absolute scale. Likewise, one must also consider the Church, which is the community response to Jesus. The Church is, in a manner which forms the subject of a later chapter, the objectified response to Jesus and, as such, becomes the objectification of the "difference", as appropriated by that particular worshipping community.

The essential subjectivity of the answer to the "difference in degree" problem is supported by Pittenger's discussion of "importance". He writes, "the subjective apprehension of any occasion as 'important' is integral to the whole complex; the 'important' does not impose itself coercively by some sort of historical or logical necessity apart from such apprehension."(27). As he notes, this is the use of "importance" which Whitehead describes in, particularly, Modes of Thought, "one characterization of importance is that it is that aspect of feeling whereby a perspective is imposed upon the universe of things felt. In our more self conscious entertainment of the notion, we are aware of grading the effectiveness of things about us in proportion to their

(26) PR p18.

(27) Christology Reconsidered p103.



The Inspiration: Faith.

interest."(28). An event becomes important when the confrontation with that event becomes irresistible, so that the "intensity of feeling leads to publicity of expression."(29). It must be emphasised that the term "irresistible" does not imply metaphysical necessity, but an invitation which requires our free consent. As Rattigan states, "(Pittenger) maintains that it is possible to designate as important those occasions which objectively have a compelling quality and which subjectively evoke an unusually vivid response."(30). The demand for the objective element is paramount and Pittenger suggests that objectivity exists insofar as "the occasion actually is present to awaken our response; it is not a figment of our imagination."(31). It is conceivable that an event which is assumed to be important could be imaginary or, at least, imaginary in the extent of its importance, and Pittenger is aware of the dangers inherent in defining "importance" solely on the basis of a subjective apprehension.

Prior to looking at Pittenger's defence of the claim that Jesus' importance is not an illusion, we note how he deduces the "decisiveness" of Jesus from this analysis. Once an event assumes the status of importance it "becomes definitive for us. It has a quality of decisiveness in our ongoing thought and action."(32). Hence one can say that Jesus is decisive for me or, in the community sense, for us. And, perhaps equally significant, one can make that claim without the "arrogance in claims made by Christians for the finality of their own

(28) Modes of Thought p11, cited by Sponheim, Faith and Process p61.

(29) Mellert op.cit. p114. In this quotation we see the foundations for the community response, based upon similar public expressions.

(30) Rattigan.M.T., "Christology and Process Thought" p137.

(31) Christology Reconsidered p100.

(32) ibid. p100.

The Inspiration: Faith.

faith."(33).

However, if Pittenger has succeeded in showing how one can make the claim for decisiveness, does he also demonstrate that such a claim is valid? Does he show that the event - in this case the "Jesus event" - satisfies the objective quality? To some extent such a justification is unnecessary. It is sufficient to note that the claim is merely decisiveness for me. Nevertheless, one intuitively feels that some explanation must be available and forthcoming, firstly, to satisfy humanity's social requirements (individual "worlds" or islands are not possible for an animal whose nature is to relate) and, secondly, simply to satisfy one's own curiosity. Pittenger argues to the objective importance of the "Jesus event" on the basis that "faith and worship and life and mission are based on the disclosure in act of God in Jesus Christ as nothing other than 'pure unbounded love'."(34). "Love" is the key to his verification.

I seem to recall that there was once a fashion for posters and stickers which proclaimed "Jesus is Love". If my memory is correct, these were particularly prevalent on the guitars of enthusiastic chorus leaders! That is precisely the message Pittenger requires although, of course, it is necessary to demonstrate how the claim is valid. He looks particularly at two examples, the community inspired by Jesus and the sense in which Jesus is the focus of God's activity (35).

The Epistle to the Ephesians states Jesus' relationship to the Church, viewing them both as "intimately and necessarily part of the total Christ - event."(36). Similarly, "the Church is the Body of

(33) *ibid.* p88. One notes that it is not possible to claim that Jesus is decisiveness for anyone else, unless they are prepared to make the "decisive for me" statement.

(34) *ibid.* p94.



The Inspiration: Faith.

Christ, in St. Paul's phrase, because by its means the specific awareness of love brought near to men in Christ is known... "(37). The Church is a historical reality, well documented and with facts available to be known. Thus, the underlying claim made by Pittenger is that, because the Church, which is the Body of Christ, demonstrates God's love, therefore we can assume Jesus was a demonstration of God's love. The effect, the Church, exhibits love, hence the cause, Jesus, must have been that love. One notes, however, that, even assuming the general validity of Pittenger's argument, it does not provide infallible justification of the claim that "Jesus is Love". The argument from the nature of the Church has another side. The Church has not always exhibited the love of God, indeed there are times when one could not envisage anything more remote from the truth. The history of the Church is not exclusively the history of love. Nevertheless, Pittenger has identified the bridge between ourselves in the twentieth century and Jesus, by noting the intimate association between Jesus and the Church.

His second point concerns Jesus as the focus of God's activity in the world - the locus of the incarnation. Essentially, one must realise that Jesus cannot be divorced from his environment; we must "avoid the fallacy of falsely abstracting a single human being or a particular historical occurrence from its context."(38). Our concern, in the

(35) This is not intended to be a direct reflection of Pittenger's method. He justifies the claim for decisiveness in three ways, community, location of the incarnation and Whitehead's notion of "importance". I have used the third point to illustrate how he is able to derive "decisiveness" and the first two points to show how that claim is verified. My argument for doing so is that, unless one presupposes the possibilities generated by the notion of "importance", the verification of decisiveness is redundant. The notions of "community" and the "locus of the incarnation" represent the twin foundations of Pittenger's christology, its historical reality and the faith of the Church.

(36) *ibid.* p94.

(37) *ibid.* p97.

The Inspiration: Faith.

christological adventure, must be with the whole "Jesus event". God's dealings with the people of Israel, the legalistic attitudes of the Pharisees, the attitudes of the disciples, are all facets of "Jesus". Similarly, our concern must also lie with subsequent events in addition to antecedent ones, hence our discussion of Jesus must not neglect the response to him, the Church. It is not possible to present a complete picture of Jesus without incorporating his past and future in the account. Pittenger relates the three tenses by claiming that Jesus, in his relationship to God, acts as a focus of all the more general (past and future) instances of God's activity with men, "the decisiveness which Christians ought to claim is for the divine activity in the world of creative advance, given expression in a distinctive fashion in the Christ event."(39). To those who claim that Jesus is the sole focus of God's activity - in other words, to claim that it is only through Jesus that one comes to know God - Pittenger retorts, "we can only trust that God is more generous in spirit."(40).

To summarize, we noted that Pittenger's christology is a response or obedience type, in which Jesus, he claims, is the exemplary instance of what it means for a human being to respond to God. This raises two questions. Firstly, how is it possible to understand God's initiative and second, how does the Process account of the human person interpret the possibilities for a response? An understanding of that relationship, generally between all men and God and, specifically, between Jesus and God, is central. Of particular interest was the simplistic identification of the theory of initial aims with the idea of initiative and response. He emphasises the quality of Jesus' response

(38) *ibid.* p99.

(39) *ibid.* p99.

(40) *ibid.* p90.

The Inspiration: Faith.

and hence characterizes the uniqueness of Jesus anthropologically. It is a human response. The notion of response is also central to the way in which Jesus becomes important. We, in our subjective response to him, apprehend Jesus as being decisive for us. His analysis of "importance" raises two issues for further discussion, in chapter three. One must show how the categories of Process philosophy are potent to demonstrate how an event in the past retains sufficient impact for it to become "important" for a future event and, how that future event (now considered as a present event), is able to apprehend a past event in such a way that it can be decisive. That, philosophical debate, relates to the next point in which Pittenger highlights the way in which the Church is a vital element of christology. Indeed, we noted that he identifies the past, present and future as being relevant to a description of Jesus, who is the focus of all God's activity. This also necessitates an understanding of how the three tenses are related in an account of the historical process.

Whereas Pittenger commenced the christological adventure from a position loyal to the faith tradition, Cobb approaches the subject rather differently. He states, "a decade ago I argued that Christology is possible only where the notions of God and man have been clarified.... I still believe that to speak of God as having become incarnate in a human being presupposes that we know something of what we mean by the terms 'God' and 'human being'."(41). It might be argued that the search for knowledge about God and man is metaphysics and, in that sense, Cobb places metaphysics in a position of primacy. This is implied when he considers the nature of the ideal data for theology, "the data for Christian theology must be primitive interpretations of Christian experience unconditioned by relativizing factors - an abstract

(41) Christ in a Pluralistic Age preface p13.

The Inspiration: Faith.

ideal. If these data are to be systematized consistently with one another and with all other human knowledge, they must be in relation to, and in terms of, an adequate and consistent interpretation of all facts, that is an adequate philosophy."(42). Whereas Pittenger uses the categories of Process philosophy to handle the primitive data as deduced from the "basic doctrinal aims", Cobb places greater emphasis on the philosophical quest, and allows reciprocal communication between metaphysical knowledge of God and man and faith. Hence he summarizes his method, "the ideal solution is a Christology in which historical wisdom and aliveness to present issues fructify each other."(43). For that reason, Cobb makes rather more explicit and rigorous use of Process philosophy than does Pittenger, "in his project of process interpretation Cobb is more faithful to Whitehead than Pittenger who, by contrast, tends to 'twist' Whitehead for the purpose of expounding Christian faith."(44). This is not to suggest that Cobb is not also critical of Whitehead. Indeed, he advocates reform in almost all aspects of the Whiteheadian conceptualities. His competence in dealing with the metaphysical abstractions coupled with a desire to explicate his theology place Cobb in an excellent position from which to embark on the christological adventure (45).

(42) "Theological Data and Method" p222. It is worth noting that in A Christian Natural Theology Jesus is mentioned only rarely.

(43) Christ in a Pluralistic Age p22.

(44) Kao, C.T., "The Particularity and Universality of the Incarnation" p110.

(45) In the chapter entitled "A Whiteheadian doctrine of God" (Christ in a Pluralistic Age ch.V and reprinted in PPCT) Cobb engages in five areas of revision; God as actual entity, God and Time, God and space, God and Eternal objects and God and creativity. In other areas of Process thought Cobb has carried the debate considerably further than Whitehead himself. Particularly relevant in this context will be his contribution to the Process account of the human being.

The Inspiration: Faith.

The question proposed by Cobb in his article "A Whiteheadian Christology" is "how can we affirm the unique presence of God in Jesus in such a way as to avoid detracting from his humanity and yet explain his strange authority? ....It may prove useful today to demonstrate that Christians can think of Jesus' relation to God as decisively unique without involving themselves in absurdity, or irrational acceptance of dogma."(46).

In a brief but crucial passage Cobb describes what he sees as the chief problem associated with classical christology, "in classical philosophy it is possible to understand how a form is present in a human being without distorting or destroying his humanity, but it is unintelligible how one substance can enter into another without displacing some part of that other substance. ...When the images are psychological, much the same results are reached. For God to be present and active in Jesus means in classical conceptualities that some aspect of what otherwise have been the human Jesus was replaced by God."(47). The most striking defect of classical christology is, therefore, the notion of one substance in another. In chapter three I shall discuss in greater detail how, in Process terms, it is possible to conceive of the presence of one entity in another and, equally crucial, without the notion of displacement. Then, according to Cobb, it will be possible to affirm the presence and activity of God in Jesus without "detracting from his humanity". Cobb's terminology reveals the extent to which this presence is real and significant, "A is genuinely and effectively present in B, and B would not be what it is apart from this presence. B

(46) PPCT p383. That quotation illustrates the relation between faith and philosophy for Cobb. Faith poses the question (the assumption of uniqueness) but its explanation must be within the limits of philosophy (the avoidance of absurdity and irrationality).

(47) *ibid.* p384.



The Inspiration: Faith.

does not first exist and then incorporate A, rather this incorporation is constitutive of B's coming into existence."(48). However, he then notes, "by itself it does not solve the problem of christology" because two additional questions are relevant, "does or can this mode of presence apply to God's relation to men?" and, if so, "can we meaningfully speak of differences in the mode of God's presence in different men?"(49).

The initial response to Cobb's first question is to repeat Whitehead's dictum that God is not an exception. But, as Cobb then comments, "interpreters of Whitehead differ in the extent to which they differentiate God from actual occasions and the relation of God to actual occasions from the relation of actual occasions to each other."(50). Cobb himself concludes, "the answer... is affirmative." God is prehended datum and, as such, is present to an occasion in exactly the same way in which any other prehended data are present. Indeed, he continues, "we must say that (God) is present in every actual occasion."(51). However, the crux of the argument is not the necessary presence of God but the possibilities for "presence" which result from that necessity.

That consideration provides a satisfactory reply to the first issue, but it renders the second aspect more complex. If, as Cobb asserts, God is present in all occasions, that does not imply anything distinctive about Jesus. To rephrase that, "if the mode of prehension

(48) *ibid.* p385. A and B are "two successive occasions of human experience".

(49) *ibid.* p385.

(50) *ibid.* p385. That understates the case! Note for example Sherburne's naturalistic interpretation of Whitehead (see chapter three).

(51) *ibid.* p385.

The Inspiration: Faith.

of God by all entities were identical, then the mode of God's presence in all entities would be identical, and there would be no possibility of asserting that the mode of God's presence in Jesus is unique."(52). In order to establish the "difference" (or "uniqueness") factor Cobb presents an account of how diversity, with regard to the presence of God, is introduced.

He makes the transition from the language of "prehension" to the language of "initial aims" and, because all occasions have a prehension of God, states, "the derivation of the initial aim from God is common to all occasions."(53).

There are three ways in which diversity is introduced. The first of these is simply that God's aim for each occasion differs so that, "God's presence in every occasion is concretely unique."(54). Given that, it is clear that one affirms the "unique presence" of God in Jesus. However, that is really to say very little, for it will also be noted that Jesus is "unique" in precisely the same way in which every other occasion is "unique". God's presence in Jesus is unique to Jesus, just as God's presence in a particular grain of sand is unique to that grain. Diversity is also introduced because "the prehensive objectification of God need not be restricted to the initial aim."(55). Clarifying this point he says, "the initial aim ... might be that the occasion prehend wider purposes of God or enjoy a peculiar sense of intimacy or oneness." This appears to be a derivative of the previous point because the additional prehensions are, according to Cobb,

(52) *ibid.* p386. This contrasts with Pittenger, whose formula "what is actualized in Jesus is potential in all men" is designed to emphasise congruity rather than uniqueness.

(53) *ibid.* p387.

(54) *ibid.* p387.

(55) *ibid.* p388.



The Inspiration: Faith.

motivated by the initial aim. Thus, it is the initial aim which introduces the diversity insofar as the initial aim requires other prehensions. The third manner in which diversity is introduced results from the "degree to which God's aim for an occasion is realized."(56). This is the freedom for self - determination which is enjoyed by all occasions, and is the point made by Pittenger in his response Christology. In contrast, the first two modes of diversity emphasize the difference in the divine initiative rather than in the response of the creature. Cobb, therefore, attempts to define "uniqueness" in two ways: a result of God's unique aim for Jesus and as a consequence of Jesus' actualization of that aim. It will also be noted that the problem of the transition from the microcosmic world of occasions and initial aims to the macrocosmic world of the man Jesus, relevant to Pittenger's christology, has not been confronted by Cobb. There is an implicit acceptance that God's unique aim for each occasion implies a significant uniqueness for Jesus and also that the notion of "response" to the initial aim is as appropriate to Jesus as it is to all actual occasions. In later chapters I shall note that Cobb's emphasis on the uniqueness of God's aim for Jesus is only one side of a complex story and, furthermore, examine the relationship between the micro- and macro-cosmos. For present purposes, however, it is possible to continue our examination of Cobb's christology and note how he applies his general ideas to a theory of the human person. While a detailed description of that concept is performed in the next chapter, this section deals with Cobb's own application for christology.

The central theme states that "God's presence in Jesus played a structural role in the actual occasions constituting his personal life... "(57). If one considers the two entities A and B, Cobb

(56) *ibid.* p388.

The Inspiration: Faith.

describes the two extreme forms of B's prehension of A. First, "B may prehend A in such a way that although important aspects of A are re-enacted, the source of these eternal objects has no importance."(58). It is the content of the prehension which is important to B, not the fact that the origin of the content is A. The second form is such that "B may prehend A in such a way that the fact that it is A which it is preheating is of paramount importance for the subjective form of B rather than the particular aspect of A by which A is objectified."(59). Here it is the source not the content which is important. Obvious analogies present themselves. If I desire to know the time of a train, I am more interested in the content of that information rather than its source. On the other hand if I hear the words "I love you", I will be more interested in knowing the source! In practice it may be assumed that most prehensions are a combination of the two extremes (60). Without, at the moment, questioning Cobb's understanding of the initial aim, and its relevance to "men", one can agree with his observation that, for most men, "what is important is the urge to actualization of a particular sort, not the source of the urge."(61). But, he then notes, "for some men some of the time the sense that they are being urged or called or guided by God becomes a very important part of the experience of the initial aim."(62). He suggests that the prophets experienced the content of the aim and its source as being of equal importance. Thus,

(57) *ibid.* p390.

(58) *ibid.* p390. The reference to "eternal objects" can be ignored in this context. The important point is that "the source... ..has no importance."

(59) *ibid.* p392.

(60) It is at that point that my two analogies break down, because, of course, in the first example there is an assumption that the source is authoritative and, in the second, my interest in the subject is promoted after the reception of the content.

(61) *ibid.* p393.

apart from the aim for the self, the prophets were also made aware of their participation in the integrated whole, an awareness which inevitably follows from a knowledge of the divine source of the aim. Self - fulfilment, therefore, is interpreted as the process of actualizing one's own purpose in the light of one's participation in the greater whole. Thus, "the obligation to bear and communicate such meanings against his natural feeling and thinking was the ground of Jeremiah's discovery of his selfhood as 'I'."(63). Although he argues that the set of individuals who, like Jeremiah, experience the source of their aim is numerically small, it is by no means unique. He says of Jesus, however, "in his case the prehension of God was one for which specific content was of secondary importance. God's aim for Jesus was that he prehend God in terms of that which constitutes him as God. This prehension was not experienced by Jesus as information about God but as the presence of God to and in him. Furthermore, and most uniquely, it was not experienced by him as one prehension alongside others.... rather this prehension constituted in Jesus the center from which everything else in his psychic life was integrated... The 'I' of Jesus was constituted by his prehension of God."(64). Cobb's claim that this implies the uniqueness of Jesus requires further examination. There are two possible approaches. Either, God determines the uniqueness, by

(62) *ibid.* p393. Empirical evidence suggests that most people feel a sense of purpose and, indeed, some may, at times, attribute the origin of this purpose to God. Hence, if Cobb had substituted "purpose" for "initial aim", his analysis has immediate impact. As it is formulated, however, the problem remains: is it possible to give empirical intelligibility to the notion of the initial aim?

(63) *ibid.* p393. It is not clear why Cobb introduces a tension here between Jeremiah's (the person's) "natural feeling and thinking" and the requirements of the total environment, implied by his use of the word "against".

(64) *ibid.* p393. As Griffin says, "the basic notion of this Christological idea was initiated by Schleiermacher insofar as he suggested that the person's psyche can be structured differently..." (A Process Christology p227).

The Inspiration: Faith.

forcing Jesus to prehend him as "that which constitutes himself as God", or Jesus responds in a unique manner. In terms of Process philosophy the first option is difficult to justify because the fundamental process of change is non deterministic. However, once the emphasis is placed on Jesus as the responding subject we note that, even if Jesus' response was unique, that does not imply a significant "uniqueness" for Jesus. Suppose that at some future time a similar response is made. Does that imply that Jesus would become "one of two"? Clearly, any "uniqueness" attributed to Jesus must not be qualified by the notion of "...so far". During the discussion I shall attempt to provide a definition of the uniqueness of Jesus which avoids these problems. It is, nevertheless, worth quoting James' comment, "Process theology assigns uniqueness to every finite particular but special uniqueness to none."(65). We shall note that in the second phase of Cobb's christology the quest for uniqueness does not play a primary role. At this stage in the discussion I shall briefly mention the problem of associating "uniqueness" with God's unique aim for all occasions. Cobb states that "...the aims provided by God for the successive occasions of Jesus' experience were markedly different from those provided by God for other persons."(66). The difficulty here is to give proper significance to that statement in the light of the fact that all aims are different (for example, Cobb's aims are unique to Cobb) and, furthermore, the fact that all aims are essentially identical insofar as all aims are the "best for that impasse."(67).

In summary of Cobb's "uniqueness" christology, so characterized

(65) James, R., "Process Cosmology and Theological Particularity.", in PPCT p400.

(66) "Finality of Christ in a Whiteheadian Perspective", The Finality of Christ. Kirkpatrick, D. (Ed). p144.

(67) PR p244.

## The Inspiration: Faith.

because he sets out to give intelligibility to the notion of the uniqueness of Jesus, one can make the following points. After establishing the necessary presence of God in all occasions, he proposes that diversity in this presence exists in three forms, different initial aims, other prehensions resulting from those initial aims and the different responses of the occasions. Jesus' response was, Cobb suggests, unique because he, and he alone, prehended with paramount importance the source of the aim. Additionally, Cobb postulates uniqueness by virtue of the "markedly different" aims which God gave to Jesus. Hence, this aspect of his christology is a combination of a response based christology and one which emphasises the uniqueness of the divine initiative.

The second phase of his christology exhibits a totally different approach. He goes beyond the specific historical figure of Jesus in an attempt to universalize the meaning of Christ. Whereas he initially understood "incarnation" to imply the unique presence of God in Jesus, in his later christology it no longer refers solely to the Jesus event.

Kao summarizes the shift in Cobb's christology thus, "Christ is not so much a person as a process; he is not just Jesus but any incarnation of the Logos in the present or that is to come. While Cobb still argues for the unique presence of God in Jesus, the incarnation is no longer confined to some event or entity. Whenever there is a new actualization of creative transformation, there is incarnation."(68). The twin thrusts of pluralism and secularism mitigate against a view of Christ which is the "absolutization of one pattern of life against others."(69). The requirement for the universality of Christ is the theme which, in Cobb's later christology, takes precedence over the

(68) Kao op.cit. p128.

(69) Christ in a Pluralistic Age. p21.



The Inspiration: Faith.

claim for the uniqueness of Jesus.

Universality is achieved through what Cobb terms "Creative Transformation." He means, "that process in which our imagination and life orientation can be transformed by lucidity of vision and openness to what we see." (70). He adds that Christ is the "image" of creative transformation. Our first task is to clarify the notion of creative transformation and ask how Christ is its image. Furthermore, it is necessary to define how Christ is related to the particular, the historical man Jesus, and note how Cobb employs the Logos in this respect.

Creative transformation is a concept which, properly speaking, defies attempts to give it a strict definition. It is always subject dependent and it is not an event which may be objectified or described by, or in terms of, other specific events. It incorporates the idea of a paradigm shift, yet not all occurrences of creative transformation are as dramatic. Similarly, what may function as an event of creative transformation in one individual or culture may not be defined as such in another. As Cobb emphasises that last point, "relativism in a very important sense is simply true." (71). The process of creative transformation takes place in all cultures, and has done so throughout history. It is not solely associated with a claim of Christianity nor, necessarily, even with a wider "religious" claim (72).

In the introduction to his study Cobb states, "'Christ' names what

(70) *ibid.* p21.

(71) *ibid.* p19.

(72) For that reason it is important to appreciate that Christ in a Pluralistic Age is not simply a book dedicated to the study of christology. Its primary theme is creative transformation; specifically christological themes are secondary and Jesus is tertiary.

The Inspiration: Faith.

is experienced as supremely important when this is bound up with Jesus."(73). It is equally crucial to note that 'Buddha' must be recognized as rightly naming the reality which is, for vast numbers of other people, supremely important. Clearly the names are different. Equally obvious is the fact that the realities so named are not the same, the suggestion that the names 'Christ' and 'Buddha' are merely two different names for the same reality merely disguises the issue. The reality, the claims associated with Christ or the Buddha, is not identical. But an approach of absolute tolerance is equally absurd. Christians do claim that Christ is supremely important and to suggest otherwise is to talk about something other than Christianity. One solution to this dilemma is to claim that Christ is supremely important for the community of Christians who worship him, whilst maintaining that for other religious or cultural groups he may be - for all intents and purposes - irrelevant (74). But, again, that does not do justice to the Christian claim that Jesus is important for all men. Cobb's resolution to this problem, which is essentially that of marrying universality to a particular claim for supreme importance, is subtly elegant.

He insists that the names "Christ" and "Buddha" are two different names, not for one reality, but for the one process itself, the process of creative transformation. The "reality" is different for each community which invokes a different name because the reality is that which the process "calls for at any given moment"(75) rather than the process itself. In this way Christ and the Buddha both name the one process although the demands made by the process in those two, very

(73) *ibid.* p17.

(74) This is reflected by Pittenger's method, the "importance" of Jesus resulting from the appropriation of him as important by individuals and the community.

(75) *ibid.* p21.



The Inspiration: Faith.

different, environments vary. Hence one can state that Christ is the image of creative transformation because, for one particular community, he represents the reality which is demanded by the process of creative transformation. Having established the universal significance of Christ, and responded to the problem of reconciling that to the claims made on behalf of other religions, Cobb is then faced by the need to relate this to the particular. "Christ", if he is to be the image of creative transformation, must be grounded in certain historical facts, because an image necessitates a reference to a particular. What, then, is the relationship between Jesus and Christ?

The two terms are not interchangeable. Jesus refers to the person, Christ to the image of creative transformation. He is able to justify the move from the man Jesus to his intimate association with Christ, the image of creative transformation, by developing a Logos christology. This enables him to retain a view of the uniqueness of Jesus, despite the fact that he is not attributing the "incarnation" solely to him. Logos, according to Cobb is the "cosmic principle of order, the ground of meaning, and the source of purpose"(76) and, "the Logos in its transcendence is timeless and infinite, but in its incarnation or immanence it is always a specific force for just that creative transformation which is possible and optimal in each situation."(77). To summarize those definitions, Cobb states that the Logos "is immanent in all things as the initial phase of their subjective aim."(78).

The Logos is not the initial aim provided, by God, to each emerging

(76) *ibid.* p71. What Whitehead calls the "transcendent source of the aim at the new the principle of concretion, the principle of limitation, the organ of the divine Eros, and God in his Primordial nature."(p71).

(77) *ibid.* p72.

(78) *ibid.* p76. The "initial phase of the subjective aim" is the initial aim.

The Inspiration: Faith.

occasion, but it is present in each emerging occasion as the initial aim. In order to illustrate how Cobb relates Logos to Christ, I quote a paragraph in its entirety.

"'Christ' is therefore a name for the Logos. No statement can be made about Christ that is not true of the Logos. But 'Christ' does not simply designate the Logos as God as the principle of order and novelty. It refers to the Logos as incarnate; hence as the process of creative transformation in and of the world. Of course, what is incarnate is the transcendent Logos; so it is not false to attribute to Christ the transcendent characteristics of deity as well, but Christ as an image does not focus on deity in abstraction from the world but as incarnate in the world, that is, as creative transformation. But just as 'Christ' does not name the Logos as such but the Logos as incarnate, so also creative transformation is named Christ only by those who recognize in it the incarnation of the Logos. It is creative transformation as the incarnation of the Logos."(79). There is a possible source of confusion in that passage. 'Christ' names the Logos as incarnate. Yet Cobb defines the Logos to be present in each occasion as its initial aim. Therefore, and in order to avoid the identification of Christ with the initial aim, one must note a distinction between the notions of "presence" and "incarnation". This distinction is readily made. Incarnation implies the presence and actualization of the Logos as initial aim or, "to whatever extent the new aim is successful, to that extent there is creative transformation."(80). The process of creative transformation only emerges as entities actualize the presence of the Logos as the initial aim. Thus, creative transformation is not a process which is imposed upon the world, because it relies upon the

(79) *ibid.* p77.

(80) *ibid.* p76.

## The Inspiration: Faith.

response of the present occasions to the possibilities for novel synthesis. That accords well with Cobb's emphasis on "recognition". Those who fail to recognize the incarnation of the Logos are those for whom Christ, the image of creative transformation, is redundant. Christ only becomes a reality insofar as the power for transformation actually exists. But, although this analysis has explained the relation between Logos and Christ, it does not relate Jesus to the image of creative transformation. And, as Cobb is aware, "unless the power of creative transformation discerned in art and theology is also the power that was present in (Jesus) and that continues to operate through his word the affirmations of Part one cannot stand."(81).

The problem has two aspects. First it is necessary to illustrate how, given the terms of Process philosophy, an individual man (Jesus) is able to exhibit the qualities of the "Christ". Second, one must show that Jesus actually did exhibit those qualities. Cobb's explanation of the second point reveals the type of consideration relevant to the first. He says, "not only is the Logos itself love but the creative transformation which is its work in us in human love. That also is not immediately apparent; for love as creative transformation is not emotion, or sentiment, or moral virtue. It is a way in which the process of becoming is formed or structured. But this ontological character of love has never been an expendable addition to an already formed being. Love is not Christian if it is not constitutive of existence... The meaning of love for Christians has been determined by Jesus."(82). Jesus is seen as the paradigm of love, the poetry of

(81) *ibid*, p97. Part One being his analysis of creative transformation, the incarnation of the Logos and the naming of the process "Christ".

(82) *ibid*. p85. Note the similarity between this definition of love and that of Pittenger. In later chapters I shall examine in more detail what "Christian love" is and how it was exhibited by Jesus.

The Inspiration: Faith.

creative transformation and the exemplary expression of the incarnate Logos. And hence he is the Christ.

Methodologically primary must be the task of the first point, to justify, on philosophical criteria, how the man Jesus could exhibit the exemplary expression of love. The key to Cobb's understanding is the notion that the Logos "co-constituted" Jesus' "I" (83). He describes "ordinary Christian existence" as that in which "the 'I', constituted by conformation to its own past, experiences the new possibility provided by the Logos as challenging it from without. It is to be taken account of. It may be felt to some extent as help, to some extent as demand and threat. A person may conform to a considerable degree to the possibility provided by the Logos. But the Logos is felt as a force other than the self and as acting in relation to the self within the total synthesis that is the actual experience."(84). In this "most familiar" structure of existence the self confronts the Logos as one option amongst many. The power for creative transformation is present, but only as one element in the myriad of possibilities, one facet in the polyhedron of potentiality. But, and this is Cobb's crucial point, this is not the only structure of existence. He mentions a very young child (the self is constituted by immediate experience) or a primitive tribal existence (identity is based on tribal rather than personal experience) as examples of other forms. The particular alternative which interests Cobb is that in which "the presence of the Logos would share in constituting selfhood; that is, it would be identical with the center or principle in terms of which other elements in experience are

(83) Chapter three presents an account of a Process theory of the self. I describe it here because it forms an important aspect of Cobb's christology. It is worth noting that he avoids talk of a "common human nature", "there is little common human nature other than the uniquely human capacity to be shaped in history into a wide variety of structures of existence."(p136).

(84) *ibid.* p139.

The Inspiration: Faith.

ordered."(85). Again I quote a complete paragraph,

"In that structure the appropriation of one's personal past would be just that ideal appropriation made possible by the lure of creative novelty that is the immanent Logos. If this occurred, the usual tension between the human aim and the ideal possibility of self - actualization that is the Logos would not occur. The relation of the person to God would not be the confrontation of an 'I' by a 'Thou'. That confrontation assumes that the 'I' desires its existence elsewhere than from the 'Thou' and is then modified in that relation. That is the case when the 'I' is constituted by its reenactment of elements in preceding experiences of the person and its anticipation of its own projections into the future. Then the Logos may be gratefully received and its claim may be recognized as a just and righteous one, but it is felt as coming from outside the 'I' and as challenging the natural tendencies of the 'I' to seek its own narrower interests. But in the structure now under consideration, the 'I' in each moment is constituted as much in the subjective reception of the lure to self - actualization that is the call and presence of the Logos as it is in continuity with the personal past. This structure of existence would be the incarnation of the Logos in the fullest meaningful sense."(86).

He anticipates what presents itself as the first objection to this account of the "I" in his next sentence. He affirms that the self is not abolished but perfected by its identification with the Logos. Human selfhood, he is claiming is not diminished if the "I" is co-constituted by the Logos. To conclude this brief introduction to Cobb's second phase in christology, Jesus is related to Christ because Jesus' self, being co-constituted by Logos, implies that Jesus is the process of

(85) *ibid.* p139.

(86) *ibid.* p139'40.



## The Inspiration: Faith.

creative transformation which is named Christ. It will be noted that, although not primary in his discussion, Cobb retains his argument for the uniqueness of Jesus, based upon the manner in which the "I" or "self" of Jesus is structured. In that respect, his later christology echoes that of "A Whiteheadian Christology". The contrast between the two is most apparent when one considers that in his early work he explicitly states an intention to "intelligibly affirm the uniqueness of Jesus", whereas he shifts his position to concentrate on the universality of Christ. Interestingly, he finds that it is necessary to affirm the former in order to relate the latter to Jesus. That is, in order that his statement about the universality of Christ can be relevant to Jesus, he arrives at a position in which the uniqueness of Jesus is a necessary corollary.

With reference to Pittenger's christology I noted that the link between the "initial aim" and the human being was not as obvious or explicit as he assumed. Cobb, too, makes that assumption. The "I", he suggests, can incorporate the Logos in its selfhood, where the Logos is present as the initial aim. This notion of the person responding immediately and directly to an initial aim will be considered in the next chapter. Although Cobb and Pittenger develop christologies which are different, there are also similarities. Perhaps the most striking of these is that they both take seriously the person of Jesus: Pittenger, by stressing the response of the person to God's initiative, Cobb, by highlighting how the Logos is present in the structure of the person. The primary difference is one of emphasis. Cobb concentrates on a philosophical explication of, firstly the uniqueness of Jesus, secondly, the universality of Christ whereas Pittenger is more concerned with demonstrating how Jesus is important for Christians, employing "faith - type" statements as opposed to philosophical ones.

The Inspiration: Faith.

The christology of Schubert Ogden must be interpreted in the light of the following quotation, "there is not the slightest evidence that God has acted in Christ in anyway different from the way in which he primordially acts in every other event.... and even if it could be established that he had, it is clear that such an occurrence would not be of the slightest moment to me as an existing self who must win or lose himself in decision here and now."(87). Griffin is clear about the dilemma which, he claims, inevitably results, "if God acts the same way in relation to the event of Jesus as he acts in relation to every other event, and if theology can only make statements about God which apply to his relation to every event, it would seem that Ogden has made it doubly impossible to assert that Jesus is the decisive act of God."(88). I propose here to outline Ogden's christology, note Griffin's response to it and then proceed to look at Griffin's alternative. This approach implies, as will become evident, that there is a distinct similarity in their christology.

If the quotation from Griffin draws our attention to one aspect of Ogden's christology it is equally important to note another. Ogden's theology cannot be extracted from its context of existential relevance. That is evident from the second half of the above quotation (89). This existentialist concern is perhaps the chief reason why Ogden is in agreement with the "crucial insight of the neoclassical theism Hartshorne has pioneered in developing" which insists that "God is to be

(87) "Bultmann's Project of Demythologization", Journal of Religion 37/3 1957 p169.

(88) Griffin, "Schubert Ogden's Christology and the Possibilities of Process Philosophy." PPCT p349.

(89) See also, for example, the discussion in chapter two of The Point of Christology. The "question christology answers" is the "existential question" because "it has to do with the ultimate meaning of one's own existence as a human being and, therefore, is and must be asked at least implicitly by anyone who exists humanly at all."



conceived in strict analogy with the human self or person."(90). Consequently, "but, if God is thus to be conceived in strict analogy to the human self, his action must be understood in strict analogy to the action of man."(91). Prior to a description of God's action, therefore, it is necessary to clarify the notion of a human act. Ogden identifies the primary meaning of "human act" following the tradition of Heidegger and Bultmann and, in Process thought, Hartshorne. Behind public acts, which are the observable results of human actions, there are the acts which constitute the self, primarily the decisions facing the self when it defines its own purpose or intention. Such internal acts of the self are of two kinds, either "it can open itself to the world and make its

(90) Reality of God p175. In Point of Christology he states, "...the whole notion of metaphysical analogy... involves serious logical difficulties.... Consequently, the conclusion to which I have finally come is that one can continue to make Christology dependent on a categorial metaphysical theism only at the risk of its theoretical credibility. As a matter of fact, considering the seriousness of the difficulties that metaphysical analogy involves, I strongly suspect that this kind of a metaphysical theism can hardly be less of a problem in answering the truth of Christology than the mythological theism that I, at least, once intended to demythologize by it."(p136'9) And yet, "I have left no doubt whatever that the christological formulation that Jesus is the Liberator necessarily implies the strict metaphysical assertion that the ultimate ground of the freedom that Jesus decisively re-presents is the boundless love of God."(p146). So, although in his later work his confidence in metaphysical analogy has diminished, he remains convinced that strict metaphysical assertions are necessary. He calls this the "transcendental metaphysics" derived from Hartshorne. O'Donnell notes "the consequences of (Ogden's) position are quite significant... Theology cannot justify its assertions merely by appealing to special revelatory experiences or to the Word of God. According to Ogden, theology can avoid this cul-de-sac only by vindicating its assertions through a fully developed theistic metaphysics."(O'Donnell p59). Without entering the debate in any depth, it appears to me that Whitehead's dictum God is not an exception but rather the chief exemplification (PR p343) guarantees that a degree of analogy is appropriate. One's interpretation of "chief" in this context is important, but the fact that God is an "exemplification" (no matter how "different") ensures similarity. Furthermore it is only by assuming that some analogy exists between God and man that one is able to make "God-talk" relevant to the human situation.

(91) Reality of God. p176. Deleting "strict" from that quotation leaves its essential meaning intact.

The Inspiration: Faith.

decisions by sensitively responding to all the influences that bear upon it or it may close itself against its world and make its decisions on the basis of a much more restricted sensitivity than is actually possible for it."(92). Ogden is correct to label the first as the self who loves, the second as the self who is estranged from the world. Alternatively, he could contrast them as authentic and inauthentic selfhood respectively. Whatever terminology is used, the point is clear, the true meaning of the term "human act" is precisely the inner act whereby the self is constituted as a self who loves.

Invoking Wesley's description of God as "pure unbounded love" Ogden continues, "I take this to imply that the primary meaning of God's action is the act whereby, in each new present, he constitutes himself as God by participating fully and completely in the world of his creatures."(93).

In the realm of human actions Ogden is particularly interested by those which are "peculiarly ours in a way that others are not.. This is particularly true of those distinctively human actions in which, through word and deed, we give symbolic expression to our own inner beings and understandings."(94). These are significant because as characteristic

(92) *ibid.* p177.

(93) *ibid.* p177. There is a point of methodological significance here. Ogden's affirmation of the "pure unbounded love" of God is prior to any metaphysical statement about, or justification of, Divine actions. In one sense, however, that is precisely the implication of Whitehead's "chief exemplification" notion, God is the perfection of love. Without a metaphysical basis for the statement, Ogden would stand accused of making mythological statements about God, which is exactly what he wishes to avoid. Ogden understands acts of God in the world as analogous to a body - mind relationship (following Hartshorne). He says, "because (God's) love or power of participation in the being of others is literally boundless there are no gradations of intimacy of the creatures to him... The world is, as it were, his sense organ, and his interaction with every creature is unimaginably immediate and direct."(p178).

(94) *ibid.* p181.

The Inspiration: Faith.

actions they reveal (or "uniquely re-present") the self to others. This analysis is the key to understanding how an act of man can become an act of God. If, in our human act we give "symbolic expression" to those acts by which God is constituted God, his "creative and redemptive"(95) acts, then the human acts actually become God's act in a sense "analogous to the sense in which some of our own symbolic actions are our acts in a way others are not". It is important to note that Ogden retains the use of analogy at this point. Our own acts are not precise representations of our inner, constituting acts, they only re-present or reveal those acts. Similarly, human acts which re-present God's creative and redemptive activity are not exact replicas but symbolic expressions. Crucial to Ogden's position is the fact that any act can become an act of God, "insofar as it is received by someone as a symbol of God's creative and redemptive action."(96). The reception of the act is as important as the objective validity of the act of re-presentation. In summary, there are human acts in which "nothing less than the transcendent action of God himself is re-presented, they are also acts of God, that is, they are acts of God analogously to the way in which our outer acts are our acts insofar as they re-present our own characteristic decisions as selves or persons."(97).

The christological application of this analysis of acts of God is that it enables Ogden to affirm how Jesus is the decisive act of God. He says, "....to say of any historical event that it is the 'decisive' act of God can only mean that, in it, in distinction from all other historical events, the ultimate truth about our existence before God is normatively re-presented or revealed. The decisiveness of the event, in

(95) *ibid.* p183. The phrase "creative and redemptive" acts of God will be a central part of this thesis.

(96) *ibid.* p183.

(97) *ibid.* p183.

The Inspiration: Faith.

other words, lies in its power to decide between all the different and conflicting historical claims to reveal the divine logos or meaning everywhere discernible to our experience."(98). The notion of "normative" is not immediately reconciled with Ogden's claim "that any event ever becomes such a decisive act of God is, naturally, also a function of its being received and understood by someone as having decisive revelatory power. A revelation is not only a revelation of something, but also a revelation to somebody."(99). I think it is important to emphasise that the re-presentation of the revelation in Jesus becomes normative when it is received as such. This, of course, echoes Pittenger's views on "importance". To claim that Jesus is the decisive act of God is to claim that in him, in his acts which are symbolic of God's creative and redemptive activity, "there is expressed that understanding of human existence which is, in fact, the ultimate truth about our life before God."(100). Once we receive the re-presentation through Jesus we are able to realize authentic existence as human beings. Ogden carries the argument one stage further to state that, because God's creative and redemptive action is decisively re-presented in Jesus, "this can only mean that he actually is God's decisive act."(101).

A possible criticism of Ogden at this point is the extent to which

(98) *ibid.* p184. "re-presentation" implies that what is revealed in Jesus is no different than what is presented to man in God's original revelation. See Christ without Myth p156.

(99) *ibid.* p185.

(100) *ibid.* p186.

(101) *ibid.* p186. Ogden realizes that his argument presupposes a certain interpretation of the Gospels, that is, as a "transparent means of representing a certain possibility for understanding human existence..... expressing symbolically an understanding of our existence coram deo."(p186). He claims the support of, for example, the scholars noted in Robinson's A New Quest of the Historical Jesus. SCM 1959.

The Inspiration: Faith.

he is employing a circular argument. He defines Jesus as the decisive act of God because he re-presents a particular understanding of existence. The latter is defined as that understanding of existence which is a symbolic expression of God's creative and redemptive acts. But Ogden seems unable to decide the epistemological primacy of God or Jesus. If Jesus is the normative or decisive re-presentation of God's act, then God is known through Jesus. However, for Ogden to make that statement about Jesus he had to define God as a God of creative and redemptive action who, by virtue of his "pure unbounded love", is intimately involved with creation. In other words, he has to define the "original" revelation which Jesus decisively re-presents. There must be a prior knowledge of God, known independently of Jesus, from which it can be deduced that Jesus is the normative re-presentation of that. For Ogden, it is possible to claim that the analogy of God's action to human action enables humanity to recognise the creative and redemptive action of God. Furthermore, although Ogden has shown how Jesus can act in such a way that he re-presents or reveals a divine act - and hence becomes an act of God - he has not yet exhibited reason to extrapolate this as a decisive act. This revolves around his use of the word normative which, as I have noted, incorporates the idea of reception as decisive. He states, "no event can become a decisive act of God unless we receive it as determinative of our self - understanding."(102). Griffin's criticism of Ogden (which we shall examine shortly) is essentially aimed at that point. How, he asks, can Jesus be decisive if this depends upon our subjective reception of him?

One of the most important corollaries of Ogden's christology is developed in Point of Christology. He says, ".. the conditions of asserting a christological predicate in no way require that Jesus must

(102) Reality of God p185.



The Inspiration: Faith.

have perfectly actualized the possibility of authentic self - understanding. On the contrary, because the function of any christological predicate is to assert somehow that Jesus is the decisive re-presentation of the meaning of God for us, and hence the meaning of ultimate reality for us, the only condition of truthfully asserting it is satisfied if the God whose gift and demand are made fully explicit through Jesus is indeed what is ultimately real..."(103). Jesus is the decisive act of God because he re-presents God's promise and demand, not because he himself actualized that same promise and demand. This frees the theologian from the quagmire surrounding the contentious debate of Jesus' perfection (104). However, it does leave unanswered the question as to whether Jesus of Nazareth actually is the re-presentation of God's original creative and redemptive act. As I have noted, Ogden accepts that this calls for a particular interpretation of the Gospels. He develops this interpretation, describing it as "deideologizing" or a "political interpretation."(105). The key word in this respect is "freedom", Ogden develops what is a thorough - going liberation christology. He says, "if Jesus who is said to be Christ means love in this sense (as authorizing our own possibility of authentic faith and love) one may evidently say that Jesus also means freedom."(106).

(103) Point of Christology p87.

(104) It must be noted that Ogden is not saying that Jesus did not actualize the possibility for authentic self - understanding (see Point of Christology p69) but that it is not necessary that he did so in order to validate his central christological assertion.

(105) *ibid.* p94. (where "political" is equivalent to Niebuhr's notion of the achievement of justice through the equilibria of power.)

(106) *ibid.* 122. Note that he adds "but even if one argues... that any claim about Jesus' own perfect freedom is as theologically unnecessary as it is historically impossible, one can still join in affirming the the meaning of Jesus for us is precisely the possibility of the existence of freedom."(p122). I shall say more about the freedom of the individual in chapter three, and the freedom of Jesus in chapters four and five.



## The Inspiration: Faith.

At this point it is possible to make a few comments in summary of this aspect of Ogden's christology. First, concerning his use of analogy. Although he has subsequently written against the position, he makes use of analogy in order to relate God's actions to human actions. God, he suggests, is, because his nature is "pure unbounded love", intimately involved with creation, in a manner analogous to the body - mind relation. Second, he argues that Jesus is the decisive re-presentation of the original revelation of God's creative and redemptive activity. It is important to note that "decisive" is a product of the mode of reception and, in addition, this christological affirmation does not depend upon Jesus' perfect actualization of the possibilities authorized through the revelation. Several issues are raised for further consideration. His account of "human action" must be scrutinized in the light of Process philosophy, along with his notions of God's creative and redemptive action and "freedom". Furthermore, one might question the extent to which "decisiveness" is achieved or, indeed, whether his picture of Jesus satisfies the Gospel accounts. Chapters three, four and five will respond to these issues.

Griffin's examination of Ogden's christology (107) notes those questions and it is to Griffin's response that I now direct attention. He agrees that analogy is a necessary mode of thinking, "unless we have a way of thinking of God's action as analogous to our own we have no way of speaking intelligibly of God's action at all." (108). He also defines a "special act" of a person as one which is peculiarly his, but, at least to some extent, the difference between his and Ogden's position is reducible to their respective understandings of what that means. For

(107) "Schubert Ogden's Christology and the Possibilities of Process Philosophy", PPCT.

(108) Process Christology p206. He expresses agreement with Gilkey on this point.

The Inspiration: Faith.

Ogden, a special act is one which re-presents or reveals the inner person, the true self, of the one who acts if, and only if, that act is received by someone as revelatory. Ogden, therefore, equates a special act with a revelatory one. Griffin, however, implies a distinction. He says, "in my usage the emphasis is on the causal relation between the inner being of the person and the nature of the outer act... A revelatory act would have both an objective and a subjective aspect; the objective aspect of it would be the special act."(109). This differs from Ogden's view, in which "the 'specialness' of a special act is entirely a function of someone other than the person whose special act it is."(110). Griffin's fundamental criticism of that position is that it fails to do justice to the objective intention behind the act, "when we say that a particular outer action is peculiarly ours we mean that the act is such that it in fact is an expression of our inner being, and thus we mean to imply something about the intentionality of the act."(111). He wants to add the notion of motive or intention which lies behind the act to its subjective appropriation by another person, before one can attribute revelatory status to that act. His examples go some way to illustrate his point. An act which appears to be unselfish might, in fact, have been inspired by very selfish motives. To adapt his own example, (112) the motorist who relinquishes the opportunity to park in the last remaining space may either have failed to see the empty slot, or wanted to avoid the possibility of the traffic warden noticing his expired tax disc, or acted out of kindness to his fellow motorists. Griffin's point is essentially that the external, observable, act remains constant despite the variations in the intention. How,

(109) PPCT p352.

(110) *ibid.* p353.

(111) *ibid.* p353.

(112) Process Christology p212.

The Inspiration: Faith.

therefore, can the mere reception of an act reveal the actor's inner self? Thus, "the specialness of a special act is partially a function of the person whose special act it is."(113). Similarly, for special acts of God, "the specialness of it would have to be partially a function of God."(114).

The implication of this is, for an act of God to be a special act, God must somehow act differently. Ogden's desire to avoid mythological language required that he negates that notion; God does not act differently in his "special acts". In contrast, Griffin believes that the opposite affirmation is necessary, to stress the role of God's initiative behind his special acts.

Prior to a brief description of how Griffin develops his own christology, we should ask whether his analysis of Ogden is justified. Particularly, is Griffin's claim that Ogden's definition of a special act entails that it is "entirely a function of someone other than the person whose special act it is"(115) correct? One recalls that Ogden made an early distinction between different kinds of human act. The true meaning of the term is, he claimed, precisely the act by which the self is constituted as a self which loves. This definition includes a notion of intentionality, the sense in which the intention of the self is to constitute itself as an authentic, loving, self. Acts which do not enter that category are not human acts in the proper meaning of that term. This implies that, although it is the recipient who distinguishes

(113) PPCT p354.

(114) *ibid.* p354. He explains the word "partially" as follows, "the specialness is also partially a function of the creature, since the creature has a certain freedom in regard to actualizing God's intention for it."(fn.35 p354). This is also analogous to the human case because the outer act is only partially a function of the mind's intention. It depends, in part, upon the body's ability to perform the intention which is given to it.

(115) *ibid.* p353.

The Inspiration: Faith.

between a special act (a revelatory one) and an ordinary act, it is, nevertheless, possible for Ogden to point to the intentionality which permeates the act. If the inner act constitutes the self as lover, the outer, visible, act permits its reception as a revelation of that self as lover (116).

Griffin's motorist example illustrates the difficulties in making the transition from an observed act to a statement of intention. However, in a wider context, it fails to convey, in any significant sense, the point Griffin attempts to express. It is by no means obvious how that particular situation would relate to an act whereby a self is constituted as a self which loves. Is "love" a notion which has relevance to single, isolated acts? In other words, does it make sense to speak about solitary acts as being responsible for, or permissive of, a revelation of a loving, authentic self? These questions are discussed further in the following chapter.

There is an additional difficulty inherent in Griffin's argument once he leaves motorists and begins to discuss God. He assumes that, in the case of human acts, the intention behind the act can vary, it may be selfish or it may constitute the self as lover. But, is it possible to regard God's intention as varying? Surely, faith insists that God's intention is constant, the divine vision does not vary and his acts are always motivated by his "pure unbounded love". That sense of permanence is conveyed in the words, "Abide with me..."(117). It is also the

(116) Griffin might reply that, according to Ogden, it is irrelevant whether, in fact, the self is constituted by acts of love. If the observer thinks it is, that is receives an act as such, then the condition for a revelation of the self as lover is satisfied. My point is, for Ogden, this cannot be a revelation of that self because unless the self actually is constituted as a self which loves, there is no such self. And it is meaningless to talk about a revelation of a non - existing self.

(117) See Pailin, David, "God as Creator in a Whiteheadian Understanding."

The Inspiration: Faith.

meaning conveyed by Whitehead's "best for that impasse" formula. Whatever the circumstances of the world may be, God always desires the "best", the maximization of beauty (118). The crucial implication is, if God's acts are always motivated by his self as lover (reiterating once again Wesley's words), all his acts are (potentially: subject to their reception) all special, they all reveal him as God. As Griffin himself notes, "God's acts in the primary sense are formally all the same... he acts by constituting himself in each moment."(119). It is not possible to avoid the conclusion to that statement, that, therefore, all God's acts are potentially revelatory (120). After considering the fact that Ogden's theory incorporates "intention" and having noted the difficulties of Griffin's alternatives, it transpires that Ogden's analysis of action, human and divine, is not invalidated by Griffin's criticism. To conclude this section we should note how Griffin develops his christology on the basis of the previous analysis. He employs the concept of the initial aim, noting that, "a certain event would be an act of God only to the degree that the creature actualized God's will for it."(121). One's instant reaction to that should be to note that it is a statement which emphasizes the role of response, the part played by the recipient, not the intention of the person whose act it is. Secondly,

(118) Perhaps it is a simplistic interpretation, but it seems to me that the essence of, for example, the parable of the Prodigal Son is to convey the fact that God's love is constant, nothing can sway the Father's love for his son.

(119) A Process Christology p214.

(120) At least, not without denying the constancy of God's intention. Additionally one might ask how one could know God's intention at any moment, unless one is able to assume that it is unchanging love. It seems to me that, unless we can treat all acts of God as potentially revealing of himself as God (as lover), we will be unable to consider any acts as being revelatory (we can have no criteria to know which ones).

(121) PPCT p356. This use of the initial aim is subject to the same comments made in connection with Pittenger and Cobb. That is, is it possible to give credibility to the notion of initial aims for men?



## The Inspiration: Faith.

he observes, quite correctly, that some of our actions have little inherent ability to express our inner selves. For example, the act of cleaning one's teeth has few possibilities for "personal expression". Two points follow. Firstly, the circumstances of the event in question are a product of the world's response, not of God's initiative. To be more accurate one should say that the impasse, which is a given for God, is a product of the world's response and the divine vision because that response is, of course, itself a response to an initiative. To that extent, therefore, God's opportunities in the world are limited by what the world gives to God. Similarly, it is possible to choreograph a dying swan because it has the potential to convey the richness of human emotion, but it is unlikely that the act of tying one's shoe laces will ever be danced on stage with the same effect. Different situations and different actions have various possibilities to reveal human nature. Secondly, despite the fact that God is confronted by a world with only limited potential for his self-expression (in acts of creative and redemptive love) his intention remains constant, he seeks to maximise love, within those predefined boundaries. Although the "whatness" of the intention varies, the intention itself is invariant.

Griffin uses his analysis of a special act, and the possibilities for a revelatory act, to respond to what he calls the problem of christology, "to understand, not how God could be present in Jesus, but how God could be present in him in a special way, so that Jesus would be especially revelatory of God's nature."(122). Rather than providing a comprehensive survey of Griffin's christology it suffices to make a few

(122) Process Christology p180. He quotes, as general support for a "revelation christology", Whitehead's "the essence of Christianity is the appeal to the life of Christ as a revelation of the nature of God and of his agency in the world."(Adventures of Ideas p167). Sponheim says of Griffin that revelation is the "controlling category" in his christology (Faith and Process p161).



## The Inspiration: Faith.

brief comments about the general issues. Both Ogden and Griffin offer "revelation christologies" and points common to both can be made. Firstly, it will be necessary to clarify the notion of God acting in order to ascertain the possibility for revelation. Then, one must discuss the nature of the reception of revelation and, indeed, the content of revelation. The discussion must also resolve the debate between Ogden and Griffin regarding the subjective and objective aspects of a special act. These, and other, issues which have emerged in this chapter must be discussed in more detail. Primarily, it is evident that the first task must be to examine how God acts in the world (123). This must consider the world as understood in terms of "initial aims" and how this relates to the notion of man's response to God (124). Particular emphasis must be given to the question of what constitutes a human person and how, therefore, the response to God is possible (125). Then one can understand how the world, and the human individual is able to actualize the potentiality in the relation with God (126) and, finally, how it is possible to conceive of God acting in a "special way". One might also note that the four authors cited in this chapter have employed different terminology in their christologies. Pittenger stressed "importance", Cobb "uniqueness / universality", Ogden "normative / decisive" and Griffin, the "intention" behind a revelatory act. It is not the purpose of this thesis, however, to risk sacrificing critical analysis for the sake of mere word-play. The study revolves

(123) This is the basic key to any christology. All four of the authors examined here make it a central point.

(124) This problem has not been considered by any of the Process theologians discussed in this chapter. It has been assumed that the notion of a man responding to his initial aim is intelligible.

(125) This will be based upon Cobb's account of the self, but Ogden's account of "action" will also be relevant.

(126) The essence of a "response" christology.

## The Inspiration: Faith.

around a discussion of the concepts involved in the christological adventure, not the linguistic subtleties which pertain to considerations of language. Having made that point it is also worth noting that language is important. Any term or phrase conveys more than its dictionary definition, it might be suited to a philosophical statement or it might express an essential religious sentiment. During the course of the discussion I shall attempt to restrain the temptation to allow emotive words to disguise the real issues and, conversely, not to permit philosophical terminology to dominate whatever "sentimentality" or emotion might be a necessary adjunct to the study. Both sides of that qualification are equally important.

The Process christologies presented in this chapter have been assumed to represent a broad statement of the Christian faith. The issues which have been derived from them must now be scrutinised in the framework of Whitehead's vision, the categories of Process philosophy.

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**Analysis: Metaphysics.**  
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The christological adventure is not, primarily, dedicated to the individual man, Jesus. Rather, its chief concern must remain with God or, more accurately, God in his relationship to - and with - the world. Hence Sponheim, "while the Christian passion of faith may appropriately focus on the figure of Jesus, Christian theology only serves faith well if it can speak clearly of God. It is, after all, the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" and, similarly, he speaks of the "logical and theological dependence of Christology on the doctrine of God."(1). This relationship forms the subject of the present chapter.

The use of the word "world" might not appear to present any difficulties. However, it is necessary to define precisely how the term is being employed in this context. The "world" might mean - and in one sense it obviously does mean - the world of real things, the Castle rock, inanimate objects, living cells and human persons. And yet, in Whitehead's philosophy, the "world" is thought of as being composed of actual entities, which are hardly instantly recognisable from the previous list. Although, of course, these "two" worlds are the same, it is not a trivial task to relate the metaphysical principles which govern the latter to the "real" things of the former. The intention of this chapter is to demonstrate that it is not possible, within Process thought, to apply the metaphysical principles which are relevant to the microcosmos directly to the macrocosmic world. The first section of this chapter deals exclusively with the world as it is composed of actual entities. This will enable the next section to relate this to

(1) Faith and Process p179. But such a claim is not always self - evident. For example, "death of God" theologians do attempt to speak of Christ without reference to God. See, for example, Paul van Buren's The Secular Meaning of the Gospel or, particularly noteworthy in this context, Sherburne's article "Whitehead without God", Process Philosophy and Christian Thought (PPCT) p306. Other theologians argue that all knowledge of God is achieved through Christ. For example, Mackinnon writes, "for Barth there are no problems in theology which are not in the end Christocentric." (Borderlands p65).

The analysis: Metaphysics.

the world of sensory perception and human experience (2).

It is not necessary to invoke subtle distinctions in order to make the point that the use of the word "God" is even more problematic! Neville provides a dramatic statement of this when he writes, "Whitehead's conception of God is largely mistaken and an alternative conception is to be preferred."(3). We might not be overly concerned by this claim if it were not for one potentially devastating fact; Neville arrives at his conclusion after a study of the principles of Process philosophy. The impact of his claim is precisely that it is based on the same criteria which Whitehead used to formulate his concept of God. It is a debate internal to Process thought. It is also, therefore, a debate which cannot be ignored by any theologically orientated enquiry into Process thought. Although space will not permit a full examination of his arguments it is nevertheless essential to demonstrate how they may be refuted. It is not necessary to describe in detail Whitehead's concept of God, our concern is how God relates to the world rather than with a particular concept. However, two aspects are relevant. Firstly, the notion that God is a single actual entity and, secondly, the function of God in the creative process.

Whitehead introduced God as a derivative notion, a feature of his thought which is portrayed by some as an example of rationalistic natural theology. For example, MacQuarrie writes, "Whitehead's philosophy, which, for all its elaboration and difficult terminology,

(2) Blyth uses the terms micro- and macro- in Whitehead's Theory of Knowledge (p13). The use of "macro-" is slightly different because, for Blyth, it refers to the transitions between actual entities. However, insofar as a "real" thing is a result of those transitions, its general usage is similar.

(3) Creativity and God p2. See also Leclerc, I., "The Problem of God in Whitehead's System", lecture (undelivered) Univ. of Manchester. Nov.1984, "Whitehead's conception of God as an 'actual entity' is unacceptable."(p26).

The analysis: Metaphysics.

presents an argument for the existence of God which is 'primarily the traditional one from the order of the universe to a ground of order.'"(4): Et hoc dicimus Deum! Cobb, however, is aware that the situation is more complex than MacQuarrie's attempt to label Whitehead a rationalist allows. He states, "the argument is not a proof... "(5). However one wishes to interpret the "argument" it is clear that Whitehead did not find room for God merely to satisfy a relic of religious feeling, "Whitehead was brought to speak of God by his reflection on the relation of events to actuality on one side and possibility on the other."(6).

This "argument" is presented in a convenient and clear fashion by Christian (7),

- A) The real world is made up of actual entities.
- B) Some real things have temporal beginnings.
- C) Some actual entities have temporal beginnings.

The conclusion is given by,

- P) There is a primordial and everlasting actual entity.

P is contingently true if any of the premises A,B,C, are only contingently true and necessarily true if all the premises are also necessarily true. If one examines premise A, it transpires that P can

(4) Thinking about God p133. He is quoting Cobb, Christian Natural Theology p169.

(5) Christian Natural Theology p170. His "alternative interpretation" is as follows, "There is a deep human intuition that the order of the world requires for its explanation some principle of order that cannot entirely be attributed to the entities that constitute the world. To many people, this intuition amounts to a virtual certitude."(p170).

(6) Cobb, "Man in Process" p41. Hocking quotes Whitehead, "I should never have included it, if it had not been strictly required for descriptive purposes." (op.cit. p16).

(7) "The Concept of God as a Derivative Notion", p195 Process and Divinity



The analysis: Metaphysics.

only be contingently true. Christian suggests two reasons why this is so. Firstly, "(Whitehead) does not claim to have deduced his system from premises which are clear, certain and sufficient.... He does not deduce his system; he constructs it"(8), or, in Whitehead's words, "metaphysical categories are not dogmatic statements of the obvious; they are tentative formulations of the ultimate generalities."(9). Second, Christian continues, "he does not claim that all possible alternatives to his system are absurd". That is, it is possible to replace A by, say, A' or A'', without necessary absurdity.

Although this analysis mitigates against the necessary truth of Whitehead's need for a conception of God (10) two points are relevant. In this context the argument proceeds assuming the basic validity of premise A. Furthermore, it is reasonable to suggest that if the corollaries and subsequent implications of that are shown to be valid (11) then this is a sufficient justification for that assumption. Christian summarizes his argument, "These provide a strong meaning for saying that God as conceived in Whitehead's philosophy is a necessary being. But saying the concept of God is the concept of a necessary being is not the same as saying the concept of God is a necessary concept. It is true that it is systematically necessary; without it Whitehead's speculative system would be inconsistent or incomplete or both. But it is categorically contingent, since it is a derivative concept. And since its existential truth - claim depends not only on

(8) op.cit. p196.

(9) PR p8.

(10) Perhaps, however, we can agree with Jordan, "it is fair to say that the place of God in Whitehead's philosophy is at least as essential as wheels to a wheelbarrow." New Shapes of Reality p129.

(11) Where valid implies logical, coherent, applicable and adequate.

The analysis: Metaphysics.

the consistency and coherence of Whitehead's system but also on its adequacy, the concept of God in Whitehead's philosophy is existentially contingent."(12).

Neville argues that the conclusion P, a "primordial and everlasting actual entity", is an inadequate concept of God. In his chapter entitled "Process and Eternity" he is concerned with two, intimately related, questions; how does God know the world, and how does the world know God? Whitehead suggests that God is a single actual entity, so that if God and the world are able to "know" each other then it is necessary that there should be prehensions which take place between contemporary occasions. But Whitehead's definition of contemporary occasions would appear to prevent this, "A and B are mutually contemporary when A does not contribute to the datum for B, and B does not contribute to the datum for A"(13), and, "actual entities are called 'contemporary' when neither belongs to the 'given' world defined by the other."(14). This definition clearly states that two contemporary entities are not available for prehension by each other. This follows from Whitehead's insistence that only actual things can be prehended. In response to this, various theories have been forthcoming which allow prehensions to take place between an entity and an incomplete entity, or a phase of an entity (15).

An alternative approach argues that God is a society of actual entities. This is best represented by Hartshorne's social conception of God (16). The immediate advantage of this concept is that it replies directly to Neville's criticism of Whitehead's concept. If God is a

(12) op.cit. p198. As we shall see later it has also been argued that the concept of God is unnecessary in Whitehead's system.

(13) PR p123.

(14) PR p66.

The analysis: Metaphysics.

society of entities then he canprehend the world, and he is available for prehension by the world, in exactly the same manner in which any entity canprehend any other, non - contemporary, entity. Neville accepts that point but raises two further issues about it.

Firstly, "because each divine occasion prehends the absolute and necessary nature of divinity in a previous divine occasion, God is always and everywhere subject to the strictures of necessity.... but most theistic religious traditions suggest that God, in at least some respects, transcends the limits of necessity and perhaps even creates them." Secondly, "if God is limited to the society of divine experience - of the world and of divine occasions - the contingent and relative occasions must contain the universal principles of necessity exhaustively within themselves; Yet it is difficult to see how a universal can be exhausted in even an infinite set of instantiations."(17).

Neville's first point echoes Ely's "the God that Whitehead derives from metaphysical analysis is not the God of religions."(18). But, that is not the correct test to apply to a doctrine of God, as, indeed, Neville has already noted. Although that is an element of his

(15) The argument has been developed by Ford, (see Neville op.cit. p16 n17). He suggests that because an incomplete phase of an actual entity is determinately individual it is available to be prehended as such. However, because there is no possibility of existentially isolating an incomplete phase it is only possible to know them as abstractions. It is, therefore, only the idea of an incomplete phase which is known. Thompson's Whitehead's Philosophy of Religion surveys these notions. Janzen presents an interesting account of the presence within each other of two contemporary entities, see "Modes of Presence and the Communion of Saints" in Religious Experience in Process Theology, p152.

(16) See, for example The Divine Relativity

(17) Creativity and God p33

(18) "The Religious Availability of Whitehead's God: A Critical Analysis." p207, EWP.

The analysis: Metaphysics.

objection, the second issue is more important. Neville is questioning the process by which the society which is "God" is capable of ensuring that the next member of that society is also "God". This is the question of continuity.

The extent of Neville's examination of Hartshorne's account is detailed and comprehensive. To justify his position on continuity Hartshorne has to "deal extensively with the problem of which experiences are normative for theories and how theories give better or worse renderings of those experiences. For reasons having to do with his theory of apriori metaphysics he does not take up this question"(19). It is not the purpose of this study to examine this general question, but it is possible to summarize Neville's critique. If the metaphysical conditions for God are not only possible but necessary then "there must be some existing actual entity exhibiting the metaphysical conditions... each occasion in the divine life is an instance of necessary existence."(20). But, in order to ensure continuity, the following must also be true, "any subsequent event would prehend the necessity in the antecedent divine event and have to exhibit it". Neville states the problem, "but, I argue, if the necessity is completely contained as an abstract part of the antecedent divine event, there is no reason for there to be any subsequent divine event to prehend it. Only if the abstract part of the divine nature is normative over possible divine events could those possible divine events be necessitated before they objectify the necessity prehend from their antecedents."(21). Essentially, Neville is seeking to understand God in such a way that God exhibits aseity, he is a se esse, and does not rely

(19) op.cit. p54. (It must say something about theologians that a priori has become apriori!)

(20) ibid. p64.

(21) ibid. p64.

The analysis: Metaphysics.

on any other entity in order to be himself. This runs contrary to the thrust of Process thinking which, to quote a well known saying of Whitehead, claims that, "it is as true to say that God creates the World, as that the World creates God"(22). Consequently, one can evade Neville's criticisms by affirming the truth of Process that, indeed, God cannot exhibit "necessity" because of the difficulties he describes. It is not the role of philosophy to judge whether that detracts from the God of religion (23) but it certainly does not erode the God of Process. The question of "continuity" in Process thought is raised in the second section of this chapter, but it is interesting to note that Neville himself mentions that Whitehead's Category of the Ultimate "guarantees a new one out of the many."(24).

Neville restates his objection to Hartshorne, "the claim made throughout Creative Synthesis and Philosophical Method that something abstract can be contained in something concrete."(25). Although this problem is outwith the remit of this study, it is worth observing that he proceeds to present his objection in a slightly different light, "with respect to how universals are ingredient in the world, this presents no problem... but with respect to the formal possibility of those universal structures, Hartshorne's theory gives no account."(26). A similar objection is raised in the chapter entitled "The category of the One and the Many". Focusing on the Category of the Ultimate and the Ontological Principle it is possible to state the objection without relating the discussion to the complexities of Hartshorne's a priori

(22) PR p348.

(23) But it is the purpose of this study to intimate that it does not.

(24) op.cit. p64.

(25) op.cit. p57.

(26) op.cit. p61.



The analysis: Metaphysics.

metaphysics. According to Neville, the latter accounts for cosmological unity whereas the former fails to account for ontological unity.

The Ontological principle states that "any condition in any particular instance in the process of becoming is to be accounted for either in terms of the decision of some antecedent in its actual world, or in the decision of its own concrescence."(27). Expressed more simply, it states that the only reasons or explanations must be in terms of actual entities (28). Neville considers that it is misnamed, and it should more accurately be called the cosmological principle (29) because it accounts for cosmological unity. As he says, "the kind of question the ontological principle interprets is how this or that ingression of eternal objects occurred... it does not answer the question why there is any decision at all... or why there are actual entities."(30). In his view, these latter ontological questions are supposedly dealt with by the Category of the Ultimate. One, Many and Creativity are the notions making up this category and the relationship between them is correctly described by Neville, "it is inconceivable that there be a many or a one except that one is conceived as a unification of many, and many is conceived as a disjunction of such unifications of manys. The process of unifying many into one is creativity; the process is creative since, when the many is unified into one, there is one more singular than when the many is not unified."(31). Or, "creativity is the principle that every plurality of actual entities is creatively unified into a new actual entity."(32). Simply, "the many become one and are

(27) op.cit p37.

(28) See PR p19,24

(29) op.cit. p38.

(30) ibid. p38.

(31) ibid. p39.



The analysis: Metaphysics.

increased by one."(33). He now asks in what sense creativity is a principle, offering two accounts. First he considers the creative principle to be an empirical generalization. Then the principle states that, in fact, all pluralities are creatively unified. But, he claims, this is an inadequate ontological account because it fails to provide a reason as to why any events of creative unification exist. "In effect it fails to advance ontologically beyond the ontological principle, which, taking for granted the creative unification, accounts for the specific form in terms of decisions."(34). The Ontological question remains. The second interpretation is that the category of the Ultimate is a "normative principle determining that there must be creative unifications of manys"(35) but, since Whitehead insisted that creativity was indeterminate in abstraction from the actual entities exhibiting it, he continues, "it cannot be normative in any sense that would necessitate creativity in specific occasions". "Creativity" does not exist as an actuality apart from its manifestation in actual entities, it cannot therefore be used as a principle to determine that creativity will actually take place. This forces us to accept that the Category of the Ultimate is an empirical generalization. We then note that this accords well with Whitehead's definition of metaphysics.

The ontological question remains unanswered, the "why" persists. Of course, at this stage one could quite simply say that there is no answer: it is not possible to give a reason why there are creative actual entities. Perhaps one must say that the Category of the Ultimate is simply ultimate (36). Neville, however, continues his search for an

(32) *ibid.* p40.

(33) PR p21.

(34) *op.cit.* p41.

(35) *ibid.* p41.

The analysis: Metaphysics.

acceptable and unquestionable explanation. The next stage of his argument relates the requirement of the ontological principle to the Category of the Ultimate. Recall that the former insists that an explanation in terms of actual entities must be forthcoming so that, "according to the ontological principle there ought to be somewhere a creative decision responsible for any unification."(37). Continuing this quotation, "but the decisions of all actual entities, precisely because they are creative, cannot constitute the ontological unity as the condition for creativity." Actual entities cannot account for the Category of the Ultimate because the latter is assumed to account for the former. Therefore, he concludes, "given the ontological principle, with no possibility of an ontological decision, the ontological unity of many and one in creativity is impossible!"(38). One possible way of avoiding this conclusion would be to exempt the Category of the Ultimate from the ontological principle but, since this rather begs the question, it is not a satisfactory approach. It is also quite correct of Neville to note that "the ontological principle does not apply to ontological unity in the sense described. There is no decision responsible for the basic togetherness of one and many in creativity. Precisely because the Category of the Ultimate is the universal of universals there can be nothing 'responsible' for it. Creativity must simply be accepted as something given."(39). To summarize the argument up to this point, Neville has forced the advocate of a Whiteheadian concept of God to admit that, ultimately, the construct has no explanation. But that is not the sum of his objection to the Whiteheadian conceptuality because

(36) *ibid.* p138. See Pailin, D., "Neville's Critique of Hartshorne", Process Studies 4/3 Fall 74.

(37) *op.cit.* p43.

(38) *ibid.* p43.

(39) *ibid.* p44. He then says, "we rightly boggle at this. It is a betrayal of rational faith."

The analysis: Metaphysics.

he claims that his own alternative concept is capable of satisfying the demand for the ultimate explanation. If that is the case then its greater explanatory power will, indeed, do much to commend it. His alternative is, "that one and many are both the products of the creative act, along with the cosmological creativity that relates them... the advance made by appealing to ontological creativity is that it can be explained how such a world (ie. a world in process) is possible: it is ontologically created, not by decisions within its own process - that would be self-referentially absurd - but by a transcendent creator that makes itself creator in the act of creating... this gives a reason how there could be such a world."(40). That it does do, but the question is, is it a better reason?(41).

Neville claims that his alternative is superior because, by attributing the creative act to God, he solves the ontological question (42). This, he suggests satisfies the empiricists' sensibilities, that an "ultimately satisfying explanation consists in locating the decisive actions from which things take their form."(43). Appreciating that he wishes to distance himself from what he terms Whitehead's rationalistic

(40) *ibid.* p45.

(41) This has striking similarities to Wilmot's claim about Athanasius. He writes, "Athanasius achieves coherence where Whitehead fails because he has learned from revelation that God is the creator of everything that is, creation ex ouk onton overcomes the dichotomy which Whitehead is unable to transcend in his system." p146. Whitehead and God.

(42) The initial response to this is that Neville overlooks the question asked by countless generations of Sunday - school pupils: who created God? That ontological question is, of course, unanswerable in his system. Secondly, he claims support from the fact that his own conception of God is "closer than Whitehead's to what the Western tradition has regarded the God of religion"(p46). But, as I noted in the first chapter, he is also anxious that "genuine theology" is concerned with the "best" conception of God, not the one which "corresponds to the object of theistic faith and worship"(p75).

(43)*ibid.* p46.

The analysis: Metaphysics.

approach, this is surely to stretch the limits of empirical sensibility too far. Indeed, it seems rather more feasible that Whitehead's system, based as it is upon empirical generalization, is more likely to pass the empiricist's test. Hence, one must conclude that Neville fails to show that his system provides a better explanation or answer to the ontological question.

The next step must to show that Whitehead's system is not only equal to Neville's, insofar as both leave an unanswered question, but actually superior. The Category of the Ultimate may be rephrased to state that an inherent aspect of an actual entity is creativity. The term "actual entity" implies individual identity or singularity, which in turn "presupposes the notion of many singulars in disjunctive diversity." (44). This statement therefore includes the three elements of the Category. Thus, if there are actual entities, there will be a process of creativity. Neville asks why there are any actual entities, "of course, neither ones nor many nor creativity could exist except as together; but the question is why they exist at all." (45). Isn't that rather to miss the point? It is empirically obvious that there is something as opposed to nothing, and Whitehead's system accounts for the form of this. It is both unproductive and, ultimately, somewhat uninteresting to question why the something exists, "Hang it all! Here we are. We don't go behind that; we begin with it." (46). The search for the ultimate "why" breaks down once one realizes that the fact of the question places the enquirer in a privileged position. The

(44) *ibid.* p36.

(45) *ibid.* p44.

(46) Whitehead, quoted by Hocking, *op.cit.* p8. Why the "something" should be thought of in terms of actual entities remains a valid question. But that is not Neville's point here. He is assuming that to be the case (recall that this is a debate internal to Process thought) and asking why that something (=actual entities) exists.

The analysis: Metaphysics.

question, and the person asking it, is, itself, the only possible answer. That is, one must accept "something" as given. That is not irrational nor is it inelegant, it is existence (47).

At this stage one must question Neville's motives for postulating an alternative concept of God. It is clear that he has not managed to undermine Whitehead's conception by an analysis of the principles of Process philosophy, except, perhaps, to the extent that he illustrates the difficulties encountered with the single - entity concept of God. Lewis Ford provides the probable explanation, by suggesting that Neville's interest lies only with applying Process ideas to, and within, a created world. He is content to place Process thought in a framework dominated by a traditional Creator God model, "this idea is quite foreign to Whitehead's own intentions."(48).

Our examination of Neville's criticisms of the Whiteheadian concept of God revealed that although the ultimate ontological question is unanswered, that is no reason to reject the system. However, he does illustrate that the single - entity conception, as represented by P is problematic. In order to overcome this obstacle, it is proposed that P' becomes,

P' There is an everlasting society of actual entities.

Or, as Cobb expresses it, "an infinite succession of divine occasions of experience."(49). If this is to be justified it is necessary to show

(47) Similarly, Wilnot states that, "(Whitehead's) system provides no interpretation of the 'ultimate metaphysical ground'; it gives no reason, for example, why it is a 'creative advance into novelty' and not a destructive descent into chaos." op.cit. p66. In response, firstly, Whitehead does not claim that his system does give a reason, secondly, his concept of God, as a derivative notion, does precisely that, ie. explains why it is a creative advance and not a destructive descent.

(48) "Neville's Interpretation of Creativity", EWP p273ff.



The analysis: Metaphysics.

that P' satisfies the requirement which is met by P, recalling that P was necessary "to explain temporal actual entities.". This phrase is rather vague and we must ask in more detail what function God has in Whitehead's system. Sherburne summarizes the three main roles, (50)

1. "God preserves the past and in so doing creates significance, meaningfulness and also provides the ontological ground for the claim that truth is immortal.
2. God provides the ontological ground for eternal objects.
3. God is the source of subjective aims in temporal occasions, and in this role is the principle of limitation productive of order, the source of novelty, and the source of the real perspective standpoint within the extensive continuum for each occasion."(51).

It is, of course, no coincidence that I have used Sherburne to present the function of God in Whitehead's cosmology. He has a specific purpose in so doing, a purpose which is relevant to this inquiry. He attempts to show that,

1. In at least one of these roles the concept "God" violates the fundamental metaphysical principles of the system and thereby introduces incoherence into the scheme, and
2. that the system can be so interpreted and modified that each of these roles is superfluous (52).

Sherburne believes that it is possible to present a naturalistic

(49) Christian Natural Theology p188.

(50) PPCT p306. "Whitehead without God"

(51) In the third point Sherburne must be referring, not to the subjective aim itself, but to the initial phase of the subjective aim, the initial aim. The subjective aim is determined by the actual entity itself. See PR p67.



The analysis: Metaphysics.

interpretation of Whitehead, and the adventurer in christology must be anxious to discover whether he succeeds. In the article under consideration here, Sherburne's argument proceeds from a consideration of the metaphysical principles of Process. In the next section of this chapter we shall see that he also presents the argument based on the evidence of experience.

There are three functions of God which Sherburne examines; the "past", "eternal objects" and "initial aims". The bulk of his article is dedicated primarily to the first of these, which is only tangentially relevant to the concern here (53). Before we can tackle the force of his arguments against God as the provider of initial aims it is necessary to look at Whitehead's theory of actual entities, incorporating the idea of initial aims.

The actual entity is the basic building block of the universe, or, the "final real thing of which the world is made up."(54). One cannot go beyond it to find something more real. Whitehead follows in the metaphysical tradition of Aristotle, "endeavoring to conceive of the generic properties of a primary existent."(55). For Whitehead, this "primary existent" is an event, rather than an Aristotelian enduring substance. Each actual entity is what it becomes (56) so in order to understand the entity itself we must understand this process of

(52) *ibid.* p306. Ford presents arguments against Sherburne in "Afterword", in EWP p334. See also, "An Appraisal of Whiteheadian Nontheism", Southern Journal of Philosophy 15 1977, p27ff.

(53) The second role, God's function as the ontological ground for eternal objects, will not be considered in this study. For a comprehensive discussion of eternal objects see, for example, "Whitehead's Doctrine of Eternal Objects and its Interpretations", Tulane Studies in Philosophy XXIII. Bart F Kennedy.

(54) PR p18.

(55) Ford, EWP p314.

The analysis: Metaphysics.

becoming. Each entity becomes, or achieves satisfaction, or concreces such that "concrecence moves towards its final cause, which is its subjective aim."(57). Hence the becoming of an actual entity, what it is, is the actualization of its subjective aim. Again Whitehead, "the 'subjective aim', which controls the becoming of a subject, is that subject feeling a proposition with the subjective form of purpose to realize it in that process of self - creation."(58). The subjective aim of an actual entity is the goal which that entity envisages for itself. Or, to quote Christian, "in its self - creation the actual entity is guided by its ideal of itself as individual satisfaction and as transcendent creator. The enjoyment of this ideal is the 'subjective aim'."(59).

Christian then raises what is a crucial question, "How does the subjective aim originate? Whence comes the original idea which the concrecence adopts as its ideal?"(60). He writes, "the subjective aim grows out of the initial conceptual aim, which has as its datum a possibility not realized in the actual world."(61). The initial conceptual aim is the initial aim (62). Christian thus gives a satisfactory reply to his initial question. The subjective aim arises from the subject's feeling of the initial aim. But this does not entirely satisfy our curiosity! We must ask the same question about the

(56) Category of Explanation no.IX. "That how an actual entity becomes constitutes what that actual entity is." PR p23.

(57) PR p210.

(58) PR p25.

(59) An Interpretation of Whitehead's Metaphysics. p23. My italics.

(60) *ibid.* p157.

(61) *ibid.* p215.

(62) *ibid.* p305.

The analysis: Metaphysics.

initial aim, how does it originate? The most significant difference between the subjective and initial aims is that, whereas the former arises out of the actual entity, the latter is a given. This is illustrated by Whitehead, who wrote, "each temporal entity..... derives from God its basic conceptual (=initial) aim relevant to its actual world, yet with indeterminations awaiting its own decisions."(63). Similarly, "the initial stage of its aim is an endowment which the subject inherits from the inevitable ordering of things conceptually realized in the nature of God. The initial aim is the best for that impasse."(64).

We must consider this notion that the self - creation of the actual entity begins with the derivation of its initial aim. Whitehead wrote, "that aim determines the initial gradations of relevance of eternal objects for conceptual feeling; and constitutes the autonomous subject in its primary phase of feeling."(65). The use of the words "determines" and "constitutes" (which I have emphasized) clearly indicates the importance Whitehead attached to the initial aim as the "initiating principle in the occasion."(66).

This is problematic. As Neville notes, "insofar as God determines that value through the subjective aim in the initial data, the occasion's own choice is depleted. And, if God continues to determine modifications of the subjective aim through the process, it is hard to see any freedom of choice left. Even if there is always a residue of self - determined emphasis left to the occasion, the function of God is

(63) PR p224.

(64) PR p244.

(65) PR p244.

(66) PPCT p235 Cobb. The claim that the initial aim is prior to all other data is certainly not, as Sponheim correctly notes, an "unwarranted favour for the religious." op.cit. p188.

The analysis: Metaphysics.

still to force feed a person's intentions even more powerfully than other things do."(67). Whitehead wants to speak about the freedom of the entity in the process of self - causation. And yet, when one questions the origin of that which is free, the subjective aim, the answer involves a determined given, the initial aim. Hence we are forced to account for freedom in terms of the given initial aim.

In an earlier quotation we saw that Whitehead noted that the initial aim has "indeterminations" which await the decision of the actual entity. That is to say, the subjective aim is not determined by the initial aim, because the way the subject feels its initial aim is dependent upon the subject feeling rather than merely the thing felt. As Christian says, "the subjective form of the initial aim is not a mere reproduction of the subjective form of God's conceptual feeling."(68). However, he then continues, "the only problem about this application of the principle of autonomy of subjective form is: How can the subjective form of the initial aim be conditioned by the subject when no prior unity of the subject exists? How can the subject affect the subjective form of that feeling which is itself the basis of the unity of the subject?" This is a serious difficulty, and is an example of a "chicken and egg" type of dilemma. Which comes first? The initial aim "constitutes the autonomous subject" and "determines" which eternal objects are relevant for conceptual feelings. It is difficult to see how the entity has any "content" with which it can feel its initial aim which is not, itself, determined by the initial aim. Christian answers

(67) op.cit. p10. The essential point here is that God, through the initial aim, intends to promote a particular outcome. Neville also argues that Whitehead's doctrine of objective immortality mitigates against freedom, "in the long run there is a metaphysical guarantee that people cannot damn themselves, and the possibility of self - damnation seems to me a touchstone of freedom".(p9). I discuss this issue again in chapter five.

(68) An Interpretation of Whitehead's Metaphysics p313.

The analysis: Metaphysics.

this by insisting the initial aim "arises with the other feelings in the primary phase of concrescence."(69). These other feelings cannot be feelings of eternal objects because the initial aim "determines the initial gradations of relevance of eternal objects". In the primary stages of concrescence there cannot be any feeling of eternal objects other than those made possible by the initial aim. Hence, if these other feelings are to enable the subject to feel its initial aim with a unique subjective form, not determined by the initial aim, they must be physical feelings. They are prehensions whose data is actual entities, feelings of the past. And, a point of crucial importance here, such prehensions of the past must be possible without reference to the options generated by the initial aim. This requirement that they are independent of the initial aim is necessary if we are to maintain that a subject exists with which to feel the initial aim with a unique subjective form. Freedom becomes a relevant feature of the actual entity because the process of concrescence is considered to be an open balance between the initial aim and the other prehensions, which, as Christian stated, arise together in the primary stage. The basic principle involved here is that if the emerging entity inherits "something" from the past, because of its unique location with respect to antecedent occasions, then the interaction between the given initial aim and the possibilities arising out of the inheritance results in a "free" (70) emerging entity.

To relate this to Sherburne's analysis of initial aims, he writes, "Whitehead correctly notes that there cannot be an emerging value without there being antecedent standards of value."(71). Whereas Whitehead introduces God as this necessary principle of limitation - the purpose of the provision of the initial aim - Sherburne suggests that

(69) *ibid.* p314.



The analysis: Metaphysics.

the past is capable of performing this function. He says, "the physical prehension of the dominant past actual entity will constitute the subjective aim of the emerging entity." (72). Two points follow. First, although Sherburne refers to the subjective aim, his comment is particularly significant if it applies to the initial aim. If his intention really is to attribute the subjective aim to the past then he is contradicting Whitehead on a point of fundamental importance. If the emerging entity derives its own vision of itself from the past then there can be no creative advance, the process is entirely retrospective. Second, he introduces the idea of the "dominant" past actual entity. This is an actual entity in the immediate past of the concreting entity and is a given, determined by the unique locus of the emerging entity (73).

Sherburne's analysis implies that a series of actual entities is a line of inheritance through the generations, each entity inheriting its initial aim from the dominant and antecedent actual entity. There is no other external ideal which is offered to the emerging entity, a point

(70) "Freedom" in this sense really means non - predictability in terms of either the initial aim or the inheritance from the past. It remains a valid question whether this is an adequate notion of "freedom"; after all, random events are equally non - predictable but one would not wish to ascribe freedom, in any significant sense, to them. Perhaps the concept of "freedom" is so linked to a notion of a conscious being that its use elsewhere (non - predictability or non - determination being more suitable alternatives) is to over stretch its meaning. This is, incidentally, a good example of how Process philosophy uses language in novel ways, inevitably giving rise to problems of interpretation.

(71) "Whitehead without God", p328.

(72) *ibid.* p328. Hence, for Sherburne P becomes P'', "there must be some past entity."

(73) The notion of a past actual entity being "dominant" will be a important aspect of the discussion as it develops. Sherburne is quite specific; the dominant actual entity must be contiguous to the emerging entity. How this relates to the idea of "importance" and other ideas of a particular past being relevant will be considered later.



The analysis: Metaphysics.

which leads into two particular difficulties. Firstly, one notes that if the inspirations for emerging entities are derived solely from a reiteration of the past, the process is destined to be deterministic. Secondly, and not unrelated to this, it is not clear how the notion of a creative advance into harmony is introduced. As Ford says, "creativity itself is simply blind activity, supplying the drive but not the focus for convergence."(74). If the initial aim for the new occasion is a restatement of the past - the dominant actual entity - the Process lacks God's guiding vision which sees the universe beyond the restricted horizon implied by the spatio - temporal location of the emergence of any one actual entity. The process becomes one of reenactment. Sherburne provides empirical evidence which, he claims, supports this view in the second half of this chapter which will look at the macrocosmic world.

These difficulties aside, it is clear that Sherburne has provoked some interesting and illuminating issues: the role of the past with respect to the emerging entity, the extent to which the present entity is determined by dominant antecedent occasions and the sense in which there is a thread of inheritance throughout a series of actual entities. Having noted these issues it is possible to re-examine the theory of initial aims and direct attention explicitly to them. Cobb writes, "the initial aim determines the standpoint that the occasion will occupy. This, in turn, determines what occasions will be in its past.."(75). There is no doubt that this suggests a very strong determining activity of God. However the picture is, as yet, rather one sided. The missing

(74) "Afterword" EWP p332. The claim made by Process thought that there is an advance into harmony is not to be equated with "naive optimism" or progress. Because, to admit to a harmonious advance is not to suggest that everything will be all right in our cosmic epoch. This point was stressed by Pittenger during conversation 13th. Feb. 1986.

(75) "A Whiteheadian Doctrine of God" PPCT p235.

The analysis: Metaphysics.

facet is, indeed, captured by Whitehead's expression, "the best for that impasse." The initial aim is not only the best, or ideal, or optimum possibility but it is that, given the circumstances of the emerging entity. It is aim towards the most perfect outcome from a particular set of initial conditions. These initial conditions are, of course, the past, so that one can rephrase this to say that the initial aim includes the idea of inheritance from the past. It includes the past because the ideal possibility is framed within the facts of the past. The idea of there being a dominant occasion is particularly helpful at this stage. It is clear that, for any given emerging entity, there will be some feature of its past which is particularly relevant and important for its effect on possible initial aims. It makes sense to think of this historical factor as being the dominant past, just as Sherburne intended. Despite the previous quotation, Cobb is also anxious to make that point. He claims that his interpretation of initial aims is such that "it denies that the initial phase of the subjective aim need be derived exclusively from God"(76) because "I have suggested that we consider the initial aim of each occasion as a composite of the aims for it of all those entities in the past that have had specific aims for it."(77). So that, "there is the aim at the fulfilment that one's own past has aspired toward and there is the aim at that fulfilment which is offered the occasion by God."(78). He continues, to make a crucial point, "so long as these two aims are in tension with each other, we may suppose that in the decision by which the subjective aim is finally determined, there will be some compromise between them." We note why that is crucial in a moment. Firstly, it is interesting to note how this differs from the deterministic overtones expressed in Cobb's

(76) Christian Natural Theology p183. (Also PPCT p220).

(77) *ibid.* p248.

(78) *ibid.* p248.

The analysis: Metaphysics.

earlier quotation. He now writes, "Whitehead's doctrine that the aim at the ideal constituted the entire initial aim of the occasion might be interpreted as calling for a certain passivity in the becoming occasion so that in its decision it would not deviate from the ideal."(79). He does not draw that conclusion, arguing that the need for greater intensity of experience involving self awareness and consciousness, requires an initial aim which inspires "efforts of self - modification", not mere passivity (80). The suggestion that the initial aim calls for passivity in the emerging entity is Neville's argument restated in slightly different terms. The effect in both is that the new entity is obliged to align its own subjective aim with the initial aim from God. Cobb points out that, "with the alternative assumption that the initial aim is composite, including God's aim but not exhausted by it, the inappropriateness of passivity is much clearer. There must be some resolution of conflicting aims."(81).

The crucial issue in this analysis is revealed by Cobb's use of the words "tension, conflicting, compromise" and "resolution". It is clear that Cobb sees the ideal toward fulfilment inherited from the past to be in conflict with the initial aim from God. But one must question the origin of this conflict. If the initial aim from God includes the past, how is it in tension with the past? The answer to that question is derived from the principle that there can be no prehension between contemporary occasions. Therefore, God's knowledge of the past is always "one step behind", he is only aware of what has perished. This implies that there is always a discrepancy between how God sees things and how things actually are. Hence it follows that there is a similar

(79) *ibid.* p248.

(80) *ibid.* p130.

(81) *ibid.* p248.

The analysis: Metaphysics.

discrepancy between how he wants things to be and the possibilities which actually exist for things to be. This is the source of tension between the initial aim and the past. Of course, in a routine universe of re-enactment this tension would be minimized. It is only in a dynamic "exciting" universe that the conflict arises. The conflict is the inevitable "risk" which is inherent in the microcosmic process of freedom and novel creativity, balanced by reiteration and continuity.

The purpose of this section was to understand how God is active in the world of actual entities, in particular his provision of the initial aim. To summarize this theory one can make the following points:

If the initial aim is derived solely from God, then the actual entity is effectively determined by God.

If the initial aim is derived solely from the past, then the actual entity is effectively determined by the past. The universe becomes a series of re-enactments with no unifying harmony.

The notion of the initial aim being a composite between an element from God and an element inherited from the past has several advantages. Firstly, it enables the autonomy of subjective form (Christian) which, secondly, implies that it is possible to understand the entity as "free". Thirdly, the element of the initial aim derived from God introduces the harmonious vision into the process, which is complemented by the sense of fulfilment of past aims. As complexity increases, the tensions (or interest) in the initial aim from God and the inspiration of the dominant antecedent actual entity increase. This gives rise to greater degrees of freedom. The initial aim is God's vision towards novelty, given the situation of the actual world. These points all correspond most acutely with Whitehead's formula that the initial aim is the "best for that impasse". The following section attempts to relate

The analysis: Metaphysics.

these principles to the world of real things, the macrocosmic universe.

The analysis: Metaphysics.

The previous section was concerned with God's presence in the world of actual entities. But as Lango so astutely points out, "the fundamental entities of Whitehead's ontology - the actual entities - are purely hypothetical, postulated by his metaphysics, but not known in any other way. We cannot observe an actual entity with our senses; we cannot infer an actual entity with empirical theories; we cannot consciously apprehend an actual entity through introspection."(82). We are faced therefore with a choice - retaining Whiteheadian categories as a purely abstract exercise with no claimed link with "reality" as we perceive it, or we must show its competence to describe the "real" world. The christological adventure, which is of course at some stage concerned with a particular man at a particular time in a very real world, demands that we adopt the second of these approaches.

Surprisingly, this is not an issue which has featured very prominently in the works of Process theologians who have, almost without exception, been content to relate the principles of the microcosmic world to the macrocosmic without an explicit justification of the leap. The underlying claim that I make here is that the intermediate step is not only a necessary one but it is also a desirable one because only by drawing the complete picture is it possible to achieve a balanced synthesis between the various components. Hence it is only after one has achieved a description of the human person in terms of the constituent entities that it is possible to begin to discuss the person of Jesus - and all the complexities that entails!

Ultimately, it is the purpose of this section to examine how God is understood to be present in the lives of human beings; a task which takes three distinct stages. First I describe, in general terms, how the transition from the micro- to the macrocosmic world is made.

(82) Lango Whitehead's Ontology p5.



The analysis: Metaphysics.

Second, it is necessary to illustrate in more detail how this applies to the concept of a human person and, finally, I ask how it is possible to hold an intelligible view of God's presence in this context. Note that the "raw material" for these considerations is contained in the previous section. The present task is to relate this to a theory of the human person.

We have already noted that the fundamental unit or building block in the Process scheme is the actual entity. The next step on the ladder which will eventually lead us into the macrocosmic world is that defined by the concept of a nexus. Whitehead defines a nexus as "a set of actual entities in the unity of the relatedness constituted by their prehensions of each other, or - what is the same thing conversely expressed - constituted by their objectifications of each other."(83). A formidable definition - but one which is reducible to a far simpler expression. All actual entities are, at least in principle, related to each other. The concept of a nexus is that principle stated as a fact: there are some actual entities which are related to other actual entities. The notion of a nexus tells us nothing about the actual togetherness, except that it exists. The concept of a society describes the togetherness in more detail.

A society - and the word is being used in its technical Whiteheadian sense - is a nexus with social order, which is defined by three points.

1. There is a common element of form in each of the included actual entities.
2. This common element of form arises by reason of the conditions imposed upon each entity by its prehensions of the other entities.
3. Each entity includes a positive prehension of the common form.

(83) PR p24.

The analysis: Metaphysics.

(that is to say that the entity does not reject the common form, thus ceasing to be a member of that society.) (84).

It is important to note that a society is self-sustaining, and that the class name applies to its members for more than merely accidental reasons. As Whitehead expressed it, "the members of the society are alike because, by reason of their common character they impose on other members of the society the conditions which lead to that likeness." (85). The common character is called the "defining characteristic" and is analogous to the Aristotelian notion of substantial form (86). But - reflecting the oft quoted literary dictum - no society is an island, it is a society within a wider society and, ultimately, within the totality of reality itself. The contributions of this wider society - its environment - must be at least permissive of the self-sustenance of the society. To that extent the process, at the level of societies, exhibits self regulation. Societies which "do not fit" cease to exist because the conditions for their survival are not available. This condition for survival is related to the role of the "dominant" actual entity for the emerging occasion. If the aim toward fulfilment inherited from that antecedent occasion is in harmony with the society, continued existence is feasible. If, however, the effect of the dominant past is to push the emerging entity away from the conditions of the society, the chances of survival are diminished.

Moving further towards the macrocosmic level, an example of a special form of a society is an "enduring object" (87). This is a society in which the social order has taken the form of "personal

(84) PR p34.

(85) PR p89.

(86) PR p34.

(87) PR p34.

The analysis: Metaphysics.

order". This rather misleading term implies that the relatedness of the members of the society orders the members serially. Thus there is a definite vector of inheritance in the society. If the defining characteristic is thought of as the mathematical plus-one function then the series "1,2,3,..x+1..." exhibits a form analogous to a society with personal order - an enduring object (88).

When these ideas are combined it is easy to see how it is possible to conceive of the development of "real" things, the elementary particles and ever increasingly complex groups of societies and sub-societies. Equally obvious, however, is the fact that a world based solely on these societies would be rather tedious and uninteresting. Atoms and molecules, for example, exhibit a high degree of continuity and it seems reasonable to assume that their capacity for novelty is essentially zero. This follows from the way in which societies are formed, emphasizing tradition, continuity and repetition. But experience tells us that the excitement of life, indeed life itself - is novelty, so we must concentrate on this aspect. As Whitehead put it, "life is a bid for freedom"(89). So our explanation of life must go beyond the terms of an enduring object which "binds any one of its occasions to the line of its ancestry."

Whitehead himself was not particularly interested in the theoretical concept of the human person. He wrote extensively about

(88) There is a lot of debate - which need not be directly relevant here - as to what actually constitutes an enduring object. See, for example, Sherburne's comments on Cobb in "Whitehead without God" PPCT p314f. The terminology is misleading because, as Whitehead was aware, an enduring object could be called a "person", (an enduring object "sustains a character" and that is one meaning of the latin term persona). Clearly, however, it is extremely difficult to forget our preconceptions of what "person" implies and so its use in this context should be avoided.

(89) PR p104.

The analysis: Metaphysics.

societies and the order of nature but when it came to "life" the human did not appear as a distinct category. If one looks at the index in Process and Reality one will note that references to the human person are about equal in number to those for a "straight line", and this is after Griffin produced the corrected edition! Similarly, although Adventures of Ideas is concerned with human society, its main subject is not so much "man" as an "interpretation of cosmic progress." (90). But this neglect does not lead us to conclude that Whitehead's conceptuality is an inappropriate device with which to handle "life". It is on that basis that Cobb, in particular, has attempted to develop a more rigorous doctrine of man, while claiming loyalty to Whiteheadian categories.

Cobb accepts that most enduring objects trivialize novelty, resulting in endless repetition. In order to affirm that truth and to establish the possibility of a society in which novelty is the key feature, he draws our attention to the two different types of prehension. The first of these is called a pure prehension, which describes an actual entity feeling its predecessor's physical pole. Physical continuity of form is readily explained by pure prehension. The second type, which interests us here, is called a hybrid prehension. This is a prehension of the novelty of an actual entity and concerns the mental pole. The mental pole is the originality of the occasion of experience which is not a derivative from the thing experienced but is contributed by the experient. In a hybrid prehension the datum actual entity is objectified by one of its conceptual feelings. Ordinary enduring objects are described in terms of pure prehensions. Hybrid feelings, on the other hand, are decisive in a special kind of enduring object, which Whitehead calls the soul. The introduction of the term

(90) Williams, D.D., "Time, Progress and the Kingdom of God." PPCT p445. See Cobb, "Whitehead's Philosophy and a Christian Doctrine of Man", Journal of Bible and Religion 32 1964.

The analysis: Metaphysics.

"soul" requires a few words of warning. It "is not an underlying substance undergoing accidental adventures. It is nothing but the sequence of the experiences that constitute it."(91). Hence Whitehead sides with Buddhism (against Hinduism) and with Sartre (against Husserl) in their joint rejection of an ultimate subject underlying human experience outside the process (92). In this doctrine of the soul we see the possibility for a synthesis between endurance and life. The continuity which is the feature of an enduring object is married to the novelty which is essential when we affirm life. However, having a doctrine of the soul is not in itself a doctrine of the human person. We need to ask how the soul functions in relation to the physical body.

Observations of the higher animals suggests that there is a degree of centralized control. That is, there are dominant occasions within the society of societies which in some sense orders the subordinate societies. These dominant occasions constitute the soul. Indeed, "wherever it is reasonable to posit a single centre of experience playing a decisive role in the functioning of the organism as a whole, there it is reasonable to posit a soul". It follows from this that "it is not a question of having a soul or of not having a soul. The question is, How much, if any?"(93). I shall return to that issue presently.

The idea of a centralized control within the overall society may seem to conflict with the process insistence on self - determination and freedom. However, we have already mentioned the tool by which we avoid

(91) Cobb Christian Natural Theology p48. Pittenger writes, "the Sartrian notion of man's pour-soi or projected self, as distinguished from his sheer given-ness as en-soi, has a considerable similarity to the general process idea." Process Thought and Christian Faith p57.

(92) See Cobb, p35 "Man in Process".

(93) Adventures of Ideas p208



The analysis: Metaphysics.

that conclusion. Firstly we recall that the environment must be permissive of a society if that society is to exist. Second, we note that the dominant occasion is not oblivious to the needs of the subordinate societies because it is prehending those occasions. Hence we envisage a cooperation, a mutually responsible relationship between the dominant occasion and the subordinate occasions. The notion of freedom does not preclude the idea of hierarchy, so long as the latter is always associated with responsibility and non - deterministic power.

If a soul exists in any given society it is, so to speak, the peak of the pyramid. Enduring objects within the society are engaged in the process of repetition - the soul infuses the pyramid with the spark of life. Whitehead called the human body a "complex 'amplifier'". The various actual entities which compose the body are so coordinated that the experiences of any part of the body are transmitted to one or more central occasions to be inherited with enhancements accruing upon the way, or finally added by reason of the final integration."(94). An ideal audio amplifier is simply the integration of the incoming signal. The soul however, adds something novel to the signal, making it come alive.

Cobb disagrees with Whitehead as to the location of the soul. Whitehead's view is that the soul resided in the empty spaces of the brain where it "wanders from place to place according to the richness of the stimuli received at these places."(95). Or, "in the history of a living society, its more vivid manifestations wander to whatever quarter is receiving from the animal body an enormous variety of physical experience."(96). Against this view Cobb presents two arguments. First

(94) PR p119.

(95) Cobb Christian Natural Theology p83.

(96) PR p106.



The analysis: Metaphysics.

he argues that, "Hearing, seeing, remembering and calculating seem to occur concurrently in one dominant occasion. If these functions are most intimately related with diverse portions of the brain, then it seems necessary to suppose that the dominant occasion is present at the same time at all these diverse places."(97). Firstly, however, he fails to appreciate that his use of the phrase "seem to occur concurrently" is made from a macrocosmic position, and can not be considered normative for an understanding of the actual entities themselves. In the world these functions may appear to occur simultaneously, but that does not imply their concurrence in the microcosmic universe. Secondly, there is a more fundamental reason for Cobb's rejection of the Whiteheadian position. Cobb wishes to state that "the region constituting the standpoint of one actual occasion can include the regions constituting the standpoints of other actual occasions."(98). Whitehead defines the standpoint of an occasion to be "the unique extended locus the occasion occupies in the spatiotemporal continuum."(99). Cobb rejects the word unique in this definition. His reasons for doing so are, I believe, related to his religious convictions - not out of any philosophical conviction nor because of the present question concerning the locus of the soul. If one region can include another then he is able to say that God's standpoint includes all standpoints. There are several religious reasons why this is advantageous. For example, it permits God to prehend contemporary occasions, so He knows our innermost feelings rather than our objective past. This issue was raised by Neville in the previous section (100). I personally rather like Whitehead's phrase, "life lurks in the interstices of each living cell", (101) because it flowers with a truly dynamic and living quality. In brief support of

(97) Christian Natural Theology p84.

(98) *ibid.* p85.

(99) See *ibid.* p82

The analysis: Metaphysics.

the Whiteheadian position we can mention the way in which our attention is constantly shifting its focus from one aspect of life to another. There is a huge variation in the range and intensity of our hybrid prehensions and I think it would be foolish to suggest that we can feel them all at once. "We sleep; we are half - awake; we are aware of our perceptions, but are devoid of generalities in thought; we are vividly absorbed in a small region of abstract thought while oblivious to the world around; we are attending to our emotions - some torrent of passion - to them and to nothing else; we are morbidly discursive in the width of our attention; and finally we sink back into temporary obliviousness."(102). That quotation from Whitehead is true to my own understanding of self, and it suggests support for the wandering view of the soul.

We can give a summary of the preceding section. The human person is an animal body with a dominant occasion, a soul. The soul is an enduring object in which hybrid prehensions are decisive. It therefore combines trivial continuity and radical novelty. We must now focus on some more specific issues.

The first of these considers the view that the human person is a psycho - physical unity, composed of both body and soul. Cobb's emphasis on the soul perhaps suggests that he identifies the person solely with the mental aspect, neglecting the physical body. Two points follow. First, I do not think that conclusion follows from his, undeniable, emphasis on the psychic. He is simply concerned with

(100) The discussion concerning unique standpoints is outside the scope of this present work. However, Christian (op.cit. p93-104) presents convincing arguments to validate the Whiteheadian view.

(101) PR p105.

(102) PR p161.

The analysis: Metaphysics.

showing how novelty is an inherent aspect of life, without denying that other features are also relevant to the overall concept of the person. The accusation may also be levelled against Whitehead, but since he did not write extensively on the subject of the person this would be rather unjust. The second point is that described by William Gallagher (103). He stresses those parts of the body which are neither dominant routes or physical objects. There are, in the body various societies which contribute to the overall effect, Sponheim notes that these include the more habitual forms of behaviour, inattentive speech, biorhythms, the reticular system, and balance, which appear to exist within the body/soul complex without interference from either the soul or the physical body. Hence, if these observations are valid it would seem that certain functions of the body are independent of the dominant occasion, the soul. However, before one is able to make that conclusion it would be necessary to show conclusively that those functions are, indeed, as separate as at first suspected. That task is, of course, impossible as there are an infinite number of ways in which the apparently disconnected functions are, in fact, in some way connected.

The next issue we must deal with is to establish the difference between man and the animals. As Whitehead said,, "it is not a mere question of having a soul or of not having a soul. The question is, How much, if any?". The answer to this depends upon the degree of centralized dominance within the organism, in particular the extent to which this dominant occasion has significant serial order. That last expression, "significant serial order" is not simple to expand. One way of looking at it is to consider the significance of distant events as opposed to recent events, and the degree to which the future is a

(103) Quoted by Sponheim, op.cit. p95,175 from an unpublished doctoral dissertation, "Whitehead's Theory of the Human Person." 1974.

The analysis: Metaphysics.

relevant consideration. The greater the emphasis on the past and on the future, the greater is the degree of serial order. And so Cobb concludes, "it is my assumption that along these lines one can argue with Whitehead's tacit support that soul is more fully developed in man in general than in animals in general."(104). He continues, "presumably there would be exceptions if we contrasted a high - grade animal with an extremely retarded child". In the Process understanding, it is conceivable that a chimpanzee has more soul than a human baby. Of course, once one accepts that the term soul has no religious connotation, this implication loses some of its impact, but nevertheless, the issue remains. Pittenger reacts strongly against it as he writes, "it is absurd to think of humans as merely sophisticated simians; there is a genuine difference between us and the higher animal level."(105). He would not approve of Beaumarchais' statement, "Drinking when we are not thirsty and making love all year round, madam; that is all there is to distinguish us from other animals."(106). One could also mention communication, or language in particular, the strong role of the future in our present decisions or our recurring interest in the past as also being factors which differentiate us from the animals. However, these are all only differences in degree. They do not separate homo sapiens as a species in any absolute sense. Although in some quarters that might be interpreted as conflicting with the Biblical account of creation, it is preferable to stress the advantages of such an outlook. Its implications for ecology and our responsibility to our environment are immense, and it is no coincidence that several process thinkers have written on these issues. The crux of this fundamental similarity is a corollary of Whitehead's one - substance cosmology. It

(104) Christian Natural Theology p58.

(105) "On Becoming Human" Theology Jan.1981, p6.

(106) Oxford Dictionary of Quotations.

The analysis: Metaphysics.

is only after one has accepted the essential sameness of all things that one ceases to be worried by the apparently reductionist understanding. We should remember, moreover, that "to seek fundamental categories exemplified both in conscious human experience and in electrons is no more to reduce man to electrons than to raise electrons to the level of man... If viewing man as a part of nature necessarily meant sharing in this reductionist drive, then man would have good reason to maintain his independent self - understanding." But as Cobb continues, "kinship and continuity do not imply equality."(107).

However, it is not sufficient to point to the ultimate unity between man and nature as the closing point of the discussion. Consider the following quotation from Act 111 of A Midsummer Night's Dream, "O Bottom, thou art changed". One might well ask the question, if Bottom has changed how then do we know that "he" is still Bottom? This is the question of personal identity through time. In the Process understanding of the person there is a major difficulty involved here. Self - identity can only be considered as an attribute of actual entities. Therefore we can state quite categorically that there is no absolute self - identity through time. Indeed, the concept itself is a contradiction. Time, in the process view is an abstraction from the extensive relationships of actual entities. Time cannot exist unless there are at least two non - contemporary discreet occasions. As Sherburne expressed it, "time is an abstraction from the ongoingness whereby generation after generation of actual entities succeed one another in the creative ongoingness of the universe."(108). But this is clearly in opposition to our commonsense beliefs about the world. We hold to the notion of responsibility. But if the "I" that exists now is

(107) "Man in Process" p33'4.

(108) "Responsibility, Punishment, and Whitehead's Theory of the Self", ANWEP, p181.



The analysis: Metaphysics.

discreet from the "I" that existed yesterday, how can the present "I" be responsible for the actions of the historical "I"? Similarly it appears that gratitude is misplaced, because it can never be expressed towards the original decision. Again Sherburne, "why execute a murderer or pin a medal on a military hero? In each case, given the Whiteheadian position, the actual entities whose free decisions were responsible for the deeds have perished."(109). This whole question has led substance philosophers such as Paul Weiss to question Whitehead's theory on moral grounds. It fails, they claim, because it cannot adequately cope with the notions of responsibility, reward and punishment (110). In response to this it is necessary to demonstrate how a Whiteheadian can understand personal identity, and then we can show how this enables an understanding of responsibility.

There are at least three possible solutions to the question of personal identity. The first of these is the simplest, resting personal identity in the continuity of the body. This would thereby ensure a steady stream of similar physical experiences for the soul, invoking a similar response at each occasion. This view is clearly deficient. Our bodies change, and no one would wish to suggest that a person becomes a totally different person if they lose, say, a limb. We want to say that the person is different but we do not want to say it is a different person.

The second solution suggests that personal continuity is a result of the inheritance of a common character through the successive occasions. This is very similar to the definition of the defining

(109) *ibid.* p182.

(110) *ibid.* p179. See his paper, "History and Objective Immortality" in The Relevance of Whitehead Leclerc, I., (Ed.). Similarly, Sponheim claims that "Process thought may seem to err on the side of undervaluing the self." *op.cit.* p205.



The analysis: Metaphysics.

characteristic of a society. In fact it is a special case of that definition. Whitehead certainly suggested this approach in, for example, his essay entitled "Immortality" (111). However, he also recognised that commonness of character cannot be the distinctive mark of life. If this was the final Whiteheadian solution the philosophy would be in "serious trouble", to use Cobb's phrase. One cannot employ the same device to a) stress repetitive continuity and b) personal identity in life. Life consists of freedom and novelty, not just reiteration. An additional objection to grounding personal identity solely in the inheritance of a common character is seen in Cobb's example of twins. No matter how alike they may be - and some twins exhibit an extraordinary degree of similarity - we do not hesitate to give them separate identities.

We derive the third solution by little more than a shift in emphasis. Rather than the common pattern inherited, Whitehead sometimes referred to the special mode of inheritance. The phrase he used is "peculiar completeness".

"We - as enduring objects with personal order - objectify the occasions of our past with peculiar completeness in our immediate present."(112).

"An enduring personality in the temporal world is a route of occasions in which the successors with some peculiar completeness sum up their predecessors."(113).

Unfortunately, Whitehead did not expand on this phrase, so it is left to other Process thinkers to derive an appropriate interpretation.

(111) In Schlipp, The Philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead.

(112) PR p161.

(113) PR p350.

The analysis: Metaphysics.

The key word for Cobb is memory (114). The present member of the series remembers the experiences of the past members of that series. It also remembers something about other experiences. Note the difference. Experiences internal to that series are remembered, other, external, experiences are remembered only insofar as the occasion remembers something about them (115). Cobb seems to separate this third solution from the previous one. However, Cobb's method will only work if we presuppose the inheritance of a common character. Bennett makes that point. He refers to the two resources (in fact he claims at least two) which support personal identity, "the inheritance of a common pattern" and "a special mode in which the past is inherited"(116). Without the defining characteristic there is no boundary placed on what is available for immediate prehension. If remembering from within is defined as an unmediated prehension then one can envisage all kinds of strange and wonderful things happening. The general philosophical principle is that every new occasion takes account of every occasion in its past. There is no limit implied by this principle, indeed, every past occasion could be physically prehended by every new occasion. However, in our universe, or cosmic epoch this does not seem to occur. Pure physical feelings are limited to contiguous occasions. These unmediated prehensions then mediate feelings of remote occasions. We can neither affirm nor deny - on the basis of the metaphysical principles - whether the mental aspect of noncontiguous occasions can be directly prehended. Telepathy, which Whitehead was prepared to accept, at least in theory,

(114) Christian Natural Theology p75

(115) For Hartshorne, memory is "our present experience of our own previous experiences", and, "it is experiences prehending previous experiences in the same personal succession or stream of awareness" (Creativity in American Philosophy p106). Similarly, Bennett, "by memory.... Cobb means remembering one's past experiences from within rather than from without." ("Whitehead and Personal Identity." p513).

(116) Bennett p512.

The analysis: Metaphysics.

is the immediate prehension of the mental poles of noncontiguous occasions. Such a prehension will also explain racial consciousness or an intense social awareness.

However, unless there is some kind of inherited limit it would be possible for the present occasion in one series to have unmediated hybrid prehensions of the members of any series whatsoever. I could become - in a very real sense - someone else, simply by feeling their past rather than my own. The notion of an inherited common character mitigates against this, but we must also note that it does not eliminate the possibility. As to why we are not all aware of our telepathic ability, Cobb suggests that "Whitehead thinks that the inevitable mixing of these hybrid prehensions of other souls with the mediated prehensions of these same souls explains why it is so difficult for consciousness to focus on clear instances of unmediated prehensions."(117).

It is possible to give two senses of responsibility at this point. A third interpretation will be introduced at a later stage. Let us accept that there is no absolute sense in which the present occasion is metaphysically responsible for the decisions of the past. But we note that this does not imply that the process understanding of personal identity lacks the notion of responsibility. First, the fact of the inheritance of common form implies that there is a flow between the past and the present which relates the two. So, rather than suggesting that the present occasion is responsible for the past decision, we can suggest that the present entity is a) responsible to maximise the consequences of that past decision and b) is responsible for similar decisions in the present. In a sense this is to say that the present must learn from its past or continue to build upon the wisdom of its past.

(117) Christian Natural Theology p54.

The analysis: Metaphysics.

The second sense is particularly appropriate to human persons. It suggests that the present occasion not only is related in a weak metaphysical way, to the past but that it also desires to be related to its past in order to affirm its own personal identity. Of course it may desire to separate itself from a past event but even here it must first affirm that that event belongs to its past. This has definite affinities with modern therapy or social work. The first task must be to affirm the individual as an individual, in other words to enable the person to affirm their own personal identity. This is achieved by the person accepting their past. Only then can one expect a person to be able to cope with the complexities of the present (118). Although it is possible to affirm a degree of metaphysical responsibility for the past, because of the inheritance of common form, this is not the most important aspect. Far more interesting is the way in which the self affirmation of personal identity in the present necessitates the acceptance of and, moreover, the acceptance of the responsibility of, the past. Thus the notion of personal identity and responsibility are intimately bound together in the process understanding.

The enthusiasm with which Cobb develops a defence of the Whiteheadian theory of personal identity perhaps suggests that Whitehead was remiss in not undertaking his own account and that it is a central issue in the philosophy. To some extent both these points have some validity. But we must be rather careful, especially with the second. "To establish personal identity qua personal identity is a fruitless effort."(119). It is always a question of personal identity with respect to something. As Whitehead wrote, "The baby in the cradle and

(118) See for example, Process Studies 14/3, 1985. "The Value of the Dialogue Between Process Thought and Psychotherapy." David E. Roy p158ff.

(119) Bennett p517.

The analysis: Metaphysics.

the grown man in middle age, are in some senses identical and in other senses diverse."(120). Similarly, the choir boy turned rapist is an example in which we would affirm the continuity of the self in some ways, while denying it in others.

This last example raises a further question. We have noted that one reason for being able to affirm personal identity is found in the peculiar completeness with which the present sums up the past. In A Christian Natural Theology Cobb used the idea of memory to interpret that term. We only have direct memory of occasions belonging to our own series, therefore we synthesize these experiences in a different way to all other experiences. He carries the discussion further in the essay "A Whiteheadian Christology" which was quoted previously. He suggests that the "I" refers to that centre which tries to organize the whole psychic life. Now clearly, this is related to, and presupposes, the idea of personal identity through time. "Unless the organizing center has continuity with its predecessors and successors, it cannot usefully be designated as "I"."(121). The "I" of which Cobb speaks is the key by which the person unlocks the process of peculiar completeness. In the choir boy turned rapist example, there is obviously a sense in which the "I" has changed, the organizing centre has shifted dramatically. An alternative method of expressing this point is to say that the historical continuity is broken, and a new line of inheritance is assumed. We note that the organising centre has a strong historical aspect and it is perhaps the impact of history upon the present self which constitutes the essential human - animal distinction. It is worth noting that human life does not require the idea of the self or "I" as understood in this context. In existential language the self or the

(120) Modes of Thought p146.

(121) op.cit. p391.



The analysis: Metaphysics.

affirmation of the "I" is authentic human existence whereas a "self" which survives without maintaining a route of historical continuity is an inauthentic existence.

There is a difficulty here. Although the theory as I have described it may be logical and coherent, unless one can propose an actual content to what the organizing centre should focus on, one cannot claim that this is authentic existence. If the organizing centre simply latches on to something as being important, then there seems to be little room to establish an objective standard. Two points follow. First, it is true that in Process thought it is not possible - nor is it desirable - to define an objective, unchanging content to anything. We are dealing with subjects and therefore can only consider value or purpose as it relates to the specific subject in question. Whitehead's ethical system is a complex balancing act between harmony and beauty, and somewhere in this confusion each individual, each subject, must find its own goal or standard. It must be emphasized that there is more to this than merely continuity with the dominant actual entity introduced by Sherburne. That is a brute fact of the process, here we are dealing with a conscious decision to appropriate a particular past as an aim for the present. The second point is that it is one of the tasks of the Christological Adventure to illustrate in what way, if any, it makes sense to propose that Christ can provide and define the optimum data for the self. That is considered in later chapters. Having a theory of the self is, of course, only part of the way to achieving a comprehensive understanding of the person. It is also a requirement that the theory is shown to be valid insofar as it is adequate to describe observable - as opposed to merely theoretical - human beings. I begin this evaluation by quoting from Pittenger's article, "On Becoming Human" (122).



The analysis: Metaphysics.

"The various schools of psychology make their contribution here. Gestalt stresses the organic character of human activity; dynamic psychology tells of the developmental drive towards goals; depth psychology, however diverse in teaching may be its exponents, agree that the whole inherited past is relevant to the vital striving for fulfilment. Existential analysis of the human situation emphasises our belonging and the effort to gain meaning through commitment to some cause or objective. Cultural psychology or sociology, biology in its several schools, ecology and practically every other contemporary discipline show us human becoming and human belonging, in a cosmos which is itself organismic or societal."

Obviously one would not wish to suggest that Pittenger is a neutral observer, but nonetheless I think his comments are valuable. They show quite dramatically how the Process understanding of the person ties in with observations from other fields. One way to illustrate this is to consider the person in the capacity to decide and act. The first question is whether the process view is adequate with respect to self-determination. Is the human being free to choose? Are we really self-causative? Cobb has written that "a man may freely modify his own goals."(123). That statement is a direct translation from the microcosmic statement about actual entities. But one question I find difficult to answer is whether the world is really like that. It has been said that Process philosophy could only have arisen from a bourgeois, wealthy and optimistic society. My fear is that the majority of the world is not wealthy, nor does it see any reason to be

(122) op.cit. p5.

(123) Christian Natural Theology p96 The theological discussion of human freedom should take place on a more significant level than the example discussed by Creel (Divine Impassibility p185): should a person listen to Mahler while reading Plotinus? That, I would argue, is not freedom. It is luxury.

The analysis: Metaphysics.

optimistic. Can a poor individual, a member of an oppressed minority really decide his own goals, or is that individual in effect determined by his society? Process thinkers have always tended to stress the ways in which men are free, because the metaphysical principles most obviously support the idea of freedom and self - determination. However, it is equally true that these same principles interpret our experience of being oppressed, dominated or determined by society - to use the word in its usual sense. Although the soul and the body are able to harmonize in order to develop as a free unity, the soul is impotent to change its wider environment. The structures of human society into which the soul emerges are givens, they cannot be ignored or altered. Indeed, the process model provides a very stark interpretation of social inequality and injustice, because it recognises that beyond a certain limit there is nothing an individual can do to transcend the conditions imposed by the environment. That is an aspect of process which is not often heard, perhaps because it is not the aspect which is immediately relevant to the majority of process thinkers. It is an important aspect nevertheless. As Macmurray wrote, "individual independence is an illusion; and the independent individual, the isolated self, is a nonentity."(124). I stress, in order to cope with oppression and the very real absence of freedom in the world, it does not prove necessary to alter the basic metaphysical principles of freedom and self - determination. The definition of a society, with its concept of the environment being permissive of the conditions required by subsocieties, includes the principles necessary to account for human oppression. Given the theory, we expect human life to be a constant tension between the conditions imposed from without and the novelty, our bid for freedom from within. The desire to achieve self - fulfilment, on one hand, and the requirements of society have to be balanced.

(124) J.Macmurray. Persons in Relation. p211.

The analysis: Metaphysics.

Sponheim notes of Schroeder that he "seems on target in his attempt to develop a Whiteheadian sociological approach to be located somewhere between Weber's freely acting individual and Durkheim's constraining world."(125).

But if it is possible to account for the dipolar tensions of life by making generalized empirical statements, is it possible to make the whole theory empirically intelligible at its most fundamental level? This is the question Sherburne raises in his paper "Decentering Whitehead: Process and Reality from a Post - Modern Perspective"(126). In the terms of Whitehead's definition of metaphysics - that it should be logical, coherent, applicable and adequate - this accords with the latter two conditions. We have already seen how Sherburne attempts to naturalize Whitehead's philosophy using arguments based upon coherence and logical consistency when I examined his proposal that God, as the source of initial aims, was superfluous to the system. The title of his paper betrays his central thesis, that it is possible to expound a Whiteheadian philosophy without resorting to "a centered decision, a center of meaning, a center of value, a center of redemption and salvation, a center of control, a center named God."(127). He asks, "what sort of a world would we expect to flow from the centered Whiteheadian account, and does our world look anything like that?"(128). As befits an inquiry based upon an empirical or experiential justification he produces an example with which to make his point. The scenario is quite straightforward: "a grand piano has just fallen off

(125) op.cit. p101. See Cognitive Structures and Religious Research, Michigan Univ. Press, 1970. W.Widick Schroeder.

(126) A revised version of this paper appears in Process Studies 15/2 summer 1986.

(127) *ibid.* p170

(128) *ibid.*

The analysis: Metaphysics.

the top of the Empire State Building"(129). The challenge offered by Sherburne is to explain this unfolding drama using the concepts developed in the previous section; in other words to show how, in experiential terms, the analysis of the microcosmos applies to the macrocosmic world of grand pianos.

Sherburne unfolds more of his drama: "so as the piano teeters over the edge, a young woman taking a stroll on lunch break approaches the spot where the piano will strike the pavement. Will she be hit? We don't know yet, nor does God. She is window shopping. Something she doesn't see clearly at first glance in a window catches her eye as she passes. Will she decide to stop and step back, or will she decide to go on? Will the man right behind her, who has just glanced up and seen the piano hurtling down, have the collected presence of mind and the courage to grab the woman and shove her out of danger, or will he chose just to save himself, avoiding some extra risk? And where does God and subjective aim fit into all this?"(130). Exciting stuff! As the scene is now described, not only is there an inanimate - albeit highly complex - society of actual entities hurtling earthward, but there are also two conscious living human beings involved - with all the implications for novel action and decision which that entails.

One can propose a naturalistic interpretation of the finale to the scene all too easily. The piano falls, the woman is killed (despite her "two small children at home, a doting husband, and aged parents for whom she lights up the world"(131)). Or perhaps the man behind her does save her life, perhaps at the expense of his own or perhaps he subsequently makes his fame and fortune with a novel entitled My Final Moment.

(129) *ibid.*

(130) *ibid.* p172.

(131) *ibid.*

The analysis: Metaphysics.

Although each of these endings is unpredictable, each is eminently credible and, more importantly, each is entirely consistent with what we all see/read/hear almost every day. But, in the Whiteheadian "centred" universe, God is an additional feature, he is, apparently, providing each emerging entity with its initial aim. Where are these aims?

Consider firstly the piano. Sherburne argues that it is not possible to suggest, from within the Whiteheadian context, that God urges the piano occasions to somehow deviate from their path in order to avoid hitting innocent pedestrians below. It is difficult not to agree with that. Experience teaches us that falling objects do not - unless acted upon by forces which have a credible explanation - deviate from their line of descent. But it must be stressed that this only challenges the idea of God providing initial aims if that idea allows for "absurd" possibilities - such as God persuading the piano occasions to transmute into a dove. Clearly, such ideas are not permitted by the theory. This is because the initial aim must be relevant to the historical circumstances of the emerging entity, one might say: once a falling piano, always a falling piano.

Sherburne himself gives a re-statement of this, "in regard to the presentation of subjective aims, God would have to 'speak' to each actual occasion in its own 'language', that is, at its own level, in a manner harmonious with the character of the sort of data which are in general operative in the aesthetic synthesis which is the concrescence of the actual entity in question."(132). The issue raised by the scene before us is essentially a moral one: an attempt to justify, or at least explain, the death of the young woman in a centred universe. But such language is obviously far beyond that which is relevant to the actual entities composing the piano: they are simply not capable of any

(132) *ibid.* p173.



The analysis: Metaphysics.

self - determination with respect to moral issues. To suggest otherwise is merely to confuse human categories of values with the inanimate. If attention is to be focused on the piano, then, the scene must be analysed in terms of a complex society reiterating the past conditions of that society. And that, one presumes, is fully compatible with God's desire to achieve order in the universe.

The alternative is to "consider options for understanding how God might exert influence at the other end of the spectrum of actual occasions, namely, by proffering subjective aims to those actual occasions that constitute moments in the regnant nexus of the human beings involved in the drama."(133). At first consideration this might seem to be a more fruitful option, it might well make sense to think of God as functioning as an early warning system prior to a disaster if he supplies the appropriate initial aim to a person, utilizing their capacity for high - level decision making. But, according to Sherburne, clearly not. Primarily, he says, because "if God were viewed as having the power to influence events at this level at all, then we would have to conclude that the world ought to be a very different place than in fact it is."(134). Drivers fear fog precisely because they do not know what dangers may lie merely a few yards before them, the captain of the Titanic did steer his vessel into an iceberg: one could continue ad-lib cataloguing exactly those events which should not have happened had God been providing information about the world through the initial aims offered to occasions. That is how Sherburne states his conclusion. Now, while no-one would doubt that "our world is filled with the absurdity which Sartre and Camus trumpet to the rooftops", (135) is it

(133) *ibid.* p174

(134) *ibid.*

(135) *ibid.* p178



The analysis: Metaphysics.

possible to interpret the events of Sherburne's drama in a manner which does permit the idea of a centred universe? There are two additional considerations relevant here which shed light on this question. First I suggest that it is comparatively straightforward to show that Sherburne concludes too much from his argument and, second, I note that he fails to consider those factors which do support the notion of a universe with God at - or as - its centre.

In order to make the first point I accept the basics of his argument - I think one would be foolish not to - but arrive at a different conclusion. There are, in fact, two valid conclusions which one can reach. Firstly, the argument produces evidence that God does not provide information (in the form of the initial aim to the emerging occasion) about the macrocosmic environment in which the entities exist. That is essentially a restatement of Sherburne's own "appropriate language" thesis mentioned earlier. The concept of a "falling - piano - about - to - strike - a - young - woman" is not one which is intelligible to any one actual entity, even to the entities involved in that drama. Entities coneresce according to a synthesis of prehensions of other actual entities, not, directly, of the societies of which those entities are members. The second conclusion states that even if the component actual entity, A, "knows" facts pertaining to the macrocosmic world of entities X,Y,Z this is not to say that the complex society of which A is a member is consciously aware of this relation to the society of which X,Y and Z are members. Unless the person is the actual entity then the relationship between the person and the entity is not simple. Clearly, to revert back to Sherburne's young woman, at the level of conscious experience the relevant data is delineated by the fact that she is window shopping. It is nonsense to suggest that a complex society is always conscious of all the prehensions of its component

The analysis: Metaphysics.

entities (136) As Whitehead said, "..... we are vividly absorbed in a small region of abstract thought while oblivious to the world around..". One can conclude that the observation that the person is unaware of fact x (God's desired outcome) does not, necessarily, imply that an occasion A (in the woman's soul) does not experience a positive prehension of X (God). We may not conclude that God is not involved in the drama, even if we have to be careful about how, precisely, he is involved. Moreover, in order to surmount Sherburne's objections at this point it has been necessary to introduce the principle which states that a society of actual entities is not consciously or significantly aware of the initial aims which are relevant to its component entities. That has profound consequences for christology.....!

However, whereas these two points reveal that Sherburne draws an invalid conclusion from his argument, the next consideration actually supports a centred view of the universe. Consider the following conclusion to the drama: a man taking a stroll after luncheon just happens to glance towards a bird singing high above him (a disciple of Hartshorne perhaps?) and, realizing the urgency of the situation, cries out. The woman instinctively moves... the drama is over. Supposing that the above scenario is compatible with God's envisagement of the situation, is it possible to conceive how he is involved in the outcome without violating the principle already stated? Consider what actually takes place here. The act of the man looking upwards at just the right time in just the right place is, of course, purely coincidental. But, he shouts a warning. Why?

(136) However, there would be an interesting exception to this if a person was totally aware of all the aspects of the world as they impinged upon the self. The possibility of this happening cannot be dismissed although it is difficult to see how it could be analysed. Perhaps one might point to mysticism or, again, telepathy to provide support for the idea that it is possible to be totally in harmony with one's world.

The analysis: Metaphysics.

Sherburne's argument prevents us from ascribing the reason for his warning directly to God. God did not determine the actions of the man, nor did he inspire the call by a direct initiative through an initial aim. In fact, a sufficient reason is given by the idea of self-preservation (one day it might happen to him) or, slightly more complex, the desire for the preservation of the species. I venture to suggest that the macrocosmic things of a decentred universe could have no understanding of, or desire for, a notion of preservation. Only in a universe which is ordered and unified is one able to make sense of "purpose". Moreover, experiential dramas of the kind portrayed by Sherburne reveal that purpose is an inherent quality in the lives of people who - despite the existentialist's pleadings for absurdity - do manifest the symptoms of life in a centred universe (137).

In conjunction with the previous two points this conclusion provides adequate support for our belief in a God-centred universe. However, in order to surmount the obstacle of Sherburne's analysis, a sacrifice was forced upon us, the principle that initial aims are not directly relevant for the macrocosmic individuals in the universe such as people. But it is essential for the christological adventure that we can speak intelligibly about God acting with individual people. In order to account for mankind's radical perception of purpose and value it is necessary, I believe, to be able to express the Divine vision in

(137) Sherburne argues that his thesis maintains a strong religious thrust to it. He talks of "pockets of order" which arise in the periphery, not the centre. This order ensures, he claims, that there is a "character of permanent rightness" which permeates nature. See Process Studies 15/2 p84, and Whitehead in Religion in the Making. In reply, I suggest that Sherburne's notion of order is not adequate to convey the sheer imaginative power of the human perception of purpose and aim. One notes a comment made by Wilmot (op.cit. p93), "One of the interesting features of the present situation is the extent to which it is an age of hope, and that in spite of the awareness on the part of all men in our generation that our life could be snuffed out at any moment without warning, we continue to believe in and to plan for the future."

The analysis: Metaphysics.

terms which are available to human persons.

The key to this understanding is reached through a synthesis of the various points in this chapter. The concept of the initial aim (for actual entities), the soul as the dominant centre of the person, the idea of continuity with that individual's past, and the sense in which the whole world is pervaded by purpose all combine to illustrate how God is active. Indeed, since this activity is with, and in, the lives of people we can speak of this as God's activity in history. It is not possible to speak clearly about God's action in history without drawing the distinction between the three tenses of history, past, present and future. The reason why it is necessary to include all three, particularly the last, in our understanding of God's action in history will become evident once each sense has been described in isolation.

The simplest sense of God's action in history is that of the divine presence in the present. This, as has been shown in the previous section, is understood in terms of God's involvement with actual entities through the provision of an initial aim. At the macrocosmic level this presence is the integration of the presence in the microcosmic components. We noted that it is not possible to give experiential credibility to the notion of God acting in any direct sense with the societies of the "real" world. The character of each initial aim never varies, it is the "best for that impasse", yet its actual content does, in order for it to be relevant to that particular emerging entity. It is, moreover, always an aim which, to different degrees, appeals to both the past and the future. It must be at once both a lure towards a future goal and a statement of reiteration of the past. If it were not then the universe would be, firstly, purposeless and secondly, discontinuous. Hence we note that at this most fundamental understanding of the divine activity there is an inexorable inter -

The analysis: Metaphysics.

relatedness between the three tenses.

This relatedness implies that one must seek to understand God's action in the past with reference to the inclusion of the past as an important element in the present. Firstly, one notes that the way the structure of the world is formed, by societies which reiterate a common character, there is a continuity of physical form without which nothing, except perhaps random order or chaos, could possibly exist. This sense of essential reiteration is the condition permissive of life and yet it is also the negation of the central feature of life, namely novelty. This aspect becomes relevant because, for an individual self, continuity is achieved by virtue of a novel appropriation of a past which is seen to have importance, or particular relevance, for the existential situation of the soul. So, unlike trivial societies, the soul is, at least partly, responsible for the creation of its own past. But every past event is, simply because it was once a present actuality receiving its initial aim from God, a manifestation of the divine act. The combination of these two ideas implies that it is possible to hold to a view of God as being active in one's past. This interprets God's past action in a subjective manner, in two ways. Firstly, it is apparent that because one can not label this or that entity to be a more complete manifestation of God's action than any other, there is no objective standard for "incarnation" (138). The response to this emphasizes that our perception of the past is not a relation to actual entities as such, we observe societies of actual entities which entails a much more complex definition of "incarnation". During the course of this discussion it will become apparent that there is, indeed, a mode of objectivity in this. The second, more important, point agrees that the

(138) It is truly an incarnation of God - in - history, but at this stage in the discussion the term should be interpreted without an excessive import of religious bias or significance.



The analysis: Metaphysics.

essence of this process is subjective. Once again, it must be stressed that the individual is in a position to determine its own relevant past. However, this element of freedom is restricted by the environment of the person and, therefore, it is possible to conceive of certain objectified standards which exist for that context. Given the environment, one can envisage that certain events will, inevitably, be more important or significant than others, these events will become the symbols or the standards of that society. Hence, although it is only objective from within a closed, finite framework, it is, nevertheless, objectivity. The crux of this point remains that it is God's action as received by an individual which is important, it only makes sense to speak about the divine presence in history insofar as individuals appropriate that history into their present. This relates to Pittenger's notion of "importance" and Ogden's insistence that revelation only becomes revelatory if it is received as such.

The third aspect of God's action in history is the notion of his action "in" the future. This provides the key which unlocks the understanding of the other two aspects and introduces a powerful sense of objectivity. The whole idea of discussing action and the future appears to present a paradox to Process thought because of its insistence on the openness of the future: following Aristotle the future is potential. How can one speak of action in a realm of mere potentiality? However, the paradox is resolved by noting that God's action in the future is that of a lure towards the realization of particular values rather than an action which is itself actual. Indeed, it is more correct to speak of God's action for the future as being a part of his action in history. This lure towards a realization is both a statement of reiteration and one of novelty. It is a persuasive force for one thing to become another thing, promoting change and development



The analysis: Metaphysics.

without divorcing the second state from the first. Crucially, it is obvious that this lure is available only because it is present in either the past or as an actuality now. It cannot exist, itself, in the future although it is directed towards, and is efficacious in - and in that sense is an activity in - the future. As a present lure to actual entities it is the initial aim, and, of particular interest in this context, the lure which is appropriate for societies is the divine purpose as it is manifested in the past. The principle that God acts in the lives of human beings, not by a direct implantation of an initial aim but through his incarnation in history, deserves a label. I propose to call it the "pyramid effect". This is the process in which God's aim for actual entities (which "transcend the given but must also reflect the given"(139)) becomes integrated, by actualizations in actual occasions, into a macrocosmic lure relevant to societies. It becomes, in other words, a statement of purpose which can be apprehended by a society. Each level of the pyramid is dependent upon the lower (antecedent) levels, thus confirming Sherburne's emphasis on the causal efficacy of the past. If the "trivial" levels, the most elementary actual occasions of the cosmos, fail to actualize their aim, the possibility for synthesized aims for societies is minimized: chaos results. Moreover, that fact illustrates why all actual entities are important. Without the "cooperation" of the most trivial puffs of existence, the possibilities for God's activity are limited. Indeed, God's involvement in the world is essentially zero unless the actual entities of the world cooperate, and actualize God's aim for them. But if all actual entities are thereby rendered important, the pyramid effect also enables us to understand why gradations of importance exist. The complex societies are more significant - interesting, beautiful and generative of greater possibilities of value - because they respond to

(139) Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki, God-Christ-Church, p94.

The analysis: Metaphysics.

complex aims, integrated aims towards, and actualizations of, value in less significant societies. The possibilities for novel creativity are greater. Whereas an actual entity receives a single aim (which is essentially a novel reiteration arising out of the dominant past actual entity), a complex society has a perception of purpose which incorporates a correspondingly complex matrix of aims and values. And, whereas an actual entity receives its aim immediately, the purpose or aim for a society (for example a person) is mediated through the facts of history. This emphasises the importance of the temporal process. A "self" cannot be described solely in terms of its aim and fulfilment in the present, but rather in the terms of a becoming process - the lure from the past towards the future (140). How, in that case, can we understand Hartshorne's statement that, "whatever else God controls, he controls human minds."?(141).

Hartshorne suggests that God alters the object of our awareness. This, he claims, alters our awareness which, in turn, alters us. It is evident that God does not alter our awareness in the manner which was criticised by Sherburne. God did not control the mind of our window shopper. Her object of awareness did not suddenly change from the contents of the window to the grand piano. That would be absurd. It follows from this that if God is to "influence"(142) a person's mind, the process must be describable in terms of the pyramid effect. God's purpose must be mediated in history. Clearly, this "takes time", its

(140) Ford expresses these two aspects when he defines human integrity in terms of "steadfastness of character" and the values chosen, Lure of God p127.

(141) The Divine Relativity p139.

(142) ibid. p141. "Influence" is more appropriate than "control" because "an object always influences but never cannot dictate."(ibid.) For an interesting study around this idea see Basinger, David "Human Coercion: A Fly in the Process Ointment?", Process Studies 15/3 Fall 1986.

The analysis: Metaphysics.

effects are neither immediate nor are they predictable. But that is precisely the "risk" inherent in any non-determined relationship. The notion of "control" is not available to the Process theist. Instead, the emphasis is on the continuity of purpose, the divine lure as it is transmitted in history and received in the present. This eliminates a dramatic and immediate injection of aim. It will be noted that this corresponds to the continuity of the becoming self. Human life is not simply the sum of the constituent acts because the continuity of purpose which promotes those acts is itself, an element in the person. It is the continuity which ensures self identity through time. Furthermore, continuity of purpose generates, by virtue of the pyramid effect, possibilities for the actualization of ever-greater degrees of value. Each level of the pyramid is engaged in a "snowball" effect which maximizes interest and the potential for novelty. To state it in slightly different terms, a world which consists of complex societies is more exciting than a world of unassociated actual entities. I suggest that it is impossible to ignore Sherburne's arguments and we must, therefore, conclude that God cannot exercise any direct or immediate control over human minds. He influences them through his actions in history. The person is able to appropriate that influence as it is mediated through the events of the past by the pyramid effect. The importance of the "influence" cannot be stated in stronger terms than those used by Williams. He states, "I am in part what I hope for; for what I am is what I am willing to commit myself to, and that depends upon what I believe finally counts."(143). The influence, the "hope", what "finally counts" or what one is prepared to "commit" oneself to is constitutive of the person.

(143) PPCT p442.

The analysis: Metaphysics.

Despite the quotation from Sponheim at the end of chapter one, the reader may feel that the present chapter has devoted too much attention to issues which are apparently peripheral to christology. In response (and although I accept that in classical terms the accusation may have substance), I argue that Process christology must explicate the mode of God's presence in the world prior to defending or debating the unique presence of God in Jesus. The fundamental purpose of this chapter has been to establish that, if we are to understand God as active in the lives of people, his activity is mediated through history. The following chapter absorbs that central idea and, combining it with the themes of chapter two, begins to enter the true adventure.

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**Synthesis: Process Christology.**  
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In chapter two the major themes of Process christology were presented in a descriptive and uncritical manner. It was noted that each of these themes was, by virtue of its author's implicit or explicit appropriation of Whiteheadian categories, derived from aspects of Process metaphysics. Chapter three was a discussion of these philosophical foundations, noting particularly relevant points of divergence amongst Process thinkers, with the intention of clarifying how God acts in the world, and how this relates to a Process understanding of the human person. In the idiom of the introduction, two tasks have been completed, the inspiration and the analysis: faith and metaphysics. The third task, which is the purpose of the present chapter, is an attempt at a synthesis. Throughout the chapter, the intention is to propose a christology which is thoroughly consistent with the principles with which we understand the world. Pailin gives us a pointed and sardonic warning against adopting any other approach, viewing "incarnation" as an "irrational irruption into this world of a 'totally other' mode of being" is equivalent to "presenting the freedom of the city to a chimney pot."<sup>(1)</sup> Our task will take two stages. First, the christologies of chapter two will be re-examined and it will be asked, critically, if they are valid reflections of Whitehead's vision, the principles expounded in chapter three. It is admitted at the outset that this tends towards a more subjective approach than has so far been the case. The examination of the christologies is in the light of a particular interpretation of Process metaphysics (albeit I believe it to be the correct one) and, consequently, the "end product" will reflect this. Hence, this evaluation of, say, Pittenger's christology, is not undertaken with respect to the principles Pittenger himself would necessarily agree with, rather it subjects his work to an

(1) Pailin, D. "The Incarnation as a Continuing Reality", ICR, Religious Studies p314.



The synthesis: Process Christology.

external criterion - the interpretation of Process metaphysics. In chapter two there was a concern to illustrate the christologies of various authors, in the present chapter the concern lies primarily with the themes of christology and, to at least some extent, the original author is coincidental. Incidentally, adopting this method has the advantage that the study is not bound by the language limitations imposed by the Christologies of chapter two. It is inevitable that thinkers - perhaps particularly in the field of religion where terminology is so crucial - generate their own idiom, yet, in this chapter, the intention is to break free (to "transcend" would imply a less than modest intention) from those limits and let the language develop without undue predetermination.

The chapter is divided into two sections. The first deals with that aspect of christology which is concerned with Jesus Christ as he was in and for himself. It replies to the question of who he was when he lived as a man in the first century (2). The second section is an attempt to understand how that man, the Nazarene, can be understood for us, what might be termed the present implications of the previous section (3). There is a sense in which this represents the christology - soteriology distinction but, for reasons which will be made evident, in the context of a Process christology, the distinction is somewhat artificial. The second stage of the chapter is to argue that, given the various themes, it is possible to present a coherent "Process Christology" which conveys the faith of chapter two in the metaphysical

(2) Moltmann, "the first task of Christology is the critical verification of the Christian faith in its origin in Jesus and his history." The Crucified God p84.

(3) "The second task is the critical verification of the Christian faith in its consequences for the present and future."(ibid.) Moltmann shows how the earliest Christian confessions incorporated both aspects, "Jesus" - the earthly historical, "Christ" - the eschatological.

The synthesis: Process Christology.

precision of chapter three.

In chapter two it was noted that Process theology has traditionally regarded the "problem" of christology not to be how God was present in Christ but how he was present in a unique sense (4). The former, it was assumed, is adequately dealt with by a statement of the kind that Process theology is thoroughly incarnational - God is immanent in everything and concomitant with the world (5). The notion of God's presence in the world was examined in chapter three, in which a distinction was drawn between His involvement in the microcosmic world and that in the world of human beings. These are represented by the notions of God providing each emerging actual entity with the initial phase of its subjective aim on one hand and, on the other, through what I called the pyramid effect. It was shown that integral to the notion of a fully developed "self", there is a strand of continuity between the past, which is reiterated, the decisions reached in the present, and the orientation towards the future that is both a product and a cause of the previous two. Furthermore, the root of this continuity must be external to the developing self. If this condition is not met then the continuity becomes merely self - referential and merely reiteration. The sense of widening one's horizons and allowing other influences to lure the self towards a goal is rendered impotent unless continuity implies a continuity with something greater than that which is continuous. The extension of this argument is to claim that an increasingly universal image and goal, to which the self adheres and aims, promotes ever increasing degrees of harmony and authenticity in

(4) For example, Griffin, (A Process Christology p180) "the problem for a Christology based on Whitehead's philosophy will be to understand, not how God could be present in Jesus, but how God could be present in him in a special way..."

(5) Whitehead says, "the world lives by its incarnation of God in itself." (Religion in the Making p140).

The synthesis: Process Christology.

that self. If, therefore, a self develops by virtue of its appropriation of, and adherence to, a divine tradition - incorporating the divine vision relevant to the future - that self achieves its optimum "selfhood". The question to be raised here is simple: how does that analysis apply to Jesus?

The reply, it can confidently be stated at the outset, is devoid of such simplicity. There is no doubt that, on the microcosmic level, God was present and active in the life of Jesus, insofar as he provided the initial aims to his component actual entities. And, as was mentioned in chapter two, Process theologians have not always observed the micro/macro distinction, thereby enabling, for example, Pittenger's statement that Jesus made his own "subjective aim identical with the initial aim which God provided him" (6). This claim is a confusion between the notion of an actual entity's freedom for self-determination and the freedom of the totality of the society. Of course, if Pittenger merely wishes to say that the actual entities of Jesus adopted their initial aims as their subjective aims, and achieved concrecence according to the divine vision as it was relevant to them, then his statement is credible. But, as a statement of christology it is really to say very little, for one can also say that, in the vast majority of instances, the actual entities of a grain of sand concrecence according to their initial aim. However, his intention is to say more than that. Indeed, he is anxious to convey the principle that Jesus, in an act of free response to a divine initiative, fully actualized, or accepted as his own aim, whatever this initiative demanded. His will was aligned to the divine vision. The theory of initial aims is inadequate to account for this.

(6) Christology Reconsidered p59.

## The synthesis: Process Christology.

Interestingly, Pittenger himself hints at the possible solution to this difficulty. For, as was quoted in chapter two, he went on to employ the language of "purpose", noting that this was conveyed to Jesus through the totality of his background. It is worth stressing the difference between the two claims. Both involve the notion of God initiating a purpose or aim for Jesus, but, whereas the former idea involves communicating the aim in the initial phase of the subjective aim, the latter suggests that purpose is expressed in history. This notion will be shown to be eminently suited to the Christological task (7). Prior to expanding upon this idea, it should be noted that Cobb uses the initial aim theory in a not dissimilar manner.

In chapter two it was noted that, for Cobb, there is a necessary presence of God in everything, in the sense that God is present as prehended datum. Obviously, however, it is essential to show how, therefore, there is variation in God's presence, and this he did in three ways. On examination it can be shown that these tools are not as powerful in the task of Christology as he implies.

Diversity is introduced primarily because of the variation in the initial aim itself. Although Cobb is correct when he says that each initial aim is unique, that is only one side of the story. In a more

(7) Pittenger's use of initial aims at this point is, perhaps, an example of the "overcoat model" (described with nonchalant perception by Dr. George Hall during afternoon tea in St. Mary's.) This suggests that a theologian, in order to gain the respect of the philosophical community, dresses-up a valid theological idea in the nearest respectable philosophical notion. If, however, the debate "hots up" the "overcoat" is discarded and the theology once again stands naked. Note that Pittenger himself says that if his own faith is shown to be in mortal conflict with philosophy, it will not be faith which is rejected. Although this is, perhaps, a somewhat harsh appraisal, it does provide a warning against using philosophical results as inappropriate theological devices. The response of my supervisor who noted the comment in an early draft might also be pertinent; a warning not to put faith in a philosophical strait - jacket! The intention is, of course, to use philosophical analysis to promote and develop faith.

The synthesis: Process Christology.

fundamental sense all actual aims are identical - they are all, to use Whitehead's words, the best for that impasse. To rephrase that, all initial aims are lures towards the maximization of harmony - granted the circumstances, albeit unique, of the emerging entity. God does not favour some actual entities more than others. God exhibits a consistent and immutable desire for all occasions, that they maximize the potential inherited from their environment. Sherburne's analysis of initial aims, presented in chapter three, shows that the initial aim from God (if it is to have any experiential credibility) must be severely restricted by the inherited environment. Suppose, however, that God does favour some entities as opposed to others, and imparts to some, aims which are potentially more rewarding than the usual. It should be immediately obvious that we are plunged headlong into the murky depths of the Problem of Evil. The process becomes fatalistic, why should I seek to maximize value and harmony in the world unless I believe that God is similarly occupied? The parable of the Lost Sheep is a Biblical portrayal of precisely this point, God's love extends to all, equally. But if this reductio ad absurdum argument illustrates just how powerful Whitehead's "best for that impasse" formula is, there is a further devastating point against any notion of God favouring particular actual entities. This is as follows. Until an actual entity becomes, according to its self - creativity, it is impossible for God to know, with any degree of certainty, what that actual entity will be. So, any notion of God favouring an actual entity prior to that entity's concrescence (at which point it is, of course, too late for God to impart a special aim for it) provokes images of God juggling his favours over the melting pot of cosmic possibilities, an extreme version of the abhorrent dice playing God.



The synthesis: Process Christology.

We have to conclude that any diversity introduced in the initial aim is, therefore, a reflection of the different environments and inherited factors which confront each actual entity. Although this can be a significant diversity, its origins do not rest under God's control. Thus the initial aim is not an adequate explanation of God's initiative for Jesus.

Secondly, Cobb introduces diversity by suggesting that the initial aim is not the only way of achieving a prehension of God. For Cobb this is a subset of the first point, because of the emphasis he places on the initial aim as the motivating power behind other prehensions. In his attempts to stress God's creating role, he places too much deterministic emphasis on the initial aim and reduces other processes formative of the initial phase of the actual entity to essentially zero. If other prehensions are possible without the controlling reference to the initial aim then it is certainly possible to introduce greater diversity. Bryan hints at this, "Jesus preheded in a unique way the influence of God which was embodied already in the other entities of his distant and immediate past."(8). One notes that this reference to the past of Jesus is similar to Pittenger's insistence that his purpose was conveyed through his history.

The third way in which Cobb introduces diversity is, essentially, entirely valid, merely noting that the response of the entity differs according to the degree of cooperation with the initial aim and the other influences. It must be noted, once again, that this can only refer to actual entities, and bears little relation to the freedom of a person to respond to macrocosmic possibilities.

(8) Bryan, "The Understanding of Jesus Christ in the Theology of John B. Cobb." p68.



## The synthesis: Process Christology.

In his discussion on the "self", Cobb noted that, for Jesus, it was the source of the urge which was of paramount importance, rather than its precise content. But, given the analysis presented in chapter three and the objections summarized above, it is clear that if we are to give credence to this notion it is essential to be able to define this "urge" (God's aim for Jesus) in a way which is not limited to the initial aim (9). Unless this can be achieved it is not possible to advance beyond the simplistic notion of the macrocosmic Jesus responding to the microcosmic actions of God in the world. The "urge" of Cobb is equivalent to the "purpose" of Pittenger, the intention of both being to express God's initiative for Jesus.

To allow the discussion to move forwards there are two points which require surveying; Pittenger's thesis that Jesus was obedient to God's purpose for him and a more detailed study of the "self" of Jesus, employing Cobb's analysis of the human person. These two points are, although it may not be obvious at the moment, intimately related. Briefly, this is because it is not possible to understand "purpose" without a prior understanding of "self". In the previous chapter it was shown that the past, present and future are all important to an understanding of "self", we should now attempt to understand the obedience of Jesus and his "self" in such a way that it incorporates the three tenses.

The source of Jesus' mission cannot be attributed to an immediate awareness of a divine message implanted in his mind as an initial aim. We must seek the explanation elsewhere. Not only the fact that Jesus sensed a divinely inspired vocation, but also the content of that vocation. At this point it is noted that Cobb and Pittenger disagree.

(9) Although it must, of course, incorporate the notion of the initial aim because that is how, at the most fundamental level, God is active in the world.

The synthesis: Process Christology.

For Pittenger, it is essential that Jesus was aware of the content - it is not possible to be "obedient" without a referent to which one is obedient - whereas Cobb relegates the content to a secondary issue. The fact that Jesus was aware of the divine origin of his vocation is the significant factor. One notes immediately that, because it is proposed to express the source (and content) of this vocation (the urge or purpose for Jesus) in the terms of the macrocosmic world, it is entirely feasible to suggest that Jesus (a person, a macrocosmic society) could be aware of it. To express this in Pittenger's preferred terminology, it is the intention to locate the purpose in such a way that it makes sense to speak of an "obedient response".

Consider the person Jesus of Nazareth as he existed at any one moment of his life, a complex society of actual entities each one of which is occupied in the process of achieving concrescence. One should immediately react against a proposition of this nature! The idea that one can isolate a person as a present "thing" is, in the terms of Whitehead's vision, quite inadmissible. The thrust of the process is, of course, dynamic, a flow from the past to the present and into the potentials of the future. A static photograph extracted from the moving sequence reveals almost nothing about the person (10). If we are to discuss the person of Jesus we must include his past and also his "future". Both Cobb and Pittenger incorporate the three tenses. Pittenger discusses the "four aspects" of the Jesus event; the "preparation for it in Jewish and other history", and the "existence of the man himself" representing the past and present while the "results effected in human history" and "his reception by others" both refer to

(10) This is the basic reason why there is no christology-soteriology distinction in the terms of Process christology. The "Christology" itself must reveal the moving picture, the whole dynamic ongoing event, the latter being the traditional preserve of soteriology. See, for example, Griffin A Process Christology p18.

The synthesis: Process Christology.

the future (11). Cobb's theory of the human self is structured around the three tenses. The key concept which allows for self - identity through time (continuity with one's own past) is memory, and the quotation from Bryan showed the importance of data in the past. The present is the acting self and the future is that power of anticipation which affects present decisions. He summarized these in his apparently strange notion of continuity with one's successors. The present tense is accounted for by the idea of an obedient self and, if it is possible to establish a unique relationship between Jesus and God, it must be done through the notion of this obedient self interacting with an initiative relevant to the past and future. These two asymmetrical "opposites" - one is actual and real, the other is pure potential - are always balanced by the response in the "present". It is in the present that the self has to make the decision which integrates continuity and anticipation. It will be observed that to consider the "future" aspect in any detail is to invoke the "soteriological" considerations which are relevant to the next section, illustrating once again how the two aspects of christology are related.

There are two basic ways in which Jesus' obedience was a manifestation of his relationship to God. The first of these is to claim that he was especially attuned to those events in his past which illustrated God's involvement with the world. The pyramid effect ensures that it is possible for God's activity in the microcosmic world to be integrated and amplified so that it becomes a feature of the macrocosmic world. Ultimately, God's aim for the fundamental building blocks is converted - to a degree dependent upon the response matrix of the relevant events - into a purpose able to be cultivated into fruition by a conscious mind. In chapter three I noted that, although in the

(11) Theology no.88 1985 p450.

The synthesis: Process Christology.

universe as we know it there is no perfect transmission system, the principles of Process philosophy certainly allow this possibility to be realized. In this context it is necessary to be more particular and ask whether, in fact, Jesus did respond to his past in this way and, consequently, may be considered as the flowering of a divine purpose. Our question seeks a reply based on the world and in that sense is at least an empirical quest. However, it is clear that any debate concerned with the historical Jesus is destined for a compromised solution lying at some point between the extremity of a "no-knowledge" approach and the absurdity of a "Gospel as Fact" position (12). If we are to establish that Jesus responded to certain facts in his past in a specific manner then we must be able to provide evidence that the argument is sound. Without wishing to enter the debate in any depth it seems - and this is purely a subjective evaluation - that it is impossible for us to know either the precise nature of the influences that Jesus considered relevant or the precise nature of his response to these influences. What can be said with certainty is that the Biblical picture of Jesus illustrates a man for whom the past was of paramount importance in his life (13). Whereas for Pittenger it is important that Jesus responded to the content of the past, for Cobb the condition is satisfied if Jesus recognised that, through the past, God was the source of whatever he felt his aim to be.

Suppose for a moment that it is valid to suggest that Jesus made the perfect response, one of total obedience, to an urge or purpose which he was made aware of because of his own understanding of history. Does that render Jesus "unique"? And, even if it does imply uniqueness

(12) See for example Kelsey, D.H., The Uses of Scripture in Recent Theology.

(13) For example, Jesus' preaching and reading from the Scriptures, Luke 4:16.

The synthesis: Process Christology.

in fact (that is, after an appraisal of the data), does it imply uniqueness by definition? Note that for the latter condition to be true, one is suggesting that it is impossible for any other person to make the same, perfect, response. Significantly, neither Cobb nor Pittenger dwell on that question. Pittenger is more concerned to show the congruity of the God - Jesus relationship to that of the God - World relationship, which, as a corollary, renders "uniqueness" secondary. He considers the question of uniqueness in connection with the decisiveness of Jesus. This, he argued, is a result of our decision to make him decisive (properly belonging to the second section) rather than decisiveness defined in terms internal to Jesus. For Cobb, the uniqueness of Jesus is a direct result of his awareness of the source of the urge, rather than the purpose. In the second phase of his christology however even this is tertiary to his concern for universality. Any christology which is based upon the claim that Jesus was uniquely in tune with God-in-history, and therefore made a unique response in perfect obedience, faces two issues. Firstly, the lack of available historical verification and, second, the limited sense of "uniqueness".

These problems prompt a further development which, although not completely detached from the previous analysis, approaches the topic from a different angle with the intention of surmounting those obstacles. Rather than considering the past as a sequence of "facts" it is helpful to think of history as the spawning ground for possibilities which confront the becoming present. This raises the explicit idea that the past produces indeterminate possibilities for the present, rather than mere statements of what was the case. This implies dynamism as opposed to factual presentation, and allows one to steer away from a static notion of obedience - as the acceptance (or rejection) of, say,



The synthesis: Process Christology.

facts A,A' and A'' - to a view in which the present self is confronted by possibilities. These take the form of conflicts, opportunities and "questions" which arise as a result of those facts. This is the pyramid effect. The questions are not the actual facts of history - the A,A' and A'', perished actual entities of antecedent generations - but are generated as a result of the self - determining activity of those entities. If the present being is to achieve a significant "selfhood" one must propose that there exists a continuity in how these possibilities are confronted. If history gives the present a series of questions, there must be a common feature motivating a response. Without this underlying commonality there can be no self. I shall call this the principle of interpretation, because it is the key with which the past can be interpreted, not randomly but with continuity. The becoming self, if it is true to a principle of interpretation, will negotiate the risks of possibility with a uniformity of purpose. Of course, a person is quite entitled to assume a position vis-a-vis his past which is quite arbitrary, in which case one assumes that the self is never fully realized. However, in this context, the proposal is that for Jesus, obedience meant the adherence to one particular principle of interpretation. This notion accords well with Cobb's idea that there is an "organizing centre" in the self. Indeed, one might suggest that it is the macrocosmic equivalent of the organizing centre, it functions in a similar way in that it gives the person a theme around which life is orientated. Given the present analysis it is possible to understand how Jesus could be aware of the divine source of his urge. If Jesus' appreciation of history was such that he interpreted past events in the light of the divine activity then the "source" which provided the motivating force central to his own life, was recognised as God's involvement with the world. Furthermore, if Jesus reached his own decisions founded upon his belief that he was answering the questions of



The synthesis: Process Christology.

his past by employing a "divine" interpretative principle, then his own self - understanding was that he was engaged in the work of God. The phrase "divine principle of interpretation", despite its rather grand and formidable sound, is nothing other than Jesus' belief that God had worked in his past and his commitment to build upon that by using it to rationalize his own life. But what was this belief? Or, how did Jesus understand God's involvement in the past in such a way that it gave rise to a general theme around which he was able to interpret the world? The answer to this question will follow from a consideration of revelation, later in this section. At this point one notes that it is still necessary to provide some degree of evidence that Jesus actually did interpret the world in the way suggested. However, this has been reduced to a matter of showing that there was a general principle of interpretation operating throughout his life - which does not require evidence about individual details. Ford dismisses obedience christology as inadequate because it "does not distinguish Jesus from the saints without making impossible dogmatic claims for Jesus' sinlessness." He continues, "the evidence is simply not available... one is forced to make claims that we have no way of supporting (14). While accepting that Ford's comments are pertinent, I would nevertheless suggest that the evidence required by the present analysis is available because, rather than seeking facts one is looking for an overall impression. As Pittenger says, "it is not essential to Christianity that this or that particular incident or saying should be certainly accurate; it is necessary that we shall be able to say of the whole picture, that this or something like this did in fact occur", and, "it is important to insist over and over again that the significant point for a

(14) Ford, L. "The Power of the Christ" Religious Experience and Process Theology p86. In Lure of God, Ford notes that because the term "optimal realization" (the response of Jesus) is relative rather than absolute it is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the Christ event (p52).

The synthesis: Process Christology.

Christological study is the total impression, the full impact, which the records as a whole give us."(15).

If the present analysis is to be verified by historical evidence, then, it is necessary to show that the Gospel's portrayal of Jesus does, indeed, depict him as using his belief in God-in-history as the foundation to his own life. Chapter five will attempt this. The "problem" of uniqueness remains. I have used the word "problem" rather than "issue" because, although I do not regard it as a particular difficulty, I have not yet answered McIntyre's charge that, "Dr. Pittenger fails to see that Christology has always assumed as a first premise that God is not in Christ in the same way as he is in ordinary men or even in saints."(16). Once again, chapter five deals with this issue. Here it suffices to note that McIntyre's stance is the polar opposite to Pittenger's concern for congruity. Indeed, there is no difficulty showing that this analysis of the man Jesus maintains, precisely, the strong sense of congruity required by Pittenger. Ford refers to this as the "continuity" of God's presence in Jesus with his action in the world. This mitigates against absolute uniqueness, which is discontinuity (17). Once this is accepted one can see that by shifting "obedience" away from a notion of a response to an initial aim to an appropriation of a motivating (purpose inspiring) force, derived from God-in-history, Jesus' humanity is emphasised. More precisely, to avoid using the term which implies a universal quality, it places utmost importance on Jesus' selfhood, and, furthermore, it emphasises the process by which he achieved that selfhood. This follows from the fact

(15) Word Incarnate p51'3. He is expressing his agreement with Tillich's position here. (He cites Tillich Systematic Theology vol II), the "biblical picture of Christ" acts as an analogy to the facts which renders faith in Jesus at least possible.

(16) Shape of Christology p140.

(17) op.cit. p79.

The synthesis: Process Christology.

that all human beings are confronted by the same issue - how to act in the present, for the future, from the past, the integration of continuity and anticipation.

To summarize the "christology of response" which has been formulated in this analysis, three points can be made. Firstly, by using the concept of the pyramid effect, it is possible to understand how a person can become aware of God-in-history. If this awareness forms the interpretative principle with which one confronts the possibilities of life, and the claim is that for Jesus it did, then the self is primarily motivated by the divine vision, as it is relevant to the situation of that self. Secondly, one can conceive that the Biblical data will furnish evidence for this because a general, overall picture is all that is required. Thirdly, on the question of uniqueness, it is clear that a response - type christology will inevitably value congruity higher than uniqueness. If, however, one considers the quality of Jesus' obedience, one can suggest that it makes him unique in fact, although not by definition.

The desire to invert the emphasis and stress the importance of uniqueness leads on to the second type of christology. Rather than regarding the crucial aspect to be the response of Jesus, it is possible to look at the initiative of God, in respect to which the response is made. Once again, we note the central role played by the macro/microcosmic distinction because we want to avoid thinking of God's initiative solely in terms of the initial aim. If God's actions were so limited then any initiative He had with respect to Jesus alone is inevitably arbitrary, as Mellert writes, "(if) every moment of his life was an acceptance and a reaffirmation of God's special initiative on his behalf...." then, "it is the positing of an arbitrary initiative that applied solely to the person of Jesus."(18). The task must be to

The synthesis: Process Christology.

formulate, in the terms of the macrocosmic world, an understanding of God's initiative which permits Jesus to be the receiving subject of a particular purpose, but without having to posit a special - and therefore arbitrary - initiative by God with respect to him. To express that slightly differently, one must formulate an understanding of a divine initiative which is relevant to a particular, the man Jesus, but which is not arbitrarily particular. The root of the solution to this apparent paradox is, as expected, the pyramid effect. An analogy might convey the intended meaning. When an author is writing a novel, he possesses, in himself, ideas of how he understands the characters and their actions. In the act of writing, however, he cannot express those ideas, all he can do is to use the printer's ink to convey the basic raw material and hope that the reader formulates the same evaluation. The reader may or may not do so, but as the character develops throughout the book each additional "fact" adds to the impact of the whole. Similarly, an artist can communicate only through the fact of each brush stroke, although she may have a clear message to convey. She must then hope that the viewer assembles and synthesises those facts in such a way that the original purpose is grasped. No-one looking at a painting "sees" x number of brush strokes, they see a dead tree.... (or perhaps a lonely sentinel standing guard over distant lands, or a symbol of man's misuse of nature or perhaps even evidence of God's wondrous creativity ....). The mediated message is never guaranteed success because, despite the accuracy of the initial facts (the print on the page or the paint on the canvas) the final effect depends on its transmission and final reception. This is important for christology because it opens the door to an understanding of how God's initiative for Jesus is genuinely unique.

(18) Mellert, op.cit. p81

The synthesis: Process Christology.

If we propose that, throughout the history of the Old Testament world, God's vision of the forthcoming Christ was operating at all levels on the pyramid of activity, we can envisage that at the time of Jesus' birth the world theatre presented precisely the optimum stage on which Jesus could perform the divine play. Not, it must be noted, in a performance isolated from the past but, on the contrary, as a culmination of centuries of antecedent preparatory activity. Hence Griffin attributes the fact that Jesus was in a position from which he was aware of the divine source of his purpose "partly to the person himself and partly to the history of decisions constituting the particular context in which he finds himself."(19). This is not to suggest that God moulded the world so that it unfolded along a divinely predetermined path - that would not advance us beyond deterministic omnipotence - but that, initially as a result of the divine lure available to all actual entities and their response, the divine purpose was integrated into the macrocosmic history of Israel. The "facts" were the initial aims presented to each occasions. God could only hope that his message - his vision of, and purpose for, the Christ - was the experienced product. The role of response and the self - determining activity of creatures remains a crucial part of this process, although the emphasis - and it is only an emphasis - lies with God's initiative. To plagiarize a phrase of William Temple, this represents the coincidence of divine initiative with human discernment. Two questions follow. First, to what extent has this compromised God's love for all creatures by understanding his initiative vis-a-vis Jesus as elevating one individual above all others? Second, does it satisfy a requirement for uniqueness?

(19) Griffin, A Process Christology p230.



The synthesis: Process Christology.

It is comparatively straightforward to acquit the argument of the first charge, that it represents arbitrary "favouritism". God's initiative is not directed at the man Jesus but at the world. It is the world, by the quality of its response throughout history which makes the initiative appropriate to the man Jesus. Even if one stresses that it was a special initiative by God, seeking to express his vision and purpose in a human person, that it is relevant to Jesus is dependant upon the world. There are three further points which follow on from this. Jesus, it is clear, is, in a very real sense, the pinnacle of God's involvement in the world, in addition to being the ideal response. Hence, one can conceive of him as the representative of God in the world, an idea which forms the basis of the following part of this section. Furthermore, Jesus is equally a product of the world as he may be a product of God's initiative. Should that provoke a negative response I recall Whitehead's comment that God, himself, is created by world. Essentially, the inter - relatedness of all actual entities ensures the validity of this. Such a statement serves to emphasise that Jesus cannot be divorced from his past. If the history of Israel had been different prior to Jesus, there would be no reason to suggest that Mary and Joseph would not have given issue to the man Jesus but, equally certainly, this man would not have been the Jesus who is the subject of this thesis. Thirdly, one notes that the idea of a divine initiative, which incorporates the vision of a man fulfilling God's purpose, existing throughout history prior to the existence of the man for whom it is particularly relevant, lends itself to a notion of "pre-existence". That is, God's anticipation of the Christ, the ideal human response to his initiative, was present and active in the world prior to its actualization by Jesus. To avoid confusion it must be stressed that it is the anticipation which is pre-existent, not the actualization which is Jesus.



The synthesis: Process Christology.

The second question raised, once again, the issue of uniqueness. This centres on the two notions of Jesus as the fulfilment of the divine initiative and the perfect human response to that initiative. If one posits that the divine initiative required only one fulfilment (that is an arbitrary judgement on behalf of man) then clearly Jesus, considered as that fulfilment, is unique. One has to note that he is not necessarily so, because it was the world which generated the unique possibility for him. In fact, it is perhaps rather more meaningful to talk about the dialogue between the world's response and God's action which created a situation uniquely capable of becoming the "Christ - event". Of course, all cosmic situations are unique, but only that one particular state, of which Jesus was a part, was enabling of the "Christ - event". Lewis Ford has replied to the question, "why is it that Socrates could not have been the Christ?" One agrees with him that "Socrates was as sensitive to the divine call as Jesus" and that he "allowed himself to be directed by what he calls his daimon, his inner spirit," which can be thought of in terms of God's call. "But", he correctly continues, "Socrates cannot be the Christ simply because he is not of the house of Israel and does not participate in that whole context of meanings which makes it possible for Jesus to fulfil a different role than is otherwise possible." (20). Note that Ford's reply to his question does not doubt the ability or sincerity of Socrates, nor does he suggest that God did not wish to bestow such elevated status upon him. Rather, he notes that the history of Socrates was not the history which was enabling of the Christ. The term "Christ - event" requires further explanation. At this point it is helpful to survey the christology of Ogden and Griffin, which was introduced in chapter two. The "Christ - event", it will be argued, is an event which is a revelation of God.

(20) Ford, "The Power of the Christ" p85.

The synthesis: Process Christology.

Revelation must be one of the most complex of all theological concepts. Partly, this is due to the fact that it is, by definition, a category of "knowledge" removed from the more readily accepted methods of argument and verification. It also inherits difficulties because of the complexity of its subject and diversity of usage. Rather than indulge in a necessarily lengthy exposition of how revelation can be understood, I shall examine the "revelation" christologies of Ogden and Griffin with the intention of illustrating how the category can be made to serve christology.

Ogden's christology began with a statement that analogy as a metaphysical tool enables us to view God's actions as being similar to human acts. Inevitably, his analysis of human actions is the crux of his argument. He discussed the idea of "self - constituting acts" which are either inclusive or exclusive. An inclusive act incorporates all the relevant influences and a decision is based upon a "sensitive response" to these factors, while an exclusive act, as the name suggests, excludes influences and the resulting decision is necessarily deficient. The conclusions reached in chapter three, which examined the concept of the human person, support Ogden's ideas. There it was shown that the self, in order to become a true self, must be responsible to its own past (taking account of all the influences which are relevant to it: continuity) and make decisions which synthesise the past and flow into the future (the "sensitive response": novelty). Human freedom was defined to be the option, which is always present, not to act in that way by rejecting the essential past or ignoring the future. The misuse of freedom results in, respectively, discontinuity or reiteration devoid of future direction. On the other hand, the self which acts, in the full response to its freedom, in an optimum sense with respect to its past and future, is the self which constitutes itself as a self which

The synthesis: Process Christology.

loves. An act which thus constitutes the self as lover is a re-presentation of the inner characteristic of that self. The condition, according to Ogden, which ensures the validity of this is that it is received by another self as such.

That requirement, when applied to christology, implies that for Christ to be a revelation of God - an expression which will be clarified later - he must be appropriated as such by the receiving subject. Hence, this topic belongs to the second section of this chapter which concentrates on the response of the subject to Christ. However, that is not to limit the christological implications of Ogden's analysis to our reception of Jesus as the revelation of God because one can employ the concept to complement the "response" or "obedience" type christology discussed previously.

There it was proposed that Jesus, by virtue of his free human response, was obedient to a particular principle of interpretation, derived from his belief that he was building upon God's activity which permeated history. He replied to the questions which confronted his own becoming self in the light of his understanding of God's involvement with the people of Israel. One of the crucial questions raised in that discussion was how Jesus was able to interpret history in that way. Ogden's category of revelation provides the clue. It enables one to claim that Jesus recognised, in his own past, revelations of God's "creative and redemptive" activity, revelations which became for Jesus (by virtue of his appropriation of the relevant past) the key to the development of his own self. By receiving - from history - an insight into the love of God - the pure unbounded love of God - Jesus himself was enabled to respond in obedience to that urge to love. The love of God was, by itself, impotent to generate activity but once it had been appropriated by Jesus it became the source of tremendous creative power.

The synthesis: Process Christology.

It was realized as love-in-action. One can conclude that Jesus' self was formed as a self which loved because of its obedience, or response, to a revelation of God's love. Two points must be made which follow from this. Firstly, the point is being made that "revelation" is as important a category in our understanding of Jesus' own relation to God, as it is to our own relation to God through Jesus. We shall note later how it is still possible to suggest that all revelation is christocentric, so that Christ is the sole revealer of God but this necessitates making a distinction between Jesus and "Christ". At this stage I am discussing the man Jesus. This point is essential, the fact that God is active in all history or, as Griffin expresses it, we have a "Christianized ontology, in which God is conceived as active in all events."(21). This is essentially a reaffirmation of the claim that there is no special link between God and Jesus, except that which exists - as it does for all men - through history. In other words, the revelation of God which was appropriated by Jesus was necessary for him. The second point is to note that Ogden does not align himself with an obedience - type christology. Indeed, as was noted in chapter two, his own christology in no way requires that Jesus made a specific response. It certainly does not call for a perfect actualization of the possibility of revelation, although he does, in fact, suggest that Jesus "perfectly actualized the possibility of authentic self understanding."(22). However, I have employed his category to show how the response - based christology can provide an explanation for obedience. It is Jesus' response to a revelation of God's love which he appropriated from his past. Although what has been said of Jesus' response to revelation is important, particularly with reference to an obedience christology, the purpose of the category of revelation as used

(21) A Process Christology p143.

(22) Point of Christology p69.

The synthesis: Process Christology.

by Ogden and Griffin demands more. It is, of course, to demonstrate how Jesus himself is a revelation of God. As indicated previously, revelation for Ogden is largely a function of the mode of reception. Griffin, on the other hand is anxious to ascribe to a revelatory event an objective quality and the debate between the two positions was examined in chapter two (23).

It is interesting to consider how the notion of an "objective" revelation fits the model of Jesus responding to a revelation he received from his past. To satisfy Griffin's requirement for an objective component it must be possible to claim that God intended to reveal himself, and that what was revealed is, in fact, what he intended to reveal. But it will be noted that the conditions necessary to satisfy this requirement are implicit in previous argument. God's activity in the world is to lure creation towards harmony by the provision of aims and the urge towards creative novelty. The manifestation in the macrocosmos of this activity is, by virtue of the pyramid effect, a revelation of God's creative and redemptive activity. Furthermore, because God's nature is creative and redemptive, a revelation of his creative and redemptive activity is a revelation of his nature. In summary, it may be stated that when God acts, He reveals himself and, since God is always active, He is always revealing his nature (24). To contradict this is to deny the very thrust of the Process. It must, however, be stressed once again that this notion of revelation does not consist of magical messages to window shoppers in New York. The revelation is inherent in the process itself, and it is

(23) As was noted in chapter two, it is not valid to suggest - as Griffin does - that Ogden's analysis of revelation is devoid of an objective component. It is the self which loves (an objective criterion, stated without reference to the receiving subject) which reveals the self as a lover. Nevertheless, the difference in emphasis does exist and it is convenient to maintain the distinction.



The synthesis: Process Christology.

the unfolding of the process - how the various actors play their parts - which illuminates or disguises the revelation. The conclusion to this states that God's intention - always to act - is always to reveal. Therefore, the objective aspect of revelation which is required by Griffin is ensured. Thus, in the terms of an obedience christology one can maintain the freedom of Jesus' response and the objective intention of God to reveal. The link between these two aspects will be stated explicitly at the end of this chapter.

If one concentrates on the notion that Jesus himself is a revelation of God the issues are rather different. Clearly, the fact that all God's actions are revelations of his nature can be extended to state that God's intention was to reveal himself through Jesus. If God reveals himself in history, then he reveals himself in Jesus too. But the question considered here is to what extent must Jesus himself have been aware of his own intention to be God's revelation? There are two extreme possibilities. The first suggests that Jesus was conscious of his divine vocation and consequently understood himself to be the mediator of the divine revelation. This necessitates some kind of response - based christology, as described previously. The second possibility suggests that Jesus became a victim of circumstances and conveyed the revelation essentially unknowingly. This is not as absurd as it may, initially, appear for two basic reasons. Primarily, the objective aspect of revelation is present regardless of how

(24) This assumes that the act is received as revelation. The terms "creative" and "redemptive" will be clarified as the discussion progresses. It should be clear from chapter three that God's nature is creative, but the sense in which it is redemptive will require further consideration. Note that Thomas Morris, although accepting that Process theology has provided insights into relationship, denies that God's nature requires him to create (suggesting that a notion of the Trinity conveys the necessary aspect of God relating without dependence upon a "creation"). (Logic of God Incarnate p212). Despite this, in the context of this interpretation of Process Theism, creativity is an essential aspect of God's self.



The synthesis: Process Christology.

"objectively" Jesus saw his life vis-a-vis God. Additionally, our subjective appropriation of Jesus as revelation is not dependent upon Jesus' own subjective awareness of what he was doing. For example, Ogden's analysis of revelation does not require a specific response from Jesus. In fact, Griffin's argument requires that Jesus did respond in a positive way to the possibility of revelation. This follows from Griffin's agreement with Baillie that, "the specialness of an act of God also depends upon the free response of the person in whom God is acting"(25). However, when he introduces Tillich's language that Jesus is "transparent" to God, one must question the extent to which this response is active or passive. What are the implications for the "self", if that self is "transparent" to another? Griffin aims to establish that the "objective existence of God in (Jesus) constituted his selfhood"(26) thereby betraying a position which demands more than a free response by Jesus. Because if X constitutes the selfhood of A it is nonsense to speak of A's response to X, A is X. There is a way to avoid this dilemma, which I consider in the final part of this chapter, although it must be noted that the sense of the "objective presence" of God decreases proportionally as the degree of "constitution" decreases. If we are to avoid the sacrifice of the self then it must be concluded that Jesus freely appropriated God (in the form of the divine activity in his past) to be a causal influence in his own becoming self, but noting the qualification that the past event cannot constitute anything. In an attempt to establish the objective presence of God in Jesus, Griffin made the claim that God acted in a special (different to all his other relations) way with respect to Jesus, who can then be called a special act of God. Of course, he never denies the need for Jesus' "free decision to proclaim God's will"(27), but he concentrates on the

(25) Process Christology p144.

(26) ibid. p145.

The synthesis: Process Christology.

specialness of the divine side of the relationship.

He considers these points within the framework of the initial aim, suggesting that the particular aim for Jesus was an expression of the general aim God envisages for the entire creation. Assuming that the thesis central to this study is valid (that initial aims are relevant only to the microcosmos, and the aims for macrocosmic entities are mediated through the response of the world), is it possible to maintain his argument? He employs a distinction between the formal and the material with respect to God's action. Formally, God acts in precisely the same way in all events, while materially, the content of his action varies. In a similar way, Cobb noted that the initial aims for all entities are unique, because all are different. In terms of revelation, the definition of God's formal activity is that all his actions are (potentially - to be actually so requires the reception by a subject as such) revelatory. Any notion of "special action" must be formulated in the terms of revelation. In a (trivial) sense, because the past for all things is different, the reception of revelation will be different, but this material difference is hardly enough to allow one to postulate a special activity for Jesus. It must be stressed that the "specialness" cannot be attributed to the fact that God's purpose for Christ is "revelatory", because all God's acts in the world are able to be received as such. It is not possible for God to act in a manner untrue to his nature as creative and redemptive (God must be true to himself) so there can be nothing special about an act through Jesus which reveals his nature. For Ogden this is obvious, but Griffin faces a two-fold problem. Firstly, how to understand the divine intention changing so that some, and only some, acts reveal his creative and redemptive nature while others do not. Note that it is not possible to reply to this by

(27) *ibid.* p218.

The synthesis: Process Christology.

appealing to the quality of the subjective reception of the act as revelation because, for Griffin it is the intention behind the act which must account for the difference. Secondly, he must produce a method by which we - the receiving subjects - are able to distinguish between those acts which are revelatory and those which are not. Given the view I am taking this second problem is avoided. If all acts of God are potentially revelatory, because God is he who loves, then one can evaluate a claim for revelation by an examination of its reception as revelation. Pailin has proposed a verification test (which I discuss and employ later) which verifies the revelatory status of a proposition. Griffin has to have a test capable of distinguishing between God's true intention and otherwise. There is nothing in his analysis which enables a satisfactory reply to either of these problems. It must be concluded that Griffin fails to give an account of revelation which permits him to ascribe the degree of "specialness" to Jesus necessary to justify the "objective presence" of God in him. Revelation must be expounded in Ogden's terms, the reception of an act of God by receiving subjects who, because of their participation in the process, are immersed in the omnipresent divine activity. That point having been established, it follows that "uniqueness" or "decisiveness", as Ogden states it, is partly (in addition to that already implied by a response christology) a function of a subject's appropriation of him as being decisive. This leads on to the second aspect of christology, namely, Christ for us. Prior to that, I summarize the main points of this section which considered the person of Jesus.

An obedience or response based christology must, a) define that to which Jesus is obedient and b) ensure that the response is a human response. Jesus' obedience was stated in terms of obedience to a principle of interpretation, derived from history, and which he used to

The synthesis: Process Christology.

develop his own self. This is the same process of becoming which confronts all human beings, which ensures the congruity required by the second point. Generally, the principle of interpretation is the method by which the self resolves the questions and possibilities generated by the past. Furthermore, the principle of interpretation can be understood as a revelation of God's creative and redemptive nature, through his cumulative activity in history. I am suggesting that this was appropriated by Jesus as the theme central to his own life. A degree of uniqueness was introduced by noting that the situation consisting of Jesus' past and present, and his own response (to which will be added the future effects) are uniquely enabling of the Christ event. The Christ event is the name given to this totality which confronts the becoming self, now, in the present. This necessitates the second section. We, too, are becoming "selves", facing the same problem of synthesizing our past and directing our lives into the future, as Jesus. In order to become as authentically as the existential reality of our situation permits, we must incorporate all relevant influences into the development of the self. To express this in one of the questions of the introduction, is it possible to achieve authentic existence without an appeal to Christ? Alternatively, is the Christ event crucial to a self in the process of becoming in the twentieth century?

The synthesis: Process Christology.

The two strands of the previous section, Jesus as the obedient human and Jesus as revelation (28), will be retained, although as the discussion progresses the boundary between them will tend to wander. At the end of the chapter I show how the two themes can be integrated.

Pittenger, it will be recalled, suggests that Jesus actualized a relationship with God which is potential for all men. This gives rise to the question whether this relationship can, in fact, be actualized, without its prior actualization by Jesus. Does the relationship which, according to Pittenger, is potential for all men exist because of the actualization of that potentiality by Jesus? There are two aspects to this question, indeed, to the whole notion of our response to Jesus. These are the individual response and the response which takes place within a community. Considering the individual aspect, the first concern is to illustrate how men and women living in today's present are able to incorporate Jesus into their own lives. This follows from chapter three, in which it was stated that the self must exhibit continuity with the past, in order that it might grow into the future as an unbroken thread of selfhood. The selection of this past is partly a result of inheritance, and, within the confines of that given, a choice of the individual. If, for example, "I" decide to reiterate the "I" of yesterday, then the requirement for continuity is satisfied. But, the "I" develops within very limited parameters and it lacks the openness of an authentic self. If, in contrast, the self is open to the divine vision it is able to become in the most complete, all - encompassing manner possible for it. The latter, it was suggested, can function as a description of Jesus' self. But as it stands the "divine vision" is available to us only as a concept or general principle. In order that a

(28) Accepting that, as yet, I have not shown precisely how Jesus can be considered as revelation, that being dependent upon this present section which deals with our response.



The synthesis: Process Christology.

present self can, in fact, relate to the divine vision it must be available in history, the universal must be manifest as a particular reality. Whereas for Jesus the reality of the divine vision existed as the history of the people of Israel, the idea promoted by Pittenger is that, for us, Jesus is the focal point of all the divine activity and is, therefore, the particular to which we turn in order to relate to God. Because (as related in the previous section) Jesus is the peak of the pyramid, he is available to us as the representative of the totality of the pyramid. There are two further requirements which must be satisfied, in addition to the actual existence of this particular historical reality. The event which is being appropriated must be capable of promoting action in the present; it must be significant. This point can be expressed in Niebuhr's idiomatic twin sense of history. External history is simply a sequence of events which any uninterested spectator can view from the outside. Internal history is "history as it is lived and apprehended from within."(29). In order that Jesus is a valid peak of the pyramid it is essential that, at least as far as the apprehending subject is concerned, the history which is the Christ event is history in the internal sense. Secondly, the event which is in the past must contain a dimension which speaks to the future. The divine vision is a lure, and any event which is claimed to represent that vision must communicate that futuristic element. Without the essential future aspect the development of the apprehending self is introverted, a replication of a mere fact which is devoid of the creative novelty of the process. The first of these, the call for action, represents "creativity"; the second, the lure towards harmony, is "redemptive". Hence one can begin to see how Jesus is a revelation of God because, when one appropriates an event which is creative and redemptive, that event is a reflection of God who is creative and

(29) Quoted by Griffin, Process Christology p51.



The synthesis: Process Christology.

redemptive. We shall note later how this relates to Pailin's verification test for revelation.

The very nature of an individual's response to Jesus implies that the topic presently under consideration is subjective. This is not to deny the objective requirements mentioned above, but one notes that the response is how one self appropriates the historical events. If this were the end of the story then "Christian faith" could not exist. It would be lost amidst the plethora of different subjective responses to Jesus, each (assuming the elements of past and future) equally valid because each is relevant to one particular receiving individual. But, the response to Jesus is not limited to the response of the individual. One must also take account of the community response. The community, the Church, is, in one sense, a class name for all those individuals who adhere to it and believe in its own importance. Yet the Church is also more than a mere name. It is also a society - in the technical Whiteheadian sense - in which "all members prehend that importance from past members of the society and incorporate that importance into themselves."(30). I shall consider the Church in more detail in the next chapter but in this context one notes that objectivity is introduced by the defining characteristic of the Church as society. The Church is the community response to Jesus and (regardless of whether one believes that to be true or false) that is an objective criterion. Once again, this community response must be subject to the same two requirements mentioned above, that the response is initiative of novel action, and is based upon a historical thread of continuity.

In order that we are able to appropriate Jesus it is necessary to be able to show how he is able to affect the future. There are two basic ways in which this is possible. Perhaps the simplest of these is

(30) Mellert, op.cit. p94.

The synthesis: Process Christology.

to suggest that Jesus provides an example of authentic existence, the ideal human - divine relationship. This approach is not, of course, unique to Process thought. For example, Norris writes of Strauss' Christology, "the figure of Christ, then, is for Strauss a kind of ideal representative of humanity,.. ...in the light of which people become aware of who they are or, perhaps, what they are becoming."(31). In this sense, Jesus represents a perfection of humanity - which is open to two interpretations. On one hand, Mellert, for example, writes, "Jesus is most divine when he is most ideally human."(32). Insofar as the ideal state of being human would permit a maximization of prehensions and awareness of the whole, then this does indeed tend towards divinity - God being the self who is aware of everything. However, and to mark the contrast, Pailin notes that this view is deficient if it reduces Jesus to "man's ideal for man"(33) which, as he points out, tends towards a Feuerbachian position. Since the Process view of Jesus clearly does establish him as an example these, apparently irreconcilable, positions must be harmonized. They are, of course, both correct because they look at the issue from two different angles. Mellert's intention is to make the point, in line with Pittenger's position, that there is congruity between our human response and the human response of Jesus, while maintaining an emphasis upon the "uniqueness" of Jesus' response. One must also note that Ogden's analogy theory implies that the line between a human act and a divine act is not precise; the boundary can be blurred. The importance of this is that it enables one to "divinize" Jesus' actions - the quality of his response to God-in-history - without crossing over the boundary between the human and the divine. Obviously, however, this has an element of

(31) Norris, R.A. Studia Patristica p147.

(32) Mellert op.cit. p87.

(33) Pailin, ICR p306.

The synthesis: Process Christology.

mere semantics about it and, given Mellert's religious position he inevitably tends towards the maximization of "divine" language about Jesus. Pailin, on the other hand, is anxious to stress one of the possible dangers of an obedience type Christology. If Jesus' importance is solely a function of his human response then he becomes an ideal, worthy of our attention, without reference to God. It is then only a minor step to a Feuerbachian position. It must be added that an obedience - or response based - Christology does not, in fact, argue that Jesus is man's ideal for man. Indeed, because it is claimed that Jesus was obedient to a divine call, it can be stated that he is God's ideal for man. That statement must be qualified - as it stands it implies a universal quality "man", whereas, of course, Jesus was, and could only be, God's ideal for that particular man. Pittenger warns that Process thought cannot permit talk of "Godhead" in union with "humanity". It is always God with that man.(34). Any generalized claim about "humanity" is always an extrapolation made with convenience, and, classically, a different metaphysical framework, rather than precision in mind. Pailin's warning is valuable insofar as it draws attention to the requirement that a response christology must be formulated with God's initiative occupying the central role. It is not a human response to a human initiative, but a human response to God's initiative.

The second understanding of Jesus as efficacious in the present concerns the generation of new possibilities. The response of Jesus to the challenge of his own life and death has opened novel possibilities for people alive today. To some extent this is true of all events, some to an increased extent than others. For example, when Rutherford succeeded in splitting the atom he had - albeit unknowingly - enabled both Hiroshima and complex radiation treatment techniques. These things

(34) Christology Reconsidered p12.

The synthesis: Process Christology.

could not have existed unless that initial possibility had been realized as an actual event. In a trivial sense, unless I boil the kettle I will not have the possibility of making a cup of instant coffee. The principle that one event enables certain possibilities in the future is consistent, although the significance can vary dramatically. The application of this to christology is important. One can suggest that the life of Jesus enables present actions to be realized by creating the conditions necessary for that actualization to occur. But any hope that this is a simple exercise in christology is misplaced. One must question whether the potential for action which exists in the present could ever have existed without the possibilities generated by Jesus' response in his life. As an analogy, for example, the atomic bomb would, in fact, probably have existed even if Rutherford's experiments had failed - the initial actualization would have been achieved by one of his colleagues or the next generation of experimental physicists. Similarly, it is not the fact that I switched the kettle on, but rather the content of that, the fact that the kettle was switched on. The causal relationship is one of event enabling a future event, regardless of the subjective quality of the initial event. To illustrate this further one notes an essential difference between my two examples. Because, whereas I certainly intended to make my coffee, it is doubtful in the extreme that Rutherford had any intention to create a weapon of vast destructive potential. Consequently, if it is argued that Jesus generated novel possibilities for the present, two issues arise. Firstly, do these possibilities rely for their existence upon Jesus himself - are they subject dependent - or is the person Jesus of Nazareth coincidental to the causal relationship which exists between the events? Secondly, and assuming an answer to the first, did Jesus intend to generate those possibilities which are attributed to him? Note that the notion of intention being discussed here is not the same

The synthesis: Process Christology.

as that required by Griffin. In the present context our concern is with Jesus' intention, not God's.

Initially, however, one should ask these questions not about Jesus, but, rather, God. Invoking the conclusions expressed in the third chapter, one notes that although God is always active in the world, it is the pyramid effect which enables the plethora of macrocosmic choice and possibility. This synthesis of urges and possibilities created at the level of initial aims and actual entities generates interesting potentials for societies and living individuals. The implication of this is that any given situation or potential state cannot be attributed solely to God. It is cosmic history as a whole which is causal in determining what present possibilities are available, a history in which God plays one role amongst many. Relating this to Jesus one realizes that it is not possible to maintain a precise causal relationship between his acts and the potential states which exist now. The options which are available to a becoming individual in the present are a product of that individual's total history, not of any one part of that history. The inter - relatedness of all events is the principle which explains why that is so. However, in an important sense the argument so far has missed the crucial point. Because it is not the individual acts which happened to be performed by Jesus which enable present possibilities but rather the totality of the whole "Jesus-event". Within this integrated corpus Jesus is an ever present reality and inspiration (or, as Pittenger, the "focus") but it is, nevertheless, the overall effect which is significant in determining what choices face the present. Chapter five shows how the Church fulfils this role. The point which emerges from this is that "soteriology" is not simply a question of what Jesus did, but rather the whole drama of events associated with him. The phrase "Jesus - event" has assumed the status



The synthesis: Process Christology.

of a theological cliché which is rather unfortunate in many ways because it really does capture the sense in which it is the totality of "Jesus", the man and his effects, which are important.

The question remains, to what extent is this subject dependent upon the man Jesus? The answer to this has, essentially, been expressed, albeit implicitly, in the previous section of this chapter. That is, the individual human being Jesus of Nazareth was not, and cannot have been, pre-determined by God, because we noted that he was a product of the world's response, his own response and the divine initiative. God urged the conditions for Jesus insofar as his creative and redemptive activity in the world promoted a Jesus - type response. The principle was there, awaiting the free response. I used the notion of "pre-existence" to convey that point. In the final part of this chapter I shall introduce the idea that this principle can be thought of as the "Christ". In the terms of the present question, one must conclude that the individual Jesus is formally coincident to the divine vision which urges new possibilities for the present. He remains, however, the efficient cause because, in practice - that is, as an actuality existing in history - Jesus is the response which realised the divine urge. In that sense Jesus is the incarnation of the Divine vision.

The second question asks whether Jesus actually intended to promote the possibilities which are attributed to him. One's initial response is to note that the source of this generative urge is truly attributed to God - for it is he who urges the world towards a telos. Furthermore one should be aware of the danger that this type of issue trivializes an important aspect of soteriology. The language of generating possibilities implies a somewhat materialistic choice between, say, event X and event X'. But of course, Jesus had no way of knowing what events would be possible or absurd for twentieth century man; one notes



The synthesis: Process Christology.

that God himself is not able to predict the actual future with precision. So, to ask whether Jesus intended to generate possibility X or X' is an absurd question. These present possibilities are generated by the totality of the past, particularly the recent antecedent actualizations, an emphasis which follows from Sherburne's analysis. This is precisely the pyramid effect. In the consideration of the Church this will be of considerable significance, because it will enable us to understand how Jesus does effect real choices for us today, without resorting to some sort of magical transmission of possibility through the centuries. Furthermore, it is stressed that Jesus' contribution to the process retains its significance not because of his intention or desire that it should do so, but because he aligned his own volition with the divine vision as he received it through his past. He acted in accordance with how he understood God's purpose for himself, within the overall context of God's purpose for creation. That loyalty - an active free decision rather than a passive letting-go - is the sacrifice which forms the essence of any Process soteriology, because through that act God's purpose for the world is allowed to flourish.

Assuming that the above analysis is valid one is still faced by the problem of Jesus' necessity. Is Jesus necessary? On one level it is obvious that the answer is in the negative. It must be accepted that for the majority of the world's population Jesus is absolutely irrelevant - and yet those same people still lead lives which are, at least apparently, as authentic as any Christian life. Towards the end of this chapter, by invoking the "christ" principle mentioned earlier, the force of that statement, seemingly so devastating to the Christian position, will be diminished. It is worthwhile repeating here the positive aspect of the claim that Jesus becomes important when he is appropriated as such, a point to which Pittenger drew our attention. If

The synthesis: Process Christology.

the claim for importance (decisiveness or necessity) is made by virtue of a subjective appropriation, an existential rather than metaphysical claim, one achieves the required result without arrogance.

Inevitably there will be problems in establishing the necessity of Jesus in a world where he is all too obviously unnecessary, but a similar problem also arises within the theological sphere of Process thought. This is an issue inherent in Process christology and is, therefore, of much greater significance to this discussion. Process theism insists that God is always and everywhere in relation to the world, and vice-versa. Hence it is necessary to explain why, and in what sense, Jesus can be a necessary link between God and the world. If it is impossible to escape the relationship with God, why is the Christian emphasis on Jesus so vital to faith? This would be a substantial problem for Process christology were it not for the analysis performed in chapter three which highlighted the difference between the micro- and macrocosmic worlds. The statement which relates God to the world in a direct and immediate fashion applies to the microcosmos, and at that scale it is true to say that Jesus is an unnecessary aspect of that process. In other words, it is possible to understand Process metaphysics without an appeal to Christ. But, assuming one also desires to understand the world of sense experience, there are additional factors to be considered. The precision of actual entity - initial aim - subjective aim - concre<sup>e</sup>nce is lost in the plethora of opportunities and possibilities generated by the pyramid effect. Decisions and potentialities which confront societies of actual entities are mediated through the world (as a result of the decisions and responses of other societies) and, similarly, the divine vision, as it has relevance for societies, must also be mediated through the activity of other societies. Whereas an actual entity prehends the Divine vision

The synthesis: Process Christology.

appropriate to it in its initial aim, a conscious person is able to respond to the Will of God, his purpose, only by appropriating his vision for the self as it is manifested in history. The Will of God is mediated in history. For Jesus, it will be recalled, this took place in the history of Israel, while for the present it is the totality of the Jesus - event which conveys the revelation. The Jesus event is, itself, the totality of Jewish history, the actual life of Jesus and subsequent effects, notably the Church. Unless this mediation took place, in and through history, it is not possible for a society existing in the present to be fully immersed in the divine vision. The mediation is necessary. It is interesting to note how Pailin argues towards "necessity", albeit of a weak and pragmatic form (35). He writes, "we must recognize that while God is involved in all events, he is not the only agent involved. If, then, in some events his influence is more decisive than in others, there is good reason to concentrate our attention on those events as offering clearer indications of his nature." We note that Pailin bases his argument around a claim that God is more evident in some events than in others. However, whereas he restricts the discussion of this variation to the level of "events" (to imply an actual occasion(36)) I suggest that the variation in the incarnation of the divine vision (its actualization) is simply a result of the pyramid effect. Some threads of societal inheritance are "clearer indications" of creative and redemptive activity than others.

The discussion up to this point has illustrated how it is possible for the present to respond to Jesus as important, by appropriating him

(35) ICR p317. One should note that while accepting the difference between "good reason" (my emphasis) and "necessity" the basis of his claim remains relevant to the present discussion.

(36) This is similar to Cobb's analysis of the variation in the divine initiative which was considered at the outset of this chapter.

## The synthesis: Process Christology.

as such, and the two ways in which Jesus has affected the future. Both these issues arise from an obedience - type christology. The next consideration is to analyse how the present can respond to the Jesus of a revelational christology. In the previous section it was stated that for Ogden the key to an event being revelatory lies in its being received as revelation. It follows that, in order to describe Jesus as a revelation of God, it is simply necessary to state that for me he is a revelation of God. Furthermore, it was shown that all God's relationships with the world must be, at least potentially, revelatory because his nature implies acts which reveal himself as creative and redemptive. An act which is not creative or redemptive is not a revelation of God's creative and redemptive nature. But this gives one a criterion by which to verify the claims made for revelatory propositions under the "for me" principle. This requirement can be incorporated into the verification test for revelation which David Pailin has proposed (37). He suggests that, "to be accepted as at least possibly true, propositions expressing the nature of God's active actuality revealed by an incarnation" must satisfy the following six points. One should note that the test is not claimed to be (although arguably it is) a test for revelation in a general sense, but it is applicable to revealed propositions about God's activity, related to christology - the "incarnation". This ensures that it is ideally suited to the present task. The six points are:

1. Internal coherence. "The assertion of 'p' and 'not-p' of the same

(37) ICR p322, He makes the point that his approach may be "criticised on the grounds that I am here illegitimately laying down a priori rules for Christian theology whereas the proper procedure is to inspect Christian theology as is instantiated and to discover a posteriori the rules that it actually obeys."(p304). In the context of the present discussion such a criticism is not made. Indeed, it was the stated purpose of chapter three that we should discover precisely those priori rules which theology must obey. An interest solely in a posteriori rules is retrospectively descriptive and has little place in the construction of a dynamic and living theology.

The synthesis: Process Christology.

aspect at the same time cannot be true of any entity, not even of God." This condition is obvious enough, although it is interesting to note the qualification which is, incidentally, the one necessary to Whitehead's famous theses - antitheses statements about God (38).

2. "Consistency with ultimate rational, evaluative and independently known principles." There is no guarantee that the "rational and evaluative principles" which we assume to know are, indeed, the "ultimate" ones. Hence in order that this is a working, pragmatic definition it is necessary to overlook the qualification of "ultimacy" and look instead to consistency with rational and evaluative principles which we assume are valid.

3. Universality, so that the revealed propositions provide a "coherent perspective on all reality". They must be consistent in all possible situations.

4. Adequacy, that is, what is revealed about God must not be trivial but be "appropriate to the character of the ground of all reality viewed on a cosmic scale".

5. A revelation of God "may well be expected to have some kind of intuitive appeal to men". I expand upon this notion later but here I note that it broadens the idea of an "independent knowledge" of God to include intuitive knowledge.

6. The revealed propositions must be relevant. Although this might, initially, appear to contradict the requirement for universality, the stress here is being placed on the relevance of the revelation to an actual existential state.

The first test requires that the revelation is internally coherent. Observing that "creation" and "redemption" are so closely intertwined in the Process account (39), it follows that if a revealed proposition is



The synthesis: Process Christology.

"creative and redemptive" there is no possibility of incoherence. Of course, the same requirement also applies to the act of receiving the revelation, because it is through that act that the revelation is indeed received as revelation. This implies that the very act of reception must, itself, be coherent with the revelation, it must be creative and redemptive. The full implications of this will be clarified as the discussion develops.

The second aspect of the test raises a crucial issue. Pailin requires that the revelation exhibits consistency with an independent knowledge. But he notes that "such a 'revelatory' view of incarnation may seem to be open to the objection that an incarnation must be redundant since it provides us with a knowledge of God that must already be presupposed in our decision that here we have a revelation of God"(40). Indeed, this study illustrates his point because, in chapter three, I discussed the nature of God without an appeal to revelation. It was possible, for example, to give credibility to the notion that God's nature is creative and redemptive without resorting to revealed evidence to justify the claim. Similarly, Hartshorne (41) argues to a theory about the nature of God again without an appeal to revelation. The resolution to this dilemma, Pailin states thus, "though Hartshorne argues convincingly that God must be conceived as loving and not as hating or apathetic,..., since hatred or apathy would contradict his existence as the ground of being or principle of concretion, this is a highly abstract notion of love and is not able to indicate with any

(39) Indeed, the notion of creativity implies a lure towards harmony, which is redemption, and, similarly, a redemptive act is precisely that, a creative act which actualizes that lure.

(40) ICR p307. A generalized objection is true of all "incarnational" theories -i.e. they presuppose an incarnational type God.

(41) In, for example, The Divine Relativity and A Natural Theology for our Time.



The synthesis: Process Christology.

clearness what God's love is actually like and how it really does act."(42). In essence, this is a restatement of the theme which permeates this study. The non-incarnational knowledge which is achieved via metaphysical speculation refers only to the abstract existence of God, it concerns the microcosmic ontological reality. Knowledge of the existential God - the God of the Bible to which human beings may relate - must be mediated through the world. This is a denial of the claim that the New Testament adds nothing to what philosophy already says. It does, because it adds tangibility to otherwise abstract notions. Similarly, it reaffirms Whitehead's idea that theology is an attempt to synthesise the life of Jesus (the revelation) with Plato's insight (Sophist and Timaeus) that Divine persuasion (a term which equates with the creative and redemptive nature of God) is the foundation of the cosmos (43). My interpretation of Pailin's condition is two-fold. Firstly, it requires that the latter corresponds to the former, thereby bestowing epistemological primacy on the metaphysical or non-incarnational knowledge. Secondly, there is the point that if the "rational and evaluative" principles change, by virtue of a paradigm shift in our understanding of the cosmos, it is reasonable to expect a different view of what constitutes a revelation of God's nature. For example, prior to a scientific world view, a revealed picture of a magical God - a God who is able to stop the sun in the sky (Joshua 10:12-13) is quite consistent with independent knowledge accepted at that time. Given our current knowledge however, it is quite legitimate (and not destructive to faith) to question whether such "revelations" are valid. It is, for example, rather difficult to see how the act of halting the apparent orbit of the sun around the earth (even if it were possible to give this meaning in our scientific

(42) ICR p309.

(43) Adventures of Ideas p172.

The synthesis: Process Christology.

framework) is relevant to and consistent with a creative and redemptive act of God. This principle relativizes revelation because it provides a mechanism to understand how a revelation in one context will fail the test in another.

Initially, Pailin's third condition appears to contradict this. The requirement for universality and a "coherent perspective on all reality" might seem to deny the relativism permitted by the second condition. However, the crux of this "universality" must be taken in regard to its reference to "reality". In Process thought the "real" is the inherited standpoint, those perished actual entities which are available to constitute the past for the emerging entity. It is clear that how reality is actually defined is dependent upon the position of the emerging actual entity in the spatio - temporal continuum. In one sense this is obvious. From my position now, the events of tomorrow do not constitute part of my reality (no matter how "real" my hopes and fears for tomorrow may be). But, in two days time those events will belong to the set of what is real - reality has altered. By extrapolating this principle to any two different locations in the volume defined by space and time, it is clear that "reality" depends upon the position of the observer. This too promotes relativism. The important point to note is that, given this "reality", the revealed proposition must be universal insofar as it gives a coherent perspective on all that reality. As a corollary of this, one notes that it also implies responsibility. The person is responsible to ensure that they consider all of what, for them, is real. This corresponds to the responsibility of the self to become in response to all the influences which are relevant to it. I shall also note how the requirement for universality is incorporated in the final part of Pailin's test.

The synthesis: Process Christology.

The fourth point, concerning adequacy, requires that what is revealed is not trivial. There is an implicit assumption here about God, that he is the ground of all reality and, therefore, not trivial - a point which relates to the requirement for consistency with an independent knowledge. In order to be adequate it must be adequate with respect to something, and this "something" is given by philosophical speculation. Again, one notes that this condition is flexible to the extent of permitting relativity. The term "adequate" is not absolute and varies according to how the "something", with reference to which adequacy is assessed, differs in a variety of contexts. The issue of independent knowledge is also relevant to the next point, in which Pailin suggests that the revelation should have "intuitive appeal". Does this imply that man can reach - on the basis of his intuition - authentic existence, thus rendering revelation unnecessary? It is, of course, always open to that interpretation but there is a more subtle intention, if I understand Pailin correctly. It is quite possible for a person to "know" something without ever really being aware of it. True awareness - at which point the possession of that knowledge acquires existential significance - is achieved when a catalyst provokes the required reaction. Or, to use Ramsey's phrase, when the "penny drops". Analogies are not always helpful, but personal experience teaches that it is quite possible to be vaguely aware of something without really appreciating it, and yet - sometimes dramatically, sometimes over a prolonged period - the vagueness is dissipated and the awareness is vivid. Pailin is, it seems to me, suggesting that revelation can function as this catalyst, to provoke full consciousness of an otherwise dormant knowledge. This analysis certainly fits rather neatly into the micro/macro idiom of this study. From the microcosmic viewpoint the process exhibits the creative and redemptive nature of God and so, in that sense, we - as societies composed of myriads of actual entities -

The synthesis: Process Christology.

are immersed in the pre-conscious awareness of creative and redemptive activity. And yet we are not consciously aware of that. A revelation in the macrocosmic world of experience can light the spark which illuminates that reality. Thus, revelation, as conceived in this analysis, can act as a bridge which relates the microcosmos to the macrocosmic world.

Pailin suggests three possible ways in which revelation may have intuitive appeal to men. Firstly, the idea that it leads to "human flourishing", secondly, that it promotes "creative growth and understanding" and thirdly, (perhaps) that the revealed propositions are self-evident. The third point, adequately accounted for by the discussion above, is the idea that the revealed material completes the jigsaw and fits one's preconceived understanding of reality. The idea of revelation promoting human development - to summarize Pailin's notion of flourishing, creative growth and understanding - is, perhaps, the most significant aspect of the test. For this is an explicit statement that revelation is not merely the communication of information about the nature of God but is, itself, a motive for action. Indeed, not only is it a motive for, but it also demands action. It is not revelatory unless accompanied by action. Furthermore, it must be noted that the action it requires must be a reflection of the content of revelation. This point was made in connection with the first condition of the test. As Thornton wrote, "revelation, interpreted in terms of activity, is the corollary of creation. It is the creative activity of God drawing man to his true end. In a sinful world revelation passes into the form of redemptive activity."<sup>(44)</sup> The reception of God's creative and redemptive nature only occurs if the act of receiving is also an act which brings forth creative growth and human flourishing. This gives a

(44) Thornton, L. The Incarnate Lord, Synopsis of Contents, ch. VI, pXXI.

The synthesis: Process Christology.

two edged sword to the test for authentic revelation. Firstly, the actual content of revelation, what is claimed to be revealed, must satisfy the six points of the test and, secondly, the effects of the revelation must be to induce positive results in the receiver. If either of these aspects is missing from a revelatory claim then it fails Pailin's test.

The final point is a demand that what is revealed is relevant. In the context of "revelation" which becomes revelatory because it is received as such this is obvious. If the Jesus event is a revelation because I receive it as such, then, for me, it is relevant to my current existential state. It is worth observing however, that the actual condition requires rather more than that. The point is, not that the revelation is relevant for me just because it "suits a mood", but that it is relevant to the totality (hence universality) of what is my reality. To rephrase that, relevance is judged against what is relevant for a responsible becoming self, inclusive of all influences, not just a tiny portion of life. Once again, this condition permits the relativizing of revelation.

It is now possible to apply Pailin's test to Ogden's analysis of revelation. Ogden opines that all God's actions are potentially revelatory and actually so if they are received as revelation. In response to the crucial point it is clear that Ogden is well placed to stress that revelation does promote action. The self, in the process of becoming, apprehends what it considers to be important and then, almost by definition, acts upon that decision. Indeed, the decision itself is active. Pailin says, "as Whitehead suggests with his concept of 'importance', certain events are far more valuable than others in leading us to perceive 'how things go'."(45). Such events become

(45) ICR p317.



The synthesis: Process Christology.

revelatory if our perception of "how things go", which is derived from them, leads on to action and response. Although previously we saw that Pailin requires that a revealed proposition is, at least to some extent, "self - evident", the consequences of receiving the revelation, and acting in accordance with it, can induce radical novelty. Revelation is capable, if it is received as a transforming power, to restructure one's understanding of "how things go". It is not necessarily a reiteration or reaffirmation of a known state as it can also function as the inspiration for change. The decisions of the self are, ultimately, formative of the self and if the self becomes according to its reception of revelation the self exhibits the qualities of the revelation. Otherwise the revelation fails as revelation because it has achieved nothing, and revelation is an act of God. Hence, since revelation is always a revelation of the creative and redemptive nature of God - which is love - the self who receives, and consequently acts upon, revelation is a self who loves.

This line of argument can be developed further. A self who loves is a self who is open to all the influences which are relevant to it. God, as the supreme lover, is affected by the totality of history (everything which has ever happened is part of God's reality) whereas even the most authentic human is defined within a limited boundary. However, within this limit, the responsible self must be open to all influences relevant to that limit, and consider all the facets of its own reality. It must, therefore, come to terms with the one inevitable influence in life, namely death. But this involves a paradox. Death mitigates against a loving self, it takes away life, and threatens to render meaningless value and love. The problem is how to reconcile the apprehension of a revelation of love with the fact of death. Pailin's verification test requires that revelation is relevant and adequate with



The synthesis: Process Christology.

respect to the existential state of the receiving subject. This necessarily includes the presence of the possibility of imminent death. At least, to be more precise, it should include that awareness if the self is to be open to all relevant influences. It follows from this that a proposition, if it is a revelation of the creative and redemptive nature of God, must convey the solution to that paradox. A revelation which is threatened by the fear of death can not be a revelation of the One who is pure unbounded love. Otherwise, revelation fails Pailin's test because it is not adequate or relevant to the fact of death. This has a profoundly interesting implication for christology, particularly for the sense in which Jesus can be considered to be the decisive revelation of God.

It is clear that there are two alternative views. Either Jesus merely conveys the revelation or Jesus is himself a part of the revelation. The proposal I wish to follow here is that if the revelation is to be adequate with respect to death then it must be founded in the existential reality of human finitude. If Jesus is only the conveyor of the revelation this is not possible. The content thus conveyed may express ontological truths about finitude, but it cannot convey the existential human reality unless it is grounded in that reality. But, supposing that Jesus is himself an integral part of the revelation, we are confronted by the intriguing possibility that the crucifixion - considered as the victory of love and value over death - is an essential part of a revelation of God (46). This is, of course, a statement which "faith" might have made on the opening page of this thesis (47), but the interesting point here is that we have arrived at

(46) Note also, for example, Whitehead's "the essence of Christianity is an appeal to the life of Christ as a revelation of (God)". (Adventures of Ideas p169.) One notes that the appeal is to the life of Christ - Jesus himself - not to a revelation merely conveyed by him.

The synthesis: Process Christology.

this conclusion via a different route: a philosophical analysis. Precisely how the crucifixion fulfils this role will be considered in more detail in the next chapter. In Ogden's terminology, this implies that the act of re-presentation requires participation, to the extent that without participation the mediation of the message fails. This, in turn, allows one to assign a significant degree of "uniqueness" to Jesus. Firstly, one must accept that revelation of God occurs throughout all creation, simply by virtue of the fact that creation exhibits the process of novel creativity which is God's nature (48). But it is only in the totality of the event which culminated in the crucifixion that the revelation assumed the authority to speak to the total, existentially aware human person. Mackey's rhetoric dramatises this. The crucifixion is the "element of tragedy necessary for any true portrayal of the human condition." (49). Furthermore, it is at this point that one can propose a departure from a humanist or, so-called, existentialist position. Because, even accepting that "life" is possible without an appeal to Jesus, these positions lack the potency to reconcile the apparent and utter devastation of death to the love and value of life. That will not persuade a humanist to change his mind, Sartrean absurdity will not dissolve in the face of the crucifixion or resurrection. But even if the hope which is the message of the Cross is received by one person as an affirmation of love, despite death, then

(47) "Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures and was buried, and he was raised on the third day...." 1.Cor.15:3b-4. See Moltmann Crucified God p181 and elsewhere.

(48) It might also be argued that it exhibits purpose, (for example in the Timaeus or in the various forms of the teleological argument) thereby hinting at God's redemptive nature, but this controversial claim is not necessary to the argument. Of course, for Whiteheadians it is true that the universe has a purpose (the Divine vision for it), but the controversy centres around the claim that it exhibits purpose. For, in any one cosmic epoch it is quite conceivable that the underlying purpose is hidden by localised forces.

(49) Modern Theology. p88

The synthesis: Process Christology.

revelation has occurred.

It is especially interesting that a Process analysis of revelation should be able to reply to the "unanswerable" problem which confronts the existentialists. It remains to be shown whether the crucifixion is an adequate account of the preservation of value, the triumph of love over the loss of death, (this is considered in the following chapter) but what has been established is that Jesus as the revelation of God is relevant to the total human being. This, in addition to the fact that the act of receiving Jesus as the revelation of God is both an act and a motive for further acts of the self, ensures that our account of revelation satisfies the conditions of Pailin's test.

Throughout the present chapter I have, on occasions, noted a distinction between the terms "Jesus" and "Christ". It should also be added that I have not observed any distinction with slavish accuracy. The purpose of this final part of the chapter is to examine these two terms and to comment upon their implications for Process christology. The essence of this is the notion of creative transformation which was introduced in the section on Cobb in chapter two.

The idea of creative transformation is composed of four primary aspects, Logos, "incarnation", "Christ" as the incarnation of Logos which is the image of creative transformation, and, finally, how this relates to the particular, the man Jesus. Logos, according to Cobb is present to all actual entities as the "initial phase of their subjective aim"(50), which is their initial aim. The Divine Vision, the eternal urge of desire, is the Logos, which is imparted to each emerging actual entity as a specific urge relevant to the circumstances of that particular genesis. This presents no difficulties from a Whiteheadian

(50) Christ in a Pluralistic Age p76.

The synthesis: Process Christology.

viewpoint. It is merely taking one aspect of deity, the Divine Eros, and labelling it "Logos". The name is as equally valid as any other appellation. One possible problem arises from within the sphere of faith and in the following chapter I shall consider whether this definition of Logos is adequate in that respect. One notes that Logos defines a process relevant to the abstract microcosmic world, a point which is crucial as the discussion unfolds. There is also a sense in which Logos exists outwith time because, being the eternal urge for desire, it is, essentially, a hope for and a striving towards a future - and therefore not yet actual - state. It is timeless because, for Process thought, time is a product of two non-contemporary occasions and an urge for the future is not bound by, or describable in terms of, actual events. One can claim that the urge for, say, event A exists prior to event A actually occurring. Logos is pre-existent with respect to any event to which it is relevant.

If Logos represents a timeless urge then one of two possibilities may be true. Either, the urge must change according to how the events which exist in, and create, time actually coneresce, or, alternatively, the urge is constant. Human beings, it can be noted, often tend to exhibit one or other of these traits. Either they allow the self to be so influenced by variable and local forces that they lack an overall continuity of desire, life constantly changing direction according to the latest influence, or they close the self to novel influences and merely reiterate the same (internal and selfish) desire. Logos, it must be suggested is neither one nor the other but the optimal combination of both. Firstly, the urge is infinitely variable because it is adapted to the unique spatio - temporal location of each emerging occasion. Second, it is constant because it is always an urge towards the maximization of harmony. This, of course, is nothing other than a

The synthesis: Process Christology.

reiteration of Whitehead's "best for that impasse" formula. The next aspect of creative transformation is the notion of "incarnation". This term is employed in order to distinguish between the presence of Logos in each actual entity as the initial aim, and the actualization of the Logos which occurs when the occasion adopts the initial aim as its own subjective aim and achieves concrescence according to the divine vision appropriate to it. The Logos incarnate is, like the Logos present, confined to actual entities. However, whereas the Logos present is (unless actualized, in which case it becomes Logos incarnate) transient and fades into oblivion the moment the entity perishes, the Logos incarnate becomes an actual reality, a fact which exists for prehension by other, non-contemporary, actual entities. Thus the Logos incarnate is available, by virtue of its being a part of what is real, to be incorporated by the pyramid effect. It becomes an inherent aspect of the macrocosmic world. The difference between "presence" and "incarnation" is, then, more than a mere variation in vocabulary. The notion of "incarnation" enables one to understand how God's activity permeates the world of real things, based upon and founded in, his activity as Logos in actual entities.

This actualization of the Logos is, for Cobb, the process of creative transformation. There is a sense in which the reader of Cobb's work is given the impression that creative transformation is a process additional to the process of creativity as described by Whitehead. This, if indeed such an impression is conveyed, is false. Creative transformation is nothing other than the process of novel creativity when that coincides with the Divine vision. It might, therefore, be termed creativity in its ideal state, each actual entity aligning itself with the eternal aim towards harmony. Creative transformation is, therefore, essentially redemptive because insofar as creative



The synthesis: Process Christology.

transformation is taking place, the actual entities are tending towards the goal of redemption, harmony. This analysis of creative transformation must be reconciled with a statement of Cobb's quoted previously, in which he defines creative transformation as "that process in which our imagination and life orientation can be transformed by lucidity of vision and openness to what we see."(51). Cobb intends that creative transformation can have immediate effects on human beings and, consequently, it is necessary to provide macrocosmic justification of this. This is readily forthcoming because, as noted above, when creative transformation is occurring it is efficacious in promoting a movement towards a harmonious, redemptive, state at all levels of activity. Actual entities which exhibit the Logos incarnate are the roots which enable the flowering of creative transformation in ever increasingly complex societies. And, as the process is amplified by each new event of creativity, new horizons are incorporated, casting asunder the boundaries to vision and encouraging openness to a wider spectrum of influence. Furthermore, it is precisely for the same reason that creative transformation is relative, implying that what functions as creative transformation for one group may not do so for another. For, even if creative transformation is functioning at the level of actual entities or simple societies, unless complex societies - indeed, consciously aware societies - also integrate into the process it will remain invisible and irrelevant to them. This replies to a question raised in chapter two concerning the possibility of recognizing creative transformation. In response, one notes that participation is recognition and, without participation, recognition is impossible. This reflects what is an accepted principle in the scientific community, namely, that the act of performing an experiment (the participation) is an aspect of the observed result (the recognition). Similarly, Knox

(51) *ibid.* p21.



The synthesis: Process Christology.

notes that although an event may be undeniably public (for example, a death in the family), it will only possess "transforming power" for those who are intimately involved with it (52). It remains possible for a group of people to recognize that creative transformation is a feature of the cosmos without making the associated claim that it is the Logos incarnate. Any position which recognizes a purpose to the cosmos, and enables present actions to be grounded in anticipation or hope of a future state is recognizing the process of creative transformation, no matter how implicit this recognition may be. But, of particular interest in this context, Cobb suggests that when creative transformation is recognized as the incarnation of Logos, the process can be named the Christ. In Cobb's analysis he faces, but does not confront, the problem that any actual entity which is recognized as an incarnation of the Logos (and thus is an instance of creative transformation) can, correctly, be termed the Christ. This would suggest that the past is, at least conceivably, littered with "Christs", many singular instances of creative transformation which are recognized as Logos incarnate. This deficiency is overcome, in the idiom of this thesis, by the insistence that creative transformation culminates, by virtue of the pyramid effect, into a force active in the world which is directly available to human beings, that is, in the history of the macrocosmic universe. If this peak exists as an aspect of the process which is relevant to a consciously aware human society, it must, itself,

(52) The Church and the Reality of Christ p83. Note that, despite its superficial similarity, this statement rests detached from the fideistic views which have been adopted by some (for example, Barthian) theologians. These positions avoid or ignore criticism by arguing that unless a person is illuminated by, and accepts, the "doctrine" they will have no hope of understanding it, thus rendering objections from outwith the inner sanctum of experience irrelevant and impotent. Although Cobb does argue that one group may claim to be immersed in creative transformation, which is possibly not acknowledged by another group, this never amounts to a true/false division. The question of "truth" is raised shortly.

The synthesis: Process Christology.

exist as a similarly consciously aware human person. For, if the process of creative transformation has only progressed as far as simple inanimate objects it is, to all intents and purposes, not (yet) a significant feature in the process of becoming for more complex organisms. This follows from the fact that participation is an integral aspect of recognition. If we (as consciously aware human beings) are to recognize creative transformation we must participate in it, and we are unable to be fully participant in the process of becoming relevant to, say, a grain of sand. We can state that, if the process of creative transformation is available for recognition by men, it must exist in the life of a man, in whom we can participate - the man who is then named the Christ. This is perhaps the closest Process christology comes to establishing the necessity of Jesus, the fact that creative transformation must (if it is to be available for recognition by us) exist in a man (53).

It must be emphasized that the naming of creative transformation is relevant only to that particular group who participate in the process of creative transformation so named. It is the Christian reality which validates the naming of the process Christ, other realities validate other names (54).

The argument up to this point has insisted that, in order for human beings to participate in creative transformation, the "Christ", so named, must be available as a particular in which it is possible to participate. It is Cobb's purpose, speaking as he is from within a Christian participatory framework, to show how Jesus is the man who is

(53) One can appreciate the feminist position at this point. For, if participation is the key to the recognition of creative transformation, one can ask whether a female is able to fully participate in the life of a male. This thesis is not concerned with feminist theology as such, but it must recognise that a christology of participation has to respond to those type of issues.

the Christ. Two questions were raised in chapter two. Does the historical man Jesus exhibit the necessary attributes which validate the naming of him the Christ? The next chapter deals with this in detail, the sense in which Jesus is portrayed by the Gospels as a man of creative and redemptive activity. And, equally important, it shows how Christ is present in the Church which is the community of Jesus. The second question concerned the possibility of a man being able to exhibit creative transformation in its most complete sense. Cobb's analysis of this followed the notion of Jesus actualizing the presence of Logos, in order that the incarnation of Logos co-constituted his self. It is relatively straightforward to transpose this, microcosmic understanding, into a macrocosmic framework. The self is a synthesis of the past, according to the present decisions of that self. But the past contains the Logos incarnate, initially at the level of actual entities, which

(54) It will be recalled that in the introduction I raised the question, "why Christ"? The notion of creative transformation ensures that the Buddha, for example, is as important to this discussion as the Christ. But, and this is the crucial condition, that is not the name which is relevant to, or validated by, the reality in which the thesis is being written. Cobb defined reality as that called forth by creative transformation at any given moment. This differs from the definition I gave previously which defined reality in terms of the context, or history, of the location of the subject. Cobb's definition ensures that "reality" is defined without reference to any decision made by the subject, but it is preferable to adopt a definition of "reality" which incorporates the sense of an active subject. Given any set of circumstances a person can create their own reality, consider, for example, Hare's paranoid college student who is convinced that his professors are intent upon murdering him. Apart from its overtly pragmatic inevitability a definition of reality which acknowledges the capacity for self-creation by the subject must reply to the accusation that it is too subjective. This can be achieved through a definition of "truth". Rorty employs a phrase of James' when he states that truth is "that which it is better for us to believe" (Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature p10). That definition is, I argue, close to Cobb's definition of reality, because it conveys a strong sense of an ideal being imposed from without the subject. Truth is that which is dictated by the process, or in Cobb's words, what is called forth. In this context, "better" implies correspondence to creative and redemptive actions which promote harmony, implying that truth is coincident with creative transformation. For societies participating in the process named Christ it is correct to label Christ as the Truth.

The synthesis: Process Christology.

actualize the Logos present, and, by virtue of the pyramid effect, eventually, creative transformation is manifested by societies. The corollary to this, which is crucial to the present argument, states that if the present self appropriates the past which is the Logos incarnate, then that self is constituted by the Logos incarnate. If, moreover, the self consciously seeks to appropriate the past which is Logos incarnate this active decision can be emphasised by employing the term "co-constitutes". The self is consciously aware that it forms itself by incorporating the Logos incarnate as the primary feature of its own composition. Similarly, the man who lives "for his children" allows his self to be co-constituted by their needs and desires. Whereas Cobb suggests that Jesus actualized the Logos as it was immediately present as the initial aim, it makes more sense to argue that Jesus' self was formed by synthesizing Logos incarnate with all the other influences present to him. To express this using Kaiser's words, "though Jesus was free to follow his own personal aims, he accepted the call of God as the very centre of his being, his very self."(55). It might be argued that the notion of co-constitution is tantamount to the sacrifice of the self to an external agency. In Cobb's analysis, which permits the direct and immediate effect of the Logos incarnate this accusation has substance. It is certainly a problem for Griffin's claim that Jesus was "transparent" to God. If, however, it is insisted that the Logos incarnate is derived from history, the autonomy of Jesus' self is emphasised, for it is the decision of his self to incorporate the Logos which enables co-constitution to take place. Barnhart speaks of "a unity between God and Jesus which is more than a commonality of purposes and ideals"(56), calling this an empathic union. This, he goes on to

(55) Scottish Journal of Theology vol.28. 1975 p75. Review of Griffin's Process Christology.

(56) Religious Studies p227f. "Incarnation and Process Philosophy"

The synthesis: Process Christology.

suggest, amounts to an identification which, although not an ontological identification, has ontological implications. He presents an analogy of a social worker involved with a child in the slums. If that person begins to "identify" (one notes that this is a frequently used term) with the child they might well be confronted by a choice: to abandon their academic interest or to become personally involved. This, it seems to me, is precisely what is involved by stating that Jesus' self was co-constituted by the Logos. Jesus, in his response to his perception of God's activity in history, became identified with the corresponding promise and demand. Ford raises an important objection to the notion of co-constitution. How, he asks, do we know the inner psychic experience of a person, in order that we can state how that self is constituted? (57). This epistemological problem is surmounted in the next chapter by insisting that it is through the New Testament accounts of Jesus' life, and the Church, that we see his selfhood revealed.

The language used throughout this present section has differed from that used elsewhere in this chapter. Despite this, a theory of creative transformation, based upon Cobb's analysis, is the key to relate and synthesize the previous ideas. A christology based upon creative transformation is, in fact, a combination of a response - type christology and a revelational christology. To express this in its simplest form, the response consists in Jesus' free decision to appropriate the past which was Logos incarnate, and Logos incarnate must be recognised to be a revelation of God. The obedience of Jesus was defined to be his loyalty to the particular principle of interpretation which he employed to reach decisions in his present. The decision he faced was two-fold: how to understand and rationalize his past, and what

(57) Lure of God, p67.



The synthesis: Process Christology.

direction his future life should take. Based upon his understanding of God's activity in his past, his dealings with the people of Israel, Jesus incorporated this revelation into his self, and became personally involved with the call for action implied by the Divine vision. But this is saying that Jesus allowed his self to be co-constituted by the Logos because the Logos incarnate is the divine activity in history. Consequently we can understand how his life was, insofar as the Logos incarnate co-constituted his self, an incarnation of the Divine Vision. All that remains, the subject of the next chapter, is to examine the Gospel record of Jesus and show that this is, indeed, a fair account of his life. Similarly, it was shown that God's activity in history is a revelation of his creative and redemptive nature, because all his actions in history are creative and redemptive. But, since God's activity in history is the Logos incarnate, we conclude that the Logos incarnate, which co-constitutes Jesus' self, is a revelation of God. Jesus, who is named Christ, which is creative transformation recognised as Logos incarnate, is, therefore, revelation. Again the subject of the next chapter, it must be shown how this revelation is adequate with respect to the totality of the human existential situation, in order that it satisfies Pailin's verification test.

To summarize this chapter I quote Daniel Day Williams, "through what Christ has accomplished in the events which came to their climax in the life of Jesus our human existence has been given a new structure. Creative and redemptive power has been released in it which was not wholly released before. There is a new community in history. Members of that community begin to live on the basis of what has taken hold of them through the life of Jesus."(58). He captures the three important points. The idea of God's activity reaching its climax in Jesus

(58) op.cit. p460. PPCT.



The synthesis: Process Christology.

highlights the fact that Jesus is the focus of an activity which permeates all history. We observe that it is in the life of Jesus - that is, the dynamic process of his becoming self - that this explicit revelation of what is "wholly released" occurs (59). Finally, we note that this implies a new structure of existence for the self. This is achieved when the self is co-constituted by the Logos. The division between a response christology and a revelation christology is artificial. Jesus' response to God is a revelation and revelation implies response. The response and the revelation take place in the becoming self, the structure of existence. William's quotation continues, to introduce the notion of community. This new community is the Church. Pittenger's christology is explicitly and essentially communal in nature. His emphasis on the faith of the community, the tradition of the Church as the data for christology, and its continuing response to Jesus ensures that Jesus is never considered in isolation from those who receive him. It is not immediately obvious that Cobb's creative transformation implies community to the same extent. That process is relevant to individuals, and is named the Christ by those who recognise in it the incarnation of the Logos. However, and as Thornton notes in another context, "...activities of the spirit which in this way pass into highly individualised forms do not necessarily become individualistic."(60). Although creative transformation is individualized, it becomes so by virtue of its reception within a particular context or environment. This community, which may be a Church, a society, ethnic group or, indeed, any collection of individuals, ensures the social aspect of Cobb's christology. It is perhaps worth noting that, for Cobb, the community is understood in a far broader sense than the "Church" which, for Pittenger, mediates and

(59) See, for example, Hebrews 1:1-3.

(60) op.cit. p135.

The synthesis: Process Christology.

maintains the Christian tradition. The first task of the next chapter is to explicate the notion of the Church in greater detail.

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Evaluation: Christ and the Church.  
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The christology I presented in the previous chapter is, it is claimed, an adequate account of Jesus Christ with respect to the principles of Whitehead's vision described in chapter three. But, if that claim is valid it is a rather limited achievement. At best it can hope to appeal to theologians already committed, or at least sympathetic, to the Process position. Of greater importance (1) is the question whether the Process christology of chapter four is adequate with respect to the Christian faith: does it satisfy the religious demand? An initial reaction is to note that I have already integrated "faith" into the discussion because chapter two, the "inspiration", described statements of faith. However, these statements were deeply rooted in the Process tradition. They were expressions of faith within a Whiteheadian framework and for that reason the resulting christology does not, necessarily, reflect what traditional Christianity has taught. It remains necessary to suppose, therefore, that in order to give an account of its adequacy with respect to "faith", the Process christology I have discussed in this study must be subjected to a comparison with the doctrines of traditional christology and the New Testament account of Jesus (2). It must be stated at the outset what the precise purpose of this evaluation actually is. It is not my intention nor, I believe, should it be, to adjust the christology I have presented so that it fits whatever the requirements of "faith" or traditional religion might warrant. It is, rather, to show that a Process christology as I have interpreted it provides an account of Jesus Christ which does respond significantly and adequately to the demands of faith. That is a

(1) I use the word "greater" not to imply that I am sacrificing my adherence to the principles of Process metaphysics but rather to convey the essential point that to be a "valid" account it must appeal to a wider audience.

(2) Note the implicit assumption here that the New Testament accounts are not, necessarily, adequately reflected by later christology!

The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

positive intention. I wish to highlight compatibility, but I will not shy away from noting areas which possibly generate problems for "faith". Furthermore, I believe it is necessary to provide rather more of an explanation than Mellert who states of Process christology, "it seems to me to conform quite adequately to what was proclaimed at Ephesus and Chalcedon."(3). It is not possible to make a simple identification between the two because, as Moltmann expresses it, "whereas in the ancient Church the dispute about the relationship of the two natures in the person of Christ was always a dispute about physical redemption as well and the idea of the real incarnation of God was always associated with the deification of man (theosis) which it made possible, the dispute at the present time about the true humanity of Jesus, his awareness of God, his 'inner life', and his freedom finds its basis in the demand for true humanity, authentic life, inner identity and liberation."(4).

In the previous chapter I noted that an analysis of Jesus is not sufficient to respond to a total christology; the "Christ - event" must include the notion of the response to Jesus, which is the Church. This idea is not new, as Pittenger brings to our attention. He draws upon the Epistle to the Ephesians in which the stress is placed not on Christ as Jesus only but on "Christ as Jesus and those who are his. It portrays Christ in terms of 'Christ and his Church' or 'Christ in his Church'."(5). Therefore, before one can evaluate Process christology with respect to the six themes of Biblical and traditional views, it is necessary to expand upon the Process understanding of the Church.

The preliminary task is to define how I am using the term "Church".

(3) Mellert, op.cit. p84.

(4) Crucified God p93.

(5) Christology Reconsidered. p94.



The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

It is not intended to imply any one particular institution and yet, in order that it remains relevant, it must apply to the "Church" to which (real) people actually belong and in which they worship. It is not an abstract, idealized "City of God" but neither is it the mass of wood and stone which shelters the members from the chill of winter for a few short Sunday hours. The Church is the people, and it is all those people who confess to worship one Lord Jesus Christ. Knox, while accepting that it is futile to try to give a precise location to the Church makes the point that the question "what Church?" remains, and is a valid one to raise (6). Furthermore, he notes that the definition must involve "oneness, community" and "reconciliation" but adds that this does not imply that it must be perfect (7). I think he provides exactly the right balance between the sense of "perfection" (Church as the Body of Christ) and "fallibility" (Church as the participation of fallible individual members) when he states, "the garment may have been torn out of shape or even rent apart, but the fabric with its characteristic texture is still the same"(8).

The basis of a Process understanding of the Church is to make the distinction between the "Church" as a name which applies to a group of individuals and the notion that the Church is a society. I quoted Mellert in the previous chapter, in which he drew our attention to precisely that point. There are two aspects to Church as society. The present members prehend ("inherit" is a word which avoids a conflict between the macro and micro aspects) the importance from the past and then, crucially, incorporate that importance into their own present. That, of course, is the definition of a society and one can see how

(6) Knox, J. The Church and the Reality of Christ. p22 n8.

(7) ibid. p129.

(8) ibid. p59.

The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

continuity (the inheritance from the past) and self - perpetuation (the incorporation of importance) are inherent in the definition. But if continuity is to be understood in macrocosmic terms, that is, relevant to human beings who are members of the society which is the Church, we must be clear about what "past" is being referred to. The proposal to be made is that, because the Church was originally a community response to Jesus it contains within it an embodiment of what it means to respond to Jesus. In that sense, a response in the Church is a response to Jesus. There are three issues which arise from that general principle. These are: in what sense is the Church a response to Jesus, how is that response "present" and how can one understand the notion of a response in the Church as being a response to Jesus? I have noted that the New Testament records of Jesus are accurate renditions of how people responded to him, either directly or mediated via the appropriate network of communication. Hence, for example, there is no reason to suppose that the journeys of Paul cannot be regarded as factual accounts of what he did in his response to the message he had heard about Jesus. Indeed, even the drama of his conversion may be considered to be a true and valid account of his response to the stimuli he received. Furthermore, one can reasonably assume that Paul's subsequent actions reflect his previous experiences, indeed are made as a direct result of those experiences. That is how an action is defined, as a manifestation of a decision made in response to received stimuli. But this enables one to conclude that if we are able to observe an action we are in some significant sense witnessing the decision and even the experience itself. Not directly of course but mediated through our interpretation and reception of the action. The relevance of this is that, since we can observe the actions of Paul (we read the accounts of his journeys and the letters he wrote) we can witness his experience. And, insofar as an experience is an experience "of - something" we gain an insight

The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

into that "something"(9). If we consider the earliest community of Christians, the object of their response was the living person of Jesus. As generation succeeded generation the active role of Jesus as the initiator of the response faded but, insofar as Jesus was incarnated in the response of previous generations, he initiated response through those generations. That is, the Church itself, insofar as it is an incarnation of the response to Jesus, is Jesus active in the present. Jesus is truly present in the Church because the Church is the realization of his initiatory activity (10). Although I think this notion of presence is stated with clarity by the process analysis, it is necessary to probe beyond a basic idea of "response" to discuss the nature of a particular response to the present Jesus. There is a sense in which this requirement has already been met because, if the Church is to be a society, it must exhibit continuity and growth. Hence one immediately recognizes the importance of tradition on one hand and a future - orientated tradition on the other. But even that condition is too general; it applies to any society, and if one is to establish the presence of Jesus in the Church it must be shown that the Church is the valid response to him. The Church claims that Jesus is the revelation of God and this is the key to deduce what the response must be. In the

(9) This principle has been widely used by New Testament scholars to justify the historicity of Jesus. The fact that the Christian community received Jesus (the experience) is a demonstration of a degree of historicity which it is claimed for him (the experience of something). See, for example, Knox, J. Criticism and Faith ch.II,III. It is also worth noting that by emphasizing the response people made to Jesus rather than the precise demands he made upon them, one avoids the problematic question of whether Jesus intended to institute a "church". The reaction of the community of faith suggests that their own self understanding was of a community founded upon Jesus. Knox is accurate when he writes, "the whole issue is largely irrelevant. The important thing is not what Jesus intended or expected but what God did. And it is clear that God actually created the Church around and through the career of Jesus. The fact of Jesus belongs to the process of the Church's becoming, not to some prior event or development." The Church and the Reality of Christ. p35.

The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

previous chapter Pailin's verification test for revelation highlighted the requirement that the reception of revelation promotes action, has relevance to its situation and is consistent with the content of revelation, the creative and redemptive activity and nature of God. If we are to show that the Church is the temple of God, the body of Christ and the community of people who confess their faith in the One Living Lord, we must show how the Church meets those requirements (11). We must demonstrate that the Church is continuous with the creative and redemptive activity of God, that the Church itself exhibits creative and

(10) Interestingly, given Cobb's analysis of the self presented in chapter three, Knox chooses to convey the sense of Jesus' presence in the Church in terms of "memory" or, more specifically, a "corporate memory", a notion derived from Niebuhr's "internal history", (ibid. ch. 2 "The Church and its Memory"). Hence he writes, "it is only as (Jesus) is remembered that he has meaning for either Christian theology or Christian devotion"(p50). In addition to providing an explanation of "presence", the notion of memory serves to balance the lack of factual records from the New Testament. Within the remembering community, the "facts" are supplemented and complemented by the "memory", and it is to the integrated product of these two factors that the Church responds. The notion of corporate memory is similar to "imagination", see Mackey Modern Theology who cites Warnock's Imagination, p25. The idea of a past thing becoming present is essentially the notion of causal efficacy and Lee, for example, bases his argument for the presence of Jesus on that fact, see The Becoming of the Church. Janzen, however, also suggests that "presentational immediacy" permits a divine "presence - to" the Church, in such a way that the past is somehow available to be known "there - now", (op.cit. p154). Sponheim responds, "it is not clear to me that process categories bring us quite as far as Janzen has come" (op.cit. p206). The sense of "there - now" required by Janzen conflicts with the temporality of the process and is not implied by "presentational immediacy" which yields "only the inferred knowledge of that other through correct recognition of pattern and extensive location" (Sponheim ibid. p206). Mackey, (op.cit. p74f), suggests that the incarnation is a present reality because Jesus is present in the Eucharist. This appears to localize the presence of the Living Lord to the sacraments, whereas I prefer to speak of the Church, in its entirety, as the Body of Christ. The sacraments, and other forms of worship, are the focus points and symbols of that presence.

(11) Note that in order to define the Church as a society it is only necessary to show that it obeys the conditions for a society. But, if one defines the Church to be the particular society which is the response to Jesus, it is necessary to show that it satisfies the quality of the conditions for establishing revelation.

The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

redemptive activity and, furthermore, that it is capable of calling forth creative and redemptive activity from its adherents. At this point I shy away from a direct confrontation with the precise issues relevant to this task. These issues are extremely complex - for example it is by no means obvious what a "creative and redemptive" response to, say, the crisis in Nicaragua, is, quite apart from the question of whether the Church, in straightforward practical terms, actually is being creative and redemptive. I think this difficulty is a direct result of the (unavoidable) institutionalization of the Church so that, in addition to being the community response to Jesus, it is also an instrument of human mechanisations inspired by a wide variety of motives. Hence I shall simply define the Church according to the quality of continuity and novelty as expressed and demanded by the creative and redemptive aspects of revelation. These conditions cover all aspects of discussion about the Church, from the response of one individual to the Church, to the notion of the Church's "defining characteristic". Why the latter is important in a practical sense is seen in a statement by Mellert. The function of identifying the defining characteristic is not "in the fact that it is conceptualized for purposes of an abstract definition, but in the fact that it is successively incorporated in an immanent way into the actual occasions which constitute the society"(12). Several further comments must be made.

Firstly, it will be noted that because the Church is continuous with a tradition which embodies the community response to Jesus it is, in that respect, representative of an objective response. As I stated in the previous chapter, there is a definite sense in which the Church is the valid Christian response to Jesus, thereby mitigating against

(12) op.cit. p95. The defining characteristic is what the Church becomes.



The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

some of the more absurd and radically individualistic claims. But the other side of that coin must also be avoided, the objectified response of the community must not prevent the novel richness inherent in individual expressions of faith. The balance is achieved when one appreciates that the Church is composed of both aspects: individuals in community. Both facets of this dilemma are revealed by the various institutional churches, some tending towards more authoritative definitions which are imposed by the community on to its members while others allow almost total freedom of individual expression. Neither position is to be denigrated, insofar as both options are freely available and reply to the different needs experienced by different people. My only objection would arise when one position claims precedence or authority over the other.

The condition that the Church, if it is to be creative and redemptive, must be relevant implies that it must speak to the problems and issues which confront people in the present. This gives rise to the whole subject of practical theology, making the Churches effective institutions and, more important in this context, enables us to understand further how Jesus generates novel possibilities for individuals becoming in the present. In the previous chapter it was shown that to speak of Jesus himself as somehow creating possibilities in the present is absurd, but if one thinks in terms of the Church generating the novel opportunities then the idea is sensible. The Church is the community response to Jesus and, insofar as the Church promotes possibilities for creative and redemptive activity, it does so by virtue of its relation to Jesus. A response to Jesus must be a response of creative and redemptive activity which, in turn, and by definition, must also promote creative and redemptive activity. In that way, Jesus, the inspirational force behind the response which is the



The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

Church, is the source of the activity which in practice is generated by the Church. To rephrase this point, the Church is essentially continuous with the activity of Jesus and, since the latter is revelatory of God's creative and redemptive nature, the work of the Church is creative and redemptive. Furthermore, because Jesus is the human response to God's creative and redemptive activity in the world, the work of Jesus in and through the Church is precisely the work of God, insofar as the response of the Church - the participation of its members - is, itself, creative and redemptive. The idea of "participation" follows from, and is emphasised by, the idea of memory. For it is only within the community that an individual comes to share that community's corporate memory and experience. Similarly, as a mother only exists (as a mother) for her children, "Our Lord Jesus Christ" has no reality outside the Christian community (13). These points serve to highlight the fact that an adequate christology must incorporate Jesus and the Church, because it is in and through the Church that God is active (in and through Jesus) in the present. To divorce Jesus from the Church is as inadmissible as divorcing him from the context of his past. Without attempting to become embroiled in practical issues, we note that the nature of the possibilities for creative and redemptive action generated by the Church has two aspects. Firstly, the response of the Church to Jesus authenticates the possibilities for individual responses through the Church. The Church becomes the vehicle which enables the person to act upon the faith decision. Second, and in many ways as a consequence of the first, the individual who responds to Jesus in and through the Church strengthens

(13) Knox, op.cit. p94. He also draws attention to the fact that by placing the locus of the incarnation in the Church (c.f. Pittenger) one relieves the Gospels of an impossible burden. It is no longer necessary to prove that Jesus is the incarnation. Furthermore it avoids placing the humanity of Jesus under extreme stress.

The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

the defining characteristic of the society. By participating in the response of faith, creative and redemptive activity, the individual contributes to the future of the community response, the Church, because any instance of creative and redemptive action is an incarnation of the work of God, as revealed by Jesus. To express this in terminology which incorporates an explicit religious sentiment, the individual who responds, in faith, to Jesus through the Church is participating in the Living Lord (14). Indeed, one might go further, to say that the person who, by virtue of their faith, participates in the Living Lord is also a revelation of the Living Lord because it is by his or her own individual response - albeit through the Church - that Jesus becomes a "living" reality.

I have mentioned the possible conflict between the individual and the community aspects of the Church and any discussion of christology must respond to this issue. On one hand I have implied the notion of a community response to Jesus while, on the other, I have spoken of the role of faith or individual participation. The question of authority - does the community have the right to exercise control over its members? - illustrates this most adequately. At one extreme of the debate is Joseph Hallman who argues that "those most akin to the divine ought to function as persuasive agents for the religious self - realization of believers."(15). Of course, there is one sense in which this claim

(14) In this context "faith" and "participation" are synonymous. An individual who "has faith" is so immersed in the participation that the self is "co-constituted" by the quality of that activity. Hence, faith is not a thing which one possesses but it is lived, it is participation in "Christology", Christ and the Church. It is lived even to the extent that it become "life", because the self is inexorably "co-constituted" by the faith. This understanding of faith emphasises its dynamic and active qualities, the fides qua creditur rather than the fides quae creditur. Faith is a living and feeling process, not a mere "knowing", as Knox writes, "Faith must know its object in a way we cannot know a historical fact."(op.cit. p16). Or, as Mackey expresses it, "all human faith is quintessentially praxis."(op.cit. p71).

The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

ought to be true, insofar as an individual may at any one moment of life reach a peak in the awareness of being immersed in the creative and redemptive activity of God - a moment of finest insight. The response to that awareness should be a faith decision to act according to creative and redemptive principles. Therefore the response of that individual has didactic qualities. It is an action considered as virtuous, an example of human fulfilment worthy to be followed. It is valid, therefore, to describe such people at those times as "persuasive agents". But, to establish that is not the interpretation intended by Hallman, for he suggests that there exists a distinct set of individuals - the priesthood or the hierarchy of the Church - who, all of the time are "most akin to the divine". There is nothing in a Process understanding of the Church which permits that degree of privilege. Indeed, one should recall the difficulty of ascribing such a blanket "perfection" to Jesus. Hallman continues, stating that "the aim of the Church is the construction of significant or important Christian experience". This conveys the impression of an asymmetrical relationship between the community and the individual members of that community. The community is said to "construct" an experience which the members are able to experience. This notion is flawed on two points. Firstly, the notion of a passive "experience" is not supported by Whitehead's epistemology. One does not confront an "experience" (a thing) which one then "experiences", because the very act of experiencing is intimately bound up with the "experience - experienced". In any significant sense it is only true that an experiencing individual "constructs" (by, indeed, the very act of experiencing) any "experience". Secondly, the notion that a society can act without any reference to its members is meaningless. Knox illustrated how vital it is to avoid any idea of "the

(15) "Towards a Process Theology of the Church", in Religious Experience and Process Thought. p143.

The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

Church" as being a thing which exists apart from the individuals who adhere to, and promote, the defining characteristic. Of course, by virtue of the cumulative actions of the members, one can speak about the Church's action, but that is a linguistic convenience appropriate to a society and must not be understood in isolation from the faith of the individuals. Hence, to say that the Church "constructs" experience only has meaning if it is taken to refer to the group name appropriate to the experiences enjoyed by all the members. The corollary to that is to deny to the "Church" the kind of authority claimed by Hallman. I think the final word on "authority" can be left to Cobb, who says, "the prophets, Jesus, Paul, John and many others have great authority for us today. But there is no one locus of absolute authority. Our concern is faithfulness to God's call today, and we can be guided in that faithfulness by many authorities. Finally we must decide."(16).

However, as Mellert noted, the Church is more than the group name which applies to its members and there is a sense in which the "Church" has an existence of its own. This existence, which is nevertheless relative to and dependent upon the members, is to be thought of not in terms of authority over its adherents, but as the vehicle for creative reciprocity. By virtue of its being a community of people responding in faith it possesses an ability to promote further and deeper participation in its members and, of course, in its missionary zeal. The fact that the Church is ultimately dependent upon the faith input of the members is also, therefore, the reason why the Church is self-nourishing and perpetuating. Furthermore, by stressing the reciprocity between the Church as community and the individuals who define it, one achieves uniformity in the models appropriate to this Process christology. The relationships between God and Jesus, the Church and

(16) Process Theology as Political Theology p48.

The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

Jesus and the Church and its members have all been expounded in terms of initiative and response, a free faith - decision made in response to creative and redemptive activity. The "price" for this elegant simplicity has been the sacrifice of dogmatic certainty. At any link in the "christological chain" the invitation may be rejected.

It is through the Church that Jesus may be seen as the focal point of all christology. In his own life he synthesized the strands of God's involvement in history with his environment and succeeded in provoking a reaction which established a community to continue God's creative and redemptive work. The sense of the Divine activity in the past, present and future are all made explicit in the Church's appeal to Jesus. Individuals make a faith response in the present, which promotes creative and redemptive action in the future, based upon the Church's memory and experience of the revelation of God's creative and redemptive nature in the past. The crucial point to note is that the relation between the three tenses is more than coincidental. The future is inherent in the present faith decision and the call for a faith decision is inherent to the revelation of God's nature in the past. Jesus is the bond which relates the three, the focus at which the various aspects can be understood as a coherent whole.

It will be noted that I have limited my discussion of the Church to that reality which names the Christian community, the response of a finite group to Jesus of Nazareth. It is necessary to redress the balance by mentioning, albeit briefly, the existence of the "church" which is the totality of the response to creative transformation. The Christian Church can properly be considered as just one aspect of that universal community; it is the aspect which names the process of creative transformation Christ Jesus. Other "churches" are equally, (but only insofar as they reflect and respond to creative



The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

transformation), valid even though they may not confess Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. Rather than developing this point at length I make two summary statements. Firstly, one notes that the physical identification of the "Church" is now rendered twice as difficult. Not only is one confronted by the question of which Christian community best reflects creative transformation (in the Christian community this equates with the terms creative and redemptive activity) but also the question of how this relates to other communities which recognise creative transformation. I think - perhaps I only hope - the second point follows from the first. In a Process understanding of the Church it is clear that there is no room for any kind of dogmatic finality. Tolerance and the appreciation of the position of others are the crucial qualities which a Church must entertain. I do, however, accept that while it is commendable and straightforward to produce such statements it is not always obvious how they translate into practice. Against a background of a multiplicity of, apparently irreconcilable, attitudes towards all aspects of life it is not self-evident that tolerance passes the pragmatic test. Royce's tolerance certainly conveys a sense of naivety, "let your Christology be the practical acknowledgement of the Spirit of Universal and Beloved Community. This is sufficient and practical faith... All else about your religion is the accident of your special race or nation or form of worship or training or accidental personal opinion, or devout mystical experience - illuminating but capricious."(17).

The final consideration to be made about the Church replies to an omission of the previous chapter. I discussed the relationship of Jesus to God in a essentially mono-linear sense, Jesus' response to God's

(17) Royce, Josiah. "Science and the Progress of Christianity", (Problem of Christology xvi) in Classic American Philosophers, p241. It may, of course, also be entirely commendable and correct.

The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

initiative for him. That is in a God - to - Jesus direction. Similarly, our discussion of the Church has proceeded under the assumption that the important aspect is how the Church responds to God, the faith decision of the community which receives Jesus as the revelation of God's creative and redemptive nature. To rectify the omission it is necessary to review the relationship as a dynamic in the reverse direction, the world to God. That is, how the world is able, by its response to him, to affect God. Of course, we are not introducing new principles here but rather making explicit what has previously only been stated implicitly. God's action in the world is God's love for the world but, to use William's words, "we do not love unless our personal being is transformed through the relation to the other."(18).

The pyramid effect is the process by which minute actualizations of value are transformed, because of their integration into a synthesized unit, into events of macrocosmic significance. The condition which enables the effect to succeed is that all the components maximise their respective potentials and thereby enjoy maximum value. Each tiny event permits the pyramid to continue if, and only if, it optimizes the possibilities generated for it by its position in the pyramid. On the other hand, should any event fail to maximise its own value then that particular aspect of the process "breaks down". The thrust towards ever - significant complexities is temporarily halted. Thus we see that the higher "up" the pyramid one goes, the greater is the dependence upon the lower levels. The actualization of significant value is dependent upon the "co-operation" of more trivial events. God, who can be considered the ultimate level, the source of the very thrust and urge of the process, is therefore dependent upon everything if his own aim is to be actualized. On the trivial level, the merest "puff of existence" must

(18) Spirit and the Forms of Love p117.

The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

actually exist if God is to experience it and, more significantly, if God is to reveal his creative and redemptive nature to man it is necessary that man recognizes and fulfils his creative and redemptive activity. Thus we understand the love of God to include amor concupiscentiae in addition to amor benevolentiae. God desires the world to actualize particular values. We note that because Jesus is the exemplary identification with creative and redemptive activity, God is supremely dependent upon him. To state explicitly what might anyway seem obvious, God could not work in the world through the (Christian) Church unless Jesus had realized his own potential as the revelation to which the Church responded (19). I make that point in order to introduce an additional aspect of the process by which novel opportunities are introduced in the present. I have noted in this present chapter that because Jesus is the focus of God's activity for the Church, which itself generates possibilities for creative and redemptive activity, it is possible to conceive of Jesus as the motivating force behind activity in the present, the mediated cause of novelty. But if one considers the effect Jesus had upon God, God's response to Jesus, it is possible to expand upon this mediated cause - effect relationship. Jesus, by his response to God - in - history, activated the possibility of the Church and also, therefore, the possibility for God to respond to a community whose defining characteristic is his revelation, creative and redemptive activity. One might say that Jesus presented God with a novel set of players with whom he could continue to unfold his cosmic drama. Novel, not by virtue of

(19) It is perhaps necessary to comment upon the notion that God is dependent, which contradicts the traditional view of his self-sufficiency or a seity. Hartshorne, in his illustration of a dog and a pillar (Divine Relativity p7) conveys precisely the sense in which a superior being is dependent upon or relative to an inferior being. Similarly, the quotation from Williams illustrates that to love someone means to be transformed by that love: one is dependent upon that person.

The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

merely being a new generation (a fact for which traditionally Jesus can take no credit) but by virtue of being a community aware of the revelation of God's nature. God's involvement with the world became explicitly creative and redemptive because Jesus authenticated the possibility of such a community. No other event can possibly be so crucial to God simply because the transition from the world's implicit awareness of God's creative and redemptive nature to an explicit awareness of that revelation is fundamentally novel. It authenticates and validates value and purpose in a way not possible prior to the conscious appreciation of the revelation of his nature. The analysis up to this point tends to suggest that Jesus "flicked the switch" and the cosmic process entered a new era. Although that makes explicit the active role assumed by Jesus, it fails to convey the sustaining role which must be played by, particularly, the Church. In the framework of Whitehead's vision a single, static event cannot be solely determinative of all future events. So, although Jesus initiated the explicit awareness of creative and redemptive activity, unless subsequent response re-affirms the revelation of his nature then the revelation is no longer explicit. The reaffirmation of this revelation is, of course, faith because it is faith which is the creative and redemptive response to the revelation. Furthermore, it is particularly relevant that the Church re-affirms the revelation because it is in the Church in which the revelation is recognised and named. Without the Church's continual generation of possibilities for creative and redemptive activity the possibility for God's creative and redemptive nature to work in the world is rendered obtuse. It would become a mere historical quirk of our present cosmic generation. The Church, the present reality of the Christ - event, is crucial in that it enables God to present, or "re-present", to employ Ogden's phrase, the revelation of his saving work. This is not to suggest that without the Church God is impotent to

The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

perform works according to his creative and redemptive nature. But it is to say that without the Church such works could not be recognised as being revelatory of his nature. They would not be explicitly received as such. One concludes that Jesus, and subsequently the Church, contributes to the Divine life and the Divine vision by making it possible for God to relate to creatures who are consciously aware of that relationship and capable, therefore, of significant value.

This discussion of the Church has not been intended as a complete description of a Process account. I have, nevertheless, attempted to illustrate why the Church is as essential to christology as Jesus and also some of the themes which revolve around that core statement. It has been superficial insofar as it has not grasped the problem of the nature of the Church except to express that in terms of creative and redemptive activity - faith. To quote just one example of a possible approach, Janzen emphasises the need to include the notion of Spirit in a contemporary definition (20).

Pittenger makes clear the need for "explicit development of the implications of the Christ - Church complex"(21) but stresses the point that this process should be performed by those within the Church. Indeed, my emphasis on participation (or, to rephrase that, faith) states exactly that. The importance of the Church as an aspect of christology cannot be over estimated. The Christ - event, which has at,

(20) He accepts the bulk of Lee's thesis that the Church is the Body of Christ but states the intention to include the idea of Spirit which, he claims, is lacking in Lee's analysis. (op.cit. p148f) Pittenger too has "lamented the de-emphasis of the third person in trinitarian belief and practice." See One God in Trinity Spiceland's article, "Process Theology" p140 who cites Pittenger, The Holy Spirit, (Philadelphia 1974). Of course, in the context of this discussion it is not sufficient to want to insert the Spirit (or anything else) into a theory of the Church. One must first ascertain that the concept has intelligibility in a Process theology.

(21) Christology Reconsidered p147.



The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

and as, its centre Jesus of Nazareth, is present today as a living reality, able to promote creative and redemptive action through faith, as the Church. This synthesis of past, present and future is adequately summarized by Royce's classic definition of the Church as "the community of memory and hope."<sup>(22)</sup>.

(22) Williams, D.D., Spirit and the Forms of Love, p181. See The Problem of Christianity 2vols., Macmillan 1914.

The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

The remainder of this chapter is dedicated to an evaluation of Process christology with respect to traditional and Biblical christological criteria.

The first aspect of the comparison refers to traditional christology. This is taken to imply the magnificent formulations of the Ancient Church, what is usually referred to as "Christian orthodoxy"(23). It should be obvious that, in terms of words and concepts, such a comparison has no chance of success. It is simply not possible to comment upon the similarity of two things which are so obviously dissimilar. Firstly, this implies that any attempt to directly compare the two christologies is awkward and irresistibly difficult. Secondly, and somewhat fortuitously, it also implies that the comparison is, for all practical intents and purposes, irrelevant. That is not to deny the importance of research into the historical development of Christian doctrine, but merely to state that in order to promote the existential relevance of Process christology today, one does not need to be concerned with a comparison of words. The quest for compatibility with "orthodoxy" is made possible by shifting the emphasis away from the actual words of the doctrinal pronouncements. The words are not the essence of christology. The formulae and famous phrases, the aphorisms of christology, are simply the conclusions which summarize the corpus of christological belief and thought. They are the icing on the cake, the most memorable and palatable aspect of the whole. And, if we are to evaluate Process christology with respect to orthodoxy, we must be prepared to delve beyond the advertising slogans and examine the kernel of the ancients' thinking behind the pronouncements. Why did they arrive at that conclusion? What was the purpose or intention

(23) One should remember Cupitt's definition of orthodoxy as "merely the form of Christianity which happened to triumph over the others." "Christ of Christendom", Myth of God Incarnate p145.

The evaluation: Christ and the Church. .

behind a particular expression? Similarly, Hartshorne writes, "is this conception acceptable to religion? To answer this question we must consider not mere verbal habits common among theologians, however reputable, but the values that can be detected - other than the value of familiar or high sounding words - beneath the use of religious terms...."(24). These reasons, intentions and purposes cannot be adequately stated by convenient, albeit dramatic, phrases. They are, in fact, the general motivating themes which provide the foundation for all subsequent religious sentiment or theological thinking. Insofar as one is able to identify these themes, or "values", for any particular system, one is able to employ them as tools for a comparative study. Prior to stating what I believe these themes to be - space will only permit a representative selection - one notes that a similar situation arises if one attempts a comparison with the New Testament account of Jesus. To pretend that there is a single New Testament account of the Nazarene is futile. One only needs to glance at the work of any two scholars of the New Testament to verify the truth of that statement. Fortunately, there are two points which stabilize the apparent liquidity and ambiguity of the Scriptures. Firstly, as was noted in the previous chapter, the sort of evidence required by a Process analysis does not consist of facts A, B and C - conceivably countered by facts X, Y and Z - but rather an overall picture or impression gained from the whole text. Kelsey writes, "one of the claims made on behalf of a Process Hermeneutics is that it can invite and empower the interpreter to be equally attentive to all aspects of Biblical texts."(25). Consequently, the Process theologian does not require precise agreement with any one school of Biblical interpretation or with all Biblical statements. Rather, one seeks to achieve compatibility with an integrated view, an overall impression which the Bible as a whole inspires. The second

(24) The Divine Relativity p22.

The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

consideration which aims to neutralize the ambiguity of the various methods of interpretation simply reaffirms an aspect of the first. We are not interested solely in the famous phrases and christological definitions found in the New Testament, but on the totality of the religious feeling and character of Jesus which motivated the initial response to him. Of course the high profile christological texts are a part of this picture, but they must not be allowed to dominate at the expense of the rest of the text. The notion that the New Testament is a response to Jesus (as opposed to viewing the Gospels as being precise records about Jesus himself) requires further comment. Ogden (26) requires that the christology of "reflection" should be verified with reference to the christology of "witness". The witness is rooted in the New Testament. Indeed, the witness is the New Testament. The Scriptural books present a picture of the community which surrounded Jesus. They tell the story of the primitive beginnings in the disciples' individual responses to his person to the formation of an early Church community. There is no reason to doubt the authenticity of these records and to do so is to promote an unprecedented assault upon the documented evidence of history. The problem arises when one begins to enlarge upon the relation between the records of the response and the original motivating force which inspired those records. Bultmann's legacy to New Testament scholarship has been to deny that it is possible to go beyond the response. There is no criterion by which one is able

(25) The Theological Use of Scripture in Process Hermeneutics", Kelsey, David H., Process Studies 13/3 Fall 1983, p181ff. He makes the point that inclusiveness can be considered in one of two ways. Either as a theory of interpretation which is "inclusive of all methods of interpretation" or a confused theory of interpretation, "an ad hoc collection of exegetical tools." (p183). But Lull responds, "its methodological inclusiveness is protected from the charges of being ad hoc because of its basis in a theory of perception - as - interpretation." Lull, David J., "What is Process Hermeneutics?" ibid. p189ff.

(26) Point of Christology p4.

The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

to distinguish between authentic accounts of Jesus himself and those which are purely response. The latter category may have been invented, edited or altered to suit the needs of the responding community. Hence, any passages which supposedly reveal Jesus' own self - understanding (as opposed to the reaction of the community to him) must be seen as vaticinia ex eventu, with little reference to Jesus himself. But, if one recognizes (as response) a novel set of beliefs then one is forced to account for the origin of those beliefs. To admit that the response of the Christian community is, in some radical sense, different from the set of prevalent beliefs of the age, requires an explanation. How and why did those beliefs evolve? To argue otherwise, a kind of belief ex nihilo is absurd, analogous to accepting a reflection in a mirror whilst denying the existence of the corresponding reality. If there is an image, there must be an object. A preliminary step must be made before one can ascribe the origin of the beliefs to Jesus. It must be established that those beliefs were, indeed, radically novel and not simply a collection or recombination of other eclectic ideas (27). Muhlenberg observes that if the response was not original then "the question still remains why the Christian proclamation should have provoked rejection, hatred and storms of persecution"(28). The claim for novelty is justified by noting how the authorities reacted to those who responded to Jesus. During this chapter I shall note that the idea of the Logos incarnate is one possible source of this novelty.

(27) Note that this does not deny that the Christians could also incorporate ideas from other sources. Pannenberg states that, "in order for an 'influence' of alien concepts to be absorbed, a situation must have previously emerged within which these concepts could be greeted as aids for the expression of a problem already present."(Jesus - God and Man p153). To state that the Christians used non - Christian concepts does not deny that Christianity was unique, it merely accepts that the Christians attempted to express that uniqueness in the terms available to them.

(28) "Divinity of Jesus in Early Christian Faith", Studia Patristica vol.17 p136.



The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

The task of identifying the novel response in its entirety is not trivial. I suggest that the following six points represent the essence of the response which is portrayed in the New Testament and the essential aspects of Patristic christology.

1. The humanity of Jesus. This is stated in the Creeds and is most vividly illustrated by the Gospels.
2. Salvation. A crucial issue is whether the Christ of Process christology can appropriately be designated our Saviour.
3. The Logos. We have noted how Cobb makes explicit use of this idea in the notion of creative transformation. Does the use of the idea in a Process christology satisfy the intentions of the Fathers?
4. The Divinity of Christ. Although this has been considered to be the crux of the christological debate (29) it has yet to be established in what sense, if at all, Process christology ascribes "divinity" to Jesus.
5. Existential relevance of Jesus. Does faith in Jesus make a difference? This question includes the idea of the Kingdom as a call which requires a response.
6. Worship. Christian faith has traditionally viewed Jesus as being worthy of worship. We must ascertain whether the Process account of Christ is potent to express that religiosity.

The list is not claimed to be exhaustive, for there are other features of Biblical or Patristic christology which might have been included. However, on examination the list is justifiably claimed to be representative. Other topics tend to be derivatives or subsets of the topics mentioned. For example the Virgin Birth (related to the Gospel birth narratives and the theotokos doctrine) is primarily a statement of the divinity and humanity of Christ. It adds nothing to the previous list because, in isolation from those topics, it is essentially rendered

(29) Note for example the furore concerning the "myth" debate.

The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

obtuse. By their general nature the topics I have selected are competent to respond to most issues in christology.

The one additional point I must make is that no amount of comparison with "orthodoxy" will guarantee religious acceptance for Process christology. That will only come if it achieves success in practice, to quote once again Mays' expression. The pragmatic criterion is ultimately convincing. The value of demonstrating theoretical success is, therefore, to enable one to promote the practical issues grounded on firm foundations. The first aspect to be examined concerns the humanity of Jesus. In Process christology it is clear that the "utter reality of the manhood of Jesus Christ" (30) is presupposed. Similarly, although from a totally different theological starting point, Daniélou states that "there is an extraordinary normality in his human reactions"(31) and there is little problem in establishing that the New Testament account conveys precisely that message. Robinson, to take just one example from the many available, presents an analysis of Jesus' development, looking particularly at Hebrews. He notes, "the writer is quite clear that Jesus learned obedience through the things that he suffered, that he had to become what he was, to be made perfect, to go through the process of individuation and maturation like every other human being."(32). It is evident from Robinson's studies that the New Testament testifies to Jesus' "growing-up" process and his "learning by

(30) Pittenger Christology Reconsidered p22.

(31) Daniélou, J. Christ and Us. p25.

(32) Robinson, J.A.T. Twelve More New Testament Studies. p159. He notes the following verses, 2:10;17f, 4:15, 5:5;8f, 6:20, 7:28. Similarly, the Syrophenician woman (Matt.15:21-28, Mark 7:24-30) who forced Jesus "under pressure to a position he has apparently no intention of adopting at the outset" and Jesus' struggle in the garden at Gethsemane to align his will with that of his Father. Also, Cullmann, "the life of Jesus would not be really human if its course did not manifest a development." (The Christology of the New Testament p97).

The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

experience". Sanders, in his study of the New Testament hymns, makes the point that the most dramatic and obvious statement of Jesus' humanity is seen in the event of his death (33). In addition to those affirmations of his death, particular emphasis is given to the manner of death. There is no reason to doubt that the Gospel records, if not historical accounts in the strict meaning of the term, are not nevertheless factual accounts. Crucifixion was, after all, a very real part of the Roman world. It is, I think, crucially important that any christology does not lose sight of the humanity of Jesus, the vivid loving and suffering humanity which is portrayed by the New Testament texts. Process christology, with its emphasis on the dynamics of the whole developmental thrust which constitutes the human person dramatically conveys the intention of the Gospels on this point. That, of course, is the reason why it was essential to make Cobb's analysis of the human person as relevant to Jesus as it is to all human beings. Having affirmed the humanity of Jesus is it rather more interesting to ask the next question, what kind of a man was Jesus?

If one is to attempt to answer that question one must first clarify the status of Scripture which is expected to furnish the details about Jesus. Here it suffices to note that the question does not demand precise facts about the man but rather Scripture must provide a picture which illustrates the type of experiences and reactions he exhibited. Of course, in addition to the "objective ambiguity" of the New Testament records, one should also stress that the evidence sought is dependent upon, and is a reflection of, the situation of the enquirer. As Hick notes, "in each case communal or individual imagination has projected its own ideal upon as much of the New Testament data as will sustain

(33) Sanders, J.T. New Testament Christological Hymns p24. He notes the following passages, Phil.2:8, Col.1:18, 1 Tim.3:16, 1 Pet.3:18.

The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

it."(34). Jesus will appear as a Liberator to those whose existential reality strives to convey the message of liberation, as an advocate of the "Just War" theory to certain Western Democracies intent on justifying their possession of nuclear weapons. Hence, the reply I give to our question is not claimed to be the correct - or even the best - one, rather it is what strikes me as being particularly characteristic of Jesus as the Gospels portray him. That is, the one dominant aspect of Jesus' life appears to be his radical sense of freedom. This is seen in the manner in which he lived as a free - thinking individual. Käsemann isolates one aspect of this when he suggests that the distinctive character of Jesus' mission is found in the "but I say" sayings, the antitheses of the Sermon on the Mount (35). There can be no Judaic parallels to those sayings, for any Jew who claimed that degree of independence from the Law would automatically isolate himself from the community. Discontinuity with respect to the authority of Scripture and Moses was unprecedented. Käsemann draws three points in conclusion (36). First, the novel implication testifies to its genuineness; second, that the claim surpasses that of any prophet or rabbi; and third, it cannot be integrated into contemporary Jewish piety. He has succeeded in showing that the "but I say" sayings are novel and we can agree with Harvey that "if a particular saying is unparalleled.. then far the most likely explanation of its presence in the Gospel record would seem to be that it was said by Jesus himself."(37). Thus we arrive as close to primary evidence as possible

(34) Hick, J. Myth of God Incarnate p167.

(35) Käsemann, E. Essays on New Testament Themes. p37. Cullmann mentions a similar feature at the trial before Caiaphas (Matt.26:64), "I will not answer this question but I will tell you something else." op.cit. p119. See also the chapter on Authority in Braun, H. Jesus of Nazareth, and Moltmann's "Jesus and the Law", "Jesus and Authority" in op.cit. p128ff.

(36) op.cit. p38.

The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

but the situation must not be misused. Käsemann maintains that "we possess absolutely no kind of formal criteria by which we can identify the authentic Jesus material."(38). However, he has identified something radically different and unusual about Jesus, the cause which can justifiably be claimed to have produced the effect, the response of the community. Jesus' freedom is also illustrated by his response to aspects of the Jewish Law. He demonstrated a remarkably flexible attitude towards it, noting that he ate with publicans and sinners and performed work on the Sabbath. In the context of his humanity this implies a surprisingly "modern" (39) interpretation of Law, that it exists to promote human growth and open possibilities rather than being intended as a via negativa, restricting creativity. However, later in this chapter I shall note that Jesus' attitude in this respect is open to another interpretation.

At this stage, the point I wish to make is simple - the New Testament account of the man Jesus shows him to be as interesting and as active as any other free - thinking human individual, engaged in the process of self - creativity which is at the heart of the Process analysis of the human person.

If that discussion has succeeded in establishing a compatibility between the Process account of Jesus' humanity and the Biblical records, the evaluation with respect to the credal formulations is not as straightforward. Of course the Creed of Nicaea states that the Divine person "...was made man" but that simple phrase disguises a plethora of

(37) Harvey, A. (Ed). God Incarnate Story and Belief. p46.

(38) op.cit. p35. My emphasis. The point is, although there is a lack of formal criteria, we can still gain an insight and balance the probabilities implied by Harvey with that lack of criteria.

(39) In the sense of its responsible flexibility rather than being undisciplined!



The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

complex meanings. The question to be faced is, given Pittenger's comment that "Jesus was obviously a genuine human being physically and physiologically.. ..in our time it is more important to insist on the full reality of Jesus' human psychology,"(40) whether any contemporary definition of Jesus' humanity can be equated or reconciled to that expounded by the ancient theologians. Quite apart from the fact that human "psychology" - modern or otherwise - was not a relevant facet of their debate it would be absurd to suggest that a thinker in the first three centuries could conceive of a human self in the same terms as we do today (41).

I think it is probably a valid comment to state that the theologians of the early Church were not interested in the humanity of Jesus qua his humanity. They realised the force of the "what he has not assumed he has not healed" arguments, as expounded by Gregory of Nazianzus (42), but one notes that the motivating factor is not "humanity" but rather "healing": salvation. That emphasis led to "divinity" playing the leading role, to such an extent that the affirmation of humanity had to be moulded and forced so that it did not interfere with or mitigate against Christ's redemptive power. We note points of divergence from a Process view at this point. Firstly, the Church Fathers began by defining Christ's redemptive function, biasing any subsequent affirmation of humanity towards that end. Secondly, their conception of "divinity" and "humanity" tended to imply two

(40) op.cit. p35.

(41) It is an interesting question as to who was the first theologian to give proper place to the "self". Augustine in his Confessions is arguable, although perhaps Luther has a stronger claim. The point remains, however, that no pre-twentieth century theologian analysed the "self" in the terms which are relevant today.

(42) See Creeds, Councils and Controversies p98. Note also, Irenaeus, Christ "became Incarnate for our salvation", (my emphasis) New Eusebius p115. Stevenson, J.

The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

opposing entities so that any affirmation of humanity to an already established divine being was fraught with problems. Any solution was inevitably somewhat artificial. Norris draws the most important implication of the first point, "one factor in Patristic thought about Christ was the conviction that he represented Original or proper or fulfilled humanity."(43). The notion of Jesus representing this "ideal humanity" is alien to any account of Jesus within a Process christology. The Process analysis of the self cannot be stated in terms of a universal "humanity" because to be human means to be an individual human being. However, one might also note that Process christology does claim, in one sense, that Jesus is the ideal for a human being. Insofar as he can be thought of as integrating his presently becoming self with the facts (as he receives them) of his past and his anticipation of the future, he does indeed represent the exemplary instance of self - determination. Although that is a valid comment I think it is necessary to note that the argument is in danger of being forced to an unnatural and unhelpful conclusion. The Process conception of Jesus as the "ideal man" is not what the ancients meant by their notion of perfect or fulfilled humanity. That essential fact is not neutralized by employing similar terminology in an attempt to disguise the basic differences. Jesus is, for a Process christology, the ideal human person because he manifested God's love for the world in the world, by virtue of his own self - determination according to his reception of the revelation of God in the world. That is not to say that he is the second Adam understood as the new perfection who reinstates the original condition to universal humanity. The second point, how to affirm the humanity of Jesus assuming him to be divine is, of course, not directly relevant to the Process account. The problem of having to "mix" two separate things is

(43) Norris, R.A. "The Problems of Human Identity in Patristic Christological Speculation". Studia Patristica vol.17 p149. My emphasis.

The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

peculiar to Patristic christology (44) and in this context it is more important to emphasise that the man Jesus is the pre-supposition of christology. How - or if - Process christology can also affirm the "divinity" of Jesus is the subject of a later section.

Perhaps the one statement which can be made with any degree of certainty is that the effort the Fathers went to in order to ascribe humanity to Jesus - in the face of the enormous difficulties of reconciling that to a divine Jesus - is a clear indication that in their view an "orthodox" christology must affirm that Jesus is human. One can conclude, therefore, that the Process account is eminently suited to conveying the Christian position in that respect.

I have noted that the primary concern of the Patristic theologians lay with the reality of Christ as Saviour. For example, Raven says of Apollinarius that he "accepted as axiomatic the principle that Christ was Saviour" (45) and "at the heart of all the debates about the nature of God was the question of the salvation experienced through Christ in the power of his Spirit."(46). Salvation is, more than any other single concept, the key behind the theology of the Early Church. Hence Sellers, "the teaching of Athanasius and the later representatives of the school of Alexandria comes before us as a striking example of the dependence of Christological on Soteriological thought"(47) and "there are good grounds for saying that the Antiochenes are interested in soteriology ..we find that one of their fundamental ideas is that if man

(44) Given those terms I find myself agreeing with Hick, who suggests that to say Jesus is God and man is to say that one has drawn that familiar friend of the theological community, the square circle. op.cit p178.

(45) Raven, C.E. Apollinarianism. p229.

(46) O'Donnell, J.J., S.J. Trinity and Temporality. p34.

(47) Sellers, R.V. The Council of Chalcedon. p132.

The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

is to be redeemed there must come into the world a man who in his perfect obedience to the will of God will be the Man, the second Adam, the firstfruits of a renewed humanity and a renewed creation."(48).

Our examination of salvation, or redemption, will take three stages. After an initial - and necessarily brief - comment on the Patristic doctrines I shall develop a Process interpretation based upon the christology of this study. This will then be evaluated in the terms of the function it is required to perform by "orthodoxy". The third stage will note some Biblical ideas and the section is closed with a few general observations. To suggest that it is possible to present a survey of the Patristic doctrine of redemption in as short a space as can be permitted here will be anathema to anyone even remotely fascinated by Early Church doctrine. Hence I state at the outset that my intention is merely to guide the discussion through a sample of the themes developed by the Fathers, in order to set the scene for the Process interpretation.

Perhaps the dominant idea was first stated in an authoritative version by Irenaeus. This is the theory of deification through

(48) Sellers, R.V. Two Ancient Christologies. p116. Similarly, Melancthon's famous dictum, "who Christ is becomes known in his saving action" (Preface to the logi communes 1521) illustrates how important the dependence was throughout the Church. It is interesting to note that Turner inverts the dependency and views redemption as a secondary factor in the formulation of theology, subordinate to the "primary principles of the Christian faith", God and Christology (Turner, H.E.W. Patristic Redemption p18). He qualifies the statement by noting that "if the via crucis were all the time being followed religiously, the theologia crucis lagged somewhat", thereby emphasizing that redemption, the Way of the Cross, was always the dominant aspect of the religious life. It must also be noted that in the modern context the supremacy of the doctrine of salvation is no longer valid. Sponheim makes this point, albeit sarcastically, in his comment, "safe in the arms of Jesus, who will hesitate over definitions of God." (op.cit. p180). That, of course, is precisely the reason why chapter three of this study is so necessary, to clarify the doctrine of God before stating a christology and a doctrine of salvation.

The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

incarnation (49). Hence Athanasius explained that man was originally intended to participate in the Logos and that this was fulfilled through Jesus Christ. Kolp's article (50) illustrates the way in which Athanasius used II Peter 1:3-4 to support this: "... You may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of passion, and become partakers of the divine nature." The most important aspect of that verse is the notion of "participation", which gives rise to four central questions: the "in-what, why, when" and "how" do they participate? Athanasius employed the distinction between divinity by nature and divinity by participation. Christ, he assumed was divine by nature because it is in Christ in which creatures must participate in order to become divine. And, he argued, the nature in which one participates to become divine must itself be divine. The incarnation is the reason "why" believers participate, they "do not have it by nature and can never obtain it through their own efforts."(51). It follows that it is by virtue of participation in Christ that the "how?" is answered, and the concept of immortality replies to the "when?". Wiles draws attention to the fact that "the argument depends upon the general principle that one can only communicate to others that which is in the fullest sense one's own."(52). And, as he asserts, it is by no means obvious that the principle is valid. This has important implications for christology, particularly for the sense in which Christ must be divine in order to satisfy the requirements of redemption. It is clear that if the principle is not valid it is unnecessary to make the strict

(49) See Pannenberg, W. Jesus - God and Man. p40f.

(50) Kolp, A.L. "Partakers of the Divine Nature: The Use of II Peter 1:4 by Athanasius", Studia Patristica vol.17 p1018ff. In the same volume see Kannengiesser, C., "Athanasius of Alexandria" p981ff.

(51) Kolp, op.cit. p1021.

(52) Wiles, M. "In defence of Arius", Journal of Theological Studies vol.XIII 1962. p346.



The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

identification for that particular purpose. The crucial point to note is that Athanasius is claiming that participation in Christ ensures one of partaking of the nature which is Christ's.

A variation on the theme of participation is found in an "ethically determined" line of Patristic thought, particularly, for example, in Origen, the Antiochene concept of unity and the christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia (53). The ethical ideal of Middle Platonism is the constant struggle towards participation in the idea of the good which is, itself, achieved through the struggle. And, since for Plato (54) the good is the divine, the striving towards participation in the good is striving towards participation in the divine. One can recognise how this notion of human effort could lead to Pelagianism on one hand and, the counter - reaction, to an emphasis on the need for grace on the other. Is this striving possible without the assistance of the Divine? A similar question arises when one considers the exemplarist and objective theories of redemption. The exemplarist theory maintains that Jesus is essentially an example to be followed, and the act of believing in and imitating him is the method of gaining salvation. An initial objection to this type of theory is that it places too much importance on the relationship a person has to the example. It bestows upon certain individuals, merely by virtue of their spatio - temporal location with respect to the example, particular privileges which make salvation more accessible than for others. Furthermore, Augustine objected to Pelagius on the grounds that by "praising the capabilities of human nature" (55) the value of the Cross was diminished. Although Dewart argues that Augustine's charge fails it does, nevertheless,

(53) See Pannenberg op.cit. p40.

(54) e.g. Republic VI.

(55) Dewart, J, McW. "The Christology of the Pelagian Controversy", Studia Patristica vol. XVII p1228.

The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

illustrate the tension which was present in the necessary attempt to balance what Christ achieved with what we can achieve. That the two aspects must be balanced is obvious. Turner writes that some kind of "example" language was necessary to prevent redemption being seen as solely "achieved by any external transaction or some device whether of quasi - physical insemination or of mystical transmutation which might save us apart from ourselves."(56). Any adequate doctrine of salvation must incorporate both aspects.

At this point in the discussion it is valuable to introduce a further issue which will also function as the departure point for the consideration of a Process perspective. The notion of redemption implies the sense of redemption from something and it is this "something" which must be considered. The discussion might easily become engrossed in "Original sin" and other complexities of Patristic anthropology - cum - theology: this must be avoided! The vital point to mention is that humanity was thought to exist in a form which was a corrupted derivative of its original state. The initial "perfection" had "fallen". Hence we see the Fathers employing the imagery of Christ as the Second Adam, the new perfected humanity who restores the human race to its former glory, a new creation. Salvation is therefore essentially a restoration. If that statement fails as a satisfactory summary of the Patristic doctrine of redemption it certainly succeeds in highlighting a radically different vision of mankind to that expounded by Process theologians.

In the context of Process thought the idea of a fallen humanity which requires restoration is meaningless. One must immediately note that it does not either advocate a view of a perfect humanity. Indeed, neither of those views are intelligible. Process conceptualities insist

(56) Turner, op.cit. p117.

The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

that mankind is adequately defined by those actual individuals who are engaged in the process of self - creation and those perished individuals who have contributed in the past. There is no overall or absolute value judgement about initial or present states. Value is generated by the present generation and may, on an arbitrary cosmic scale, be less than or greater than the total value as defined by a previous generation. The hope is that there is an overall increase in value. That is to claim that the present state of "humanity" is somehow "superior" to a former state, a rise as opposed to a "fall". It is worth repeating, moreover, that the use of the term "superior" indicates a comparison of the relative value of one state to another. It is not an absolute term. It is an inherent feature of Whitehead's vision that the process is orientated towards novel harmony (57). I employ the term "novel" in order to distinguish this from any notion of a return to a Leibnizian pre-existing harmony. The direction of the whole thrust of creativity is towards the telos, a goal anticipated by God. Consequently one can understand how God's activity is always creative and redemptive. It is creative because it promotes novelty, redemptive because it aims towards establishing harmony. This general notion of God's activity gives rise to the idea that the process of creativity, considered on the cosmic scale, is itself a process of salvation. To reiterate and emphasise the contrast, whereas the Ancients viewed creation as a downward spiral of concupiscence and "passion", as understood in a negative sense, the very essence of Process consists of the generation of value, a movement towards harmony driven by a passion which is now understood as a positive quality.

This basic difference between the two understandings has

(57) If Process and Reality is the philosophical account of this, Adventures of Ideas relates the human face of this creative advance.

The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

significant implications. The Patristics, faced by the need for restoration on a grand cosmic scale, were forced into making extravagant claims for Jesus. Indeed, it is hard to imagine a Saviour who is appropriate to that task who is not defined by universal and abstract perfections. The Process concept is not confronted by the same issues. Firstly, it could be argued that since the process is itself redemptive, by virtue of God's creative and redemptive activity, there is no need to postulate a Redeemer other than God himself. At the level of the Cosmos, the totality of the creative advance into novelty, that argument cannot be refuted. However, recalling that in Process terms "humanity" is not a universal quantity but a finite set of individual qualities, one can propose that a notion of individual salvation does lend itself to the idea of an individual Saviour. Rather than advocating a cosmic restoration, the view of salvation which is appropriate to Process theology is an individual reconciliation. This proposal must be formulated in the context of a cosmic process which is itself redemptive. The key to this understanding is that, although the cosmic process may be redemptive, any one individual component of that process is not, necessarily and at any given time, participating in the aim appropriate to the optimization of harmony. In the terms of the pyramid effect, in which the optimum peak is dependent upon the cooperation and contributions of the relevant constituents, one can say that in reality the majority of "peaks" fail to be realized. Individuals do not always fulfil their own potential. This implies a reduced level of possibility for subsequent generations, thereby rendering them impotent to fully realise the value properly relevant to their location. Redemption, I argue, is not, primarily, the task of "correcting" that historical fact but rather the process of reconciling one's purpose, as a self-determining individual, with the overall telos of the cosmic whole. The sequence is not one of sin, repentance, forgiveness and reward, which

The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

acts retrospectively with reference to the initial "sin", but rather it is an intention to create new growth and value from whatever state exists at the time. The corollary of this is that redemption must be considered as a reconciliation with the whole, because it is in the totality of the cosmic process that the value of novel creativity is achieved. Thus, individual redemption is inextricably bound up with the notion of the universal redemptive process. It is the failure of the individual to respond adequately to cosmic redemption which implies the necessity for individual reconciliation with the process of creative advance. Furthermore, the locus of individual redemption is the totality of the Redemptive Process.

The "whole", in relation to which individual salvation is required and in which salvation occurs, consists of God, the universe and the self. Redemption is futuristic with reference to God, the universe and the self but retrospective only in relation to the self. An action in the present becomes available as data for the future, it gains the status of a fact to which the future is able to respond. Therefore, any action in the present is either redemptive, in which case it generates value and, furthermore, novel possibilities for the generation of value, or it fails to contribute anything positive beyond the value of its own actualization. Hence, a redemptive act in the present enables future possibilities for value to be realized. In relation to the self, the redemptive act is also retrospective. The analysis of the human person in chapter three showed that in order for a person to be identified as a true "self", it was essential that continuity existed with antecedent members of the same series of becoming. This may take the form of mere reiteration of previous states but in order to be redemptive one must also suppose that the person acts to reinstate, reiterate or reaffirm the purpose which defines that "self", by virtue of its past. A



The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

redemptive act in the present reconciles the person to his or her own "self". Second, that purpose must itself be redemptive with respect to the cosmic process. The purpose which defines the self must reconcile that self to the telos. Clearly, an act which reaffirms a purpose which is not itself a reconciliatory intention cannot be considered a redemptive act.

It is possible to give a summary of the discussion so far. It was noted that the Process of Creativity, which lies at the heart of Whitehead's vision, is a redemptive process. God's creative and redemptive activity in the process lures it towards states of ever-increasing degrees of harmony. However, it was subsequently emphasised that this does not imply that all individuals who are engaged in that cosmic process are necessarily aligned with that harmonious aim. This gave rise to the notion of individual redemption, in which the self is reconciled to the telos appropriate to the cosmic whole and to the purpose which is the defining characteristic of that self. However, unless the Process scheme can give intelligibility to the notion that Jesus Christ is our Saviour, it must remain deficient and inadequate to the needs of faith. As Griffin expresses this, "every doctrine of Jesus' person is to be judged in terms of its adequacy to the Scriptures as currently understood and to the particular doctrine of Jesus' saving significance with which it is combined."(58).

As previously stated, the idea that the Process is itself a process of redemptive creativity requires no reference to Christ. It is in the realm of individual redemption in which Christ becomes relevant to the discussion. Of course, by "Christ" it is meant the whole christological reality, Jesus and the Church. The role of Christ in salvation is two-fold. As the revelation of God's creative and redemptive activity

(58) A Process Christology p143.

The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

Jesus authenticates the Church as the community in which that activity is explicitly recognised and which becomes the motivating power in which the community participates. Moreover, and as a corollary to the previous point, Jesus - and the Church - affect God in such a way that God's lure for the world, particularly through the Church, is an explicit aim towards creative and redemptive activity. Both these points require further discussion.

By stating that Jesus is the revelation of God's creative and redemptive activity, the Church (which is the community response to that) must participate in its own action which is creative and redemptive. That is how the Church is defined. Furthermore, that is immediately to state that the Church is the locus of redemptive activity, simply by virtue of the fact that the Church's activity is redemptive. One can extend the argument to emphasise that point. I have mentioned the concept of individual reconciliation, noting that the self must become reconciled to the cosmic whole. But this implies that reconciliation demands community and, since the Church is the redemptive community, individual reconciliation takes place within the Church. Or, to rephrase that making explicit the reference to Jesus, one can say that individual reconciliation takes place by participation in Jesus who is present in his Living Body, the Church.

This essential relation between salvation and the Church might well imply that extra ecclesiam nulla salus - although one must recall that "church" in this context is understood in a radically different sense than that conveyed by that particular dictum!

This analysis of salvation has stressed its subjective aspect, similar to an exemplarist view. The individual subject makes a decision to participate in Christ, in Jesus and the Church, and that response is

The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

redemptive. The individual is reconciled through his or her participation in the revelation of Jesus to the creative and redemptive activity of God which is his lure for the world. To employ Cobb's phrase, the faith decision implies that Jesus co-constitutes the self of the individual who responds to him. By making Jesus the purpose of one's own life, accepting his revelation of God's creative and redemptive activity as the motivating centre of one's own being, one is participating in the Grand Opera of the redemptive process. However, if one is tempted to view the Process account as providing an entirely optimistic analysis, it is worth providing the balance by quoting Marshall (59), "it is true that, at times in history when man seems to be civilized and almost able to pull himself up with his own boot strings.. ..at such times it almost seems that... ..the exemplary view of the atonement goes far enough. However, when I read Golding's The Lord of the Flies or newspaper accounts of the events at the people's Temple in Guyana, I realize that man's predicament is far more terrifying than that and that the Incarnation must be a bolder and more profound statement rooted in a metaphysic and not merely a largely cosmetic improvement for the face and image of mankind." Although the point has been made by an appeal to the emotions, it is a valid point to make and forces us to look beyond faith's acceptance of Jesus as Saviour and respond to the requirement for an objective aspect to redemption. The Process account does this by stating how the Christ - event alters God's inner experience. Essentially, this theme is developed employing the idea that God is able to use the community, which is the response to the revelation of his creative and redemptive nature in Jesus, as the vehicle for explicit creative and redemptive action in the world. Prior to the existence of the Church, God's involvement with the world was,

(59) Marshall, M. "The Person of Christ in the Experience of the Church", Myth/Truth of God Incarnate p42. See also Sano, R. "Jesus as Saviour and Lord" ibid. p85ff.

The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

although necessarily creative and redemptive, only implicitly so. Jesus made explicit in his life and message the idea that God's purpose as expressed in his activity in history could be conceived as co-constituting one's own self. Such a person becomes an organon of the divine will. One notes that God's creative and redemptive nature is explicitly known in the world because of the response of Jesus. It is only through his life that the world recognised the divine nature. Therefore, the fact that Jesus lived his life as a revelation of God has literally and objectively affected God's future. Jesus made possible the opportunities for explicit creative and redemptive activity in the world, through the Church. One can say that because of his response to God, his revelation of the Divine nature, Jesus effected redemption because new possibilities for the radical and explicit fruition of God's love were made available. Barnhart writes in terms of God becoming aware of the human situation, "because of Jesus, God's potential (primordial) humanity is now actual (consequent) humanity."(60). The human experience of Jesus enables God's consequent nature to be the fulfilment of his primordial nature. However, it seems to me that, although Barnhart is correct to emphasise the fulfilment of God's humanity, he fails to encapsulate the sense in which the redemptive efficacy of Jesus lies in the total fulfilment of the divine vision. By enabling novel possibilities for creative and redemptive activity it is God's nature which is fulfilled, not merely his humanity. His primordial vision is realized through those possibilities. Pailin expresses the same theme in terms of two people who love one another, "they will claim that as they increasingly love each other so they increasingly become sympathetically aware of each other's feelings and experiences."(61). In short, they identify with one another.

(60) op.cit. p229.

The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

I have tended to state this relationship in positive terms. That is, I have considered how the world achieves the enjoyment of value as a result of God's initiative. The response of the world to the revelation of God's creative and redemptive nature redeems the world. There is, however, another aspect of this process. God's desire, his erotic love for the world, is never fully realized. The initiative is never wholly appreciated by the world. One notes that even the response of Jesus, although it was the ideal human response, was not a perfect response simply because it was limited by the imperfections of humanity. This unrequited love means that God suffers as the world fails to respond to his initiative (62).

The fact that God made possible, and Jesus initiated, the process

(61) op.cit. p306. See also Griffin, A Process Christology p189 "to love someone in any real sense means to be affected by their experience." It is worth noting as a corollary that this attributes a significant degree of uniqueness to Jesus. He, and he alone, is responsible for effecting the shift from implicit, unrecognised, creative and redemptive activity to that made possible in the community which is the explicit response to the divine initiative. The notion of redemption as being effected by Jesus and made possible by him through the Church is, in fact, implicit in Cobb's analysis of Creative Transformation. Although Creative Transformation occurs whenever there is incarnation of the Logos, it is only after this is named "Christ" that the awareness and reception of Creative Transformation is explicit. It may be claimed that the distinction between implicit and explicit redemptive activity is too tenuous a notion to respond adequately to the Christian idea of the role played by Jesus in effecting salvation. However, I defend myself against that charge by pointing out that, in the terms of Process theology, the possibilities and opportunities for novel creativity are significantly greater for conscious (explicit) action than activity at the prereflective or pre-thematised (implicit) level, which tends to emphasise reiteration. Thus, the fact that Jesus made explicit the revelation and authorised a conscious response to it is a radical achievement.

(62) Pittenger relates how Hartshorne and, to a lesser extent, Whitehead both use that notion. Hartshorne regards Jesus as a symbolization of the suffering of God. See Pittenger, Process Thought and Christian Faith p68ff., and "The Christological Symbol of God's Suffering", Baker, J.R., in REPT. The metaphor is not one which I find particularly constructive. Our understanding of love conveys the necessary aspect of suffering but without isolating it as a special feature.



The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

of explicit redemptive activity does not deny the need for a continued faith response to it. Without the response of the Church, which is itself creative and redemptive activity, the possibilities in the world for God to reveal his love are minimised. The Church, therefore, has the responsibility for maintaining the opportunities for the work of the divine vision. Christology, Jesus and the Church, must be adequate to both those aspects; the initial revelation and the continuing revelation. To summarize, the Process scheme of salvation is a combination of three aspects, representing the idea that the aim of the created world is reconciled with God's purpose for it. First, there is a sense of individual salvation (which is Pelagian if anachronisms must be used) in which the self must strive to incorporate God's purpose into his or her own self - becoming. Second, this is reflected by the Church or community response, through which the divine vision is realized and made available for the world. Third, Jesus may be praised as the Saviour or Redeemer because, through his own response to God, he generated the community which is the explicit recognition of God's creative and redemptive activity. By virtue of its own faith, the community expresses that recognition in its own creative and redemptive activity, thereby sustaining the revelation of God in the world.

Our discussion of salvation has omitted any reference to the concept of "immortality". It is difficult to present a brief and adequate account of the issues so, rather than attempting to do so, I shall simply make a few relevant points. Firstly, it is imperative to note that Process theologians find themselves divided on the issue, particularly between the ideas of "objective" or "subjective" immortality (63). The notion of objective immortality causes few

(63) See for example, Pittenger, "The Last Things" in a Process Perspective, Hartshorne's chapter "Time, Death and Everlasting Life" in Logic of Perfection and Suchocki's "The Question of Immortality", Journal of Religion 57/3 July 1977.

The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

problems. God prehends all reality as it responds - on all levels of the pyramid of activity - to his initiative. The divine "memory" synthesises these responses and subsequently uses them as essential components in the divine vision and lure for future generations. Simply, "preservation is of all qualities, all fact, and there is no stipulation limiting it to good qualities or facts"(64). Secondly, because objective immortality ensures immortality for all qualities and facts it is necessary to comment upon the quality of the immortality. Everything is immortalized because everything is relevant to God's knowledge and vision, nothing can escape his universal awareness. But actual occasions and, of course, societies of actual occasions, differ radically in the extent to which they contribute positively, by generating value and harmony. Events which contribute maximally are clearly of greater significance to God because they convey greater potential for the introduction of new beauty into the world. But that is precisely our definition of the redemptive act, one which is capable of promoting further acts of novel creativity and value. Hence, one is able to conclude that, although all events are objectively immortalized, only those which satisfy the condition of being redemptive are "saved" (65). This appears to me to be a satisfactory reply to Neville who suggests that because "in the long run there is a metaphysical guarantee that people cannot damn themselves" there is no human freedom since "the possibility of self - damnation seems to me a touchstone of freedom."(66). On the contrary, damnation is possible, it is the attainment of immortality without redemption, a state of, literally,

(64) Hartshorne, "The Immortality of the Past: Critique of a Prevalent Misinterpretation." Review of Metaphysics, 7 1953, p99.

(65) Employing the word "saved" in order to connote a significant religious meaning as opposed to merely a philosophical notion of preservation.

(66) op.cit. p9.

The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

worthless preservation. This is one instance when we see that "genuine theology" is not reducible to metaphysics. The principles of the latter give us good reason to postulate "immortality", but without the christology of the former we are impotent to translate that eternal preservation into a significant sense of "being Saved". Salvation is based upon acts which are creative and redemptive, not the totality of "qualities and facts" good and bad.

The debate surrounding subjective immortality is complex and in a footnote I add a brief comment (67). Without entering into the philosophical complexities it is pertinent to note that the Biblical picture of "immortality" is certainly not one which obliges us to hold a belief in a personal survival after death. For example, Hamilton comments that "in recent years a number of theologians have attacked our Western tradition to individualize the Gospel."(68).

It is to the Bible that it is now necessary to turn, with the intention of examining how a Process christology expresses the sense of the Kingdom of God. With perhaps just a hint of "poetic" licence it is fair to say that, of the New Testament, there are as many interpretations as there are interpreters. Scripture's message concerning the Kingdom of God is a dramatic demonstration of that fact. Consequently our task of evaluating Process christology with respect to the "Kingdom" is far from trivial. Nevertheless, we can identify certain relevant factors upon which to build the Process account. Once

(67) Christian's arguments (op.cit. p329f) are, in my opinion, convincing reasons to dismiss the concept of subjective immortality. However, one notes that both Hartshorne (see e.g. Logic and Perfection p253) and Cobb (A Christian Natural Theology p70) present arguments to the contrary. See also Schilpp, "Whitehead's Idea of God" in The Philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead, Schilpp, P.A. (Ed). Whitehead himself was neutral on the subject.

(68) Hamilton, P. The Living God and the Modern World. p129.

The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

again, I only present a sample, although representative, selection of views. There are three basic questions which shall concern us, the "when?", the "what?" and the "where?".

The first of these, which asks about the timing of the Kingdom, is, perhaps, the one to which New Testament scholarship has devoted the greatest degree of variety. Conzelmann presents a summary of these views and is able to give Scriptural references to support what are apparently conflicting positions. On one hand the New Testament implies that the Kingdom is already present while, on the other, it suggests that it is a future reality, not yet present (69). References which apply to the former include Luke 10:18; 14:16-24, Matt.11:12; 11:5, Mark 2:19 and, of relevance to the latter, the Beatitudes, Luke 6:20ff, the Lord's Prayer, Luke 11:2, Matt.8:11, Mark 14:25, Luke 11:31f; 12:8 (70). Griffin illustrates the two positions and concludes that there exists a consensus among New Testament scholars that Jesus preached the Kingdom as both a future and present reality. In this context I avoid any further debate on that subject, noting that the sample references from the Gospels certainly appear to support the integrated view. Perhaps of greater relevance, and definitely of more interest, is Schillebeeckx's comment that "throughout the Bible, the coming of the Kingdom of God is the coming of God as salvation for human beings."(71). That answer to the "when?" question is relative - it depends upon the "coming of salvation" - and is particularly noteworthy because it makes explicit the connection between the Kingdom and salvation. This has important

(69) Conzelmann gives the following examples among New Testament scholars; C.H.Dodd "has already arrived", J.Jeremias "process of realization", Bultmann and Schweitzer "future and imminently near" and W.G.Kummel "a present and a future power". Jesus p71.

(70) Griffin, A Process Christology p199.

(71) Schillebeeckx, E., Interim Report on the Books Jesus and Christ. p105.

The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

implications for the "where?" of the Kingdom. However, prior to that - and, indeed with the intention of adding support to that connection - we must confront the "what?" question.

Braun writes that "the essential intention of Jesus' preaching about the end is not entertaining advice about events in the near future but an unprecedented sharpening of accountability" and, "Jesus intended to summon people because of the end"(72). But if Jesus made that call for action what is the locus of the response? Our answer to that, the "where?" question, must be that the response is made in the Church. Firstly, because, and with reference to Schillebeeckx, salvation occurs in and through the Church and, second, because the community which is responding to Jesus' call is the Church. One notes that Braun also states that "Jesus... calls the individual to make his own obedient decision" (73) which appears to identify the locus of the Kingdom in the individual. However, I have previously shown that the Church is the response of individuals (an individual cannot respond to Jesus without contributing to the church) which draws these two strands together.

The notion that the Kingdom of God is present in the Church enables us to understand how it is both a present and a future reality (74). It is a present reality for two reasons. The call for response - the

(72) Braun, H., Jesus of Nazareth p41'2.

(73) ibid. p48.

(74) This analysis essentially depends upon Whitehead's notion of anticipation, "the relevant future consists of those elements in the anticipated future which are felt with effective intensity by the present subject by reason of the real potentiality for them to be derived from itself." PR p27. The decision in the present anticipates a contribution in the future. It also incorporates the notion (from Heidegger) that an anticipation of the future (a hope) contributes to the quality of the present (the decision). The latter is validated by Kline's agreement with Heidegger that there is a "certain phenomenological priority of one's existential future". Kline, G., "'Past', 'Present' and 'Future' as Categoreal Terms and the 'Fallacy of the Actual Future'". Review of Metaphysics Dec.1986 vol.XL no2. p218.



The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

action of faith - is a call for action now. Furthermore, it is the nature of faith, redemptive activity, which gives intelligibility to the idea of God's Kingdom. The Kingdom has meaning for us now because of the quality of our present response. It must also be a future reality because, as Griffin notes, only then are we able to avoid "absolutizing" the present (75) or "politicizing the transcendent." (76).

It is a future reality because the reasons and motives for the call-to-faith do not remain in history but anticipate the future. Of course, they are not divorced from history because without tradition the scheme is discontinuous and exists without order. Rather, one is called to respond precisely because God's creative and redemptive activity, made explicit in Jesus, reveals his vision, the lure towards the future. The realization of that vision is the Kingdom of God. Present, because one responds to the call immediately: future, because it lures one towards radical and novel creativity. Ford raised the epistemological problem of how we gain an insight into Jesus' self. I suggest that in his proclamation of the Kingdom we see Jesus' understanding of God at work in history and the constituting role that perception played in his own self. The preaching of the Kingdom reveals Jesus' commitment to it and, recalling the quotation from Williams (77), a commitment to something is constitutive of the self. Jesus was obedient to a principle of interpretation which revealed God's activity in the world, and his obedient response was the proclamation of the Kingdom. Marjorie

(75) A Process Christology p201.

(76) Cupitt, D., Myth of God Incarnate p145. Without the future element, what is is what ought to be. But if that is true then the need for faith (action) is obtuse which, in turn, implies that there can be no Church and, therefore, no Kingdom of God. One should note Whitehead's "fallacy that all types of seriality necessarily involve terminal instances" (PR p111) which denies Teilhard de Chardin's omega point, the "consummation and terminus of history", Ford, Lure of God p113.

(77) "I am... what I hope for..." PPCT p442.

The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

Suchocki has made the interesting point that a "surprising feature" of Jesus' teaching about the Kingdom is that it is "discontinuous" with the past (78). This appears to deny Jesus' continuity with history, essential to the claim that he employed his interpretation of God - in - history as the constitutive element in his self - understanding and becoming. This apparent contradiction is avoided by noting that the "discontinuity" stated by Suchocki is really a reversal of past values. It illustrates the importance Jesus had for his past even if, as is the case, he overturned that past.

To summarize this section which has examined the doctrine of salvation, I make the following points. Process theology cannot deal in the abstract universals which entertained the Ancients, so any notion of the "restoration of humanity" is irrelevant. The emphasis lies on the reconciliation of the "self", its purpose and its central being, with the divine vision. The call to realize the Kingdom is a call to respond to the Will of God, as mediated by Jesus in his proclamation. This takes place in and through the Church. Indeed, one can say that this redemptive process is the church in action. Furthermore, the New Testament conveys the essential point that the Kingdom is both present and "not-yet". I illustrated how a Process account of the Church expresses that same point precisely and constructively. The one aspect which I confess to having rather avoided is personal immortality. But that is not so much an admission of guilt or error, but a statement that for myself the notion of a "life eternal" is not central to a confession of Christ as Saviour. The next stage in our evaluation concerns the relationship of Process christology to the Logos doctrine of the Fathers. According to Cullmann the Logos concept became the "dominant designation for Jesus in the classical Christology of the ancient

(78) God Christ Church p168'9, she cites Matt.13:44 in support.

The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

Church."(79). That is a startling development because the concept only occurs in three instances in the New Testament, the Prologue of John's Gospel, the first verse of 1 John and Rev.19:13. New Testament scholarship has centred around the pre-Christian "Gnostic redeemer myth" (80) and the relation of Logos to the Wisdom and Word of the Old Testament. Of particular concern is the apparent process of hypostatization which moves from 1 Genesis to Sap.18, indicating that the New Testament use of Logos is a natural development from Jewish Wisdom literature (81).

However, and despite the complex arguments which invigorate the "myth" or "hypostatization" debate, one thing is clear. That is, the "incarnation" of John 1:14 is a novel introduction of Christianity. Never before was the Logos identified with a human individual. That is true regardless of the thread of inheritance which enabled the Christian authors to have access to the concept. The Fathers developed the doctrine along philosophical lines which essentially ignored any Old Testament continuity. Basic to the development of the concept is the idea that God's general activity in human existence is the logos spermatikos and his specific activity in Christ is the logos sarkotheis (82).

(79) op.cit. p249.

(80) The major alternative to Bultmann's myth is expounded by C.H.Dodd in The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, see Sanders who presents convincing arguments against Dodd in New Testament Christological Hymns which also gives a good account of Bultmann's position. The most interesting feature is the process of reduction which took place, the Gnostic cosmology being dislodged by a belief in creation and the concern for the God - man relationship. As Sanders says, "the soteriological interest has become primary."(p39).

(81) See Sanders p49. The notion of hypostatization can be traced into the beginnings of history.

(82) Pittenger, Theology 88 1985, "Redemption: A 'Process Theology' Interpretation" p452. See also Ogden, The Reality of God p172.

The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

Kelly notes how Justin used this idea as an elementary christology, the Logos' presence in Christ should be understood as being similar in kind to his universal presence, though much greater in degree (83). Origen "regarded the world as the scene of an educative process carried on by the Logos, who as Master and Healer was gradually inducing all free creatures to return to the good"(84). However, he took the implication a stage further than Justin, to suggest that the incarnation of the Logos in Jesus represents the pre-eminent instance of the Logos' intervention in human affairs. Exactly how this was to be understood was the subject of debate between the two great schools of Patristic theology. If this can be summed up in a few lines, the Alexandrians postulated a Christ composed of Logos and body, the Antiochenes a Christ composed of Logos and complete humanity, body and soul. In the first case, Logos is incarnate by virtue of displacement while in the second, it becomes incarnate by virtue of "co-constitution". Of course, I employ that term in order to convey a point. Logos, in Process christology follows the Antiochene type rather than an Alexandrian formulation. In the following section I shall note how this theme implies the "divinity" of Christ. Prior to that it is fruitful to mention how the Logos in Cobb's theory of Creative Transformation "fits" the classical mould. Logos, as the cosmic principle of order and the source of purpose, is analogous to the logos spermatikos, and the incarnation (presence and actualization) of Logos, who is named the Christ, is the logos sarkotheis. So, Cobb's use of Logos relates to the doctrines of the Church Fathers in that it is concerned with the principle of universal intelligibility, made available to man. The Antiochene concept of unity or, to use Lohse's words on Origen, the union between Jesus' soul and the Logos was "so close that the... soul

(83) Kelly, J.N.D., Early Christian Doctrines p146.

(84) Daniélou, J., Origen p269.

The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

of Jesus took the Logos wholly into itself"(85) captures the imagination of a Process theologian because it is an early statement of the "co-constitution" idea. Not all Process christologies have made use of the Logos concept in this way. For example, Spencer Bonnell (86) has developed a view, totally different in its approach. He draws a distinction between Logos and Spirit and, whereas Logos is equivalent to Cobb's definition, Bonnell uses Spirit to create the creature's creativity. By so doing, he denies that the inherent creativity of the world is sufficient which, to me, separates his position from a Whiteheadian one. Furthermore, it is not clear how his use of Logos is a more adequate expression of the Father's thought than Cobb. And, most significantly, his position is retrospective. It attempts to state a contemporary christology by employing themes and concepts from the historical context. Of course one must seek continuity, but that does not imply the need to restate theology in identical terms. That principle is of direct relevance to the following section which discusses the sense in which the Jesus of Process christology may be said to be "divine".

Perhaps the New Testament opinion on whether Jesus was "divine" is best summarized by Ogden who, quoting Knox, says, "that where a greater or lesser name is proposed for Christ, it is always the greater that is adopted."(87). That adequately epitomizes the tendency to maximize the

(85) Lohse, B., A Short History of Christian Doctrine p77.

(86) Bonnell, S., God Who Dares to be Man: Theology for Prayer and Suffering Seabury Press 1980. This is from Griffin's review, Process Studies 13/3 Fall 1983. p237ff.

(87) Point of Christology p77, from The Early Church and the Coming Great Church. But, in contrast, Lohse states categorically that the disciples "knew, in fact, that in a certain sense Jesus is himself divine."(op.cit.p72 my emphasis). Furthermore it is possible to give an alternative interpretation to the "But I say" sayings, quoted previously. Rather than being illustrative of a radical human awareness of freedom, they could be interpreted as depicting divine authority.



The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

status of Jesus. But why was such a tendency present? I have already noted that the Patristic theology of Salvation necessitated extravagant claims about Christ, notably the idea that if one is to become divine by participation that in which one participates must be divine by nature. One can conclude that the victory of Athanasius over Arius was a victory of soteriology over cosmology. Such was the demand for this victory that the "most famous word in the whole history of Christian doctrine" should properly be attributed to Arius himself (88). The idea of homousios, as stated in the Nicene Creed to mean that the Son is fully God has a history which follows a characteristic pattern. Motivated by soteriological considerations, a christological doctrine was formulated which satisfied those requirements. This doctrine was developed in the terms of a certain model. In the case of the two natures of Jesus the Patristics employed "materialistic and chemical" (and "painfully artificial")(89) analogies in order to describe the combination. But Wiles quotes Theodore, "homo homini consubstantialis est, Deus autem Deo consubstantialis est" (90) noting that Theodore himself favoured personal analogies, eudokia (goodwill) replacing ousia. Raven states that "love in action" (91) is an adequate translation of his thought. Pittenger describes this in terms of an "intimate cooperation" or a "union in moral terms." (92).

Process christology must respond enthusiastically to the suggestion of a union between God and Jesus based upon the model of "love in

(88) Wiles, M., Journal of Theological Studies vol. XVI 1965. "homousios" p454'5.

(89) Raven op.cit. p301.

(90) Wiles, "homousios" p458. He says, "the point which Theodore is making in this passage is simply the utter impossibility of any mixing of the two natures."

(91) op.cit. p302.

(92) Christology Reconsidered p13.

The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

action". Insofar as Jesus reveals the creative and redemptive nature of God, by his own creative and redemptive nature and that inspired by him in the community which responds to him, it may be possible to state that Jesus is God's creative and redemptive nature. He is God's love in the world: He is "God" in the world. But that only describes one aspect of christology. The Church, too, is "love in action" (insofar as it responds in faith) and for that reason one must include the Church in the locus of the incarnation. God incarnated in the world is the whole process of Creative Transformation or, to use the alternative phrase, it is creative and redemptive activity. Hence, although Process christology recognises an identity between Jesus and the Father, the empathy identification of Barnhart or the "love in action" type of moral union, it must also insist that a similar identification exists between the Church, the present Lord, and God. One should note that Process christology is made deficient if the incarnation is limited to Jesus. Such a limit makes it impossible to affirm the reality of creative and redemptive work in the Church, which obliges one to deny the living Lord. (93)

Perhaps the most dramatic way in which I can convey my impression that the ascription of divinity to Christ is fundamentally irrelevant, (in the Process framework), is by noting that if it were ascribed of him nothing would be gained. Our attention would remain focused upon Jesus' activity, the centre of God's creative and redemptive activity and the

(93) It is necessary to reply to Protestant objections to the idea that the Church is the extension of the incarnation. Such objections arise from the need to avoid ascribing infallibility and sinlessness (seemingly perfections of the incarnation) to the Church. I think the criticism can be adequately responded to by noting that the Church, the community response to and appropriation of Jesus, is not seen in terms of those qualities. It is the continuing consenting cause of the incarnation only insofar as it enables the revelation, through Jesus, of God's creative and redemptive action. The Church is the continuing consenting cause of the incarnation to the extent that it reveals the Living Lord.

The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

origin of the Church's creative and redemptive activity, its faith. Questions about "being" or "nature" in Process theology are inevitably reduced to questions about activity, because the self is defined by a process of becoming, a self which acts. Here one notes that because Jesus aligned his own self, the purpose and aim of his life, to the divine vision his self was co-constituted by the Logos. Thus, Jesus' decisions and actions (which made him who he was) were, at least partly, determined by (and therefore identified with) the Logos. But, that sense of identification is stated without any reference to an ontological identification. If one invokes Wiles, who says that "the language of the divine activity seems fully as appropriate as the traditional language of the divine being"(94) then one begins to appreciate the full impact of the Process dynamic and its relevance to the task of expressing the unity of Jesus and God in a contemporary context.

Throughout this study I have emphasised how Process christology promotes and demands action. Revelation was seen to become revelatory only if it brings forth that which it reveals, the creative and redemptive nature of God. I defined the Church on the basis of its being a response to Jesus, in which faith is creative and redemptive action in the world. Similarly, I noted how the New Testament pictures Jesus as calling for a response to the Kingdom which is, itself, the realm of creative and redemptive activity. Again, redemption is thought of in terms of a reconciliation with the divine aim. This is not a passive purpose but a purpose which requires its actualization. But one

(94) Wiles, Making of Christian Doctrine p179. Similarly, Hick, "when someone thus embodies some ideal or idea or attitude or value three - dimensionally, in his life, we can say, in a self-explanatory metaphor, that this ideal is being incarnated in that life."("Evil and Incarnation", Incarnation and Myth p83). It is also worth stressing the title of Pittenger's paper, "'A Thing is What it Does': A Discussion of 'God'", The Modern Churchman 15 1972.

The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

should note that even if one accepts the theoretical analysis as valid, it is only a theoretical analysis. It lacks content in the sense that it has not yet defined precisely what action faith actually calls forth, apart from the oft - repeated condition that it is "creative and redemptive". There is a sense in which the admission of that failing relieves one of the responsibility to correct the omission. It does so because it dismisses the accusation of dogmatic adherence to the phrase "creative and redemptive" activity which might, otherwise, have seemed to be rapidly gaining the status of an idol. It is equally valid to note that it is not possible to clarify how the call for action translates into practical activity for all conceivable situations. Faith is not only dynamic, it is also subjective and flexible, and any attempt to dictate what faith implies is inadmissible - except, of course, to say that it demands action which conforms to the ideal of being creative and redemptive. What I propose to do in response to this issue is to examine just two aspects. First, I wish to suggest that the Christ event can resolve the "freedom and/or responsibility" dilemma (95). In the light of Ellul's quotation it is necessary to illustrate the radical and significant meaning which Process christology gives to the concept. Freedom, at the level of macrocosmic societies, describes three processes. The person is free to choose his or her own relevant past, free to choose a desired future and free to act upon those choices in the present. As noted in the third chapter, this freedom is not

(95) The reference to a dilemma is a bias. Perhaps it is possible to state "freedom" and "responsibility" without introducing a degree of conflict. However, I would argue in response to that, once "freedom" is attributed one must be clear about that in respect to which one is free. That necessitates a discussion of responsibility because to accept responsibility is to restrict one's freedom. It is significant that Jacques Ellul can write of Kasemann, "he seems to me to be the only modern theologian to give freedom the central place which is its due". (The Ethics of Freedom. Fn.1 p104), perhaps indicating that Process theology has not yet presented an adequate account of freedom, at least it has not "advertised" itself as a "freedom" theology.

The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

unlimited because the environment dictates the type of possibilities which are available to be chosen. Within those limits, however, the person is free, or self - creative. On the other hand, the notion of responsibility appears to counter that definition of freedom. If one is responsible then the something to which one is responsible places an additional limit upon freedom. This "something" has three aspects, the "self", the universe and God, each one functioning as an imperative implying that there is a decision one "ought" to reach if one is responsible. Although on one level it is clear that this does not mitigate against freedom, because one remains free to ignore that imperative, such a solution leaves one with an uneasy sense of conflict. A more satisfactory approach is one which will emphasise freedom as the consequence of responsibility.

This, I suggest, is achieved through Christ. Firstly, one notes the role played by the three tenses in the definition of freedom and the Church. The Church is rooted in, and validated by, the past. It is the living manifestation of a historical reality and as such is able to exhibit the dynamic activity of a society. But it is also eschatological in nature in that its message, the message of Jesus, calls its adherents towards the realization of future value. Furthermore, that call is, of course, made by, and is relevant to, the present decision. Thus one can understand how the individual who participates in the Church is, in fact, sharing in the self - creating process, continuity, novelty and activity. Participation in the Church implies responsibility for creative and redemptive activity in the world but that very process is the process by which the self becomes a true, and free, "self", related to the past but not bound by it, called towards the future by a lure towards novelty and invoked to make a decision in the present. The responsibility implied by the faith



The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

decision, one's participation in the Church, is the freedom to become an individual, a free self. Hence the Church, because it is a process of continuity, novelty and decision, represents the freedom available to mankind through Christ. Knox argues, and I think a Process christology must agree with him, that the Resurrection is the event which brings the Church to an awareness of this (96). Once the Church understands how Jesus is present in its body, it can affirm itself as a present reality exhibiting continuity with God's work and the vehicle for the realization of his vision. The Church is able to recognise, because of the resurrection which transforms the dead Jesus into the Present and Living Lord, that Jesus' responsibility to follow God's purpose for him was not a limiting factor in his life but his essential freedom. Jesus, because he exercised responsibility to God's call, is free even to the extent that people are still able to call him - so naming the process of Creative Transformation - the Living Saviour.

In the previous chapter I stated that the resurrection is existentially relevant to people today because it illustrates the "victory" of value over death. The resurrection is thus the "incarnation of the divine Word addressed to the human situation."(97). In the Church's affirmation of the resurrection of Jesus the believer is brought to realize that the self who responds responsibly to God is the

(96) The Church and the Reality of Christ p69. He says that the notion of a revived corpse is irrelevant because it is impotent to explain the presence of Christ now. Ford comes close to identifying the Church with the resurrection, "We argue for the bodily resurrection of Christ, but the body of Christ's resurrection is none other than the body of Christ which is the Church." Lure of God p78. It seems to me that the language of resurrection is a powerful religious metaphor for the process in which God is the ground for the re-presentation of past realities as present possibilities. Furthermore, it is because the Church talks of the living resurrected Lord that our awareness of revelation is through mediated immediacy. It is mediated (the essence of the pyramid effect) but it is immediate (present as the reality of the incarnation in the Church).

(97) Ford.L., Lure of God p79.

The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

self who is free. Griffin expresses the same point thus, "the opposite of selfishness is not complete selflessness, but a selfhood which includes other individual's needs and contributions, sufferings and joys, in its own quest for fulfilment."(98). Jesus fulfilled his own self not by the selfish exercise of his freedom but through a free response to God's call, even to the extent of death. In the section which looked at the humanity of Jesus I identified "freedom" as a vital element. This can be re-affirmed here, noting once again that it was not a freedom to be "disobedient" (with respect to the Law) but a freedom which fully realized mankind's potential to act responsibly in relation to the world and God. Freedom, in this context, is dynamic freedom, in the sense that it leads to greater freedom. Not only for oneself but also for the community in which one participates freely and in relation to which the self is constituted (99).

At the outset of the thesis I stated an intention to benefit our understanding of the world through the formulation of a Process Christology. This necessitates that the "Kingdom of God" is given some practical content. Similarly, how should an individual exercise freedom in a responsible way? A world in which the equality of opportunity and the liberation from oppression exists for all men is, I think, the minimum description of the Kingdom. Suchocki captures this when she describes the Kingdom in terms of Justice (100). Any attempt to disguise that fact is - and I say this deliberately bluntly - un-Christian. And, incidentally, at variance with the equalities

(98) A Process Christology p211.

(99) Because the self becomes according to a synthesis of freedom and responsibility, one can say that man is created in the image of God. God's role in the creative process is to persuade (thus recognising freedom) the process to actualize novelty and harmony, given the demands of the greater whole (thus ensuring responsibility). Williams, D.D., PPCT p446.

(100) op.cit. p169.

The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

implied by Process philosophy. It is only in an atmosphere of freedom that the love of God, his creative and redemptive activity, can be realized in the world to its fullest possible extent. The Kingdom is actual now only to the degree to which the world presently manifests that equality, liberation and harmony (101). Hence the Church must be involved in feeding those who are starving, free those in captivity, and liberate humanity into a state of equality. A "Church" which does not risk its dignity in those actions is not the community in which Jesus is the Christ. It is not the purpose of this study to comment further on that point, but I do wish to indulge myself by quoting Pittenger, "... the sad thing has been the freezing of that institutional form, so that for many it has become a strait - jacket rather than a liberating agency, while for others it has become an idolatrous substitute for the dynamic and vitalizing response in its proper fullness."(102). Is Process theology a Liberation theology? I prefer to make the point that the message of Process theology is a message of liberation. Basinger relates how Cobb, Griffin and Ogden "at least implicitly criticize many of the 'liberation theologies'"(103) for failing to base their praxis in a liberating doctrine of God. One notes that many liberation theologies find their inspirations in the evils of the socio- politico- and economic climates. A Process theology, on the other hand, derives its power for liberation from the Process conception of God. Liberation and

(101) So is it present? I can only resort to an Abelardian sic et non. It is interesting to note Cupitt's comments which illustrate how the Kingdom as understood today differs from that expounded by Jesus, "for (Jesus) the call of the Kingdom was away from family roles, not into them. The idealization of the family is a modern cultural creation which the Churches have validated, and now no modern Bishop would dream of publicly endorsing Jesus' views about the family." "The Christ of Christendom", Myth of God Incarnate p133. This shift is justified within a Process interpretation because it is the totality of the Christ - event, Jesus and the Church, which is determinative of the Kingdom.

(102) Christology Reconsidered p146.

(103) op.cit. p161.

The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

equality are implied by the reciprocity of God's relation to the world. Thus, the terrestrial tasks of justice do not merely follow on from a Process christology but they are inherent aspects of it. As Cobb states this point, "my interest as a process theologian is to show how process theology can become a political theology committed to the indivisible salvation of the whole world."(104).

The final issue to be raised in this process of evaluation concerns worship. Is the Christ of Process christology worthy of worship? As Schwobel states, "the soteriological intent of his agency, no less than his awful transcendence, suggests why God as agent is worthy of worship"(105) and, as we have seen, God's soteriological intent, conveyed through Jesus, is appropriated by us insofar as we participate in the redemptive process. This participation is worship, as Hartshorne writes, "the way to serve and glorify God is to promote the creative process...."(106). We participate in, and promote, the creative process when we, as members of the Church, confess our faith in the Living Lord. Hence Jesus, who reveals the creative and redemptive nature of God, is the one through whom we are able to worship. Without Jesus, without that revelation and without the authentic Church, there is no possibility for worship. Jesus, therefore, is the necessary complement to worship. Indeed our acceptance of, and faith in, Jesus is worship. The point of crucial importance is that there can be no

(104) Process Theology as Political Theology p44. Camus was essentially correct: whatever fulfilment men can achieve must be obtained in this life. But, and this is where, for example, The Rebel is impotent to actually transform the world, this liberating force is derived, not from man, but from God.

(105) Schwobel, C., "Divine Agency and Providence", paper presented to the Society for the Study of Theology, Univ. Exeter March 1985. p5.

(106) The Divine Relativity p133. This is in stark contrast to "obscurantism", "the theory that we can best praise God by indulging in contradiction and semantical nonsense."(ibid.p149).

The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

distinction between "worship" and the world "out - there". Worship takes place primarily in the world, although its focus may justifiably be argued to remain in the "Church". The World, insofar as it is the response to the manifestation of the love of God revealed through Jesus, is worship. One cannot praise God without promoting the reconciliation of the world to Him.

At the beginning of this chapter I stated my intention to evaluate Process christology with respect to the various themes of "orthodoxy". It may be objected that in each of the these themes I have not actually stated any definite conclusions to the evaluation. That omission has been quite deliberate. Throughout the study I have attempted to formulate a christology which is, in my opinion, a valid and adequate account of Jesus Christ - with reference to Whitehead's vision and the Christian faith, However, whether I think or claim that it is, is, of course, irrelevant when the reader makes his or her own decision about its adequacy. I have argued that it is entirely consistent with the principles of Whitehead's vision, but perhaps it is possible to interpret those in other ways. Similarly, I have presented Process christology alongside some of the notions of traditional "faith". Perhaps my sample is insufficient or inadequate, as faith is felt and lived by another reader. Faith is a multi - faceted subjective reality and no one argument can be allowed to dictate or determine the faith of another person. As Moltmann says, "Christians cannot regard themselves as judges, but only as witnesses."(107). It is in the quality of the witness which is inspired by Process christology that the judgement is made. Unless one's faith, the participation in the creative and redemptive activity which is the revelation of God, is creative and redemptive, the witness fails.

(107) The Crucified God p83.



The evaluation: Christ and the Church.

The adventure in christology is over. The following chapter is intended to offer some comments and conclusions about the discussion and add some personal observations.

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Conclusion: Some Personal Comments.  
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John Arlott relates the following cricket story: "the Australian commentator who, giving the score in Australian fashion said that Australia were 'four for 142', understood by a staggered English listener as '441 for two'."(1). Ambiguity can have a certain poetic elegance! The story can also be used to illustrate a serious point. What the commentator actually said was precise, it was accurate and, in and of itself, was not ambiguous at all. And yet the English listener was justifiably (sic!) "staggered". That, it seems to me, is an essential feature of Process thought. At one level, the microcosmic, the process exhibits the precision of initial aim, the feeling of that as the subjective aim and the actual entity's concrescence. Purpose, God's aim for creation, is always and everywhere "the best for that impasse". But there is also the ambiguity which results when God's purpose is mediated by the pyramid effect. The ambiguity is not the result of a morally ambiguous God but it is the result of God's activity in the imperfect world. It is not a lack of precision in the Divine vision for humanity, but it is mankind's blurred perception of what that vision actually is. In Process christology we maintain that our blurred vision is focused by Jesus and the Church. God's purpose or lure for humankind is given existential significance as it is revealed by and through the Christ - event. The model used to express the mediation or revelation of God's lure is one of initiative and response. In that respect, Process thought is fractal because, at whatever "magnification" one examines the process, the pattern remains the same. One is always confronted by initiative and response. At the highest "magnification", the level of the microcosmos, the process is a balance between the initial aim which lures towards novelty and the inheritance from the past which ensures continuity. The actual entity responds, synthesizing its inheritance with the lure towards the future. On the macrocosmic

(1) Another Word from Arlott p40.

The Conclusion: some personal comments.

level, at which point, of course, no "magnification" is required - it is the sphere of direct sense experience - human persons are faced by the same decisions, the reconciliation of a lure towards future novelty with continuity with their past. In human terms, this is the balance between freedom and responsibility. I have argued that Process christology enables us to show that freedom is responsibility and that responsibility is freedom. Christ frees the self when the self responds with faith to God's creative and redemptive activity as revealed by Jesus. To conclude this thesis I wish to offer a few observations on that theme. These will serve to illustrate why I think the Christological Adventure succeeds.

One notes that I am not claiming that all aspects of Process christology are unique to the Process way of doing theology. There are two points I add to that observation. I am claiming that the Process account of the Christ - event, Jesus and the Church, synthesizes "christology" in a unique way. It conveys ideas of God's initiative and man's response (Jesus and the Church) as a single integrated whole. Process christology exhibits the same pattern as any other aspect of the creative process. It is continuous, in the sense that it does not support an unprecedented intrusion into the world from beyond the world, because it employs one model: initiative and response. I illustrated that even a revelation christology is based upon that model. Revelation becomes revelatory only when a subject receives it as such. On the other hand, and this is equally important, one should be reassured by the fact that Process christology is not thoroughly unique. For, if it were, it would not be obvious how it could convey the Christian faith. The previous chapter was an attempt to highlight areas in which Process christology is continuous with faith. Combining these two points I think it is valid to claim that Process christology is best described as

The Conclusion: some personal comments.

a novel re-presentation of faith. This defends its continuity with faith whilst it argues for the radical novelty with which faith is presented.

There are four aspects of Process christology which, I believe, demonstrate the validity and value of a christology derived from Whitehead's vision.

Firstly, I believe Process christology is philosophically valid. Of course this is assuming the validity of Whitehead's vision, with reference to which I have judged it to be adequate. And, as stated in the introduction, that is the "leap of faith" behind this work. But if Process christology is consistent with the principles of Whitehead's vision, it also exemplifies them. Christ is not merely described in terms of initiative and response but he is the supreme example of what it means for a human to respond to the divine initiative. This implies that the christological relationship (God, Jesus and the Church) is normative for the "self" because it exemplifies the decision which constitutes the self: novelty and continuity, freedom and responsibility. Process christology, which is derived from philosophical principles, becomes normative for our understanding of how those principles refer to ourselves, the process of our own self-becoming. In order that we can understand Christ to be normative in that respect it is necessary to define God's purpose, the lure of divine love, in a manner which is experientially credible and existentially relevant. Hence the task of the third chapter was to move the discussion concerning the divine lure beyond the theory of initial aims. And yet the elegant simplicity of Process thought - its fractal pattern - was maintained. The elements of novelty and continuity, vital to one's understanding of the microcosmic process, were manifested with equal vigour, stated as freedom and responsibility. The pyramid effect



The Conclusion: some personal comments.

was introduced as the link between the micro- and the macro- cosmos. The divine lure is integrated and synthesised in the events of history. We see that the principles of Process philosophy permeate Process christology and the roles of initiative and response are exemplified. If God is the chief exemplification of the metaphysical principles, the Christ - event is the chief exemplification of those principles as they correspond to the lives of men and women. Christ is the Lure of Divine Love as it is incarnate in human terms.

The second area where I believe Process christology makes a significant contribution is Christian faith. This is not a thinly veiled attempt to deny the essential subjectivity of faith. Indeed, rather than attempting to illustrate the objective validity of Process christology as a statement of faith, I want to stress one simple point. Process christology is dynamic. Perhaps that fails to convey my point with sufficient impact: Process christology is a living faith. Hence it cannot be defined or closed, but must remain open to future developments and influences. If that was not the case then the christology of Process would be self - defeating. It is not possible to propose that a christology which is based on initiative and response and which advocates real growth and development (creative and redemptive activity or freedom and responsibility) is a final statement. I don't think the point can be expressed with greater clarity than by Kelsey who, referring to the Bible, speaks of the "religiously exciting possibility that what the text might come to mean could be more important than what it has meant."(2). That quotation is a magnificent statement of the potential for christology. As it is lived it is constantly revealing God's Word to men and women who participate in the faith. The act of participation is endowed with the potential for novel

(2) Process Studies 13/3 p187.

The Conclusion: some personal comments.

instances of revelation. Faith, an activity in response to God's creative and redemptive activity, generates new opportunities for revelation. Furthermore, Process christology is a powerful affirmation of the Living Lord because Jesus is present in his Body, the Church. This is not a static presence, but a dynamic living reality. It is true not by virtue of some obscure metaphysical formula but is valid only insofar as the Church today - those who are engaged in the process of self-becoming - manifests Christ, the revelation of God's creative and redemptive activity, in the world. If the revelation of God is ambiguous (which, I believe, it must be because of the complexities of the pyramid effect and the finitude of human awareness), that is not to devalue it. Indeed, quite the opposite. The ambiguity of revelation - the reception, not God's intention - is the synthesis of freedom and responsibility. It is interesting, it is exciting and it is beautiful. It promotes freedom because it is non-dogmatic and, for the same reason, it promotes responsibility. Choice enables freedom and it requires responsibility. It is this free act of participation in the life of Jesus and in the life of the Church which illuminates the person by God's vision. By accepting the responsibility to become involved - identified with - God's action in history, one's becoming self is co-constituted by the guiding hand of God. There can be no better statement of faith.

The third justification I offer for the adherence to Process christology is that it is emotionally satisfying. This, of course, is thoroughly subjective. But as Schleiermacher wrote, "if dependence on Christ was of no significance for one's personal character... then Christ himself is of no significance."(3). Emotions are an important facet of one's personal character and unless Christ evokes feeling and

(3) Hermeneutics p139.

The Conclusion: some personal comments.

emotion he is, in those respects, irrelevant. It might be argued that because Process christology does not consider Jesus to be divine in the traditional sense, he does not appeal to the emotional faculties with the authority of the classical model. The eleventh century gold icon and the Victorian stained glass window certainly evoke tremendous "transforming power" by virtue of their portrayal of the divinity of Christ. And yet they also evoke human sensuality because they portray Jesus as a human person, engaged in the agonies and ecstasies of human growth. The sheer emotional identification with the fellow human sufferer is more than adequately conveyed by a Process account. The Cross of Jesus is the most powerful portrayal of human finitude in the history of mankind. And, the crucial corollary to that, the resurrection is the dramatic victory of freedom and value over the fact of death. Jesus died and yet the Church proclaims him the Living Lord! Process christology enables us to emphasise the immediacy of Jesus in the Church, not by affirming his divinity but by affirming our humanity. It is our human response to Jesus (the participation of faith) which affirms him as the revelation of God; as God in history: as God. Inspired, of course, by the insistence that God is always and everywhere active in the world.

Pittenger's claim that his christology is a variation on the theme of love stands alongside 1 John 4:8 as the essential statement of Process christology. Affirmed not simply by an appeal to a static definition or statement but affirmed by an event. Indeed, by the participation in that event. When one confesses one's faith one is affirming that God is love.

The Conclusion: some personal comments.

My final consideration concerns what might be termed the political adequacy of Process christology. The comedian Ben Elton has a catch-phrase, "Social Comment! Very Alternative!". In the context of Process christology nothing could be further from the truth. The emphasis on participation and the resolution of the freedom / responsibility dilemma necessitates social comment. The revelation of God's creative and redemptive nature demands that the faith response is liberating. Crucially, this is not based on an arbitrary human political, social or economic judgement about the world, but rather the transforming power is called forth by the metaphysical principles. One cannot adhere to Whitehead's vision, based as it is on initiative and response, without demanding the transformation of the world. The philosophy requires "justice". Process christology is precisely that message translated into an existentially appropriate, and religiously satisfying, medium: the Kingdom of God. Of course one must avoid the transition from one form of dogmatism to another, as Hartshorne wrote, "that God has an absolute goodness of purpose... lends no absolute 'sanction' to anything else... For it is impossible that anything less than the eternal divine abstract purpose should be eternally valid."(4). We are forced to conclude that humanity will never be able to give a definitive content to the idea of the Kingdom as it impinges upon the world. It is not possible to translate, in any direct and final way, how the creative and redemptive nature of God is best actualized by human society. Life will always be a synthesis of "freedom and necessity"(5). But that essential ambiguity of the mediated revelation of God's love for humanity constitutes the freedom to exercise our human responsibility to create the Kingdom on earth. It demands freedom. It demands responsibility. It is the process of the becoming self.

(4) The Divine Relativity p128.

(5) See Sickness Unto Death, Kierkegaard, S. p17.

The Conclusion: some personal comments.

Our blurred perception of the divine lure is clarified by our participation in Jesus Christ. Whitehead speaks of the "reconciliation of freedom with the compulsion of truth"(6). That reconciliation is achieved in the Christ. As the ideal response to God's initiative, Jesus represents the freedom which is called forth by the reality of the process of creative transformation. Our free participation in the Christ - event is the realization of our freedom reconciled to the truth. But the ambiguity must not be forgotten. That is what makes life exciting. That is what makes faith beautiful. That is what makes Process christology worthwhile.

(6) Adventures of Ideas p68.



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