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Thesis Abstract

The Theology of Jurgen Moltmann

The purpose of this thesis is to describe and respond to some of the major themes in the dialectical writings of Jurgen Moltmann.

The first chapter of the thesis examines Moltmann's theological and philosophical heritage. Two key individuals are discussed, Jacob Boehme and Friedrich Schelling. These men are significant for their contribution to Moltmann's basic view of reality and life. Described briefly, all of life is caught up in struggle. At the very foundation of all that is, including God, are two opposing forces, namely being and nonbeing.

It is the contention of this thesis that this orientation has greatly influenced Moltmann's dialectical and trinitarian perspective. The key to understanding any aspect of his theological system hinges first on comprehending this dialectical and trinitarian world view.

Chapters two through six briefly summarize Moltmann's contribution in the areas of Trinity, cross, resurrection, soteriology, and eschatology. Chapter seven deals with the

ongoing dialogue between Moltmann and the Latin American liberation theologians. Chapter eight responds to the foregoing theological topics.

The response and critique does not deal with the internal coherency and consistency of Moltmann's theological system. Rather, it challenges the basic presuppositions of the dialectical world view which shapes all of his writings. This thesis suggests that Moltmann's dialectical perspective lacks an adequate discussion of freedom. Furthermore, a world view which requires evil in order for good to be manifest guarantees an eternity of struggle with no ultimate resolution between the opposing forces. Considered in an existential context this contributes more to a theology of hopelessness, rather than a theology of hope.

LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY

Graduate School

THE THEOLOGY OF JURGEN MOLTMANN

by

BRENT A. WOOD

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree Master of Arts
in Religion

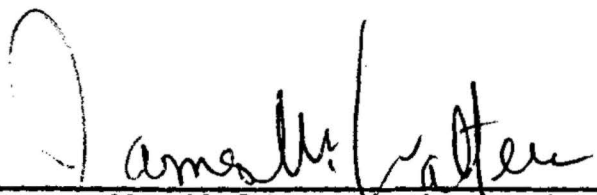
September 1986

Each person whose signature appears below certifies that this thesis in his opinion is adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree Master of Arts.


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INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this thesis is to provide an accurate description and interpretation of some of the major themes in the writings of Jurgen Moltmann. Beyond this there is a brief response to these themes and in some cases the suggestion of alternatives.

The thesis will be structured in the following way. The first chapter will consider Moltmann's theological and philosophical heritage. A theologian is certainly free to depart from whatever tradition he or she is part of and it would be presumptuous to assume that another writer can fully assess just how a theologian has been influenced by what has gone before. Having granted these cautions, it is the contention of this thesis that there is a significant continuity in the thought patterns of Jacob Boehme (1575-1624), Friederich Schelling (1775-1854), and Jurgen Moltmann. Moltmann draws from these men directly through quotation and perhaps more importantly, indirectly through the themes and emphases these men have contributed to German philosophy. These individuals are particularly important because of the dialectical and trinitarian-like themes found in their writings. This is the framework around which

Moltmann's theological system is developed. A secondary source especially helpful in understanding Boehme and Schelling was Adam Smith's doctoral dissertation, "The Problem of Theodicy in the Thought of Paul Tillich."

Chapters two through six concentrate on a descriptive development of the Trinity, the cross, the resurrection, soteriology and eschatology. Chapter seven discusses Moltmann's contribution to Liberation theology and endeavors to account for some of the disagreement between him and the Latin American group. In the case of this chapter, the writer elected to include the response within the chapter itself. The response to chapters one through six comes in a final chapter of response, chapter eight.

The criticisms of this thesis do not have to do with the internal coherency and consistency of Moltmann's theological system. They have more to do with the dialectical and Trinitarian presuppositions of that system. It is the contention of this thesis that these presuppositions as they are developed throughout this paper provide the keys for understanding what Moltmann is really saying.

CHAPTER I

JACOB BOEHME AND F. W. J. SCHELLING: MOLTSMANN'S PHILOSOPHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

Jacob Boehme on the Origin and Nature of the Trinity

To introduce Boehme's conception of the origin and nature of the trinity, it is helpful to briefly describe some fundamental themes found throughout his writings. For Boehme, all life, divine or otherwise, may best be described as a dynamic process. Smith elaborates on this dynamic process in the following way.

For Boehme life involves a unity which expresses itself in multiplicity. The more full life is the more it expresses itself as self-productive, as a self-evolving process, moving by its own powers. It reveals itself as its own cause, effect, and goal. Life is thus fully teleological, a design which through its willful impetus seeks to actualize itself.¹

This actualization of life involves a movement from darkness to light, from indefinite to definite, etc. In

¹ Adam Herbert Smith, "The Problem of Theodicy in the Thought of Paul Tillich" (Ph. D. dissertation, Claremont Graduate School, 1972), p. 21. The development of this view of life can be found in its original form in Jacob Boehme, Six Theosophic Points and Other Writings by Jacob Boehme, with an Introductory Essay entitled, "Unground and Freedom" by Nicolas Berdyaev, trans. John Rolleston Earle (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1958), pp. 54-55.

other words, life always entails contrast. Without contrast life cannot be.² This theory of contrasts or this perception of life as dialectical, is central to Boehme's philosophy. In order for anything to be revealed it must be revealed through contrast and even struggle with that which resists it.³

God's Theogonic Movement and the Unground

This necessary contrast of opposing principles (of light coming from darkness, of manifest from hidden, definite from indefinite, etc.) is applicabable to the life of everything, including God. God's theogonic movement takes place in an eternal realm.⁴ His beginning is not a temporal beginning, but an eternal one. Humankind can best describe this theogony symbolically.

The first symbol that needs to be examined in this theogonic movement is the Unground. The Unground is the source of the theogonic movement.⁵ Boehme explains in his book Six Theosophic Points that life is based on will. Furthermore, will is the driving force of the "essences."

²Boehme, Six Theosophic Points, p. 179. (This is found in the section entitled, "On the Divine Intuition," no. 9.)

³For a development of this conception of life, see Boehme, Six Theosophic Points, pp. 54-55, 179ff.

⁴Jacob Boehme, The Aurora (London: James M. Watkins, James Clarke and Company Ltd., 1960), p. 17-23. (This is section xxiii of The Aurora.)

⁵Jacob Boehme, Mysterium Magnum, trans. John Sparrow (London: John M. Watkins, 1924), p. 2. (This is Chapter 1, Section 8.)

Life in turn is generated from these essences. There are then, three elements: will, essence, and life. Boehme describes this by saying that will is the essences' father and life is the essences' son.⁶ The beginning component is will. Contained in this will is desire which enables the essence to rise. Boehme refers to this will as the Unground. He describes it as an ungroundedness, eternal nothing, a mirror wherein one sees his own image: like a life, but really only a figure of life. It is life, a "hidden fire that burns not, which exists and also exists not."⁷

Nicolas Berdyaev, an influential interpreter of Boehme explains that will-freedom (Unground) is the principle of all things.

This unfathomable will resides in the depths of divinity and before divinity. The Unground is the divinity of apophatic theology, and is at the same time the abyss, the eternal nothingness which extends below God and beyond God. In God there is a nature which is a principle different from Him. The first divinity, divine nothingness, is beyond good and evil, beyond light and darkness. The divine Unground exists in eternity before the birth of the Divine Trinity. God is engendered, is realized out of divine nothingness.⁸

The next question then, is how does God originate or evolve from this divine nothingness? The need to use symbols makes precise explanation difficult. A brief description would nevertheless be helpful.

⁶Boehme, Six Theosophic Points, pp. 13-14.

⁷Ibid., p. 15.

⁸Berdyaev, "Unground and Freedom," pp. xx-xxi

As mentioned above, Boehme uses a variety of metaphors to describe the Unground. In the context of his discussion of theogony he uses Spirit, the Spirit of God (not to be confused with the Holy Spirit, the third member of the Godhead) eternal eye, eternal will, and eternal ground.⁹ From the Unground (or Spirit) shines forth "seeing." This seeing is an eye or mirror which reveals will. The seeing makes a will, as the Spirit (Unground) alone is unable to do so. However, the mirror (seeing) goes into the Spirit to generate a new will. The new will which is produced is also an eternal ground within the larger Unground. (Boehme is here drawing from Ezekial's wheel within a wheel.)¹⁰ Every step of the process and every participant depends on and occurs within the limitless Unground. This is an eternal and continual process. It is from this symbolic process that Boehme eventually distills Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The eternal will which comprehends the mirror is the Father. The smaller, eternal will within the Unground is the Son. This is the very center of the Father (Unground) The Son is a ground which has passed from ungroundedness. The Son is to the Father what essence is to will. "For it is the Word of life, or its essentiality in which the will shines forth with lustre."¹¹

⁹Boehme, Six Theosophic Points, pp. 14-15.

¹⁰Ezekial 1:16.

¹¹Boehme, Six Theosophic Points, p. 8.

Next to be considered is the Holy Spirit. Where in this complex process does the Holy Spirit come in? The Holy Spirit seems to be in part a process. It is the process of the Unground going within itself to its center and coming out with/as the Son or groundedness or something. "And the going within itself to the centre of the ground is Spirit; for it is the finder, who from eternity continually finds where there is nothing."¹²

While a more complete response to this description can be found in chapter seven, some preliminary observations will be helpful. Boehme's voluntaristic scheme places God's origins in an indefinite, unstructured ground, the Unground. The processive nature of this will is to move towards definiteness and structure. There does not appear to be any definite character within the Unground which distinguishes good from evil. There does not seem to be a norm or standard of good from the beginning which continues consistently to the end. If this is true, it would seem that the nature of "good" could vary arbitrarily.

Initially in the Unground there is only an image which is moving towards reality. God is moving towards self-consciousness.¹³ Life is realized, however, only through struggle and opposition. From within the Unground, evil is brought forth in order that the good may be

¹²Ibid., pp. 8-9.

¹³This discussion of God's movement can be found in Boehme, Six Theosophic Points, pp. 16-19.

manifest. Evil is an active force, it is will. Each step of growing unity brings a new differentiation of this evil will, which is the opposition necessary for actualization, manifestation, the realization of self-consciousness, etc. God can only become living and manifest by separating himself from himself and establishing an eternal contrast. The presence of both of these forces is eternal: "In God there are two states eternally and without end--namely, the eternal light and eternal darkness."¹⁴

Here, then, we understand the will in two ways: One which rises in fierceness to generation of the wrath-fire; the other, which imagines after the centre of the word, and, passing out of the anguish, as through a dying, sinks into the free life; and thus brings with it a life out of the torment of anguish into freedom, so that the eternal Unground is recognized as a life, and from the Nothing an eternal life springs.¹⁵

Schelling on Theogony and World View

This section will consider the thought of Friederich Schelling (1775-1854). Particular emphasis will be given to his discussion of theogony as it is portrayed in Of Human

¹⁴ Boehme, Six Theosophic Points, p. i. Further discussion of these two states can be found in Jacob Boehme, The High and Deep Searching Out of the Threefold Life of Man Through [or According to] the Three Principles, trans.

John Sparrow (London: John M. Watkins, 1909), ix. 30.
¹⁵ Boehme, Six Theosophic Points, p. 24, no. 45. See also p. 29, no. 67.

Freedom and The Ages of the World.¹⁶ These two volumes point out the influence Boehme had on Schelling. In fact, Schopenhauer once remarked that Schelling's treatise Of Human Freedom was merely a revision of Boehme's Mysterium Magnum.¹⁷ Smith describes the theme of The Ages as a "description of the living God who comes to an actualization of his personality through his victory over the contradiction of evil."¹⁸

To understand Schelling's concept of God, it is necessary to consider his world view. In response to Hegel's rationalistic idealism which associated rationality and reality, Schelling asserted that "order and form nowhere appear to have been original, but rather that what had initially been unruly had been brought to order."¹⁹ Schelling is willing to grant the presence of order, rule and form in the world, but he also sees an "incomprehensible basis," an "irreducible remainder which cannot be resolved into reason by the greatest exertion, but

¹⁶F. W. J. Schelling, Of Human Freedom, trans., Critical Introduction and Notes by James Gutmann (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Company, 1936; F. W. J. Schelling, The Ages of the World, Introduction and Notes by Frederick de Wolfe Bolman Jr. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942; reprint ed., New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1967)

¹⁷Harold Brinton, The Mystic Will (New York: Macmillan, 1930), p. 76; Franz Hartman (comp.), Personal Christianity: The Doctrines of Jacob Boehme (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1957), p. 261, cited in Smith, "The Problem of Theodicy in Paul Tillich," p. 43.

¹⁸Smith, "The Problem of Theodicy in Paul Tillich," p. 44.

¹⁹Schelling, Of Human Freedom, p. 34, quoted in Smith, "The Problem of Theodicy in Paul Tillich," p. 45.

always remains in the depths."²⁰ This irreducible element is necessary for anything to achieve reality and existence. It is this darkness which drives men and women towards light. Schelling speaks of a "primal longing" which turns towards reason, though it cannot recognize it. Schelling compares this longing to the "matter" of Plato and states that it follows some "dark uncertain law, incapable in itself of forming anything that can endure."²¹ He goes on to exclaim that there is in God also a kind of longing, and "an inward, imaginative response, corresponding to this longing, which is the first stirring of divine Being in its still dark depths."²²

As with Boehme, Schelling understands life to be a dynamic process, a "struggle for realization."²³ Schelling speaks of a "will of the depths" or a "solicitation of the depth" which is a kind of evil force necessary to be acted against in order for life to be realized. In this context Schelling explains that, "activated selfhood is necessary for life's intensity; without it there would be complete death, goodness slumbering; for where there is no battle, there is no life."²⁴ Hence life becomes active and conscious only as it struggles with opposites. Smith explains that similar to Boehme, Schelling's dialectical

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Schelling, Of Human Freedom, p. 35.

²²Ibid.

²³Smith, "The Problem of Theodicy in Paul Tillich," p. 45.

²⁴Schelling, Of Human Freedom, p. 80.

theory of contrasts is so pervasive that "contradiction is a necessity for life to be realized."²⁵ This can be supported by Schelling's assertion that "contradiction alone brings life even into the first necessary nature."²⁶

The voluntaristic and dialectical emphases characteristic of life and its beginnings are also applicable to God. Bolman explains that for Schelling, God develops as a result of his own incompleteness. His coming into existence is necessary to completeness. "In short, God must have a beginning of himself in himself which is different from his existence as potentiality is different from actuality. God is not moral except potentially, implicitly."²⁷ Life achieves order only as it proceeds from disorder.

My true, undisguised opinion is that every life proceeds indiscriminately from a state of envelopment, since, relative to the succeeding state of development or unfoldedness, it is as if dead and dark, like the grain of seed before it is sunk in the earth.²⁸

Furthermore God's personality comes into existence as a result of the antithetic character of his divine nature.

So long as the God of modern theism remains the simple being...which should be purely substantive but, actually, is characterless: so long as a real duality is not discerned in God, and a limiting negating power is not opposed to the affirming expanding--so long the denial of a personal God will be scientific sincerity...²⁹

²⁵Smith, "The Problem of Theodicy in Paul Tillich," p. 46.

²⁶Schelling, The Ages, p. 106.

²⁷Schelling, Of Human Freedom, p. 28.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid.

Schelling would not accept the traditional theistic understanding of God. The reality of evil in this world was incompatible with the belief that the world proceeded from a perfect, immutable, omnipotent being. And so Schelling replaced theism's self-sufficient God with one who was "becoming." In the next section we will describe how this process of "becoming" takes place.

Schelling's Becoming God: The Life of God and the Three Potencies

The First Potency

Schelling saw in God a threefold movement. He refers to these movements as potencies. The first potency is often referred to as the "basis" of God. Similar to Boehme's "desire," this basis is the "longing which the eternal One feels to give birth to itself."³⁰ This basis is incomprehensible, but Schelling tries to explain it with different metaphors. In The Ages, the basis is described as the first of the threefold movement of God. This potency begins the creative movement of God and is designated by Schelling as nonbeing or "that which is not."³¹ In Schelling's dialectical scheme this nonbeing is a negating power whose presence needs to be overcome in order for the

³⁰Ibid., p. 34.

³¹Smith, "The Problem of Theodicy in Paul Tillich," p. 53.

life processes to be inaugurated. Otherwise there would be mere static indifference.³² Nonbeing is the first of eternal being. It is not a lack or a deficiency, but an "active negation."³³ It is a mediating concept between being and pure nothingness.

The original life of blind necessity could not be called one that is, because it never really attained stability, being, but remained in mere striving and desire for being...There may indeed be something mediate between what is and "nothing," namely, what is not, and moreover should not be, and yet tries to be.³⁴

It is from this first potency that evil arises. Evil is something that is and yet is not: "Evil is inwardly a lie and devoid of all true being. Yet evil is and shows a terrible reality, not as something which truly is, but as by nature something which strives to be so."³⁵ This provides us with an insight into God and the theogonic process. The first potency is a conditioning factor. It provides the chaotic depths necessary for actualization.

All existence must be conditioned in order that it may be actual, that is, personal, existence. God's existence, too, could not be personal if it were not conditioned, except that he has the conditioning factor within himself and not outside himself. He cannot set aside the conditioning factor, for if he did he would have to set aside himself; he can only subdue it through love and subordinate it to him for his glorification.³⁶

Schelling goes one step further to distinguish the "ground" of God's existence from God himself. However, his

³²Schelling, Of Human Freedom, p. 88.

³³Schelling, The Ages, p. 133.

³⁴Ibid., p. 155.

³⁵Smith, "The Problem of Theodicy in Paul Tillich," p. 54.

³⁶Schelling, Of Human Freedom, p. 79.

pan-en-theistic philosophy says that nothing is outside or before God for all is contained within him. "As there is nothing before or outside of God he must contain within himself the ground of his existence."³⁷ Schelling also explains that the ground of God, that is, the basis of his existence or his nature, is "inseparable from him, to be sure, but nevertheless distinguishable from him."³⁸ This basis is "that within God which is not God himself," i.e. is that which is the basis of his existence."³⁹ Schelling inserts a footnote here in which he explains that his intention is to set up a dualism, but a dualism with unity or at least a modified unity. It is a dualism in which "the principle of evil does not stand alongside goodness, but is subordinated to it."⁴⁰ In any case the first potency or first principle, which Schelling has described as nonbeing or "that which is not," is a negating power which must be overcome if the life processes are to begin.

The beginning is only beginning as it is not what really should be, not that which is veritably and unto itself. If there is a decision, then only that can be posited for a beginning which distinctly inclines to the nature of what is not.⁴¹

The challenge to this original negating power is the second potency.

³⁷Ibid., p. 32.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Ibid., p. 33.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Schelling, The Ages, p. 107, quoted in Smith, "The Problem of Theodicy in Paul Tillich," p. 54.

The Second Potency

The eternal No of the first potency is complemented by the eternal Yes of the second potency.⁴² It is the second potency which calls forth the hidden power of darkness and sets it into motion. Smith explains that the second potency has measure and form which enables it to bring order to "the chaotic surging of the blind will."⁴³ This second potency has a twofold function. It is the object for the subjectivity of the first potency and makes ineffective the power of "that which ought not to be."⁴⁴ In Schelling's descriptions of life everything longs for a state of constancy rather than remaining in a state of contradiction. "Thus the primal will elicits the movement of the second potency to liberate it from contradiction."⁴⁵ Regarding the two potencies, Schelling explains that the "potency of negation" (the first potency) is necessary for the second potency, with its unlocking and affirming qualities, to exist. On the other hand it is the second potency which gives stability to the former. Schelling explains the relationship in this way.

Antecedently that which is, is still fettered, and it is

⁴²A more complete discussion of the first and second potency can be found in Schelling, The Ages, pp. 136-140.

⁴³Smith, "The Problem of Theodicy in Paul Tillich," p. 55.

⁴⁴Schelling, The Ages, p. 134.

⁴⁵Schelling, The Ages, p. 134, quoted in Smith, "The Problem of Theodicy in Paul Tillich," p. 56.

liberated only subsequently by a higher potency. It is no contradiction that what was once confined in a preceding moment may become free in a subsequent one; it must rather be confined so that it can be set free.⁴⁶

The Third Potency

The second potency gives the first potency stability, but it too needs to be helped by something higher, a third potency. While the second potency functions to overcome the negating power of the first potency, there is in the second potency some negating power as well.

This third power liberates that negating power. The nature of the second potency is outflowing, outpouring, but it was forced to operate inwardly since it was at variance with the negating primordial power. Schelling states that the role of the second essence (potency) is to assist nature as a spiritual essence. Its inward orientation prevented it from doing this. The third power liberates it to enable it to function in this way.

Further insight into the role of the third potency can be gained from the following description by Schelling. The third potency is a "universal soul" which animates the universe. It is "the eternal bond between nature and the spirit world as well as between the world and God, the

⁴⁶Schelling, The Ages. p. 135.

immediate instrument whereby alone God works in nature and the spirit world."⁴⁷

In summary, Smith describes the first potency as God's internal esoteric nature and the second potency as God's external-determined existence. He describes the third potency as "the spiritual union of his essence and determined manifestation."⁴⁸ These three potencies are in "indissoluble concatenation."⁴⁹ Drawing from Tillich, Smith explains that in Schelling's dialectic there is expansion, contraction, extension and return. "The third potency or spirit combines longing and reason, the infinite and the finite, the unbounded and the bounded."⁵⁰ Lastly, these three potencies of nature, reason and spirit represent in temporal power what is an eternal process within God himself.⁵¹

While the above descriptions of Boehme and Schelling are brief, the importance and influence of these themes in Moltmann's theology will become clearer as this paper is developed.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 141.

⁴⁸Smith, "The Problem of Theodicy in Paul Tillich," p. 56.

⁴⁹Schelling, The Ages, p. 106.

⁵⁰Smith, "The Problem of Theodicy in Paul Tillich," p. 56.

⁵¹Ibid.

CHAPTER II

THE TRINITY

Trinity: Its Importance

The doctrine of the Trinity developed out of early church discussions over the two natures of Christ. The challenge these early church fathers faced was how to reconcile their philosophical understanding of God with a quite different picture of human nature. God was described as incorruptible, unchangeable, indivisible, incapable of suffering and immortal. Human nature on the other hand, was transitory, changeable, divisible, capable of suffering and mortal.

Gradually the debate over Jesus' divinity and humanity produced the concept of a three person godhead.¹ Because the doctrine of the Trinity grew out of this Christological debate it is included in this thesis. Furthermore, a trinitarian theme is found throughout Moltmann's Christology and his entire theological system. Any paper with the

¹A description of this historical development can be found in Williston Walker, History of the Christian Church, 3rd ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Son's, 1970), pp. 67-70, 72-77, 106-116, 131-139, passim.

purpose of describing some of his major themes would therefore have to address his understanding of the Trinity. Moltmann's trinitarian emphasis is particularly noteworthy as it goes against a prevalent and long-standing monotheistic trend in theology.² This chapter will open with a section which discusses the relationship of the cross to the Trinity. It will continue with a major section on God the Father, followed by a further development of God as Son and God as Spirit.

Trinity: Its Starting Point

Moltmann acknowledges that the New Testament does not contain a comprehensive development of the Trinity. In his judgment, however, this doctrine is essential to an adequate understanding of the cross.

The perception of the trinitarian concept of God is the cross of Jesus...The theological concept for the perception of the crucified Christ is the doctrine of the Trinity. The material principle of the doctrine of the Trinity is the cross of Christ. The formal principle of knowledge of the cross is the doctrine of the Trinity.³

Moltmann further suggests that not only the cross, but Jesus' entire history reveals the Trinity. It is from Jesus' historical and eschatological history that men and women are enabled to understand the differences, the

²See Moltmann, Trinity and Kingdom, p. 1; Moltmann, Crucified God, pp. 215, 236.

³Moltmann, Crucified God, pp. 240-241.

relationships and the unity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.⁴ There is a correspondence between Christ in time and God in eternity.⁵ Just as God appears in history as sending Father and sent Son, so he must have been earlier in himself.⁶ Moltmann explains that his book, The Trinity and the Kingdom, is an "attempt to start with the special doctrine of the history of Jesus the Son, and from that to develop a historical doctrine of the Trinity."⁷

Trinity: Its Description

Moltmann draws from Nicholas Berdyaev to explain that there is a "will" a "longing for freedom" within God which makes possible all the world processes. Berdyaev suggests that the reason for the existence of the world and its history is freedom: "'The origin of the world springs from the freedom willed by God in the beginning. Without His will or longing for freedom no world processes would be possible.'"⁸ Unfortunately men and women have misused this great freedom, making human history a tragedy. Because God wants man to be free, this is his tragedy as well. "Consequently the history of man's freedom is simply the

⁴Moltmann, Trinity and Kingdom, p. 65.

⁵Ibid., p. 31.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid., p. 19.

⁸Moltmann is here quoting from N. Berdyaev, The Meaning of History (Geoffrey Bles and Scribner's, 1939), p. 58.,
Ibid., p. 42.

side of the history of God's passion which is open to our experience and perception."⁹ Included in this perception is what might be described as a dark side to God. If freedom has made human history possible and if this freedom is found in God himself, "then we must assume a movement, a passion, a history--yes, even a 'tragedy in God' himself."¹⁰ Drawing from Boehme's idea about a 'dark nature in God,' Berdyaev suggests the possibility of tragic destiny in God.

When in the divine life a passion tragedy is played-- a particular divine destiny in the centre of which stands the suffering of God himself and of his Son-- and if in this suffering the redemption and liberation of the world is fulfilled, then this can only be explained by saying that the profoundest source of such a tragic conflict, such a tragic movement, and such a tragic passion is present in the depths of the divine life itself.¹¹

God experiences the pain which results from our misuse of freedom and in his great passion goes out of himself to suffer with his people.¹² "God suffers with us--God suffers from us--God suffers for us: it is this experience of God that reveals the triune God."¹³ This divine longing which causes him to go out is not reflective of an imperfection or a lack in God, but stems from his abundant and creative love. God longs for his created other and

⁹Moltmann, Trinity and Kingdom, p. 42.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 43.

¹¹Moltmann is here quoting in altered form, Berdyaev, The Meaning of History, p. 57, *ibid.*

¹²The concept of God's "going out" is central to Moltmann's understanding not only of the Trinity, but all of his theology. Its significance is developed throughout this paper.

¹³Moltmann, Trinity and Kingdom, p. 4.

wants both the Son and men and women to return love. The Trinity is open for the gathering, unifying and glorifying of the world in God.¹⁴ This openness stems from a longing in God which leads him out of himself. Moltmann explains that the effect of the triadic life is a process of self-emptying and re-appropriation of personality.¹⁵ God finds liberation by liberating his creation.¹⁶ The Trinity meets people, gives them a new identity, a new creation or a new self.¹⁷ In this sense the Trinity can be described as an event or a process which is pressing towards eschatological consummation which Moltmann describes as the time when the

'Trinity may be all in all', or put more simply, so that 'love may be all in all', so that life may triumph over death and righteousness over the hells of the negative and of all force.¹⁸

Moltmann goes on to further describe this process:

If Christian belief thinks in trinitarian terms, it says that forsaken men are already taken up by Christ's forsakenness into the divine history and that we 'live in God', because we participate in the eschatological life of God by virtue of the death of Christ.¹⁹

There is much in this quote that needs to be explained in order to understand what Moltmann is really saying.

Phrases such as "participating in the eschatological life of God, " and "being taken up by Christ's forsakenness into the

¹⁴Moltmann, Church in the Power, p. 60.

¹⁵Moltmann, Trinity and Kingdom, p. 18.

¹⁶Moltmann, Church in the Power, pp. 59-60.

¹⁷Moltmann, Crucified God, p. 248.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 255.

¹⁹Ibid.

divine history" along with this overall description will be further developed in the next three sections on Father, Son and Spirit, as well as throughout this thesis.

God The Father: The One Who Goes Out And Brings Up

God, in his freedom and love, is constantly involved in a process of going out of himself. It is his very nature to do so. He goes out in order to experience and effect history and to gather into himself.²⁰ Moltmann draws from Miguel de Unamuno to explain that God chooses to limit himself by entering into his finite creation and participating in its evolution. The result is that God is involved with the world in a common redemptive process.²¹ Drawing from Berdyaev, Moltmann explains further that there is a longing in God which leads him out of himself to join his counterpart, his "other"--man.²²

Here Moltmann is talking not just about God's presence alongside that of men and women. Rather, there is an actual synthesis; a combining of God's divinity with humankind's humanity. The synthesis is part of an eternal cycle: a part of God goes out from himself and is synthesized with individual human beings producing a new creation or new

²⁰See Moltmann, Church in the Power, p. 64; Moltmann, Trinity and Kingdom, p. 43.

²¹Moltmann, Trinity and Kingdom, p. 39.

²²Ibid., p. 43.

identity, this new part falls and becomes the old self which is rejected, God goes out of himself, synthesis occurs, etc., etc. This description is the working out of the dialectical system. The experience of suffering and death enables men and women to enter into "the history of the human God."²³ Furthermore, if God is to be "completely God" he must become man.²⁴ The point at which God becomes man is not explicitly stated, but appears to be the time when the divine-human synthesis takes place. This may be described as the point at which God is most human and humans are most divine. This may also be when humankind comes closest to true or ideal humanity.²⁵

As was pointed out in the prior trinitarian discussion, it is God's love, his pathos and suffering that "leads to the perception of the self-differentiation of the one God."²⁶ Self-differentiation refers here to the Almighty humiliating himself to accommodate human weakness. Moltmann explains that in Jewish mysticism the Shekinah was not only regarded as one of God's characteristics, but was "thought of in hypostasized and personified form."²⁷ The Shekinah is in a sense exiled until redemption restores the original harmony. The net result is a divorce in God.

²³Moltmann, Crucified God, p. 254.

²⁴Moltmann, Trinity and Kingdom, p. 33.

²⁵Moltmann, Crucified God, p. 231.

²⁶Moltmann, Trinity and Kingdom, p. 27.

²⁷Moltmann is here drawing from Gershom Scholem, Von er mystischen Gestalt der Gottheit (Zurich 1962), pp. 145ff., cited in Trinity and Kingdom, p. 28.

"The Shekinah, the descent of God to man and his dwelling among them, is thought of as a divorce which takes place in God himself."²⁸ Ultimately there is estrangement, a rift, not just between God and man, but also between God and God. God himself is in need of redemption. The question at this point, then, is how is this estrangement overcome? It is overcome through prayer and the acknowledgement of "the one God." By acknowledging God's unity we are uniting God. This unity is a becoming unity. "And this Becoming is laid on the soul of man and in his hands."²⁹

A God of Love

Central to Christianity is the conviction that God is a God of love. For Moltmann, this has trinitarian implications. He suggests that unselfish love "lies in the loving persons communication of himself."³⁰ This self-communication presupposes a capacity for self-differentiation because the lover communicates himself. "He is the one who communicates and the one communicated. In love he is both simultaneously."³¹ Moltmann goes on to make an important point for understanding his theology.

²⁸ Moltmann is here quoting F. Rosenzweig, Der Stern der Erlösung, 3rd ed. (Heidelberg 1954), 3:192ff., Trinity and Kingdom, p. 29.

²⁹ Again Moltmann is quoting Rosenzweig, Der Stern der Erlösung, p. 194., Trinity and Kingdom, p. 29.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 57.

³¹ Ibid.

Love is the power of self-differentiation and self-identification, and has its source in that process. The greater the self-differentiation of the lover, the more unselfish the self-communication.³²

It is because God both loves and is love that he has to be understood as the triune God.

Love cannot be consummated by a solitary subject. An individual cannot communicate itself: individuality is ineffable, unutterable. If God is love he is at once the lover, the beloved and the love itself.³³

Previously it was explained that God goes out of himself in order to gather into himself.³⁴

Love has to give, for it is only in the act of giving that it truly possesses, and finds bliss...God has to give himself completely; and it is only in this way that he is eternal.³⁵

Love described in this way is a circular process of going and coming. It goes out to give life, to open up for the freedom to live. Love is a self-communication of the good which is God's nature and being. "By deciding to communicate himself, God discloses his own being; otherwise his decision would not be a self-communication of the good which he is."³⁶

God and Freedom

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Moltmann, Church in the Power, p. 64.

³⁵Moltmann, Trinity and Kingdom, p. 37.

³⁶Ibid., p. 58.

This model of suffering love described by Moltmann raises a metaphysical question. Has God chosen to participate in humanity out of his free will or is it for the completion of his own being? One answer can be found in the nominalist decree: "God is free. He is compelled to do nothing. He can do and leave undone whatever he likes. His creative and suffering love is founded on his groundless decision."³⁷ Moltmann reacts against this concept of freedom as a threat to God's truth and goodness.

Where his self, his truth and goodness is concerned, God by no means has the choice between mutually exclusive possibilities. For he cannot deny himself. So he does not have the choice between being love and not being love.³⁸

Moltmann wants to keep love and freedom together and therefore asserts that the freedom to choose between good and evil is less than the freedom of desiring the good and doing it. He goes on to explain that God's freedom lies in the friendships he makes with men and women. God's freedom is seen in his vulnerable love, in his openness and his "encountering" kindness by which he suffers with human beings, acts as their advocate, and opens the future up for them.³⁹

Opposition in God

³⁷Ibid., p. 52.

³⁸Ibid., pp. 54-55.

³⁹Ibid., p. 56.

It was explained above that there is separation in God, a rift so to speak. Love must give in order to find bliss. God must give himself in order to possess himself. God is God because he gives himself completely.⁴⁰ Love too, if it is to be completely itself has to suffer. God as love, experiences in his own self-sacrifice anything which contradicts his being, namely evil. God is able to transform this evil by suffering it.⁴¹ Moltmann is here drawing from Rolt who explains that throughout history God's suffering love transforms "brute force" into "vital energy." "Through openness and capacity for suffering, the divine love shows that it is life's pre-eminent organizing principle in the deadly conflicts of blind natural forces."⁴²

Moltmann cogently points out that since God is from eternity suffering love and self-sacrifice,

then evil must have come into existence with God himself, not merely with creation, let alone with the Fall of Man. It is only if there is a tension within God himself that we can talk in a way that makes sense about God's eternal self-sacrifice.⁴³

Explaining that this discussion is reminiscent of Jacob Boehme, Moltmann quotes Rolt to explain that God is the single source for good and evil: "'Brute force...comes from

⁴⁰ Drawing from C. E. Rolt, The World's Redemption (London 1913), pp. 247, 95., Moltmann explains that God is involved in a process of eternally sacrificing himself,

⁴¹ Moltmann, Trinity and Kingdom, p. 32.

⁴² Moltmann, Trinity and Kingdom, p. 33.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 34.

God and he is responsible for it. Good and evil come from the same source and are therefore precisely the same thing."⁴⁴ How should this statement be understood? Rolt asserts that evil exists not because God created it, but precisely because he commanded it not to exist. God creates order and excludes chaos. Consequently, in a dialectical way chaos is present by default as whatever has been excluded by creation and is ever a threat to creation. God transforms the power of the negative by taking it up into the process of the becoming of his being.

The evil which God suffers is the condition of his eternal bliss because it is the presupposition for his triumph. 'This is the mystery of the cross, a mystery which lies at the centre of God's eternal Being.'⁴⁵

God's eternal bliss is not based on the absence of suffering, but on the acceptance and the transformation of suffering.

The Union of God

As expressed earlier, the process of God's self-giving comes back around full circle to return to himself. Here again it is necessary to speak of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit glorifies Christ in the world and the world in Christ, all for the glory of the Father. The Spirit is the agent or power which unites creation with Father and Son and

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Ibid.

also unites the Son with his Father. Moltmann understands this historical reality to point back to unity in divinity from eternity. The salvation which we look forward to can be described as this ultimate unity, unity of creation with God and unity within the triune God. "The history of the kingdom of God on earth is nothing other than the history of the uniting of what is separated and the freeing of what is broken."⁴⁶ Finally, eschatologically, God's unity is linked with the salvation of creation.

The Trinity as a Historical Event Pressing Towards
Eschatological Consummation

With any theologian there are a number of significant terms, expressions, descriptions, etc. that are often mentioned in their writings. The more often these terms are repeated, the more important it is to understand the terms in order to fully comprehend the writer's major themes. This is done, of course, by carefully considering these various expressions in their immediate context and in the context of the theologian's writings generally. In this section some of the descriptions and expressions relevant to the Trinity will be considered. This part of the thesis will describe how the Trinity is a process or an event which has a history, how humankind participates in that

⁴⁶Moltmann, Church in the Power, p. 62.

history and what Moltmann means when he talks about the eschatological consummation of the Trinity.

The Trinity as Historical Process

To begin to understand the history of the Trinity, it is necessary to look to the cross. It is here that the nucleus of that history can be found.

Nevertheless, the theology of the cross also has cosmological dimensions, because it sees the cosmos in the eschatological history of God. For the 'history of God', whose nucleus is the event of the cross, cannot be thought of as history in the world, but on the contrary makes it necessary to understand the world in this history.⁴⁷

The cross as nucleus provides a summary or a window of God's trinitarian history.⁴⁸ Moltmann goes on to specify what it is about the cross that we must come to grips with.

Before it can talk of the significance of the history of Christ's suffering for the history of the world's sufferings, Christian theology must have faced the intrinsic problem of the history of Christ's suffering and have understood God's being in the forsakenness of Christ.⁴⁹

The cross is the nucleus to understanding God as Trinity. What is found here is God forsaking his son. This is a vital part of the trinitarian history. God goes out of himself as Son. (He goes out in order to bring humankind up into himself; this is the synthesis previously

⁴⁷Moltmann, Crucified God, p. 218.

⁴⁸A more complete development of this can be found in

⁴⁹Moltmann, Crucified God, pp. 246ff.

Moltmann, Crucified God, p. 227.

described.) If new life is to occur in the dialectical system, it must arise out of death. Jesus dies. Here God abandons God.⁵⁰ He rejects a part of himself which must die in order for new being, new life, i.e. the resurrection to take place. This eternal and historical cycle, God as event or process, finds its clearest and most profound expression at the cross.

It is this continuous cycle that humankind has the privilege of participating in. God goes out of himself, humans are "taken up" and in some way synthesized with that part of God which has gone out. This synthesis is part of a cycle or process. If the cycle is to continue, this synthesis must be rejected, it must die in order for a new synthesis to take place. This is why Moltmann explains that the experience of suffering and death enables men and women to enter into "the history of the human God."⁵¹

Participating in trinitarian history means that they are taken up, die (fall in sin), and are taken back up again. In this regard their experience parallels God's.⁵² The Trinity as history is a history of love and liberation. The good news in trinitarian terms is that men and women "are taken up by Christ's forsakeness into the divine history and

⁵⁰ Roland Zimany rightly describes this when he explains that Jesus, as the Second Person of the Godhead, dies and brings death into the Trinity. Roland Zimany, "Moltmann's Crucified God," Dialog 16 (Winter 1977): 53.

⁵¹ Moltmann, Crucified God, p. 254.

⁵² See Moltmann, Crucified God, p. 274; Moltmann, Trinity and Kingdom, p. 5.

that "we 'live in God', because we participate in the eschatological life of God by virtue of the death of Christ."⁵³ Not only do we actively participate in the suffering of God, we also participate "in the joy of God wherever we love and pray and hope. 'In this sense God is the great companion-the fellow-sufferer, who understands.'"⁵⁴

God the Son: He Who Goes Out

In the previous section on God the Father it was explained that God's nature and love includes a process of God going out of himself. That which goes out from the Father is both Son and Spirit. This section will briefly describe the role of the Son in this trinitarian process.

An important initial point is the relationship between the earthly Jesus and eternal God. Moltmann suggests that since the sending of Jesus comes from the very foundation of God it is possible to interpolate back, that is, to make analogies from Jesus' experience on earth to God as he is and has been in eternity.

The relations between the discernable and visible history of Jesus and the God whom he called 'my Father' correspond to the relation of the Son to the Father in eternity. The *missio ad extra* reveals the *missio ad intra*.⁵⁵

⁵³Moltmann, Crucified God, p. 255.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Moltmann, Church in the Power, p. 54.

The question to be asked then, is what can be found when Christ is considered? Again Moltmann draws from C.E. Rolt in his book The World's Redemption to explain that God's omnipotence is the almighty power of suffering love.

What was Christ's essential power? It was love, which was perfected through voluntary suffering; it was love, which died in meekness and humility on the cross and so redeemed the world. This is the essence of the divine sovereignty. The passion is the final victory of the Son of God.⁵⁶

Jesus is that person of the Godhead who goes out from the father so that men and women might understand God's sovereignty and to enable them to become part of this process. It is through Christ that God creates the conditions necessary for building a relationship and communing with him. These conditions are created through God's self-humiliation on the cross and through his exaltation of men and women in the resurrection. Moltmann emphasizes that it is God who takes this initiative and gives himself. By giving himself, his own sphere is opened "for the whole of man and for all men."⁵⁷ God has gone out from himself and has humiliated himself completely in the person of Jesus Christ. In this context Moltmann explains that

God in the person of the Son enters into the limited, finite situation of man. Not only does he enter into it, descend into it, but he also accepts it and embraces the whole of human existence with his being.⁵⁸

⁵⁶C. E. Rolt, The World's Redemption (London: 1913), p. 35, cited by Moltmann, Trinity and Kingdom, p. 31.

⁵⁷Moltmann, Crucified God, p. 276.

⁵⁸Ibid.

God does all this so that humankind might find fulfillment for themselves (new creation), but also to participate in and contribute to God's life as well. Jesus draws men and women up into his life so that they may be grasped by God's freedom.⁵⁹ Liberation and new creation are experienced when individuals are taken up into the Father's grief, into his inner life.⁶⁰

Earlier it was explained that there is a relationship between Jesus on earth and God in eternity. God himself is going out, is creating new possibilities for new creation through Jesus. Divinity constantly dies and goes out in new forms that enable men and women to constantly be recreated, to receive new self, etc. Jesus goes out from God, takes men and women up into God's being and gives them new identity. Both God and men and women are involved in this continual, circular process of becoming. Jesus, as the representative of ideal humanity is constantly going out in a newly created form which has the identity of the previous self, but is slightly different. The ultimate self-humiliation is the death of God himself in the abandonment of Jesus on the cross.⁶¹ All of this is directed towards the unification and glorification of God. While it may at first seem like a paradox, it is from a dialectical perspective quite logical. As men and women see the God who

⁵⁹Ibid., pp. 186-187.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 249.
⁶¹Uzoltmann, Church in the Power, p. 85.

humbles himself, even to the point of death, and realize their acceptance and unity with God they receive unlimited freedom.⁶²

God the Holy Spirit: The One Who Goes Out and Returns

An adequate and comprehensive description of the Holy Spirit has eluded theologians since the doctrine was first formulated. One of the finest summaries regarding Moltmann's understanding of the Holy Spirit can be found in his book The Trinity and the Kingdom where he explains that there are two orders of the Trinity found in scripture.

In the first order the divine Trinity throws itself open in the sending of the Spirit. It is open for the world, open for time, open for the renewal and unification of the whole creation. In the second order the movement is reversed: in the transfiguration of the world through the Spirit all men turn to God and, moved by the Holy Spirit, come to the Father through Christ the Son. In the glorification of the Spirit, world and times, people and things are gathered to the Father in order to become his world.⁶³

The First Order

In the first order the Holy Spirit comes from the Father. Moltmann explains that according to the gospels, prior to Easter the Spirit's activity was confined exclusively to Jesus. However, Jesus was raised "through

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Moltmann, Trinity and Kingdom, p. 127.

the Spirit" (Romans 8:11). The Spirit gives life to the dead (1 Corinthians 6:14) and is the "divine energy of the new creation."⁶⁴ It is through the risen Christ that God pours out the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5). The Spirit proceeds, then, both from the Father and the Son. Moltmann further explains that it is the event of the cross that enables the Spirit to move from the Father to us.⁶⁵ Why this is the case must be understood in the context of the dialectical system outlined throughout this paper. In this context it is important first to consider some of the descriptions Moltmann applies to the Holy Spirit. The Spirit as unconditioned and boundless love creates new life. It is creative freedom for renewal of life.⁶⁶ The Spirit opens up the future of history and is the creator of new future. The dialectical requirement for life is the overcoming of death. Before men and women could receive new creation, new life, etc., God had to go out of himself even to the point of death. Incredible life was made possible by incredible death. This is Hegel's negation of the negation. Moltmann quotes Hegel to explain that the Spirit repairs this "rift."

The reconciliation believed in as being in Christ has no meaning if God is not known as Trinity, if it is not recognized that He is but is at the same time the Other, the self-differentiating, the other in the sense that this other is God himself and has potentially the divine nature in it, and that the abolishing of this

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 122.

⁶⁵ Moltmann, Crucified God, pp. 206, 245-246, 252, 255.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 245.

the Spirit" (Romans 8:11). The Spirit gives life to the dead (1 Corinthians 6:14) and is the "divine energy of the new creation."⁶⁴ It is through the risen Christ that God pours out the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5). The Spirit proceeds, then, both from the Father and the Son. Moltmann further explains that it is the event of the cross that enables the Spirit to move from the Father to us.⁶⁵ Why this is the case must be understood in the context of the dialectical system outlined throughout this paper. In this context it is important first to consider some of the descriptions Moltmann applies to the Holy Spirit. The Spirit as unconditioned and boundless love creates new life. It is creative freedom for renewal of life.⁶⁶ The Spirit opens up the future of history and is the creator of new future. The dialectical requirement for life is the overcoming of death. Before men and women could receive new creation, new life, etc., God had to go out of himself even to the point of death. Incredible life was made possible by incredible death. This is Hegel's negation of the negation. Moltmann quotes Hegel to explain that the Spirit repairs this "rift."

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⁶⁴Ibid., p. 122.

⁶⁵Moltmann, Crucified God, pp. 206, 245-246, 252, 255.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 245.

difference, of this otherness, this return, this love, is Spirit.⁶⁷

Two things are clear from this quote. The first point, which will be developed in the chapter on the cross, is that the cross was very much a trinitarian event. It is the cross event that necessitates the doctrine of the Trinity.⁶⁸ The second point is that the Spirit functions to bring bring back God's differentiated self, that which has gone out from him, namely his Son. The Spirit's function of reconciliation brings us to a discussion of the second order.

The Second Order

As the descriptions above indicate, not only do things flow in the order of Father-Son-Spirit, Father-Spirit, or Son-Spirit, but also Spirit-Son-Father, Spirit-Son and Spirit-Father. It is in this context that the Spirit can be understood as person, the person who functions to glorify and unify God. The Spirit is not described as a proceeding energy, but as a person who acts to bring glory and unity between Father and Son through the whole creation.⁶⁹ Here all activity proceeds from the Spirit. He is the maker of the new creation. He achieves the glorification of God through the new creation's praise and

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 254.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 240.

⁶⁹Moltmann, Trinity and Kingdom, p. 126.

testimony. He creates for the Father in heaven that joy on earth which finally gives him bliss.⁷⁰

The going out of the Spirit is preceded by inner changes within the divine Trinity. The Trinity is opened up in the sending of the Spirit. In this opening the whole creation is gathered so that all people and things then partake of the 'inner-trinitarian life' of God. They join in the responding love of the Son and will thereby become the joy of the Father's blissful love. Then the triune God is at home in his world, and his world exists out of his inexhaustible glory.⁷¹

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 127.

⁷¹I. A. Dorner, Die Unveränderlichkeit Gottes (Leipzig: 1883), p. 361, cited by Moltmann, Trinity and Kingdom, pp. 127-128. Moltmann quotes Dorner in a footnote to further describe this mutual participation, "Thus, out of the sphere of temporal history and of free creative beings, something results for God, something which according to his own, absolute judgement is of value, a satisfaction for the divine consciousness which it did not have before, a joy which it could not have of itself and without the world..." Dorner, Unveränderlichkeit, p. 361, quoted in Moltmann, Trinity and Kingdom, no. 47, p. 239.

CHAPTER III

THE CROSS EVENT

Christ's death typically receives the most attention in the context of atonement or soteriology. The question that is addressed is, "What is the meaning of the cross for humankind?" In Moltmann's theology this is also an important question. Its answer, however, follows or develops from a prior question which does not generally receive the attention that Moltmann gives to it, namely, "What is the meaning of the cross for God?" Here the emphasis is on what took place between God the Father and God the Son. When the cross is comprehended as an event between God and God, i.e., as an event within the Trinity, it can then be understood as an event for humankind.

The Cross as an Event Within the Trinity: The Abandonment of Jesus

The previous chapter explained how the Trinity is involved in a process in which God, in his freedom, goes out of himself in order to make possible new creation and new identity in men and women. The ultimate goal is to bring

himself and his creation back together in eschatological unity and glorification. The cross is a central part of this continual process. Its significance is not to be found in its uniqueness, but rather in its intensity or degree.

The cross finds its great importance in the context of freedom. Moltmann explains that while the cross cannot be loved, only the cross can bring the kind of freedom which changes the world, a freedom which is not afraid of death.¹ It is the cross which provides the driving force for opening up new horizons in society and the church.² He further asserts that an adequate theology of the cross must go beyond the question of salvation to revolutionize our concept of God. "Who is God in the cross of the Christ who is abandoned by God?"³ Ultimately the church must come to grips with Jesus' cry to God, "'My God, why hast thou forsaken me?'"⁴ What part did God play at the crucifixion? Did God die? Did he allow death? Did he kill Jesus? If the cross is looked at in an eschatological context, i.e. looking from the future into the past, a number of questions must be answered:

What was the 'God who raised Jesus' doing in and during the crucifixion of Jesus? If there was here only the action of evil, ignorant men, Jews and Romans, then that God evidently did not act, but restrained himself and allowed things to happen. But why did he keep silent

¹ Jurgen Moltmann, The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1974), p. 1.

² Ibid., p. 2.

³ Ibid., p. 4.

⁴ Ibid.

over the cross of Jesus and his dying cry? Had he forgotten him? Was he absent?⁵

Moltmann suggests that in the primitive Christian theology of Easter two strata can be found. The first stratum proclaims that while men killed Jesus, it was God who raised him (Acts 2:23; 3:15; 4:10). Moltmann takes issue with this first stratum by explaining that for Paul and Mark, the risen Christ was the crucified Christ. In other words, they had to "understand the God who raised him as the God who crucified him and was crucified."⁶ Moltmann goes on to explain that Paul went one step further in 2 Corinthians 5:19 ff. to say that God was in Christ. "In other words, God not only acted in the crucifixion of Jesus or sorrowfully allowed it to happen, but was himself active with his own being in the dying Jesus and suffered with him."⁷ To express the full import of what Paul is saying, Moltmann quotes W. Popkes.

That God delivers up his Son is one of the most unheard-of statements in the New Testament. We must understand 'deliver up in its full sense and not water it down to mean send' or give'. What happened here is what Abraham did not need to do to Isaac; Christ was quite deliberately abandoned by the Father to the fate of the death; God subjected him to the power of corruption, whether this be called man or death...God made Christ sin (II Cor.5.21), Christ is the accursed of God. A theology cannot be expressed more radically than it is here.⁸

⁵Ibid., p. 190.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

⁸W. Popkes, Christus traditus, Eine Untersuchung zum Begriff der Dahingabe im Neuen Testament, quoted in Moltmann, Crucified God, p. 191.

The event of the cross is no less than an abandonment which separates the Father and the Son.⁹ There are other important dimensions to the cross expressed by Moltmann, but for the purposes of this thesis, the question of Jesus' abandonment is paramount. Moltmann explains that Jesus "died with every expression of the most profound horror."¹⁰ The gospel of Mark reproduces the cry of Psalm 22: "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Moltmann suggests that of the various Gospel accounts, the one found in Mark comes the closest to the historical reality.¹¹

When we look at his non-miraculous and helpless suffering and dying in the context of his preaching and his life, we understand how his misery cried out to heaven: it is the experience of abandonment by God in the knowledge that God is not distant but close; does not judge, but shows grace. And this in full consciousness that God is close at hand in his grace, to be abandoned and delivered up to death as one rejected, is the torment of hell.¹²

Jesus' greatest torment on the cross was his abandonment by God. Moltmann explains that the origin of Christology, whose purpose is to say who Jesus is in reality, is found in this context.

It lies in what took place between Jesus and his God, between that 'Father' and Jesus, in what was given expression in his preaching and his actions and was literally 'put to death' in his abandonment as he died.¹³

⁹For a brief discussion of this abandonment, see Roland Zimany, "Moltmann's Crucified God," Dialog 16 (Winter 1977): 50.

¹⁰Moltmann, Crucified God, p. 146.

¹¹Ibid., p. 147.

¹²Ibid., p. 148.

¹³Ibid., p. 149.

What is at stake at the cross is not only Jesus' personal existence, but also his theological existence. Jesus proclaimed God to be his father. "From this point of view, on the cross not only is Jesus himself in agony, but also the one for whom he lived and spoke, his Father."¹⁴ Here can be found nothing less than the abandonment of God by God.

The abandonment on the cross which separates the Son from the Father is something which takes place within God himself; it is stasis within God-'God against God'-particularly if we are to maintain that Jesus bore witness to and lived out the truth of God.¹⁵

Having firmly established the Father's rejection, abandonment, even murder of the Son, it is necessary to explain why this took place.

The Purpose of the Cross: Why Abandonment?

To suggest that God abandoned Jesus to the point of death is difficult to understand if not considered in the dialectical context in which Moltmann's theology is couched. Any killing that took place was for the purpose of giving life. Any judging was done for the purpose of freeing.¹⁶ Jesus accepted suffering and death in order to heal.¹⁷ The death of the Son is "the beginning of that God event in which the life-giving spirit of love emerges from

¹⁴Ibid., p. 151.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 151-152.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 212.

¹⁷Jurgen Moltmann, The Church in the Power of the Spirit: A Contribution to Messianic Ecclesiology, (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), p. 64.

the death of the Son and the grief of the Father."¹⁸ The self-offering of Jesus is a revelation of God's nature. In this event between Father and Son "God becomes so 'vast' in the Spirit of self-offering that there is room and life for the whole world, the living and the dead."¹⁹ The believer is then taken up into this vastness in order to receive new creation, new identity; to participate in the divine life, and to bring unity and glory to divinity. What proceeds from the cross event between Father and Son is the Spirit, the Spirit which creates love for forsaken men and women and even makes the dead alive.²⁰

Moltmann explains that the Messianic mission of Jesus was only fulfilled in his death.²¹ God takes death upon himself in order to give his own eternal life to those who are lost.²² God had gone out of himself, judged himself and killed himself for the sake of the lost. When a believer understands the cross as an event between God and God, as an event within the Trinity, he or she perceives the liberating word of love which creates new life.²³ To perceive this is to be taken up into the inner life of God and experience liberation. Again the importance of the Trinity is emphasized:

¹⁸Moltmann, Crucified God, p. 252.

¹⁹See Moltmann, Crucified God, p. 274 and Moltmann, Church in the Power, p. 96.

²⁰Moltmann, Crucified God, p. 245.

²¹Moltmann, Church in the Power, p. 87.

²²Ibid., p. 95.

²³Moltmann, Crucified God, p. 249.

If one conceives of the Trinity as an event of love in the suffering and the death of Jesus--and that is something which faith must do--then the Trinity is no self-contained group in heaven, but an eschatological process open for men on earth, which stems from the cross of Christ.²⁴

When believers understand the cross, they realize that God has gone the ultimate distance to give them new identity and to bring them into unity with himself. The believer understands that the cross is an anticipation of world judgement in favor of those who would not otherwise survive it.²⁵ Jerry Irish draws from Moltmann when he rightly explains that the cross is the abiding key-signature of Jesus' lordship in the world until the fulfillment of God's promise.²⁶ The cross represents active solidarity with a broken creation that must wait for God's redemption. Jesus' crucifixion with two freedom fighters reveals the unconditional fellowship of the Son of man with the tortured and executed men and women.²⁷ His death reveals a new righteousness which says that in fact the executioners will not triumph over their victims or victims over their oppressors. This new righteousness breaks through hate and vengeance creating new humankind for humanity.

Only where righteousness becomes creative and creates right both for the lawless and for those outside the law, only where creative love changes what is hateful and deserving of hate, only where the new man is born who is neither oppressed nor oppresses others can one

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Jerry A. Irish, "Moltmann's Theology of Contradiction,"

Theology Today 32 (April 1975): 22.

²⁷Moltmann, Church in the Power, pp. 91-92.

speak of the true revolution of righteousness and of
the righteousness of God.²⁸

²⁸Moltmann, Crucified God, p. 178.

CHAPTER IV

RESURRECTION

This chapter will consider how the resurrection is an integral part of the overall trinitarian, dialectical system which is in development throughout this paper. First it will define what Moltmann believes occurred at the resurrection, the form it took, how to describe it, etc. Then it will consider how the resurrection is part of an ongoing process within God and lastly, how men and women participate in that process.

The Form of the Resurrection

Methodologically, Moltmann explains that it is vital to ascertain what Easter faith says and does not say about the resurrection. Therefore the place to begin is with the eyewitnesses. Jesus was crucified in public, but at first only his disciples learned of his resurrection through his "appearances." "What actually happened between the experience of his crucifixion and burial and his Easter appearances, is left in the darkness of the still unknown

and still hidden God."¹ Not even the Easter narratives profess to know specifically what took place. In this context Moltmann suggests three determinative considerations regarding the situation of the Easter witnesses. The situation was determined

- 1.) "by the preaching of Jesus and their discipleship;"
- 2.) "by the crucifixion of Jesus and their faith which was shattered by it;" and
- 3.) "by the themes and symbols of the general apocalyptic expectations held by the Judaism of their time, under Roman domination."²

This sequence is important in order to properly understand Easter faith and not to derive it only from apocalyptic themes. Moltmann further explains that Easter faith received its Christian determination

primarily by Jesus' proclamation of the righteousness of the kingdom of God which was approaching in grace, and which already represented a change from the apocalyptic mood of the Judaism of the time.³

How then did the eyewitnesses see the risen Christ? Moltmann explains that in the Easter kerygma, Easter faith is constantly grounded in a "seeing." This was not a physical seeing in the sense that the resurrection could have been recorded on a video camera, but is a kind of revelation. Similar to the theophany accounts in the Old Testament, a person experiences the appearance of God in

¹Moltmann, Theology of Hope, p. 197.
²Moltmann, Crucified God, p. 166.
³Ibid.

his knowledge of God. God acts in such a way that people are able to see whatever he wants them to see.

It is the seeing of something which is given to someone to see. It is therefore not the seeing of something which is always there. Nor is it a seeing that can be repeated and can be verified because it can be repeated...God is disclosing something which is concealed from the knowledge of the present age of the world. He is revealing something which cannot be known by the mode of knowledge of the present time.⁴

From Moltmann's perspective, the resurrection was an event whose reality lay outside of the consciousness or faith of the witnesses. It was a reality which provided the origin "of their consciousness in remembrance and hope."⁵

Moltmann goes on to suggest that the controversy between the Jews and the disciples was not whether or not this was historically possible, but was over the question, "has God raised him from the dead according to his promises, or can God according to his promises not have raised him?"⁶

Clearly Moltmann does not see in the Easter kerygma someone coming out of the tomb after the stone was rolled away.

'Resurrection of the dead' first of all, excludes any idea of a revivification of the dead Jesus which might have reversed the process of his death. Easter faith can never mean that the dead Jesus returned to this life which leads to death.⁷

That which attests to the resurrection is not scientific data, but Easter faith.⁸ The concept of the resurrection

⁴Ibid., p. 167.

⁵Moltmann, Theology of Hope, p. 172.

⁶Ibid., p. 174.

⁷Moltmann, Crucified God, p. 169.

⁸Moltmann, Church in the Power, p. 82.

of a dead man is problematic because it is unlike our history which is dominated by death.⁹ Moltmann has difficulty with the idea that the event of the raising of Jesus must be "historically" verifiable.

The thesis that this event of the raising of Jesus must be 'historically' verifiable in principle, would require us first of all so to (sic) alter the concept of the historical that it would allow of God's raising the dead and would make it possible to see in this raising of the dead the prophesied end of history. To call the raising of Jesus historically verifiable is to presuppose a concept of history which is dominated by the expectation of a general resurrection of the dead as the end and consummation of history. Resurrection and the concept of history then contain a vicious circle for the understanding.¹⁰

Moltmann goes on to explain that resurrection means "life from the dead" (Romans 9:15), not "life after death." "It means the annihilation of death in the victory of the new, eternal life (1 Corinthians 15:55)."¹¹ What meaning, then, can be drawn from these Easter appearances? This question will be addressed in the next section.

The Meaning of the Resurrection

To comprehend the resurrection in Moltmann's writings it must be understood as an eschatological event. The

⁹ Moltmann, Crucified God, p. 189. For a discussion of the resurrection and how it should be approached historically, see chapter three, section six, "The Historical Question of the Resurrection of Christ and the Questionableness of the Historical Approach to History" in Moltmann, Theology of Hope, pp. 172-182.

¹⁰ Moltmann, Theology of Hope, p. 82.

¹¹ Moltmann, Crucified God, p. 170.

resurrection is not accidentally new, but is eschatologically new. "The resurrection of Christ does not mean a possibility within the world and its history, but a new possibility altogether for the world, for existence and for history."¹² In the resurrection God has defined himself in the end-time as the "God who raises the dead."¹³ This has comprehensive implications which men and women are sometimes slow to comprehend. "God promises a new creation of all things in righteousness and peace, but man acts as if everything were as before and remained as before."¹⁴ Moltmann describes God as the God of the exodus and the resurrection. As such he is a God "'with future as his essential nature', a God of promise and of leaving the present to face the future, a God whose freedom is the source of new things that are to come."¹⁵ The resurrection is not a revivification, but a creative action by God which "raises the dead in the word of the promise which creates faith."¹⁶

It was stated above that in the resurrection, God has defined himself in the end time as the God who raises the dead. In the previous paragraph the raising of the dead is again referred too in the context of God's creative action. Clearly when Moltmann speaks of the raising of the dead, it

¹²Moltmann, Theology of Hope, p. 179.

¹³Moltmann, Crucified God, p. 188

¹⁴Moltmann, Theology of Hope, pp. 22-23.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 30.

¹⁶Moltmann, Crucified God, p. 188.

is the not the restoration of a new perfect physiology at a "second coming" of Jesus. Moltmann speaks of the resurrection as a "creative action by God." How then should this be understood? This thesis suggests that this creative action refers to the new identity and new self people receive when they are taken up into synthesis with God, the One who goes out of himself. His direction of approach is one that is before them. People are not pushed ahead from causal events in the past, but are pulled forward into the future, into God's future. He goes out of himself to give men and women a new identity and a new self. Moltmann feels that confining Christian faith's eschatological orientation to the general flux of time is to weaken it. Rather than talking about what was, what is, and what will be, he prefers to discuss "what is to come."

'What is to come' is, it is true, close to what will be, but is not totally absorbed by that; it stands in relationship both to the future and to the present and past. For what is to come does not emerge out of the forces and trends of growth and decay but comes in liberation to meet what is becoming, what has become, and what has passed away. To this extent, what is to come also contains the end of growth and decay.¹⁷

An eschatological event, while having a future dimension, also has a present day reality and significance. "The eschatological resurrection of the dead does not mean a restoration of the creation which had been made obsolete by human sin, but the 'creation of the end time' that is

¹⁷Moltmann, Church in the Power, p. 130.

now dawning."¹⁸ Moltmann goes on to explain that the resurrection is no longer the ontic presupposition for God's righteousness to be shown in a final judgement, an apocalyptic theme, "but is itself already the new righteousness of God and the new creation from this righteousness."¹⁹ It is the Spirit which puts this new creation into force.²⁰ There is no longer a need to have two periods, one of present death and the next a future period of life.²¹

Through Jesus' resurrection the future of the new world of life has already gained the victory over this "unredeemed world of death."²² The power of death is overthrown and God's glory has dawned in Jesus.²³ The resurrection provides a basis for new and redeemed existence.²⁴ New and redeemed existence is experienced each time an individual receives a new self. This new self is not the full realization of the future, but includes a part of that future. As such it points ahead, not to some future period of life where suffering and death and all evil have been eliminated, but to the next creation of a new self, a continuing repetitive process.

¹⁸Moltmann, Crucified God, p. 188.

¹⁹Ibid., 189.

²⁰Moltmann, Church in the Power, p. 192.

²¹Moltmann, Crucified God, p. 171.

²²Ibid.

²³Moltmann, Church in the Power, p. 99.

²⁴Moltmann, Crucified God, p. 187.

The Relationship Between the Resurrection and the Cross

In a dialectical system it is especially important that the cross and resurrection be considered together if people are to understand how resurrection faith impinges on their lives. It is as men and women understand the crucified God that they come to grips with the meaning of the resurrection and new life can begin for them.²⁵ On the other hand it is only the resurrection that qualifies the cross to be redemptive and gives Jesus' death saving significance.²⁶ "Christianity stands or falls with the reality of the raising of Jesus from the dead by God. In the New Testament there is no faith that does not start a priori with the resurrection of Jesus."²⁷

The resurrection is the basis of Christian hope and the promise of the future of Christ. It is not the resurrection in isolation, but the resurrection "of the Crucified."²⁸ Richard Bauckham correctly points out that "hope for the new creation of this world is provided only by the identity-in-contradiction of the crucified and risen Jesus."²⁹

²⁵Ibid., p. 186.

²⁶Ibid., p. 182.

²⁷Moltmann, Theology of Hope, p. 165. See pp. 168ff. for a further development of the relationship between faith, hope and the resurrection.

²⁸Richard Bauckham, "Moltmann's Eschatology of the Cross,"

Scottish Journal of Theology 30 (August 1977): 302.

²⁹Ibid.

The cross demonstrates the most extreme form of God's self-differentiation. The contradiction of cross and resurrection is nothing less than the complete contradiction of godforsakenness on the one hand and the nearness of God on the other hand. Jesus' identity is to be found as a dialectical identity "in" this contradiction, not above or beyond it. Bauckham goes on to explain that, just as the resurrection is a symbol or foretaste of the coming glory of God, so also the cross must in its godforsakenness be on a par with the godforsakenness of the world. Bauckham is drawing from Theology of Hope when he explains that

the dialectic of cross and resurrection corresponds to the dialectic of hope and experience, in which the hope of new life and righteousness for the world contradicts present experience of godlessness and death.³⁰

God has gone out of himself to the point of death in an effort to bring men and women to true humanity, to return to himself and thereby find freedom. The Son goes out, the Spirit liberates. This is a trinitarian, eschatological event. It is trinitarian because all three persons of the Godhead are involved. It is eschatological in that the direction comes from the future. There is present significance and reality and a future element yet to happen. This going out makes possible and is prelude to Christ's resurrection in which the powers of death are overcome. The process of reunification and liberation has begun with

³⁰Ibid. (Bauckham is drawing from Moltmann, Theology of Hope, p. 211.)

Christ's resurrection. Jerry Irish describes well how the cross and resurrection, when one is understood in light of the other, provide eschatological hope in the present. Drawing from Moltmann he explains that when the believer looks at the resurrection he or she sees the crucified one. Looking at the crucifixion, the believer can see one coming in glory.³¹

In this act of identification, the future is pulled into the sufferings of the present. The cross becomes the present form of the resurrection. The cross is the Godforsaken suffering and death of the one who promises a kingdom in which God is all in all, and the dead are raised. This event of identification in contradiction is, for the believer, an eschatological demonstration of the faithfulness of God.³²

While the cross and resurrection contribute toward a proper understanding of God, they also provide an understanding of salvation. The next chapter will consider how salvation fits into the context of this dialectical, trinitarian, eschatological process.

³¹This is an example of Moltmann's eschatological principle of knowledge in which the present is illuminated by the future, a backward reading of history if you will. Richard Bauckham identifies this as one of three important principles of theological method employed by Moltmann in The Crucified God. See Bauckham, "Moltmann's Eschatology," p. 303.

³²Jerry Irish, "Moltmann's Theology of Contradiction," Theology Today 32 (April 1975): 23.

CHAPTER V

SOTERIOLOGY

Salvation Described

The previous chapters have outlined a trinitarian, dialectical process in which God goes out of himself in order to redeem and restore men and women, i.e. to bring about their new creation, and also ultimately to bring unity to himself. To experience salvation is to be caught up in this process. Forgiveness of sin liberates men and women from the powers of the past and opens them up to a new future of righteousness and eternal life.¹ This chapter will consider Moltmann's concept of Christ in relation to salvation.

Moltmann suggests that for Paul, "justification of sinners is the meaning of the history of Christ."² What can be seen in this history is the forgiveness of sins, the reconciliation of sinners in the cross and in the

¹Moltmann, Church in the Power, pp. 22,31.
²Ibid., p. 30.

resurrection, the opening up of new righteousness, new obedience and new fellowship.³

If, therefore, the justification of sinners is the meaning of the history of Christ, then the meaning of the justification of sinners is the liberating lordship of Christ over the dead and the living, i.e. the new creation in him.⁴

Salvation as Process

The description given above of salvation is that of a process. The believer must understand the crucifixion as an event between Father and Son, that is, as an event between God and God, as something which happens within the Trinity. Through the Son's death, the sinner is taken up in to the life of the Father. They are taken up into the inner life of God and experience liberation.

If in the freedom given through experience of it the believer understands the crucifixion as an event of the love of the Son and the grief of the Father, that is, as an event within the Trinity, he perceives the liberating word of love which creates new life. By the death of the Son he is taken up into the grief of the Father and experiences a liberation...He is in fact taken up into the inner life of God, if in the cross of Christ he experiences the love of God for the godless, the enemies, in so far as the history of Christ is the inner life of God himself. In that case, if he lives in this love, he lives in God and God in him.⁵

In the context of this dialectical process the following model seems to be suggested. God in his love and freedom goes out of himself even to the point of death.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. 31.

⁵Moltmann, Crucified God, p. 249.

There could not be a more forceful portrayal of this great love than is found at Calvary, where Jesus has surrendered himself for the redemption of the lost (Gal. 2:20).

The whole history of his passion stands under the sign of this self-surrender, which is on the one hand to be seen as abandonment by God and on the other as the consummation of God's love.

Christ's surrender of himself to a God forsaken death reveals the secret of the cross and with it the secret of God himself. It is the open secret of the Trinity. The Father gives up his beloved Son to the darkness of Godforsakenness. 'For our sake he made him to be sin' (II Cor. 5.21). 'He became a curse for us' (Gal. 3.13).⁶

God goes out of himself as Son to create in humanity new life and new identity. There is a continual process of death and rebirth. The existence of men and women seems to be a cycle of actualization or falling, only to be taken up into unity with Christ, or Logos, and receive new identity, new creation, etc. This is a process in both God and man. The old self in man dies as he receives new identity. The old Logos dies each time God goes out of himself as new Logos.⁷ Men and women receive new identity when they are brought into unity with the new Logos. Roland Zimany, having explained that God is a reality which both suffers and makes new, goes on to develop Moltmann's description of salvation.

Salvation is achieved through continual repetition of that process of suffering in love and making new, the process which characterizes ultimate reality, since

⁶Moltmann, Church in the Power, pp. 94-95.

⁷This is correctly pointed out by Zimany, "Moltmann's Crucified God," p. 53.

that reality is the trinitarian one which was constituted on the Cross.⁸

It is a cycle of death and life. In God's case it is the death or forsakenness of the old Logos each time he goes out of himself as new Logos. When men and women are taken up into unity with this new Logos their old self dies and they receive a new self and a new identity. As stated above, the sinner is taken up into the inner life of God. In other words, certain features of fallen men and women become a part of God. Moltmann explains that to suffer God is to experience in one's self the death of the old man and the birth of the new. Whoever looks at God must die. "The closer people come to the divine reality, the more deeply they are drawn into this dying and this rebirth."⁹ When the believer enters into love and God's history he will experience suffering and death:

Therefore anyone who enters into love, and through love experiences inextricable suffering and the fatality of death, enters into the history of the human God, for his forsakenness is lifted away from him in the forsakenness of Christ, and in this way he can continue to love, need not look away from the negative and from death, but can sustain death.¹⁰

⁸Ibid., p. 56.

⁹Moltmann, Trinity and Kingdom, p. 8.

¹⁰Moltmann, Crucified God, p. 254. In Theology of Hope, Moltmann describes the believer as one who hopes. Revelation encounters the believer as promise. As such it does not disregard the negative, but "opens him to pain, patience and the 'dreadful power of the negative', as Hegel has said." Continuing to quote from Hegel, Moltmann explains, "Yet it is not the life which abhors death and keeps itself pure of corruption, but the life which endures it and maintains itself in the midst of it, that is the life of the spirit" (Moltmann, Theology of Hope, p. 91.).

To summarize, salvation, justification, etc., is a process of being taken up "into the relationship of the Son to the Father."¹¹

"'Salvation' means, therefore, to be taken up, through the trinitarian history, into the eternal life of the Trinity: 'To open up to humanity the circle of divine relationships and to incorporate the soul into God's own life-flow, that is the fundamental idea of revelation and salvation.'¹²

Social Consequences of Salvation

In addition to a personal or individual dimension to salvation, Moltmann also discusses a social dimension. In this context he explains that the gospel is "the mediation between the coming kingdom of God and the person who is turning towards freedom."¹³ In Moltmann's eschatological theology, the future has a present reality. The coming kingdom is present through the Word. The closeness of the kingdom frees men and women to repent and to turn away from this life of oppression, death and evil, to a future of life, freedom and righteousness. In this context, new creation or new beginning includes not only people, but also the relationships and conditions in which they live.

¹¹I am quoting from "The Unity of the Trinitarian God," a paper presented by Moltmann in an American Academy of Religion meeting held in Dallas, Texas, December 19-22, 1983. John Cobb, of Claremont Graduate School, responded to his paper and provided me with a copy.

¹²Fr. Kronseder, Im Banne der Dreieinigkeit, (Regensburg: 1934), p. 45., quoted in Moltmann, "The Unity of the Trinitarian God," p. 6.

¹³Moltmann, Church in the Power, p. 80.

Conversion incorporates both the community and systems that humankind participate in. "Conversion is in tendency as universal as the kingdom of God, in whose imminence it is both made possible and demanded."¹⁴

Moltmann proclaims that Christianity includes a salvation with comprehensive implications. "Every withdrawal of the presence and living testimony of Christians from any sphere of life would be the equivalent of a surrender of their hope."¹⁵ This conviction includes political and economic input. Christianity should encourage forms of government and economic policies which best protect human rights, dignity and fellowship. "The political task of Christianity is not merely to live in an already existing political order, but actually to take part in forming it."¹⁶ Moltmann goes on to explain that a justified person is free from self-justification and does not have to prove him or herself through race, health or sex, enabling him or her to recognize the rights of others. Finally he explains that Christian fellowship of the unequal is one where persons accept one another, "a fellowship of the unequal and different, held together by free and courteous recognition."¹⁷

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 173.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 178. (See pp. 168ff. for a discussion of economics.)

¹⁷Ibid., p. 188.

CHAPTER VI

ESCHATOLOGY

The previous chapters have indicated the importance of eschatology in Moltmann's theology. For him, eschatology is not an afterthought to be added to more important dogmatics, but is a context or light in which to consider all of Christian theology.

From first to last, and not merely in the epilogue, Christianity is eschatology, is hope, forward looking and forward moving, and therefore also revolutionizing and transforming the present. The eschatological is not one element of Christianity, but it is the medium of Christian faith as such, the key in which everything in it is set, the glow that suffuses everything here in the dawn of an expected new day.¹

Moltmann asserts in Theology of Hope that if this perspective is lost, Christianity risks becoming adapted to its environment and surrendering its faith.² Throughout this important work he emphasizes the centralness of "promise" to eschatology. An understanding of eschatology depends on clearly comprehending the significance of promise. It was this book that brought Moltmann to the forefront of the theological scene. As such it is an

¹Moltmann, Theology of Hope, p. 16, see also p. 41.

²Ibid., p. 41.

important work for understanding him. The emphases of this thesis, however, are in other areas, so a comprehensive discussion of "hope" and "promise" is not included. This chapter will provide a general description of the coming parousia and kingdom. It will also explain how the future has a present reality. A response to apocalyptic themes will follow this discussion and lastly a description of how eschatology fits into the dialectical model which has been developed gradually throughout this paper will be given.

Description of Christ's Parousia and Coming Kingdom

In his book, The Church in the Power of the Spirit, Moltmann explains that world history is not led towards its fulfillment in a continuum of advances, but rather in crises. However, these crises do not point to a total crisis which leads to Christ's parousia for "it is Christ's parousia that brings this world with its crises to an end."³ The believer expects the promised future to come from God himself.⁴ Later in a section entitled "God's Redeeming Kingdom," Moltmann describes this kingdom as one which "makes an end of the history of violence, suffering and death and brings about a new creation of all things."⁵

³Moltmann, Church in the Power, p. 50.

⁴Moltmann, Theology of Hope, p. 119.

⁵Moltmann, Church in the Power, p. 100.

Moltmann further states that resurrection is a symbol for the "end of history," the history of unrighteousness, evil, death and abandonment by God and the beginning of the new world of God's righteousness.⁶ That which is to come contains the end of growth and decay.⁷ The future will fulfill all desire for God, will overcome suffering, and will restore what has been lost.⁸ It might appear from these descriptions that Moltmann favors an apocalyptic oriented eschatology in which a coming parousia terminates all crises, pain, and suffering, to be followed by an eternity of no sin, and no suffering; in other words, an ending of temporal time as it is now known. Moltmann does not favor this emphasis as will be explained later in this chapter in the section, Form and Structure of the Parousia. He admonishes Christianity not to look towards "another world," or to regard the struggle for human rights as something which is historically finishable.⁹ These statements might at first appear to be contradictory. The purpose of this chapter is to explain how these statements actually contribute in a consistent and coherent way to Moltmann's dialectical development of eschatology.

The Presence of the Future

⁶Moltmann, Crucified God, p. 169.

⁷Moltmann, Church in the Power, p. 130.

⁸Moltmann, Trinity and Kingdom, p. 49.

⁹Moltmann, Church in the Power, pp. 164, 181.

The freedom and liberation of the coming kingdom reach back and impact our present experience. The question to ask at this point is what form does this impact take? Moltmann explains that the effect of the "imminent kingdom" is seen in the conversion of men and women and their "liberation from the godless and inhuman relationships of this world."¹⁰ As described in the soteriology chapter, conversion appears to be the receiving of a new self, a new creation. God has gone out from himself as Jesus to bring people up into a synthesis with him. The result is the receiving of a new self. The direction of approach is from the future, a kind of pull rather than a push. God impacts the present with the future each time the cycle of death and new birth (creation) takes place. Because this is a continuous cycle the future is constantly impinging on the present.¹¹

Moltmann describes the "coming kingdom" as a kingdom which casts its light on the conflicts of history. The future of the kingdom transcends present systems and provides transforming power in the present. In a powerful

¹⁰Ibid., 135.

¹¹Moltmann explains in Theology of Hope that the gospel is promise and as promise is an "earnest" of the promised future. In Christ, the gospel reveals anew the one eschatological salvation. Quoting E. Kasemann, Moltmann goes on to describe how the future impacts the present: "'As such it (eschatological salvation) is already present and apprehensible in history, yet solely in the form of promise, i.e. as pointing and directing us towards a still outstanding future.'" E. Kasemann, Das wandernde Gottesvolk, 4th ed. (1961), pp. 12ff., quoted in Moltmann, Theology of Hope, p. 148.

article on human rights, Moltmann explains that "in the coming of his kingdom, God will ultimately glorify his right, justify human beings and transfigure creation"¹² Drawing from 2 Corinthians 5:18 ff. Moltmann goes on to explain that human rights become real through the service of reconciliation. Reconciliation is in turn described as justifying justice and "the power of the new creation in this twisted world."¹³ The right of reconciliation is the present responsibility of all Christians. With this reconciliation a process begins which changes an unrecognizable world into a world which can be seen as a human world loved by God. Moltmann wants to avoid, on the one hand, a position which describes only a future kingdom that has no bearing on present systems, and on the other hand, identifying God's kingdom with some present set of conditions.

The liberating rule of God can thus be understood as the immanence of the eschatological kingdom, and the coming kingdom can be interpreted as the transcendence of the believed and experienced rule of God in the present. This understanding forbids us to banish the lordship of God to a future world unrelated to our earthly, historical life. But it is also forbids us to identify the kingdom of God with conditions in history, whether they be already existing or desired.¹⁴

The eschatological kingdom is immanent each time Jesus breaks into history to produce a new creation. For this moment transcendence is present. Each new creation and

¹²Jurgen Moltmann, "A Christian Declaration on Human Rights," Reformed World 34 (June 1976): 69

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Moltmann, Church in the Power, p.190.

synthesis is followed by fall. Therefore, the coming kingdom continues to be expected and can never be fully present in tempo-spatial history as long as the cycle continues.¹⁵

With Jesus resurrection a new era begins. This is the Messianic era. This is not an era which stands under law. The Messianic era transcends the present through hope for what is to come.¹⁶ It marks the beginning of the end time of the world and the beginning of new creation which, Moltmann explains, began with the resurrection of the dead. This in turn started with Jesus' resurrection.¹⁷ The church, with its eyes fixed on Christ and living in the Holy Spirit, is itself the beginning of the future of the new creation. The fact that the church proclaims Christ "is already the advent of the future of God in the world."¹⁸ Clearly the parousia and coming kingdom impact the present. This impact, however, is incomplete and points to the future. The next section will further describe how this happens.

Towards Fulfillment

¹⁵In Theology of Hope, Moltmann explains that for Paul, the promises held more than Jesus life or even resurrection. "With the raising of Jesus all has not yet been done. The end of death's domination is still outstanding in that future reality of which Paul says that 'God will be all in all', (1 Corinthians 15: 28)." Quoted in Moltmann, Theology of Hope, p. 163.

¹⁶Moltmann, Church in the Power, p. 193.

¹⁷Moltmann, Crucified God, pp. 170-171.

¹⁸Moltmann, Church in the Power, p. 33.

Moltmann explains that among the various messianic concepts is the category of "anticipation." It is a "categorical mediation between the kingdom of God and history."¹⁹ He further explains that anticipation "represents a fragmentary taking possession of the coming whole," a preliminary taking possession of what is to come."²⁰ What is anticipated and looked forward to is an end of suffering, the restoration of a fragmented church and unity within the Trinity. Moltmann describes the consummation of Christ's lordship as the end of human subordination and the replacement of systems now enforced by power with systems characterized by the brother and sisterhood of all peoples.²¹

As with other major events and processes, the eschaton is a trinitarian event. God's unity contains "within itself the whole union of creation with God and in God."²² As a result the eschatological unity of God is connected with creation's salvation and his glory is linked with "his glorification through everything that lives and rejoices."²³ It is the role of the Spirit to bring God's unity to him through the union of creation. The glorification of God began with Christ's history, the beginning of new creation and the messianic era. Christ's

¹⁹Ibid., p. 193.

²⁰Ibid., pp. 194-195.

²¹Ibid., p. 104.

²²Ibid., p. 61.

²³Ibid.

history when considered "in the light of his sending" and in the "light of his resurrection," points to the glorification of the Trinity, the eschatological unity of God and the "completion of God's history with the world."²⁴ Moltmann explains that the Trinity as an event for history,

presses towards eschatological consummation, so that the 'Trinity may be all in all', or put more simply, so that 'love may be all in all', so that life may triumph over death and righteousness over the hells of the negative and of all force.²⁵

Having briefly outlined the present and future aspects of Moltmann's eschatology, it is necessary to consider just what he means when he talks about liberation, new creation, and the coming kingdom, etc. The next section will deal with these topics.

Form and Structure of the Parousia

Moltmann explains that Revelation 21:4, which states that "death will be no more, because the former things have passed away," includes the assurance that we can die peacefully in faith with a universal hope for "the new creation in Christ."²⁶ As pointed out before, the new creation and coming kingdom are not to be identified with existing conditions.²⁷ Moltmann states that human rights, for instance, should be understood as a process "which is

²⁴Ibid., p. 57.

²⁵Moltmann, Crucified God, p. 255.

²⁶Ibid., p. 218.

²⁷Moltmann, Church in the Power, p. 190.

unfinished and historically speaking, unfinishable."²⁸ On the other hand, Moltmann asserts that "Christianity's hope is not directed towards 'another' world, but towards the world as it is changed in the kingdom of God."²⁹ These descriptions are understandable when understood in the context of Moltmann's dialectical framework. The new creation referred to is that time when Jesus breaks into history and brings men and women into synthesis. This is the time when men and women are most divine and God most human. As such, it points to the coming kingdom, but is not the coming kingdom in its fullest. The coming kingdom is not a future tempo-spatial kingdom in which sin no longer exists as is anticipated in apocalyptic theology. The hope that humankind can have is in God's dependability to continue to go out of himself and produce new creation. In this way the kingdom is accessible in faith and can, therefore, give assurance even when facing death. Since this is God's very nature, as was outlined in the chapter on Trinity, men and women can count on new creation continuing forever. It would seem then, that the kingdom may exist in some kind of eternal realm, which is accessible by faith rather than a tempo-spatial kingdom to be anticipated in the hopefully not too distant future.

²⁸Ibid., p. 181.

²⁹Ibid., p. 164.

Moltmann reacts against apocalyptic themes in connection with Christ's parousia.³⁰ That which is constitutive for Christian eschatological faith is a new eschatological understanding of time over against Jewish apocalypticism.³¹ Among the themes he objects to are 1.) the idea of the guilty deserving punishment, 2.) a spoiled world order which needs restoration and 3.) the apocalyptic expectation of a future general resurrection.³² He further explains that Christian eschatology is not Christianized apocalyptic and that the adoption of various apocalyptic ideas in the Easter narratives is plainly eclectic.³³ A good summary of how Moltmann understands Christ's parousia can be found in chapter three of The Church in the Power of the Spirit. He explains in this section that the N.T. contains "promises of Christ's presence in glory and open appearance and manifestation."³⁴ Parousia, which literally means presence, has gradually come to be rendered "Christ's second coming." Moltmann objects to this terminology since it seems to presuppose a period of absence. He then asks if speaking of multiple parousias, which puts them in temporal terms, does not function to weaken Christian faith's eschatological orientation.³⁵

³⁰ See e.g., Moltmann, Theology of Hope, pp. 192ff.

³¹ Moltmann, Crucified God, p. 171.

³² See Ibid., p. 174; Moltmann, Trinity and Kingdom, p. 51.

³³ Moltmann, Theology of Hope, p. 193.

³⁴ Moltmann, Church in the Power, p. 130.

³⁵ Ibid.

Moltmann explains that the N.T. writers equated Christ's return with the end of the world (Matthew 24:3 ff.; 1 Peter 4:7). Christ's parousia was expected as a universal, all-embracing and openly manifest event. Moltmann states that this orientation towards Christ's parousia is necessary in fact, but not in content.

The character of promise in the history of Jesus, the eschatological character of his cross and resurrection from the dead, the hopeful character of faith and the unique nature of the experiences of the Spirit, which point beyond themselves, would be incomprehensible without this future orientation towards Christ's parousia and hence ultimately themselves be null and void.³⁶

As to the exact form of Christ's messianic presence, Moltmann explains that it is difficult to conceive of what that would be like since conceptions are formed from experience and this presence has not yet been experienced. "The events of 'the end of the world' cannot be told either, because we can only tell of what is past."³⁷ To be unable to adequately describe this event is not to take away from its certainty and future reality. Christ's messianic future in glory and the end of the world can be both expected and anticipated.

They are expected in the hope which is kindled at the remembrance of Christ and which in its suffering over this world cries out for the new creation in righteousness. It is anticipated inasmuch as the present is brought into 'messianic abeyance', or, better, into the dynamism of the provisional.³⁸

³⁶Ibid., p. 131.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid.

At this point it is necessary to explain this outline on eschatology in the dialectical context which has been developing throughout this paper. How is it that in the crucified Jesus the "end of history" is already present in the midst of history? This happens with each death of the old self. The eschatological future of Christ seems to be the "about to emerge" potentiality of the new creation. God creates a new future each time he goes out of himself to unite with men and women in producing new creation and new being. Moltmann states that the "kingly rule of Jesus Christ" can be stated as "the Lord is Jesus."³⁹ In other words, Jesus rules by dying, the death of himself, and the death of each person which makes possible the liberating creation of the new self. Christianity is eschatology and hope. This is the hope of receiving a new self when the old self is abandoned and forsaken by God. The new self is a segment or part of Christ's eschatological history which points towards the unification and glorification of the Trinity. Jesus' life inaugurated the "end time," the messianic era. His death and resurrection represent the process of the dying of the old self and the new creation. There is a parallel process occurring in both God and humankind. God goes out of himself as Jesus, draws men and women up into synthesis to create a new being or a new self. When men and women proceed to

³⁹Ibid., p. 102

fall, God must once again go out and start the process over again. Each time he rejects or abandons a part of himself, that part which contributed to the previous synthesis. This is the dialectical requirement. Both God and humankind experience a continual cycle of death and rebirth, of rejection followed by synthesis and new creation.

CHAPTER VII

THEOLOGY OF HOPE AND LIBERATION THEOLOGY

This chapter will briefly outline the discussion and debate between Latin American theologians of liberation and Moltmann's theology of hope, politics and the kingdom. The Continental theologian most often quoted and drawn from by this group clearly is Moltmann. Jose Miguez Bonino describes Moltmann as "the theologian to whom the theology of liberation is most indebted and with whom it shows the clearest affinity."¹ Gutierrez, in his A Theology of Liberation, describes Moltmann's work as "undoubtedly one of the most important in contemporary theology."² While there may be common goals, language and emphases, there are some significant points of departure which will be developed throughout this chapter.

Once again, as in previous chapters, Moltmann's dialectical system comes through clearly in his dialogue with the Liberation theologians. It is the assertion of

¹ Jose Miguez Bonino, Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), p. 144.

² Gustavo Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation, trans. and ed. by Sister Caridad Inda and John Eagleson (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1973), p. 218.

this chapter that the objections of the Liberation theologians stem from the limitations of dialectic thought. This discussion is significant because it provides another facet portraying the dialectical system or world view in which Moltmann operates. In addition, the volume of dialogue has sharpened perspectives on both sides which in turn has shed light on Moltmann's theological perspective generally.

Objections From Latin American Liberation Theologians

The objections or arguments of the liberation theologians may vary in form, but essentially all have a similar theme. It seems to them that Moltmann, while speaking generally of liberation is not willing to suggest specific practical steps necessary to bring this liberation about.³ Moltmann is unwilling to delineate policies or laws which reflect or are consistent with the kingdom. He may provide profound declarations which make for moving proclamation, but when it comes to actual implementation, to actual steps to be taken in the real temporal, spatial

³While this thesis supports some of the liberation theologians criticisms, it must at the same time declare that Moltmann has written with both volume and eloquence on the liberation and redemption of human beings. He is very committed to human rights and explains that Christian theology cannot "allow itself to dispense with the discussion of, and the struggle for, the realization of human rights." (See Jurgen Moltmann, "A Christian Declaration on Human Rights," Reformed World 34 (June 1976): 59.

world, Moltmann seems to draw back. This may be an option in the ivory tower of Tübingen, but for someone in the trenches of political oppression and injustice found in Latin America this is impractical if not irresponsible.

Gustavo Gutierrez points out that while Promise and Kingdom in all their fullness await future fulfillment, there are present concrete manifestations. He goes on to explain that the lesson of Exodus is that man has significance in the historical and political struggle. He then explains where he and Ruben Alves differ from Moltmann. Referring to the Exodus example Gutierrez states the following:

On this point we are far from the position of Jürgen Moltmann (Theology of Hope) criticized perceptively by Ruben Alves (Theology of Human Hope, pp. 55-68); Moltmann would give the impression that he does not keep sufficiently in the mind the participation of man in his own liberation.⁴

Again, Gutierrez states:

It cannot be denied that despite all his efforts, Moltmann has difficulty finding a vocabulary both sufficiently rooted in man's concrete historical experience, in his present of oppression and exploitation, and yet abounding in potentialities--a vocabulary rooted in his possibilities of self-liberation...The hope which overcomes death must be rooted in the heart of historical praxis; if this hope does not take shape in the present to lead it forward, it will be only an evasion, a futuristic illusion."⁵

The criticisms of Jose Muguez Bonino run along similar lines. He asserts that Moltmann's social analysis remains too abstract, so that Moltmann can talk about "demonic

⁴Gutierrez, Theology of Liberation, p. 182, no. 41.

⁵Ibid., pp. 217-218.

circles of death," without "giving a coherent socio-analytical account of this manifold oppression."⁶ Miguez Bonino goes on to explain that if we are to take the cross and its history seriously it must incorporate "a coherent and all-embracing method of sociopolitical analysis."⁷ This criticism leads right into Bonino's next and perhaps more serious objection. He criticizes Moltmann for failing to give concrete content to "identification with the oppressed."⁸ Bonino quotes Moltmann to illustrate his point. "The crucified God is really a God without country and without class. But he is not an a-political God; he is the God of the poor, the oppressed, the humiliated."⁹ Miguez-Bonino insists that Moltmann cannot have it both ways:

Is it really theologically responsible to leave these two sentences hanging without trying to work out their relation? Are we really for the poor and oppressed if we fail to see them as a class, as members of oppressed societies? If we fail to say how, are we "for them" in their concrete historical situation?¹⁰

⁶ Miguez Bonino, Theology in a Revolutionary Situation, p. 147.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., p. 148.

⁹ Moltmann, Crucified God, p. 329, cited by Miguez Bonino, Theology in a Revolutionary Situation, p. 148. (Note, although Bonino appears to refer to the same edition of Crucified God used for this paper, he wrongly refers the reader to Crucified God, p. 305. Furthermore the quote from Moltmann should read, "The Crucified God is in fact a stateless and classless God. But that does not mean that he is an unpolitical God. He is the God of the poor, the oppressed and the humiliated.")

¹⁰ Miguez Bonino, Theology in a Revolutionary Situation, p. 148.

While Moltmann talks about the importance of "materializations of God's presence," at the crucial point of identification he draws back to a critical function which is neutral in the ideo-political realm.¹¹ The motive behind this retreat on the part of Moltmann and other European theologians stems from their concern to avoid "sacrilizing a particular ideology or power structure."¹² While Miguez-Bonino agrees that there are no divine politics or economics, he feels this is all the more reason why "we must resolutely use the best human politics and economics at our disposal."¹³ Another critic is Juan Segundo. Segundo is critical of eschatological hope believing that it relativizes all experiences and ideologies. Looking to the "wholly other eschatological future" is too transcendental, i.e., it does not liberate the oppressed in the historical present.¹⁴ While these are only a few examples, they are thematic to the major objections of the liberation theologians. The next section of this chapter will suggest some possible reasons for this lack of concreteness on the part of Moltmann.

¹¹ See Moltmann, Crucified God, p. 337.

¹² Miguez Bonino, Theology in a Revolutionary Situation, p. 149.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Juan Segundo, "The Choice Between Capitalism and Socialism as the Theological Crux," Concilium (October 1974), cited by Jurgen Moltmann, "An Open Letter to Jose Miguez Bonino," trans. Douglas Meeks, Christianity and Crises 36 (March 1976): 58.

Moltmann's Response

Not suprisingly Moltmann has reponded to these and like criticisms. With regard to Segundo for instance, Moltmann maintains that Segundo has only read the first half of Barth and Bonhoeffer, explaining that both these men "spoke constantly of the stimulation and intensification of historical hopes through the eschatological hope, not to speak of Metz and me."¹⁵ He agrees with Segundo when he explains that Jesus' messianic actions did not function in a way which "deabsolutized," but rather was indeed an "absolutizing" of what to us would seem unwise.¹⁶ What does all this mean? Again, as throughout this thesis, these statements must be understood in the dialectical system in which Moltmann operates.

How is it that the eschatological hope impinges on present reality in such a way that present historical hopes are stimulated and intensified? The eschatological hope is the hope for new being, the creation of a new self, an activity of God done for the purpose of bringing men and women up into harmony with himself, ultimately for his own completeness. Existence is a cyclic history of new creation, fall (any action in history or time), the rejection of the fallen or old self in order for the

¹⁵Moltmann, "Open Letter to Bonino," p. 58.

¹⁶Segundo, "Choice Between Capitalism and Socialism," cited in Moltmann, "Open Letter to Bonino," p. 58.

creation of the new self, fall, etc., etc. In a sense then, people are the embodiment of a collection of old selves and at any moment the particular new self they are currently receiving. The "absolutizing" activity is the creation of the new self. The new self may provide a perspective which suggests a new direction or plan which seems unwise in the judgement of the accumulated old selves. This is the irony of the dialectical system. The reason men and women should have faith in the new direction or perspective is because it reflects the creation of the new self. This then defines orthopraxis. It is right acting or right doing. It is nothing less than God's action of creating the new self. God acts to liberate the person from his or her old sinful self and to bring him or her back into harmony with God and himself or herself. He does this by going out of himself in order to bring them up into himself. This thesis suggests that the going out (which is done by the second person of the Godhead, as explained above) is what Moltmann means by "orthopraxis." As such, this is indeed a transcendental orientation over against a historical emphasis. The creating of the new self does not have "causal character." It does not cause some political arrangement or structure to come into being which represents the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God seems to be a community of "new selves" which function or cause one to become aware or conscious of the experience of liberation. Liberation then is a change in

consciousness caused by the creation of the new self which in turn is the result of God's orthopraxis.

Moltmann describes the present effect of the imminent kingdom as being "man's conversion and his liberation from the godless and inhuman relationships of this world."¹⁷ The messianic kingdom is therefore, to be found in the multitude of new selves present at any one time, and not in the establishing of democratic socialism in space and time through the cooperative action of these selves. Furthermore, on any particular day in earthly history, the community of new or eternal selves is only a "fragment," because in the next moment orthopraxis creates new selves which judge that fragment as god-forsaken. These ideas come into clearer focus with a brief consideration of "law" as it appears variously in Moltmann's writings.

The precedence or priority of the creation of the new self and different ideas stemming from that new creation over against previously held notions or laws is reflected in Moltmann's various discussions of law, and in particular, Jesus' relationship to the law. The first point to consider is that while Jesus was here on earth, he was clearly taking issue with the law.

Anyone who preached God's law as the law of grace for the unrighteous and those without rights, anyone who--when he was only a carpenter's son--set himself above the authority of Moses, was bound to come into conflict with the established law and its custodians.¹⁸

¹⁷Moltmann, Church in the Power, p. 134.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 87.

What was it exactly that Jesus was in conflict with? Was he actually in conflict with God's law or was he in conflict with the contemporary interpretations of that law? For instance, did Jesus and his disciples actually transgress the Sabbath commandment when he and his disciples ate corn (see Mt. 12: 1ff.) or was he actually clarifying what God really intended the Sabbath to be, over against traditions of men? Some statements seem to indicate the latter. In a section which explains one of the reasons for Jesus' death, namely that he was considered to be a blasphemer, Moltmann states that the disciples fled from the cross and hence in no way maintained their faith. Moltmann explains that:

From this point of view, the life of Jesus was a theological clash between him and the prevailing understanding of the law. From this clash arose the legal trial concerning the righteousness of God in which his gospel and the law were opponents.¹⁹

The majority of Moltmann's discussion supports an actual confrontation with the law itself however. In this same section Moltmann goes on to explain that the primitive Christian interpretations of the cross in the light of the resurrection were a recapitulation of the trial

in which Jesus and the law are opposed...Paul did this with complete clarity: since the law had brought Jesus to his death upon the cross, so the risen and exalted Jesus becomes 'the end of the law that everyone who has faith may be justified' (Rom. 10:4).²⁰

¹⁹Moltmann, Crucified God, p. 133, see also, p. 131.

²⁰Ibid., p. 133.

Moltmann is certainly making reference here to righteousness by faith versus righteousness by works, but his continued development of this theme requires further discussion.

Moltmann explains that fundamentally the dispute between Jesus and the law has to do with God's true will:

Jesus' claim to fulfill the law of the righteousness of God, the claim made in the Sermon on the Mount, and his freedom from the law should not be understood as contradictory. For Jesus the "radicalization of the Torah" and the "transgression of the Torah" basically both amount to the same thing, the freedom of God to show grace. Thus the right which he claimed to forgive sins goes beyond the Torah and reveals a new righteousness of God, which could not be expected according to the traditions of the law.²¹

Furthermore, by showing prevenient love and gracious mercy towards men and women, Jesus placed himself above the authority of Moses and the law. "The acts of forgiveness of sin represent the very culmination of his freedom from the law, for the right of showing mercy belongs to the judge alone."²² Rather than being caught up in the vicious, circular legal systems of life, a person endeavoring to follow the "godless" Son of God will seek "after the living will of God towards new creation."²³ This is, in the opinion of this thesis, an expression of the priority of the new self and its orientation over against previous ideas and understandings. In the context of a discussion of Easter as a feast of freedom, Moltmann emphasizes the spontaneity, joy and liberation that are all part of this experience:

²¹Ibid., p. 132.

²²Ibid., p. 129.

²³Moltmann, Church in the Power, p. 89.

The feast of freedom is itself the festal liberation of life. For a particular time, in a particular space, through a particular community, the laws and compulsions of 'this world' become invalid. The laws, purposes and compulsions of everyday life no longer apply. An alternative emerges and is present-j festal terms. This feast always means first of all that a community is freed from every compulsion and arrives at the spontaneous expression of its feelings, spontaneous ideas and spontaneous bodily movements.²⁴

Each time an individual receives a new self, a new festal alternative arises. He or she should not be shakled or judged on the basis of previous thinking or ideas since they reflect the old self or selves which have been rejected in favor of the new.

Response

What is troubling to the liberation theologians is what they perceive to be in Moltmann a certain vagueness and obscurantism. They are not content with theologizing about freedom, liberation and justice, but want to move ahead with praxis, the actual steps that need to be taken to make these concepts reality in our present world. Moltmann certainly shares their "present world" orientation over against a strictly other-worldly kingdom in the sweet by and by. For this they applaud, but ultimately they find his position to be too moderate.

As stated above, it is the contention of this thesis that the underlying reason for Moltmann's moderateness stems

²⁴Ibid., p. 111.

from the basic understandings of the dialectical system. Existence as defined by the dialectical system is one of fall, the receiving of a new self, fall, etc. God goes out of himself to create within us a new being by bringing us up into himself so that he may be "all in all." The Incarnation represents on a macroscale the multitudinous incarnations that take place each time a new self is created on a micro scale. With Jesus' incarnation, the Messianic age had begun. The older, former things passed away in favor of the new creations and revelations of Jesus. Righteousness was no longer to be defined as careful obedience, but in having an openness to new creation. Thoughts and ideas which reflect the new being are not under compulsion to logically follow from previous ideas which represent the thinking of old, now rejected, selves. It is therefore impossible to develop policies or a modus operandi which reflect the kingdom. As described above, the kingdom is not to be identified with a particular set of conditions, but is better described as a community, the community of heavenly new selves which exists in heaven and come down to earth to create a change in us. While it is true that the new self will certainly give a perspective of what is right for the moment, there is no assurance that God will lead in this direction in the next moment, hence Moltmann's uncertainty. What is important is that individuals have an orientation towards this new creation, rather than try to

identify policies which are "Kingdom like." The only orthopraxis that takes place is on the part of God. It is his activity of going out of himself to create new being, etc.

The objections of the Latin American theologians are ones shared by this thesis. What follows, then, will be a response to various positions outlined above, accompanied by an alternative which it is believed the liberation theologians will find more acceptable.

First will be discussed whether or not Jesus was actually in conflict with the law. There can be no question that Jesus was opposed to any system which set out to appease or satisfy God on the basis of various deeds or works. Over and over the New Testament describes salvation as a free gift, something the law is unable to provide. "The conclusion of the matter is this: there is no condemnation for those who are united with Christ Jesus, because in Christ Jesus the life-giving law of the Spirit has set you free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:1-3, NEB) This theme is developed throughout Paul's epistle to the Romans. The question is then, did God ever intend for justification and righteousness to be based on the consistent keeping of the Torah, etc? If indeed Jesus came to demonstrate what his Father was like and what his will was and has been for people's lives, the answer to this question is no. What Jesus objected to was the

misinterpretation and tradition that had grown up around the law. The purpose of these additions ostensibly was to protect the law, but in fact the result was to obscure both the letter and the spirit of the law. Jesus came to strip away these encumbrances and clear up any misunderstanding about God's true will. The supposed guardians of the law had elevated the traditions of men in such a way as to be in conflict with the law of God (see Mt.15:1-9). A good example of this was Sabbath keeping. The Sabbath had become a day of great restriction. Literally thousands of rules governed its observance. The significance of the Sabbath as a day of re-creation and rest had been lost sight of. Therefore Jesus did not object to his disciples picking some corn and he did not stop his work of healing and exorcising on the Sabbath. Paul develops this theme when he explains that what is important is the circumcision of the heart, rather than the circumcision of the flesh (see Rom.2:29).

It is the contention of this thesis that Jesus was not acting in a new way that was inconsistent with the law or Torah. Jesus' "radicalization" of the Torah was not the same as the "transgression" of the Torah.²⁵ On the contrary it was the proper expression of the Torah, the very essence or underlying harmony that God had in mind from the very beginning. The circumcised heart which Paul discusses in Romans is the same message found in Deuteronomy 30:6, "The

²⁵See Moltmann, Crucified God, p. 132.

Lord your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendents, so that you will love him with all your heart and soul and you will live." Jesus' love and acceptance for those who had been rejected by society reflects God's instructions for how strangers should be treated hundreds of years earlier, "When an alien settles with you in your land, you shall not oppress him. He shall be treated as a native born among you, and you shall love him as a man like yourself, because you were once aliens in Egypt" Leviticus 19: 33,34. Jesus' miraculous feedings (see e.g. Mt. 14: 15-21) exemplified God's attitude towards the poor and hungry outlined long before: "When you reap the harvest in your land, you shall not reap right into the edges of your field, neither shall you glean the fallen ears. You shall leave them for the poor and for the alien", Leviticus 23: 22. What this thesis is suggesting is that there are indeed eternal principles of peace, justice and liberation which reflect God's kingdom. While the application of these principles may vary, there can be no question of the need to do all that is possible to make the kingdom a reality now, to in Miguez-Bonino's words, "use the best human politics and economics at our disposal."²⁶ On this point Moltmann explains that Christianity's hope is "not directed towards 'another world, but towards the world

²⁶Miguez Bonino, Theology in a Revolutionary Situation, p. 149.

as it is changed in the kingdom of God."²⁷ He further describes the kingdom in this way:

The liberating rule of God can thus be understood as the immanence of the eschatological kingdom, and the coming kingdom can be interpreted as the transcendence of the believed and experienced rule of God in the present. This understanding forbids us to banish the lordship of God to a future world. But it also forbids us to identify the kingdom of God with conditions in history, whether they be already existing or desired.²⁸

In the context of the dialectical system this is an understandable statement indeed. On the other hand, however, is it not possible to avoid identifying the kingdom ultimately with a particular system or structure, but at the same time determine policies in harmony with kingdom principles? This thesis agrees with the liberation theologians that it is not only possible, but irresponsible to do otherwise. Furthermore, this is done by identifying the eternal, underlying principles of peace, justice and liberation. This process seeks after a fulfillment of the law rather than a rejection of the law. God wants men and women to experience new creation, but a new creation which is a change in direction or orientation from their normal selfish direction. As people behold the good and become changed, gradually they are enabled to love one another as God has wanted from the beginning (see 2 John, vs. 5,6). Policies and ideas from long ago do not need to be rejected so long as they are consistent with the underlying

²⁷Moltmann, Church in the Power, p. 164.

²⁸Ibid., p. 190.

principles of peace, justice, etc. Furthermore, the soundness of new concepts should be considered for their continuity with these earlier principles.

CHAPTER VIII

RESPONSE

It was stated in the preface at the beginning of this thesis that its major purpose would be descriptive. Consequently, the previous chapters have attempted to briefly outline some of the major themes found in the writings of Jurgen Moltmann. Special attention was given to his understanding of Christology and related topics. The development of these themes has reflected the dialectical framework in which they are written. To only be descriptive, however, would be below the standard of scholarship, and inconsistent with Moltmann's own intentions. It is his goal to participate in and to invite dialogue. This concluding chapter is a "response" to that invitation. The term response is preferred to conclusion as it seems to be more consistent with dialogue and sensitive to the relativity of an individual's experience. Any person who has read the writings of Jurgen Moltmann, must first sit back and marvel at his depth as a theologian and his compassion as a pastor. At a 1983 American Academy of Religion meeting, John Cobb was asked to respond to a

paper presented by Moltmann on the Trinity. Early in his response, having affirmed Moltmann's view of an open Trinity, Cobb gave this description of Moltmann's accomplishments.

There is much else in Moltmann's work on the Trinity in which I rejoice. He has developed in a rich theological way the doctrine of God's suffering not only with Jesus on the cross but with all creaturely suffering. He has done much to heal the ancient filioque quarrel that played its role in the division of Eastern and Western Christianity. He has correlated Trinitarian images with issues in the political world. And he has given reality and authenticity to Trinitarian thought by grounding it in the history of salvation. These are massive achievements, and I can only admire and envy the scholarship they reflect and that makes them possible.¹

This lengthy quote is included not only because it provides a helpful summary, but also for the value of the last sentence. Moltmann's scholarship as a theologian and compassion as a person provide great incentive for study. It is out of respect for what he has done that this "response" is offered.

Response to Chapter One: Boehme and Schelling

The opening chapter of this thesis outlined some important themes in the writings of Jacob Boehme and Frederick Schelling. Both of these men have significantly

¹This quote comes from a response made by John Cobb of Claremont Graduate School to a paper entitled, "The Unity of the Trinitarian God," presented by Moltmann, at an American Academy of Religion Meeting held in Dallas, Texas, December, 19-22, 1983.

contributed to the development of dialectical and in Moltmann's case, trinitarian theology.²

Boehme understands all of life to be caught up in a dynamic process of actualization. This actualization occurs only through contrast and struggle with opposing factors. God too is involved in this actualization process which Boehme refers to as God's theogonic movement. He sees a threeness in that movement; will, essence and life. Schelling later draws from these three elements to describe three potencies. It is the contention of this thesis that this stream of thought has contributed extensively to Moltmann's development of the Trinity.

Going back to Boehme, it is necessary to consider the first will, the Unground. While it is difficult to precisely describe the Unground, it can be thought of as eternal nothingness, a principle contained within God which is different from him and exists from eternity. Berdyaev explains that it is from this initial will that the Trinity is realized or given birth. It is at the point of suggesting that there is in God a dark side or in some way an evil nature which has existed from eternity that this response must diverge. There can be no question that life is filled with suffering and death and that good is often exhibited or demonstrated in the context of overcoming

²Moltmann's indebtedness to Schelling is pointed out by Richard Bauckham, "Moltmann's Eschatology of the Cross," p. 304.

evil. Explaining this situation is perhaps the greatest challenge facing Christianity. If, however, evil is inherent in God and reality and both are necessary for the existence of the other, then in fact evil will always exist. This would contribute more to a theology of hopelessness, rather than a theology of hope. Any position taken will ultimately have a price tag. The dialectical requirement of the presence of evil is, existentially speaking, too high a price and would ultimately drive Christians to despair.

Boehme goes on to describe the theogonic process. Initially there is will (Unground). From this will proceeds an eye or mirror which reveals the will, i.e. enables the will to be actualized, something it could not do without the mirror. The actualization of this initial will is a process of moving from ungroundedness to groundedness. The ungroundedness is the Father and the groundedness is the Son. The Holy Spirit is more elusive, but seems to refer to the process whereby the Unground (Father) goes into itself and comes out as groundedness (Son). Here all three members of the Godhead are involved in a continual process. With Boehme can be found the origins or at least a significant contribution to the theogonic process developed throughout this thesis in which God goes out of himself as Son (Logos) to bring men and women into unity with himself and thereby give them new identity and in the process to bring unity to himself.

Response to Schelling

The first chapter of this thesis referred to Boehme's influence on Schelling. Similar to Boehme, Schelling understands the beginnings of life and the world to have been, in his term, unruly. He talks about an irreducible element which is necessary for anything to achieve reality or to come into existence. There is an initial darkness that drives men towards light. Schelling continues with a reference to Plato's "matter." This provides a clue to the origins of the dialectical or dualistic system. Schelling explicitly states that life only becomes active as it struggles with opposites. Contradiction is necessary for life to be realized. Clearly, Schelling is filling out and giving clearer descriptions of the more ambiguous and symbolic themes found in Boehme.

Schelling perceives a duality in God, the presence of a limiting negating power opposed to God's affirming and expanding side. Schelling could not accept theism's perfect, omnipotent God and replaced this self-sufficient God with one who was becoming. The idea that God is involved in a process of becoming is helpful, but is it necessary to see in this becoming a metaphysical negating power, a duality within God? God can be described as a becoming God in the sense that his experience and knowledge are in a constant state of change. This does not mean or

require that there is in God, an inherent evil or chaotic nature at war with another "good side" of God. God's knowledge, for instance is ever increasing relative to what there is to know. This is a quantitative increase, rather than a qualitative one. In other words, the content of God's knowledge may vary, but not the quality of his knowledge. God can, therefore, be involved in a process of becoming while only having a good nature.

Schelling develops a system of three potencies which depend on each other and bring one another to fulfillment. The first potency, the "basis" of God, is similar to Boehme's initial will, the Ungrund. This potency, which is a part of God, is described as an active negation from which evil arises. Hence a dualism is set up. Schelling describes these three potencies as being in "indissoluble concatenation." These potencies exist in relation to each other. Each is needed to bring the other to fulfillment and actuality. The second potency provides an eternal Yes to complement the eternal No of the first potency. The second potency, in turn, needs to be helped by a third, higher potency. It is not clear why the third potency does not require a fourth, etc. These three potencies are involved in a continual process in God of expansion, contraction, extension and return. Here again are the roots of Moltmann's trinitarian process in which God goes out of himself to eventually return in greater unity. Schelling's

three potencies correspond to Boehme's will, essence and life. These in turn contribute to the discussion of Father, Son and Spirit in Moltmann. Just as the three potencies are in concatenation, so the three members of the Godhead exist in a mutually constitutive relationship in which each exists in and through its relations to the other.³

In summary: Moltmann is undoubtedly on the cutting edge of dialectical and trinitarian theology. John Cobb refers to what he is doing as a "dazzling theological performance." The objections raised in this thesis have to do with the fundamental presuppositions of dialectical theology generally, not with the coherency or consistency of what Moltmann has done within that system. The seemingly overwhelming nature of evil does in fact cause a person to wonder if evil is inherent in reality, in God himself. There is not an adequate answer. This thesis suggests that while its presence cannot be fully explained it can be at least partially accounted for. God created our world with great freedom. If people are free, then they must be able to make decisions. This necessarily meant that humankind was free to trust God and obey him or choose to distrust God, to sin and participate in evil. Furthermore, good does not require evil in order to become a reality. It is freely extended and expressed by God without the need for any other force other than God's desire to communicate what he is in

³Cobb, Unpublished response to Moltmann, AAR Meeting, 1983.

himself. These points of departure will be further developed throughout this concluding chapter.

Response to Chapter Two: The Trinity

In Moltmann's discussion of the Trinity, he suggests that it is possible to learn about how God has been from eternity by considering Christ in time. Since Jesus came to communicate what God is like, this is a helpful concept. This thesis agrees that God chose in his freedom to create the world and furthermore, that he sustains it moment by moment. Moltmann makes another important point when he explains that God created humankind with freedom which they in turn, chose to abuse. Because God is our Creator, this is both his problem and our problem. Moltmann draws from Berdyaev who grapples for an explanation of all the pain and suffering that overwhelms humankind. Berdyaev proposes that there is in God a process or a movement stemming from and fueled by an inner conflict in the depths of the divine life. As pointed out above, this thesis agrees that God is "becoming," but that does not necessarily include the idea of conflict within God. To account for evil it is necessary to go back to humankind's misuse of freedom. This is as far back as it is possible to go, the metaphysical limit.

Moltmann draws from Miguel de Unamuno and Franz Rosenzweig to describe the Father as a God of freedom and

love. He goes out of himself to enter into creation. This going out is the self-differentiation of the one God which leads to the suggestion of a divorce in God, estrangement, a rift; so that God himself is in need of redemption. At this juncture some questions must be raised. Is it necessary to conclude that because God cares about humanity's redemption and so in one form or another joins with his creation in their struggle, that he in turn needs redemption. Cannot God choose to influence and motivate humankind (while respecting our freedom), and stay unified in thought and purpose within himself? Why must there be some kind of split?

In the section on "God and Freedom" the question was raised as to whether God has chosen to participate with humanity out of freedom or out of necessity for the completion of his own being. This thesis suggests that God freely chose to create humankind. Having done this and then observing the entrance of sin and evil, it is difficult to conceive of God not being involved in their redemption. There can be no question that God will be different, having participated in this process. It does not seem, however, that the completion of his being depends on his involvement and any consequent responses from men and women.

The issues raised in the sections on "Opposition in God" and "The Union of God" have already been addressed. Love is defined as self-sacrifice. Sacrifice suggests

having to suffer from or through something. Because God is love from eternity, he must have suffered from eternity. What else could he suffer from, but something which was not really him, i.e. evil. This logically holds together providing it is accepted that to love requires self-sacrifice and that in turn requires suffering, etc. The hinge pin in this argument is how love is defined. It is true that love often involves self-sacrifice. This thesis maintains that ultimately love leads to unity and fulfillment and all that is best for the self, rather than what is destructive for the self. While it may be the most loving thing to do to lay down a person's life in some circumstances, it could be a very selfish thing to do in other contexts.

Response to Chapter Three: The Cross

Moltmann refuses to water down the harsh realities of the cross. Considering the experiences out of which his theology grew, this becomes understandable. As a young man of seventeen he was drafted as an assistant in the anti-aircraft division of Hamburg. In July of that year (1943) Hamburg suffered a week of bombings which killed most of his co-workers and left him wounded. In 1944 he became a soldier, was taken prisoner in 1945, and remained in prison camps until 1948. The conditions were quite terrible and

contributed to a sense of hopelessness. He describes this experience in this way.

My fellow prisoners and I had no idea what was happening at home. We were broken men. Some of us fell sick during that time and died out of hopelessness. But I myself was gripped by a new hope which enabled me to survive. That hope was the hope of Jesus Christ, to which some Christian fellow prisoners testified in conversations with me.⁴

It was out of this context that Moltmann decided to abandon his original plans to study mathematics and physics and pursue theology. It is this background that must be considered when reading his theological work, and particularly the theology of the cross. Having personally experienced the terrible hells of war and hopelessness, Moltmann set out to discover "what kind of faith enabled a person to survive in such situations."⁵ It was that element of Christian faith that provides people with the courage to confront nothingness that inspired him to study theology.

Moltmann declares that an adequate theology of the cross will revolutionize typical concepts of God. The church must come to grips with Jesus' dying cry of forsakenness. He concludes that God not only forsook Jesus, but actually killed him. He suggests that Paul and Mark believed that God raised Jesus, but also crucified him. In the context of Moltmann's dialectical system this is a reasonable and necessary conclusion. To understand the

⁴Miroslav Volf, "Communities of Faith and Radical Discipleship: An Interview with Jurgen Moltmann," The Christian Century 100 (March 1983): 246.

⁵Ibid.

cross in the dialectical context in which Moltmann explains it, requires a major revolutionizing of our concept of God indeed. God killed Jesus. The Father murdered the Son. What could be more radical in effecting our concept of God? All of this took place, however, in order that the resurrection could take place. The supreme sacrifice of death was necessary for the ultimate triumph of life. God goes out of himself in order to bring humankind up into himself, in order that he may be "all in all." Good is actualized only as it overcomes that which opposes it, namely evil and chaos. Within a dialectical framework this revolution is absolutely essential. The principle necessary for understanding here, is what Richard Bauckham describes as the "dialectical principle" of knowledge, a "revelation in contradiction," for it is in the context of greatest godforsakeness that people discover the "crucified" God.⁶ There is much in Moltmann's discussion of the cross that this thesis wants to affirm, though these mutual perspectives are often arrived at in a much different manner and ultimately a different interpretation of the Easter records is favored.

First, with Moltmann, this thesis wishes to affirm the horribleness of the experience of the cross for Jesus. It is difficult to imagine a more difficult death in any regard. Not only would the physical pain have been

⁶Bauckham, "Moltmann's Eschatology of the Cross," p. 304.

excruciating, but the abandonment by his disciples and the "apparent" absence of his Father could have produced a misery which even exceeded his physical suffering. It is, therefore, quite understandable that Jesus would cry out in his desperate loneliness while hanging before mockers and those skilled in abuse.

Also with Moltmann, there can be no question that at the cross the ultimate contradiction between good and evil is made manifest. Furthermore, God, in Jesus, even experiences the contradiction of death. This thesis denies, however, that there is contradiction inside of God. There is no opposition or abandonment between the Father and the Son. This is not only an objection to the idea of God abandoning Jesus, but is on a more fundamental level, an objection to the dialectical world view which requires this. Abandonment is a reasonable interpretation in the dialectical context of Moltmann's theology. Indeed, the Unground and chaos of the dialectical system describe well the pain and evil of this world. This thesis suggests, however, an alternative world view. No individual has conclusive, irrefutable evidence to answer metaphysical questions and must realize the limitations of his or her perspective. Each decision carries a price tag. The adoption of a particular world view logically leads to certain conclusions. If indeed, the dialectical system requires God not only to abandon individuals and his

creation generally, but also himself in the form of his Son, this is too high a price. To assert that the Father rejected the Son is, from an existential standpoint a source of hopelessness, rather than a source of hope.

The complete development of an alternative world view is beyond the scope of this paper. However, a brief description is necessary. What this thesis finds lacking in Moltmann's work up to this point is an adequate discussion of freedom. This thesis supports a world view which accounts for Jesus death, as well as the chaos and evil of this world by considering the consequences of freedom and its misuse.

It is quite clear from the Easter narratives that the Father permitted the ignominious death of his Son. He chose not to intervene, and in that sense to be quite absent. This decision on God's part, however, was out of respect for an earlier decision made by Jesus in Gethsemane to go through this terrible ordeal (Mark 14:36). This was a decision Jesus chose to make and was not coerced into. If the father had intervened to stop the death of the Son, he would not have been respecting Jesus' power of free choice, i.e. Jesus would not have been genuinely free.

With Moltmann, this thesis wants to emphasize the cross as a symbol of God's solidarity with humanity and his willingness to experience and endure the pain of this world. This thesis also supports Moltmann's unwillingness for the

cross and resurrection to ever be considered in isolation, and the absolute necessity of understanding one in the light of the other. Also with Moltmann, this thesis rejoices that the resurrection of one considered to be a rebel and a blasphemer (but who was actually faithful) indicates God's true righteousness in accepting those who have been rejected by society and condemned by legalistic religiosity. The point of departure is the suggestion that the one who was raised was one abandoned by God. Rather, the resurrection shows once and for all that indeed Jesus was not abandoned by God. Furthermore it shows that evil and chaos, which are foreign to God will ultimately be defeated.

How, then, should the cross be understood? The cross is important, not because God has gone the ultimate distance in self-differentiation to facilitate a new Messianic death and rebirth, but to show humankind a.) the great freedom they have, b.) the extent to which that freedom can be abused and the resulting consequences, and c.) the great love God has for them. At no other time in history has there been a more dramatic illustration of what humankind is capable of when following a path of evil on the one hand, and on the other hand, the extent God is willing to go to convince men and women to be in a saving relationship with him. With the cross, God has done all he possibly could to reach out to humankind and challenge them with using

their freedom responsibly, while still respecting that freedom.

Also in the chapter on the cross it was explained that the cross event created a vastness in God so that there is room for the whole world, living and dead. How this impinges on the dead is not elaborated on in detail. In response to this, this thesis suggests that from eternity God has always had sufficient size and capacity to accept all humanity. It is as men and women become aware of this acceptance and come to understand his love and then commit themselves in action that they are saved and changed. This decision is made possible by God. It does not reflect some change in God, but is a response to how he has been from eternity. He does not need to die, become the new Logos, bring men and women up into unity with him, etc. It is true that as people are changed they lose interest in some things and in a sense die to them. This happens as they behold the good, not to make the change possible.

Later in this same chapter, Moltmann explains that Christ's Messianic mission was only fulfilled in his death. This thesis wants to affirm this position though for different reasons. For Moltmann, God has gone the ultimate distance that self-sacrificing love can go. Before there is life there must be death. This thesis would suggest, on the other hand, that Jesus had to die if men and women were to fully comprehend the laws of cause and effect, the

inevitable end of misusing freedom and the other reasons listed above. It was not because new life can only be realized as it overcomes death.

Response to Resurrection

As with the response to Moltmann's discussion of the cross event, there is much that this thesis wishes to affirm in his development of the resurrection. Again, these areas of agreement may be arrived at in a different way or stem from a different process of reasoning. As was briefly developed in the previous chapter, these differences will stem largely from the preference of this thesis for a world view reflecting a greater emphasis on and a different interpretation of freedom as compared to Moltmann's dialectical world view.

In the section entitled, "The Form of the Resurrection", it was pointed out that methodologically, Moltmann explains that the place to begin to understand the resurrection is with the eyewitnesses. This is, however, a problematic starting point. Jesus was crucified in public, but his disciples first learned of his resurrection only through his "appearances." He further explains that Easter faith did not derive only from apocalyptic themes, but from Jesus' proclamation of an approaching kingdom of grace and as such already represented a change from the apocalyptic

mood of the time.⁷ Furthermore, the appearances of Jesus were not something that could have been perceived through a physical seeing with eyes, i.e. something which could have been recorded with a video camera. Moltmann instead compares them to Old Testament theophany accounts by which a person experiences the appearance of God in his knowledge of God. He further points out that it is not scientific data that attests to the resurrection, but rather, Easter faith. He takes exception to the idea of the resuscitation of a dead man, since it is unlike our history in which death is so prominent. Furthermore, to say that the raising of Jesus must be historically verifiable, would require men and women to so alter their concept of history, that it would allow for God to raise the dead and would make it possible to see in this raising of the dead the prophesied end of history.

In the next section of this chapter, "The Meaning of the Resurrection", it was explained that the resurrection was an eschatological event. It points to a God who promises "a new creation of all things in righteousness and peace."⁸ The resurrection is not a revivification. It is a creative action by God which "raises the dead in the word of promise which creates faith."⁹ He goes on to explain that the eschatological resurrection of the dead does not mean a restoration of the creation which was made obsolete by sin.

⁷Moltmann, Crucified God, p. 166.

⁸Moltmann, Theology of Hope, pp. 22-23.

⁹Moltmann, Crucified God, p. 188.

Rather it signifies the "'creation of the end time' that is now dawning."¹⁰ Neither is the resurrection to be understood in an apocalyptic sense as the ontic presupposition for God's righteousness to be shown in a final judgement. The resurrection is in itself the reality of God's new righteousness and the new creation which comes from this righteousness. It is not necessary, therefore, to have two periods, one of present death, and one of future life. Through the resurrection the new world of life has already gained victory over this world of death, death's power has been overthrown and God's glory has dawned in Jesus.¹¹

The last section of this chapter addressed the relationship between the cross and the resurrection. As was explained above in the discussion on the cross, a full understanding of either cross or resurrection requires that both be considered together. In order for men and women to come to grips with the resurrection and experience new life they must understand the crucified God. On the other hand it is only the resurrection that qualifies the cross to be redemptive.

Having briefly summarized chapter four, this thesis will next discuss areas of commonality as well as points of departure. This thesis agrees that the resurrection was an "eschatological" event. As such it has present significance

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Moltmann, Church in the Power, p. 99.

and in addition points forward to the future. The resurrection reflects God's righteousness, justice and creative power. The reality of the resurrection provides great hope that present painful (cross) experiences will not ultimately prevail. The resurrection of one regarded by many to be a rebel and a blasphemer clarifies God's righteousness in offering grace to those forsaken and cast out by society. In this context, the resurrection clearly stands in opposition to several features of the apocalyptic mood of the time. A person's value or qualification for salvation was not to be judged by how well he or she kept a multitude of manmade rules and regulations. The one raised was the very one who "broke" the Sabbath by healing, who spent time with prostitutes and tax collectors, whose teachings of peace challenged the present political structure, etc., etc. Jesus did not come proclaiming death for Israel's enemies on the basis of retributive justice. Rather, he taught that enemies should be loved. Moltmann also makes a helpful point when he points out the difficulty of understanding the raising of Jesus to be historically verifiable. There is no other event in history that parallels the resurrection to provide some reference point.

The points of question or departure are these.

Moltmann objects to any revivification-like interpretations of the resurrection, because this is so unlike our world which is dominated by death. Instead he suggests something

analogous to Old Testament theophany accounts. This thesis would assert that the theophany accounts to which he refers are also somewhat rare, and really cannot be accounted for with modern historical methods or scientific data. What is at issue here, is where to draw the lines of evidence and faith. Again, the comprehensive development of an alternative is beyond the scope of this paper. Stated briefly, this thesis favors a resurrection interpretation that might broadly reflect a more conservative view of scripture which includes an actual rolling away of the stone and the coming forth of Jesus. There can be no question that he came forth in a transformed state of existence that is indeed unlike anything previously experienced and at best difficult to imagine. At the same time, this thesis suggests that while Jesus may have assumed a variety of forms, post-resurrection, he did appear in a form which could not only be seen with more than the mind's eye, namely visually, he could even be touched and partake of nourishment. (See Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; and John 20,21.)

Moltmann maintains that to say the resurrection is historically verifiable requires a change in the concept of the historical so that it includes the possibility of God raising the dead. This in turn makes possible seeing in this raising the end of history. He states further that calling the raising of Jesus historically verifiable

presupposes a concept of history which is "dominated by the expectation of a general resurrection of the dead as the end and consummation of history. Resurrection and the concept of history then contain a vicious circle for the understanding."¹² Moltmann does not want the resurrection to be limited by inadequate conceptions of history. The resurrection is a history making event and not vice versa. With Moltmann this thesis agrees that there is much about God and divine activity that far exceeds current concepts of reality and understanding. Human beings are never-the-less bound by present conceptions for the purposes of description, comparison, etc., hence Moltmann's dilemma. Perhaps an alternative is a compromise which seeks to describe as far as possible that which is historically verifiable, while acknowledging the profound mystery of the cross and resurrection which goes beyond human understanding. Included among possible historically verifiable occurrences would be observable wounds which revealed the identity of who was raised and a physical form which could not only be touched, but which could also consume food, see texts listed above.

Moltmann also objects to the apocalyptic idea of a general resurrection of the dead and the consummation of history. This thesis maintains that Moltmann objects to the idea of the consummation of history because the dialectical

¹²Moltmann, Theology of Hope, p. 82.

system makes no provision for an "end of time" when evil and sin no longer exist. If there is a dual nature in God and good is only manifest as it overcomes bad, then the future only holds a vicious circle of struggle. This thesis would suggest that this is a circle of much greater viciousness than the one Moltmann refers to above. Furthermore, to maintain that the raising of Jesus is not historically verifiable may also mean that current accepted concepts of history are in need of revision. At the very least more research could be done in the area of accounting for divine activity in history.

What is a possible alternative to the dialectic view of the resurrection? This thesis would suggest that not only was the resurrection a vindication of Jesus and all that his life stood for, it was also clear indication that ultimately God's mercy and justice would prevail. Clearly, as Moltmann has emphasized, present existence for many is one of injustice, pain, and a lack of freedom. A very good example of the present lack of freedom can be found in Moltmann's discussion of protest atheism. He illustrates this form of atheism by referring to a story told by Ivan Karamazov, a character in one of Dostoevsky's novels.¹³ Karamazov tells the story of a poor serf child who hit his master's hunting dog with a stone while playing. The master proceeded to have the boy hunted and torn to pieces by the

¹³Moltmann, Crucified God, p. 220.

master's hounds and all this before his mother's eyes. What is protested against is not God, but rather the world he has made which would allow such atrocities.

This thesis has suggested that evil can be accounted for by referring to the misuse of freedom. The challenge to that supposition, is the child torn apart by dogs. What about the child's freedom? It is clear that in this life he had none. It would seem, then, that justice, mercy and love would require some ultimate, final resolution and another life for this boy. Only then would this boy experience parallel Jesus' life of cross and resurrection. Otherwise, for eternity injustice would remain and then, perhaps, a dialectical model is the best explanation. In this regard, this thesis asserts that the resurrection points to a future time when evil will be eliminated and victims of abuse, like the boy in Karmazov's story, will finally be given another chance for life. This does not change the severity of present suffering and injustice. It does provide hope, because while it takes very seriously the cross of the present, it finds hope in the resurrection following the cross experience. What may be the only source of hope amidst the terrible suffering and evil of this world is knowing that God himself suffered the pain and hell of death and that ultimately, he was resurrected.

Ultimately there will be a day of reckoning in which innocent victims will be vindicated and those who have been

free to choose a path of evil will experience ultimate evil, namely separation from God and death. To anticipate a future in which evil is ultimately eradicated from existence and creation is restored based on an "apocalyptic like" interpretation of Jesus' resurrection does not necessarily result in a vicious circle for understanding. Moltmann's alternative in the context of the dialectic system for dealing with the dilemma of God and suffering is to see suffering as part of the very being of God:

The only way past protest atheism is through a theology of the cross which understands God as the suffering God in the suffering of Christ and which cries out with the godforsaken God, 'My God, why have you forsaken me?' For this theology, God and suffering are no longer contradictions, as in theism and atheism, but God's being is in suffering and the suffering is in God's being itself, because God is love. It takes the 'metaphysical rebellion' up into itself because it recognizes in the cross of Christ a rebellion in metaphysics, or better, a rebellion in God himself: God himself loves and suffers the death of Christ in his love. He is no 'cold heavenly power', nor does he 'tread his way over corpses', but is known as the human God in the crucified Son of Man.¹⁴

Moltmann again makes this point in response to the concentration camp experience. "God in Auschwitz and Auschwitz in the crucified God--that is the basis for a real hope which both embraces and overcomes the world, and the ground for a love which is stronger than death and can sustain death."¹⁵ It does provide some comfort to maintain that God is intimately involved in human suffering, even to the point of hanging from the gallows. For God to be so

¹⁴Ibid., p. 227.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 278.

closely involved in human suffering, that he can take that suffering up into himself and transform that suffering into a new creation is indeed cause for hope. This, it would appear, is the best that can be hoped for in the dialectical system. This thesis maintains that not only is God present and involved, even to the point of allowing Jesus' death, but also God is ultimately victorious. Not only can men and women hope for a new being or a new creation, but they can look forward to a time when sin and pain will be no longer. This position is cause for even greater hope.

Response to Chapter Five: Soteriology

Chapter five outlined a model or description of salvation that Moltmann seems to suggest. The word "seems" is used because Moltmann does not discuss salvation in the context normally thought of by Evangelical American denominations. While he gives a general description of the conditions that stem from conversion, the actual process itself, how one enters into this process, etc. is not explained.

This thesis suggests that salvation might best be described as being caught up in the new Logos to receive new identity, etc. This is a continual process of death and rebirth and actual participation in the trinitarian life of God. As mentioned above it is not clear how men and women

begin this process or whether or not they are free to choose to participate in it. It seems that this is the very nature of existence. It would be helpful for this issue to be clarified.

This thesis heartily supports Moltmann's discussion of the social dimension of salvation. The social, political and economic implications of salvation are extensive and relatively unexplored by many traditions. Moltmann maintains that Christians should encourage political and economic systems which protect human dignity, rights and fellowship. He speaks in favor of active participation in existing political orders. This is clearly a great need in the contemporary world.

Response to Chapter Six: Eschatology

The section entitled "Form and Structure of the Parousia" outlined how the eschaton and coming kingdom might best be described within the parameters of the dialectical model outlined throughout the thesis. It was explained how the future has present reality and how the "end of history" is already present in the midst of history. Both God and humankind receive a new self with the death of the old self. The hope central to Christianity is the hope of being taken up into the inner life of the Trinity and receiving new being. The new self or new being that

is received is part of Christ's eschatological history which points towards the unification or glorification of the Trinity.

Moltmann describes the coming kingdom as a time when there will be no more death, violence, suffering, etc. How do these descriptions fit into the model that has been suggested? Perhaps the time of the kingdom will be when men and women commit themselves to God in such a way as to always be receiving new being, for their to be the briefest moment spent in actualization between the times of being taken up. For God, perhaps it means greater unity and the elevation of that which is good in God over his dark side. It is much easier to describe generally what this time will be like, then to describe the specific form it will take when it occurs. At best it seems to be a very gradual process. If there is in God both good and evil and if both are required for their to be life or actualization, how will there ever be a time when violence, suffering and death cease? If the Messianic age has already started with Jesus and refers to the receiving of a new self, is the eschaton a time of greater numbers receiving this new self? Since Moltmann has not clarified how a person becomes a part of this process or who is involved in this process, it is difficult to ascertain just how this takes place. In any case, it is not easy to see in this model the final cessation of evil and death. If there is a dark side to

God, then it would seem that suffering will be an eternal reality. Will not life here on earth continue indefinitely in a fashion similar to the past? If there is progress on the part of both God and humanity perhaps it is a gradual difference in a quantitative sense. The model does not seem, however, to make allowance for a qualitative, once and for all elimination of evil. Instead there is an ongoing cycle of death and rebirth. Against this model, this thesis would support a physical, observable second coming, based on a revivification emphasis for the resurrection, and a qualitative change in the world with the total elimination of evil. This would be a preferable alternative consistent with the scriptural record.

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