

**A THEOLOGY OF SPATIALITY:
THE DIVINE PERFECTION OF OMNIPRESENCE
IN THE THEOLOGY OF KARL BARTH**

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Abstract

Throughout its history, the Christian Church has commonly assumed that God's own being or nature is the opposite of ours. Human existence is conditioned by the spatial and temporal order of creation, so God is thought to be a-spatial and eternal. Yet this does not account adequately for the biblical witness concerning God. Karl Barth radically claims that God is not merely spatial but that God has His own space and even *is* His own space. Barth bases this assertion upon an actualistic epistemology instead of the metaphysical framework grounding much of the Christian Church's conceptualizations of God. Barth defines spatiality as a characteristic way of lovingly and freely being personally present with another distinct being in a rightly ordered relation. Beyond the discussion on the perfection of omnipresence, Barth does not directly develop this perfection further. However, his theology of spatiality underlies much of his theology, evident in his use of spatial language. Additionally, apparently lacking in Barth studies or elsewhere is a comprehensive theology of space or spatiality that begins by concretely considering God's own space and His perfection of spatiality. This thesis aims to develop an actualistic theology of spatiality through an expositional exploration of the spatiality of the triune God in the theology of Karl Barth, primarily from his *Church Dogmatics*. Secondly, this study addresses the issue of the spatiality of human beings that is encompassed by the divine spatiality. Considering the questions how is God present to Himself and also to us, in proper relation and distinction, further indicates how we are present to God and to each other both in appropriate and inappropriate relation and distinction.

The thesis begins with Barth's epistemology and doctrine of God. Barth's doctrines of the Trinity and omnipresence are revisited after engagement with his doctrine of election in the light of Bruce McCormack's critical reading of *Church Dogmatics*. After focusing on the spatiality of the triune God in His unity, through Barth's doctrines of God and election, the spatiality particular to each mode of God's being in His work is explored. First, the creative spatiality of God the Father as Creator and Lord of the covenant is investigated through a consideration of Barth's doctrines of creation and providence in addition to the spatiality of His human creature and covenant partner. Second, the reconciling spatiality of God the Son is explored through Barth's doctrines of the incarnation, justification and sanctification, along with the spatiality of human beings who are sinners and unfaithful covenant partners. Third, the redeeming spatiality of God the Holy Spirit is explored through Barth's pneumatology, ecclesiology and eschatology, which also illuminate the spatiality of God's reconciled covenant people in the community and in the consummation, completing this study.

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For
Daniel and Katharine

who help me to know the astounding presence of
the Triune God of grace

...who is spatial

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INTRODUCTION

IS GOD A-SPATIAL?

Space and time are conditions of the created order, determining all creaturely existence. Creatures are spatially located in a twofold way: they are circumscribed, both by their own physical bodies and the location of those bodies in a particular place in the universe. Such bodily and geographical existence occurs over a span of time within world history. But is creaturely reality limited to and exhausted by this order? The Christian tradition professes ontological distinctions between Creator and creatures. God is what we are not. We are created and spatio-temporally determined. But God is uncreated, so unlimited by space and time. This suggests that spatiality and temporality primarily affect human beings and only secondarily impinge, not upon God Himself, but possibly upon God's work in relation to this space- and time-bound creation. In the divine omnipresent and eternal infinitude of His being, God is alleged to be a-spatial and timeless.¹ Suggesting otherwise appears to contradict the plain sense understanding. Indeed, this has been the common assumption throughout Christian history.

What are the bases and presuppositions that account for the conclusion that God is a-spatial and a-temporal, and are these valid foundations upon which to gain true knowledge of the biblical God? Is the traditional rendering of spatiality and temporality, still prevalent today, adequate to account for the full witness of Scripture as it pertains to the being and work of God? I think not. Karl Barth, in fact, radically claims that God is not only spatial but actually possesses His own space. Moreover, God's spatiality and eternity encompass and determine creation's spatiality and temporality. Such disparate conceptions warrant evaluation since they bear directly on our understanding of God's presence in and relation to the world, and ours to Him.

This thesis presents a theological study of spatiality. Works concerning the problem of time and eternity abound in theological studies, while little has been proffered in the same realm for the notion of space. Most of the published material is second level discourse that uses common understandings of space as a framework to tackle other issues. For instance, 'geographical space' might indicate the use of land by the powerful to extend their influence

¹ For an example of this notion in Reformed theology see Heinrich Hepppe, "Attributes of God" in *Reformed Dogmatics: Set Out and Illustrated from the Sources*, trans. G.T. Thomson (1950; reprint of the first English edition, with a foreward by Karl Barth, revised and edited by Ernst Bizer, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978) 65-67 (hereafter cited as *Reformed Dogmatics*).

or a revisioned Christian existence in problematic places.² ‘Spiritual space’ refers to people’s encounter with ‘the holy’ in ‘sacred’ space.³ ‘Physical space’ is used to speak of the relation of material bodies in the physical environment.⁴ ‘Psychological space’ centers on one’s own being or personality, an I-Thou relationship, or even the relation of mind and body.⁵ ‘Cultural space’ concerns the identity of people groups, and how that is protected or lost through the ages.⁶ ‘Architectural space’ is concerned with the problem of appropriate environments for creaturely existence.⁷ Biblical studies go more directly to the heart of a theological account of space by examining the spiritual relation of God and people, for example, through considerations of the relation of Israel to the Land, the design of Solomon’s Temple, the ‘body of Christ’ and its extension to the ends of the earth, and even of God’s own name.⁸ Such connotations and uses of space include helpful insights, yet I have not found a

² See for example Timothy J. Gorringer, *A Theology of the Built Environment: Justice, Empowerment, Redemption; Explorations in Practical, Pastoral, and Empirical Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Eric O. Jacobsen, *Sidewalks in the Kingdom: New Urbanism and the Christian Faith*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2003.

³ See for example Philip Sheldrake, *Spaces for the Sacred: Place, Memory, and Identity* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001); Frank Burch Brown, “Making Sacred Places, and Making Places Sacred” in *Good Taste, Bad Taste & Christian Taste: Aesthetics in Religious Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); George Steiner, *Real Presences* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

⁴ For inquiries in the physical sciences see for example, Sir Isaac Newton, *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy & His System of the World* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1962); Max Jammer, *Concepts of Space: The History of Theories of Space in Physics*, 3rd ed. (New York: Dover Publications, 1993), esp. ch. 2 for theological developments and influences, see also the forward by Albert Einstein; Richard Sorabji, *Matter, Space and Motion: Theories in Antiquity and their Sequel* (London: Duckworth, 1988); Lawrence Sklar, *Space, Time, and Spacetime* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974); Hans Reichenbach, *The Philosophy of Space and Time*, trans. Maria Reichenbach and John Freund (New York: Dover, 1958); Hermann Weyl, *Space, Time, Matter*, (New York: Dover, 1952).

⁵ Brian Grant, *A Theology for Pastoral Psychotherapy: God’s Play in Sacred Spaces* (Binghamton, NY: Hayworth Pastoral Press, 2001); Ann B. Ulanov, *Finding Space: Winnicott, God, and Psychic Reality* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001).

⁶ For the classic geographical-sociological inquiry see for example Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place; The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977);

⁷ Christopher Day, *Places of the Soul: Architecture and Environmental Design as a Healing Art*, 2nd ed. (Oxford and Burlington, MA: Architectural Press, 2003); Robert Harbison, *The Built, the Unbuilt and the Unbuildable: In Pursuit of Architectural Meaning* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2001); Otto Von Simpson, *The Gothic Cathedral: Origins of Gothic Architecture and the Medieval Concept of Order* 3rd ed. (Princeton University Press, 1989); Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space: The Classic Look at How We Experience Intimate Places*. trans., Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994); Richard Kieckhefer, *Theology in Stone: Church Architecture from Byzantium to Berkeley* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Iain M. Mackenzie, ed., *Cathedrals Now: Their Use and Place in Society* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse, 1997); David Canter, *Psychology of Place* (London: Architectural Press, 1977).

⁸ For example see Gregory K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission: a Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004); Walter Brueggemann, *The Land* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977); J. Nathan Clayton, “An Examination of the Holy Space in Psalm 73: Is Wisdom’s Path Infused with an Eschatologically Oriented Hope?” *Trinity Journal* 27 (2006) 117-142; Jammer has noted that not only first century Palestinian Judaism but also earlier Jewish theology connects “...space and God in the use of the term ‘place’ (*makom*) as a name for God.” At first, Jammer suggests, this may have resulted in abbreviated form from an identification of “‘holy place’ (*makom kadosh*) for the ‘*Shekinah*’”. But due to the importance given the conception of omnipresence throughout Hebrew Scriptures, “...‘spatial limitations’ were not ascribed to its use as an appellation for God.” Max Jammer, *Concepts of Space: The History of Theories of Space in Physics*, 3d ed. (New York: Dover Publications, 1993) 30-31 (hereafter cited as *Concepts of Space*).

comprehensive theological study on the primary issue assumed by and underlying these uses, the issue of God's own space.⁹ Also problematic is that the majority of inquiries or theories of space begin with a philosophical framework which, at the very least, proves difficult to integrate with a genuinely theologically oriented study.¹⁰

My primary assertion is that God is spatial. Knowing what kind of God can be spatial, and the nature and extent of that spatiality, increases understanding of our own spatiality since we are part of the creation determined by this God. Applying theological knowledge of God's spatiality to these other areas of research will reorient some scholars to a more theological inquiry that offers new insight; insight stemming from a knowledge of God's being and activity that provides the starting point from which to reflect upon the significance of geographical, psychological or architectural space.¹¹ New insight derives from refusing to insert God into preconceived notions of space and their particular uses in research, and instead, insisting on inquiring about God's own space and what it means for God to be spatial in the light of Scripture.

What is God's space and what is the spatiality proper to Him? From this comes a related and secondary question: what is the human creature's space and the spatiality proper to it? To consider where God is, and where we are, is to better perceive the reality and significance of a genuine relationship between such ontologically differentiated beings. In considering these questions, I will develop a theology of spatiality based on an exposition of the theology of Karl Barth, with primary reference to Barth's *Church Dogmatics*.¹² While several works have been generated in Barth studies concerning divine attributes or perfections, omnipresence has not received extensive study.

What is the basic notion of space that has usually been appropriated in Christian theology? According to Thomas Torrance, most 'theories of space' are categorized into two

⁹ Iain MacKenzie, *The Dynamism of Space; A Theological Study into the Nature of Space* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 1995) offers a rich and helpful theological discussion, though not from a beginning in God's own 'space'.

¹⁰ For philosophical expositions see for example, Diogenes Allen, *Philosophy for Understanding Theology* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1985) see esp 3, 18, 26, 124-128, 207-209, 212-217; Edward S. Casey, *The Fate of Place; A Philosophical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Catherine Pickstock, *After Writing: On the Liturgical Consummation of Liturgy*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1998; Andrew Louth, "Space, Time and the Liturgy," and Catherine Pickstock, "Commentary: Liturgical Twilight – A Footnote to Andrew Louth," both in *Encounter Between Easter Orthodoxy and Radical Orthodoxy: Transfiguring the World Through the Word*, eds. Adrian Pabst and Christoph Schneider (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009) 215-231, and 232-238, respectively.

¹¹ For instance, if God is the kind of God who values and calls us into community, then that insight could help city planners and architects orient their designs around common areas, facilitating interpersonal contact instead of a more solitary, individualistic experience.

¹² Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, eds. Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Thomas F. Torrance, trans. G.W. Thomson, 4 vols. in 13 parts (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1936-77). (After the first full reference to individual volumes of the *Church Dogmatics* further references will appear with the abbreviations *CD* followed by the volume number, the part number, and the half part number as appropriate.)

general views of space, the ‘container’ and ‘relational’ models.¹³ In the first, derived largely from ancient Greek philosophy, space functions as a containing vessel for all the events or bodies of the universe occurring within it. An “open” container is infinite and independent of everything happening or existing within, while a “closed” container is finite, influencing or determining what is contained.¹⁴ According to Torrance, Patristic theologians first developed the alternate “relational” (and personal) concept, seeking to understand the spatial ramifications of the Person and work of Christ in relation to the incarnation and atonement.¹⁵ While Karl Barth reflects this substantialist framework especially early in the *Dogmatics*, his development toward an actualistic epistemology offers a way to construct a more theological concept of space and spatiality.

To develop a theological concept of spatiality along these actualistic lines, the definition of spatiality will need to evolve until it neither begins with nor is exhausted by the embodied creaturely reality of physical location and extension in space, which, when considering God, leads to the notion that God is a-spatial. Though these aspects of the common definition of creaturely spatiality are still necessary, they are quite secondary to Barth’s radical redefinition of spatiality. Also, to be indicated, a metaphysics of ontology offers an inadequate context in which to develop a theology of spatiality as relational, given the whole biblical witness.

Therefore, I begin with Barth’s definition of spatiality. His concept centers on the way differentiated beings are lovingly and freely present to one another in a mutual and ordered relationship or union. Within this relational understanding of spatiality, there is ‘nearness’ in presence and relatedness between the beings even at the necessary and appropriate ‘distance’

¹³ Thomas F. Torrance, *Space, Time and Incarnation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969) 4.

¹⁴ Plato and Kant provide examples of the open container and Aristotle of the closed model. See for example, Plato, *The Dialogues of Plato; Timaeus*, 2 vols., trans., Benjamin Jowett (New York: Random House, 1937); Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans., J. M. D. Meiklejohn (London: H.G. Bohn, 1855) especially Section I of ‘The Transcendental Aesthetic’; Aristotle, *Categories* (for his theory of space) and *Physics*, esp. Book III; Benjamin Morrison, *On Location; Aristotle’s Concept of Place* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

¹⁵ Torrance, *Space, Time and Incarnation*, 56. He writes, “Thus it is the faith and understanding of the Christian Church that in Jesus Christ God Himself in His own Being has come into our world and is actively present as personal Agent within our physical and historical existence. As both God of God and Man of man Jesus Christ is the actual Mediator between God and man and man and God in all things, even in regard to space-time relations. He constitutes in Himself the rational and personal Medium in whom God meets man in his creaturely reality and brings man without, [sic] having to leave his creaturely reality, into communion with Himself” (52). A general relational view also may be argued to stem from Greek philosophical theories of space as the separating boundary between objects, which led to ideas of relations and/or forces between bodies as delineated in physics and geometry. For instance, “Theophrastus views space as a system of interconnected relations.” Jammer, *Concepts of Space*, 23. Jammer indicates that a relational view of space, perhaps also in conjunction with a receptacle view, may have been existent in Jewish theology as well. Torrance’s main point, however, is that it is a personal relation, and a particular one in Jesus Christ.

that distinguishes one being from the other and maintains their proper distinctions. Where beings are truly present to one another in love and freedom, each is in its proper space. Each is dynamically present to the other in a way that accords with its particular being. Spatiality includes the following: mutuality in which each being gives of itself and receives from the other, specific determination and ordering of the partners, and maintaining their appropriate distinctions and limits, all according to their respective natures and conditions, or places. Thus, being spatial or mutually present with others in properly ordered relation and distinction fulfills their true nature. In fact, they cannot be truly ‘themselves’ without being co-present with other spatial beings.

Barth’s theology of God’s spatiality challenges us to shift from anthropocentric definitions of what it means to be spatial to the relational spatiality enacted and revealed in God’s triune being and work, most fully in Jesus Christ. How God is mutually present with Himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and with the creation, especially human beings, is the basis of our new understanding of spatiality that is seen most fully in Jesus Christ. As the primal spatiality, God gives a corresponding spatiality to creatures, especially those made in His image. This originates in the particular and unique spatiality of Jesus Christ, in and through whom all other human beings are spatial. Spatiality is revealed in the way the Son Jesus Christ is present with His Father, and the Father is present with the Son, both in and through the presence of the Holy Spirit. Consequently, God, in His triunity and in each distinct mode of being, determines and limits the notion of spatiality. Spatiality is defined by the triune God as the loving and free being in act who elects to be the one God for humanity in the distinction of Father, Son and Spirit; by the Father’s intra-trinitarian relationship and His covenant relationship with creation; by the unity of the one Person of Jesus Christ in two complete and distinct natures, elected to accomplish the reconciliation of the world with God; and by the Spirit as the empowering presence that unites God, unites human beings, and unites God and human beings in corresponding order while maintaining proper distinctions. Divine spatiality thus determines and defines human spatiality in such a way that it enables each to be fully, appropriately and distinctly present to the other in loving and free relationship. So while the spatiality to be developed in this thesis includes aspects of circumscribed bodies and physical location, it is nonetheless a ‘spiritual’ definition, meaning that the spatiality proper to the being of God in His work takes place solely by divine Word and Spirit.

And yet, defining the more specific terms, “space” and “place”, to be used for this study of omnipresence and spatiality is a difficult task. Barth himself, perhaps purposefully,

does not codify his selection and use of terms. As will become evident, Barth uses omnipresence, presence, spatiality, space, and place interchangeably, and remarkably, all terms refer to both God and human creature(s), further complicating matters.¹⁶ At times these indicate common, physical definitions of location and extension in space; at others, metaphoric meanings prevail, and still others refer analogically to the dynamic event that is the being of God in act. Adding to the confusion, Barth often uses several different terms while attempting to describe one and the same aspect or effect of God's spatiality. Thus, while I aim to specify and consistently use terms according to a particular stated meaning, confusion of terms may arise where Barth uses alternate terms. I strive not to misrepresent Barth according to my codification but to clarify his thinking and advance more precision in this discussion. I introduce my general meanings of the main terms, "space" and "place", used throughout this study, as indicated by Barth.

Broadly speaking, "space" entails the predominant realm of a divine or human being's living reality, or 'where' that being is elected to be co-present in relation and distinction. For instance, in pre-temporal eternity or prior to creation, God's space is His own being; He is present to Himself, for no other reality yet exists.¹⁷ In temporal eternity or the history of the created realm, God's space is distinct from but now includes created reality; God is present in relation and distinction with Himself and with creation. And in post-temporal eternity or the consummated new creation, God's space includes the new heaven and new earth; God is present in relation and distinction with Himself and the new creation. In other words, God's space encompasses all reality over which He is Lord: His own being, His creation, His new creation. Nothing else exists except as it is related to yet distinct from God's space. Human beings' space is the created realm of earth and its heavens until the consummation of creation as the new heaven and new earth. Barth further identifies particular spaces of God's presence within the space of creation: His own space in "heaven" from which He rules over creation; His general life-sustaining power and providential presence in creation; His special presence in Israel and the Church; and His proper, unique presence in Jesus Christ. All are enacted by the powerful presence of the Holy Spirit.

"Place", as typically used by Barth, refers to a being's position or standing before God that focuses on the properly ordered aspect of the relationship. For example, the human being

¹⁶ Omnipresence here does not refer to human creatures in general, but only to the Person Jesus Christ who is inseparably yet distinctly fully divine and fully human. Only in that very precise sense does omnipresence refer to this one particular human being.

¹⁷ Though, in God's election of the covenant of grace, the reality (of creation) distinct from God is already included in God's being, in anticipation of its creation, and is discussed in Chapter Three.

who is in right-standing before God, is what she was created to be from the beginning: one who exists or dwells in a mutual, distinct and ordered relationship with God, being fully present in love and freedom, and then through Him with other humans. She thus, dwells 'in' righteousness, which is to say, she lives 'in Christ' as God's created, reconciled, and redeemed creature among others. Also, the community of God's people called to His service relates to God either by its presence with Him in faithful response or its presence in disobedience. The Church, gathered, empowered and sent out, responds as the body to its Head, Jesus Christ. The body never becomes or dictates to the Head, for the God-willed order is maintained in a right and proper relationship.

Obvious overlap occurs in use and meaning of these terms, especially regarding Jesus Christ, the God-man. While possibly confusing, nonetheless, such overlap is necessary to explore the full reality of divine and human spatiality. Even so, in its definition and all its aspects spatiality is wholly determined by the triune God, and is presented as follows.

Part One of this thesis sets forth the problem of the spatiality of the triune being of God that is demonstrated in Part Two through an exploration of the work attributed to each of God's three modes of being. Chapter One outlines Barth's theological epistemology, that provides the methodological framework for this study. This includes his doctrines of the Word of God and revelation, his concept of analogy as it pertains to human language, his dialectical notion of divine veiling and unveiling in revelation, and a preliminary introduction to his Christology. Chapter Two presents Barth's doctrine of God, setting it in its particular context in order to consider his doctrine of the divine perfections and, specifically, his view of divine omnipresence. This includes both God's omnipresence in Himself and also God's omnipresence in His creation. Chapter Three engages not only the content of Barth's doctrine of election but also its ramifications for his theology as a whole and omnipresence in particular. Material discussions pertain to God's Self-determination, the Subject and Object of election and God's eternal will, concluding with a reconsideration of Barth's doctrines of the Trinity and the perfection of omnipresence in the light of his doctrine of election. With this background in place, I offer a preliminary theological concept of the spatiality of the triune God.

Part Two contains three chapters that explore the divine spatiality particular to each of God's three modes of being in His work of creation, reconciliation and redemption. Secondly, the spatiality proper to human beings, as creatures, sinners and perfected covenant partners, is discussed in view of the divine work.

Chapter Four considers the creative spatiality of the Father as Creator. It begins with an explanation of the doctrine of appropriations in view of the Trinity, which balances the multiplicity of God's being in His work with His perichoretic unity. The creative spatiality of the Father is considered using Barth's interpretations of the Genesis creation stories to highlight the relation of creation to its ground in the divine covenant. The discussion of the spatiality of the human creature also highlights the covenant relationship between Creator and creature. The providential spatiality of the Father that sustains His creation is presented through Barth's doctrine of providence.

Chapter Five addresses the reconciling spatiality of God the Son. An overview of Barth's doctrine of reconciliation through his interpretation of God's covenantal name, 'God with us', introduces the spatiality of God in this context. Venturing into the heart of Barth's Christology through his doctrines of incarnation and justification explains and demonstrates the unique spatiality proper to Jesus Christ. The incarnation reveals what true human spatiality entails while the atonement identifies its stark contrast with our own spatiality as unfaithful covenant partners and sinners. Examining Barth's interpretation of Jesus' cry of dereliction from the cross, I consider the problem of 'abandonment' by an omnipresent God. Through Barth's doctrine of the resurrection, an understanding of the spatiality of the new creature is provided, and the ascension offers a glimpse into our future spatiality.

Chapter Six examines the redeeming spatiality of God the Holy Spirit. Barth's notion of the church age is described through a spatial lens to emphasize the multifaceted connotations of space. The spatiality of the Spirit in His objective work establishing, maintaining and leading the community of God's people toward its appointed end, is investigated through Barth's pneumatology and ecclesiology. The spatiality of the Spirit in His subjective work in that community enables its members to live into their own reality as justified, sanctified and called people, thereby exercising and demonstrating their full spatiality. The adequacy of Barth's pneumatology is revisited in view of his incomplete work in order to consider the full ramifications of the Spirit's spatiality in His redemptive work. Finally, a view of the Spirit's spatiality in His work to bring all creation to its completion is presented through Barth's understanding of the consummation of creation and the eschaton. The perfected spatiality of God's faithful covenant partners is suggested in their definitive relationship with God. In this view of the spatiality of the Holy Spirit, our understanding of the spatiality of the Son is particularly enhanced.

Therefore, God is spatial, where spatiality is defined as the characteristic way one being is determined to freely and lovingly exist in an intimate and properly ordered personal

relationship with another distinct being. Stated more succinctly, spatiality means being fully co-present with others in ordered “distinction and relationship.”¹⁸

¹⁸ Barth, *CD II/1*, 476.

PART ONE

THE SELF-DETERMINED SPATIALITY OF THE TRIUNE GOD

CHAPTER ONE

KARL BARTH'S EPISTEMOLOGY

Interpreting the theology of Karl Barth requires great diligence. His theological development and the sheer vastness of his corpus, both spanning a lifetime, demand that attention be paid to the dynamic theological context of the particular work being interpreted. Even the monumental *Church Dogmatics* is now acknowledged by scholars not to be as monolithic as once assumed, having been written over many years within a vastly changing historical context and addressing a variety of theological conversation partners.¹⁹ The primary advantage of a contextual reading of Barth is, negatively, to help guard against misinterpretation or the introduction of something alien to Barth's own theology or methodology, and positively, to provide a constructive reading that draws from the keenest insights of his mature theology.²⁰ By attending closely to Barth's writings I hope to represent him faithfully (both positively and negatively) by focusing on the theological context of selected passages. Using the 'later Barth' to revisit and revise some of the more abstract tendencies in the 'earlier Barth' as they impinge on this study, I aim to develop a more consistently theological account of the spatiality of God.

Declaring my procedure and assumptions more specifically, I express my basic agreement with those scholars who, following Barth himself, take his doctrine of election in *CD II/2* as a watershed for his theology as a whole and for individual doctrines.²¹ My purpose

¹⁹ See for example, Bruce L. McCormack, *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology: Its Genesis and Development 1909-1936* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995, 1997) (hereafter cited as *Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology*); Matthias Gockel, *Barth and Schleiermacher on the Doctrine of Election: A Systematic-Theological Comparison* (New York and Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2006) (hereafter cited as *Doctrine of Election*); Suzanne McDonald, "Barth's 'Other' Doctrine of Election in the *Church Dogmatics*," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 9, no. 2 (Apr 2007) 134-147 (hereafter cited as "Barth's 'Other' Doctrine of Election").

²⁰ See Bruce L. McCormack, "The Actuality of God: Karl Barth in Conversation with Open Theism" in *Engaging the Doctrine of God: Contemporary Protestant Perspectives*, ed. Bruce L. McCormack (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008) 212-214 (hereafter cited as "The Actuality of God").

²¹ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics: The Doctrine of God*, vol. II, part 2, eds. G.W. Bromiley and T.F. Torrance, trans. G.W. Bromiley, J.C. Campbell, Iain Wilson, J. Strathearn McNab, Harold Knight and R.A. Stewart

is not to repeat a detailed defense of this position, which is cogently argued by others, but to build upon this foundational interpretation by tracing through various ramifications for my task. Scores of interpretations have assessed the impact Barth's doctrine of election has had on his entire theology and on particular doctrines. Among them, Bruce McCormack's interpretation affords some remarkably unique considerations that shed particular insight on my project.

I acknowledge this task is complicated by several intrinsic factors. First, Barth's discussion of the spatiality of God is found in his presentation of the divine attribute of omnipresence, located within his doctrine of God in *CD II/1*.²² Given that Barth's only comprehensive treatment of the attribute in the *Church Dogmatics* occurs prior to his decisive revision of his doctrine of election, the impact such a revision makes upon what precedes it must be taken into account. That Barth himself did not fully reconsider divine omnipresence after *CD II/2* affords me this opportunity to do so.

I therefore consider what divine spatiality may look like on Barthian soil, both in the light of this revised doctrine of election and in the light of some accompanying doctrinal reformulations, particularly regarding the Trinity and Christology that arise from it. Following this trajectory, I revisit Barth's earlier understanding of divine omnipresence by engaging with his doctrines of creation, reconciliation and redemption in subsequent chapters.

Additional complications, acknowledged by others, stem from Barth's inconsistency in carrying out his own agenda even after *CD II/2*. Such concerns are noted as required for this project. Attempting to interpret Barth in the light of Barth and amending his earlier

(Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1957) (hereafter cited as *CD II/2*). Scholars who, following Barth himself, have identified the doctrine of election as key to Barth's theology as a whole include Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth: Exposition and Interpretation*, trans. Edward T. Oakes (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992) 155-56 (hereafter cited as *Theology of Karl Barth*); G.C. Berkouwer, *The Triumph of Grace in the Theology of Karl Barth*, trans. Harry R. Boer (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1956) 99; Donna Bowman, *The Divine Decision: a Process Doctrine of Election* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002) 2; Gockel, *Doctrine of Election*; Colin Gunton, "Karl Barth's Doctrine of Election as Part of His Doctrine of God," *Journal of Theological Studies* 25, no. 2 (Oct 1974) 381 (hereafter cited as "Karl Barth's Doctrine of Election"); Herman Hartwell, *The Theology of Karl Barth: An Introduction* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964) 105; William John Hausman, *Karl Barth's Doctrine of Election* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1969) 8-10; Robert W. Jenson, *Alpha and Omega: A Study in the Theology of Karl Barth* (New York: Nelson, 1963) 17-18; Eberhard Jüngel, *God's Being is in Becoming: The Trinitarian Being of God in the Theology of Karl Barth*, trans. John Webster (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), 41 (hereafter cited as *God's Being is in Becoming*); McCormack, *Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology*, 460-463; Michael O'Neil, "Karl Barth's Doctrine of Election," *Evangelical Quarterly* 76, no. 4 (2004) 311; with a reply from Oliver D. Crisp, "The Letter and the Spirit of Barth's Doctrine of Election: a Response to Michael O'Neil," *Evangelical Quarterly* 79, no.1 (2007), 53-67; Douglas R. Sharp, *The Hermeneutics of Election: The Significance of the Doctrine in Barth's Church Dogmatics* (New York: University Press of America, 1990) 1.

²² Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics: The Doctrine of God*, vol. II, part 1, eds. G.W. Bromiley and T.F. Torrance, trans. T.H.L. Parker, W.B. Johnston, Harold Knight and J.L.M. Haire (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1957) (hereafter cited as *CD II/1*).

presentation of spatiality only as suggested by his epistemology and later theology, I thereby anticipate gaining the formal and material elements necessary to construct a more theological account of spatiality.

1. Theological Epistemology

My aim in this epistemological section is to introduce the method, parameters and definition of terms utilized throughout this inquiry regarding the spatiality proper to God. To do this, I highlight pertinent aspects of Barth's epistemology drawn from *Church Dogmatics*, Volumes I and II/1.²³

The starting point of Barth's theological epistemology is the principle that "God is known only by God."²⁴ Since God transcends our phenomenal or intuitable realm, and is unlike any other subject of inquiry or object of human knowledge, no means or possibility exists to know this 'unintuitable' Subject from the human side. For

...God and His Word are not given to us in the same way as natural and historical entities. What God and His Word are, we can never establish by looking back and therewith by anticipating. This is something God Himself must constantly tell us afresh. But there is no human knowing that corresponds to this divine telling.²⁵

Here Barth makes use of Kantian limits to human reason and knowing.²⁶ He rejects using *a priori* speculative concepts or methodologies in theology, for such are grounded on prior human experience, understanding or commitments that can never lead to true knowledge of God.²⁷ For instance, he dismisses psychological theologies based on the modern 'turn to the subject' with its epistemological emphasis on the 'knower' and the possibility (rather than the

²³ I acknowledge their formulation prior to his mature doctrine of election, in addition to two more points. First, that there is a "gap" between the theological method(s) Barth proposes in the first volumes of the *Church Dogmatics* and how he in fact carries it (them) out in subsequent volumes. Secondly, rather than a single theological method, there are multiple methods demonstrated to be in play throughout the *Church Dogmatics*. See Bruce L. McCormack, "Divine Revelation and Human Imagination: Must We Choose Between the Two?" *Scottish Journal of Theology* 37 (1984) 435, footnote 12 (hereafter cited as "Divine Revelation and Human Imagination"); and Stephen W. Sykes, ed., *Karl Barth: Studies of His Theological Method* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979).

²⁴ Barth, *CD* II/1, 179.

²⁵ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics: The Doctrine of the Word of God*, vol. 1, part 1, 2d ed., eds. G.W. Bromiley and T.F. Torrance, trans. G.W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1956) 132 (hereafter cited as *CD* I/1).

²⁶ For a discussion of Barth's use of Kantian philosophy vis-à-vis his epistemology, see Clifford B. Anderson, "A Pragmatic Reading of Karl Barth's Theological Epistemology," *American Journal of Theology and Philosophy* 22, no. 3 (Sep 2001) 241-269.

²⁷ For the background with Feuerbach that leads Barth in this epistemological direction see Karl Barth, *CD* II/1, 269; Karl Barth, "Ludwig Feuerbach," in *Church and Theology: Shorter Writings, 1920-1928*, trans. Louise Pettibone Smith (New York: Harper and Row, 1962) 215-237; and Karl Barth, "Ludwig Feuerbach," in *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century* (1959; reprint of the first English edition, with an introduction by Colin Gunton, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002) 520-526. Also see Joseph L. Mangina, *Karl Barth: Theologian of Christian Witness* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004) 30-31; Katherine Sonderegger, "On Style in Karl Barth," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 45 (1992) 65-83, especially 69.

actuality) of obtaining any true knowledge as a measure of what is real.²⁸ He rejects natural theologies built upon an interpretation of an *analogia entis* that draws “continuity” between divine being and creaturely being for knowledge of God, especially where this capacity is located in human beings.²⁹ Also discarded are ‘historicized’ theologies where theological meaning is reduced to a presumed significance for those reconstructed historical communities that gave rise to biblical texts.³⁰ Firmly and consistently, Barth claims that any human endeavor (in pious works or noble ideals), any human experience (even the most sincere spirituality or mysticism), any human knowledge (including the psychological, historical, sociological, physical or metaphysical sciences), and any human epistemologies and methodologies (especially those that are abstract, predetermined, systematic or analytic) cannot provide the ground for knowledge of God’s being and work.³¹ In Barth’s view, natural theology, generalized concepts of being or *a priori* epistemologies will only produce an idol in the name of ‘God’ which tells us nothing at all about God’s actual being and activity.³²

In place of such ideologies, methodologies and “idle speculation”,³³ Barth formulates his epistemology theologically, meaning that all knowledge concerning God is revealed in and determined by His actual work.³⁴ In lieu of a subjective ground in human beings, Barth posits

²⁸ This is seen in Protestant liberal theologies of the 19th and 20th centuries.

Various interpreters of Barth’s epistemology identify it as modern while others pre-modern, and still others attempt to use it as the root for postmodern concerns. For an example of the ‘modern’ view, see McCormack, *Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology*, 465; “Dankeswort,” *Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 21, no. 2 (July 2000) 216-219; “Barth’s grundsätzlicher Chalkedonismus?,” *Zeitschrift für dialektische Theologie* 18, no. 3 (2002) 173, footnote 78; for a representative view that Barth adapts ‘pre-modern’ concerns see Christoph Schwöbel, “Theology” in *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Barth*, ed. John Webster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) especially 29-30; and for ‘postmodern’ leanings see, for instance, William Stacy Johnson, *The Mystery of God: Karl Barth and the Postmodern Foundations of Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997) (hereafter cited as *The Mystery of God*).

See also Daniel J. Price, *Karl Barth’s Theological Anthropology in Light of Modern Thought* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002) especially chapters 2 and 3.

²⁹ This form of *analogia entis* of much Roman Catholic theology engenders Barth’s critique against it and the natural theology based upon it. Karl Barth, *The Holy Spirit and the Christian Life: The Theological Basis of Ethics*, trans. R. Birch Hoyle (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993) 5. See von Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth*, 161-7; also 107-113 for his treatment of Barth’s *analogia fidei*. In opposition to von Balthasar’s view that Barth returned to embrace the analogy of being late in life, see McCormack, *Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology*, 383-391, especially 391. See Barth, *CD II/1*, 260, for Barth’s explanation of a “doctrine of being” with this connotation.

³⁰ This was prominent in historical-critical biblical studies in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and includes the searches for the historical Jesus.

³¹ See Barth, *CD I/1*, 251. For an exposition of Volume I concerning Barth’s methodology See Alan J. Torrance, *Persons in Communion: An Essay on Trinitarian Description and Human Participation with special reference to Volume One of Karl Barth’s Church Dogmatics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996) especially Chapter 1.

³² See also Eberhard Busch, *The Great Passion: An Introduction to Karl Barth’s Theology*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004) 26 (hereafter cited as *The Great Passion*).

³³ Barth, *CD I/1*, 17.

³⁴ For Barth, this is what makes theology or dogmatics to be a “scientific” task, which is to examine the truthfulness of the content of the Church’s talk about God against its “being as the Church”. In other words, the theologian critically assesses whether or not the Church’s beliefs about God correspond to God’s being as it is

an objective ground for our knowledge of God in God's own being and revelatory activity. God's independence and sovereignty in His act of revealing Himself is ensured, being separate from any preconceived human activity. Barth accomplishes this by grounding all knowledge of God in a divine event: God has spoken.³⁵ More specifically, in the Word that God has spoken to us He "reveals Himself as the Lord"³⁶ whose name is "Immanuel, God with us."³⁷ This expresses the heart of my inquiry into the attribute of God's omnipresence or spatiality as Barth expounds it: who is this God who is with us, how is God present and how do we know that He is?

Barth delineates a perpetual distinction between divine and creaturely knowledge ("noetic") which follows from the eternal ontological ("ontic") distinction between the "wholly Other" Creator and human creatures.³⁸ However, while this ontological distinction between God and human beings remains, Barth's emphasis shifts on the utter distance between God and human beings as set forth in his second *Romans* Commentary and the early volumes of his *Church Dogmatics*. After his reformulation of the doctrine of election with its Christocentric focus, divine and human are brought into very close relation.³⁹ Barth's theological ontology thus provides the ground for his epistemology. *Who* God is determines not only *what* we know of God but also *how* we know Him. The being of God thus "precedes" our thinking about God's being, knowledge that we cannot directly access. As a human exercise, theology must be thinking or "following after" what God Himself has actually said about Himself.⁴⁰ The proper movement is from actuality (what God is and does) to possibility (because God is and God does what He does, it is possible for Him to be and do so). Such "realism" manifests itself most decidedly in his concentration on *a posteriori* knowledge of God based on concrete events that have occurred within the realm of human history, rather than on speculative possibility. Moreover, unlike intuitable objects of our knowledge, neither knowledge of God's Word nor of God Himself is a static "set of

preeminently revealed in Jesus Christ through His Spirit, offering credible but fallible doctrinal statements based on the interpretation of the whole of Scripture and also Church tradition. Barth, *CD I/1*, 4, 7-8.

³⁵ "Deus dixit." Barth, *CD I/1*, 115.

³⁶ Barth, *CD I/1*, 306.

³⁷ Barth, *CD I/1*, 108.

³⁸ For example see *CD I/1*, 141. This is a critical concept carried over from his *Romans* commentaries. See for example, Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, trans. Edwyn C. Hoskyns (London: Oxford University Press, 1933) 206.

³⁹ See Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*. In Jesus Christ, God and human being, Creator and creature are brought into unity in His own existence, even though they remain distinct. Christology will serve as Barth's new emphasis of divine (and human) ontology.

⁴⁰ Barth, *CD I/1*, 7. ("Nachdenken") See David F. Ford, "Barth's Interpretation of the Bible" in *Karl Barth: Studies of His Theological Methods*, 58; Alan J. Torrance, "The Trinity" in *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Barth*, 72-73.

statements”, facts or data that are given or “available in a straightforward way”,⁴¹ there is no “given”, no possession of knowledge concerning God that humans can claim.⁴² The divine address does not give us information about God or ourselves that can be predicted or manipulated for our purposes.⁴³ Instead, “In this divine telling there is an encounter and fellowship between His nature and man but not an assuming of God’s nature into man’s knowing, only a fresh divine telling.” Divine speech reveals and enacts God’s spatiality. Human knowledge of “the God with us”⁴⁴ takes place in this relating since “He is present in person in and with what is said by Him.”⁴⁵ Revelation is thus God speaking to us in person,⁴⁶ which creates a “personal” relationship between God and us, and manifests His spatiality.⁴⁷ He is co-present with us in ordered relation and distinction where He reveals Himself to us.

Essential to Barth’s theology is the presupposition that God is really present with us, telling us what He is and does. Within the relationship established by His Self-communication, God graciously permits and enables us to share in His own knowledge of Himself.⁴⁸ God gives this knowledge with faith, most fully in the covenant community of Israel and the Church.⁴⁹ As such, Barth agrees with this aspect of Anselm’s thought: the theological endeavor occurs as “faith seeking understanding”.⁵⁰ True knowledge of God is divinely given when “...our viewing and conceiving is adopted and determined to participation in the truth of God by God Himself in grace.”⁵¹ He conforms us to Himself as

⁴¹ John Webster, *Barth*, Outstanding Christian Thinkers Series (London and New York: Continuum, 2000) 55.

⁴² According to McCormack, “...the ‘given’ is the product of the knowing activity of the human subject...” that Barth utilizes from his inherited idealism, seeking to set appropriate limits to human knowledge of God. See McCormack, *Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology*, 67.

⁴³ See Barth, *CD I/1*, 93.

⁴⁴ Barth, *CD I/1*, 132.

⁴⁵ Barth, *CD I/1*, 137.

⁴⁶ “Revelation is *Dei loquentis persona*.” Barth, *CD I/1*, 304.

⁴⁷ “Personal” here indicates encounter with the ‘Person’ of God in which those who are encountered must respond. As Barth uses the term, it has no originating meaning in psychology or anthropology, which is one reason he prefers the early church term “mode” rather than “person” for the threeness of God. See Barth, *CD I/1*, 350-351, 359-360.

⁴⁸ John Webster, “Hermeneutics in Modern Theology”, in *Word and Church; Essays in Christian Dogmatics* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 2001) 65-6-6. See also Rowan Williams, “Trinity and Revelation,” *Modern Theology* 2, no. 3 (Apr 1986) 196-212.

⁴⁹ This is Barth’s *analogia fidei*, the corresponding act of faith to God’s original act of gracious Self-revelation. The true *analogia entis* between God and His creatures, for Barth, is the dynamic relation which is “God’s ongoing act of relating to the creature... a relationship of correspondence between the act in which God has his being (grace) and the act in which the creature has her being (obedience as the response to grace). Being, on this view, is a function of decision and act, not the other way around...” See Bruce L. McCormack, Book Review of *Karl Barth, The Holy Spirit and the Christian Life: The Theological Basis of Ethics*, trans. R. Birch Hoyle (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1993) in *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin*, 15, no. 3 (1994) 312-313.

⁵⁰ Such faith seeking understanding is characterized by “penitence”, “obedience”, “prayer” and “humility”. Barth, *CD I/1*, 15, 22, 23. See Karl Barth, *Anselm. Fides Quarens Intellectum* (London: SCM, 1960) 26ff. See also, Stephen D. Wigley, “Karl Barth on St. Anselm: The Influence of Anselm’s ‘Theological Scheme on T.F. Torrance and Eberhard Jüngel,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 46, no.1 (1993) 79-97.

⁵¹ Barth, *CD II/1*, 179.

the object of our knowing.⁵² God's Word therefore has the character of a dialectical "event" or "happening" in which, on one side, God gives Himself to be known "ever and again" and on the other side, we are transformed for genuine involvement in God's Self-knowledge.⁵³ Such knowing through God's Self-revealing is a "giving" because what He gives, and constantly gives anew, is nothing less than Himself.⁵⁴ The goal of this Self-giving in His Word is for God "to bind us to Himself" such that "we really hear the 'God with us' that is spoken to us."⁵⁵ God's revelation of His Word reveals the spatiality of God's being for this "work is grace, a free divine decision" by which "...we can know about God only because and to the extent that He gives Himself to us to be known."⁵⁶ Therefore, theology must always "begin again" in response to a fresh hearing of God's Word that is given only by a new gracious and free act of God.⁵⁷

Genuine knowledge of God proposes, first, that God must make Himself known to us and do so in a form we, as creatures and sinners, can grasp. Second, He must do this in a way that God remains God, giving away nothing proper to divine being. By this twofold proposition Barth ensures that God "remains Lord of the epistemic relation."⁵⁸ According to Bruce McCormack, with these formal methodological emphases and ordering based on God's revelatory Word, Barth accomplishes two things: on one hand, by idealism, critical limits are set to human knowing by perceiving "...God as a Reality complete, whole, and entire in itself, apart from and prior to all human knowledge and therefore not caught in the Kantian subject-object split...";⁵⁹ and on the other hand, by realism, he seeks to avoid both speculation (from *a priori* principles) and arbitrariness (by positing the primacy of one Christian doctrine from which all others are 'systematically' or 'analytically' derived) in dogmatics.⁶⁰

To construct a theology of the spatiality of God, I follow some of the implications of Barth's theological epistemology. I begin by summarizing Barth's threefold form of the Word

⁵² Rather than Kant's idealism in which the knower determines the object to be known, Barth seeks to follow an actualistic epistemology: the knower is determined by the object or more accurately the Subject, who is God Himself.

⁵³ Barth, *CD I/1*, 132, 382, 88.

⁵⁴ Barth proposed not a "*datum*" but a "*dandum*". See for example Barth, *CD I/1*, 132. See also Bruce L. McCormack, "What Has Basel to Do with Berlin? Continuities in the Theologies of Barth and Schleiermacher," *Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 23, no. 2 (2002) 167 (hereafter cited as "What Has Basel to Do with Berlin?").

⁵⁵ Barth, *CD I/1*, 175.

⁵⁶ Barth, *CD I/1*, 371.

⁵⁷ Barth, *CD I/1*, 14.

⁵⁸ Bruce L. McCormack, "Barth in Context: a Response to Professor Gunton," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 49, no. 4 (1996) 497.

⁵⁹ This is McCormack's succinct definition of what he terms Barth's "critically realistic theology". Bruce L. McCormack, "The Unheard Message of Karl Barth," *Word & World* 14, no. 1 (winter 1994) 61.

⁶⁰ McCormack, "What Has Basel to Do with Berlin?" 169.

of God and doctrine of revelation to clarify how God is able to reveal Himself to us while remaining true to His own being.

2. Doctrine of the Word of God

Barth formulates his doctrine of the one Word of God in a “threefold form”.⁶¹ The supreme form in which God speaks to the Church is the Word “revealed” or Jesus Christ “the Word made flesh”.⁶² Jesus Christ is the personal presence of God in His Word. The secondary and derivative form is the Word of God “written”, that biblical witness in the words of the “prophets and apostles” to the revelation recurrently given in Jesus Christ.⁶³ The third form, the Word “preached”, is the church’s contemporary witness based on the prior two forms, the Scriptural witness to God’s revelation in Jesus Christ and the revelation of Jesus Christ itself.⁶⁴ In and of themselves, however, these three forms are not directly identical to God’s Word. They “become” God’s Word to us only if and where God freely chooses to use them to reveal Himself to us, for He is the only source of His Word’s occurrence in each form.⁶⁵ The event in which God is present with us, speaking to us, establishing and renewing fellowship with us, thus actualizing His spatiality, is His Word. Before delving into the material content of Barth’s epistemology, I discuss some key notions of his doctrine of revelation that impact this theology of spatiality.⁶⁶

3. Doctrine of Revelation

For Barth, the primary concept in divine revelation is that of “indirect identity”.⁶⁷ He specifies both sides of the dialectic: on the one hand, there is a distinction between God in His

⁶¹ Barth, *CD I/1*, 88. In Barth’s formulation of the Word of God, the relation of the three forms “...stand in analogical relation to the unity-in-differentiation that is the Trinity.” See McCormack, “What Has Basel to Do with Berlin?” 167-8, footnote 44. This is another incidence where theological ontology provides the basis for appropriate knowledge and speaking of God. For a view that Barth constructed his threefold formula on Anselm see also, Colin E. Gunton, *The Barth Lectures*, transcribed and ed., P.H. Brazier (New York: T&T Clark, 2007) 72-75. See also Douglas J.W. Milne, “Barth and Calvin on the (Three-fold Form of the) Word of God,” *Reformed Theological Review* 68, no. 2 (August 2009) 88-108.

⁶² Barth, *CD I/1*, 111.

⁶³ Barth, *CD I/1*, 99.

⁶⁴ Barth, *CD I/1*, 88.

⁶⁵ While we are enabled to participate truly and fully in grateful obedience by the Holy Spirit, revelation of God’s Word does not originate in or by us; it is wholly God’s own free act.

⁶⁶ For an exposition of Barth’s doctrine of revelation see Trevor Hart, “Revelation” in *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Barth*, 37-56.

⁶⁷ For example, see Barth, *CD I/1*, 309; Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics: The Doctrine of the Word of God*, vol. 1, part 2, eds. G.W. Bromiley and T.F. Torrance, trans. G.T. Thomson and Harold Knight (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1956) 199 (hereafter cited as *CD I/2*). See also Bruce L. McCormack, “The Barth Renaissance in America: An Opinion,” *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 23, no. 3 (2002) 338 (hereafter cited as “The Barth Renaissance in America”) 337.

Word and its revelation to us, yet on the other hand, there is a genuine unity of God in the revelation of His Word, Jesus Christ. These cannot be resolved into a synthesis for the revealed "...form is not a suitable but an unsuitable medium for God's self-presentation. It does not correspond to the matter but contradicts it." The form "does not unveil but veils" God's Word for two reasons: it "meets us in the garment of creaturely reality" and the realm in which God's revelation occurs is under the power of sin.⁶⁸ Sin affects both the "fallen matter" of creation (the media or veil) and human reason (our understanding of God). So God's Word is revealed in "the form of the cosmos which stands in contradiction to God." Thus, where God's Word is actually revealed in creaturely matter, it is truly revealed "through it" but in such a way that it is revealed "in spite of it" as well.⁶⁹ Only the Word itself gives any true perception of its form.⁷⁰ Hence, the indirect aspect of revelation is that God's Word to us is always hidden in a fallen creaturely form, such as the human words of Scripture and proclamation, and even in the human creature, Jesus of Nazareth. In the strictest sense, identity in revelation takes place solely where the creaturely forms actually do become God's Word, if and only as they are made to correspond to it by a new act of God's grace.⁷¹ Yet, the form itself, as creaturely and sinful, always retains its necessary distinction from God's being, even in revelation. This concept of indirect identity in revelation is demonstrated in Barth's understanding of human language.

4. Concept of Analogy Regarding Human Language

Not all language attests the reality of God. So, Barth wonders, how can we speak about God in a way that truly reflects who and what God is? Of concern is the relationship between the divine Word, God's Word about Himself and creaturely words, what we say of God or "the relationship between what we say of God and what God is". Rather than a direct identity (resulting in a synthesis of the two) on one hand or a complete distinction (resulting in the virtual impossibility of any relation) on the other hand, Barth maintains a dialectical relation of "analogy".⁷² He defines analogy as follows: "In distinction to both likeness and

⁶⁸ Barth, *CD I/1*, 165-166.

⁶⁹ Barth, *CD I/1*, 166.

⁷⁰ Barth, *CD I/1*, 167.

⁷¹ Mangina claims "God's revelation is ultimately identical with God himself." See Mangina, *Karl Barth; Theologian of Christian Witness*, 30-33. In the sense that Barth identifies "Revelation" (capital "R") with the Son of God, this is, of course, true. However, as just indicated, there are necessary stipulations in Barth's understanding of revelation – that it is never "direct" – so it is more accurate to qualify such "identity".

⁷² Barth, *CD II/1*, 227. It is significant that Barth discusses "analogy" in a section on "The Veracity of Man's Knowledge of God" in his chapter entitled "The Limits of the Knowledge of God". For a discussion of "Barth on Analogy" in the context of divine perfections see Robert Anthony Krieg, "The Theologian as Narrator: a Study of Karl Barth on the Divine Perfections," PhD Dissertation, University of Notre Dame (1976) 234-238.

unlikeness ‘analogy’ means similarity, i.e., a partial correspondence and agreement and, therefore, one which limits both parity and disparity between two or more different entities.”⁷³ ‘Partiality’ here refers not to a partial revelation or a partial relationship between God and humans. For “God is indivisible so gives Himself to be known by us in His revelation not partially but fully.”⁷⁴ Instead, it indicates that our knowledge of God is “...only a partial correspondence to God’s being, limited by God’s incomprehensibility.”⁷⁵ Furthermore, we are “...limited to the concepts and words God Himself uses in His self-disclosure...” in the manner of “thinking after” what God has first revealed. Our theological use of language thus involves a process of “selection”.⁷⁶ However, even such selected concepts and words, like human reason itself, have no capacity in and of themselves to speak of God. God must again and again graciously accommodate our creaturely “thought and language” to bear true “similarity” to the Self-communication of God’s being.⁷⁷ For Barth, this occurs “...only in the concrete (particular!) event in which [language] is taken up and used by God in bearing witness to Himself.”⁷⁸ That human language is used or “commandeered”⁷⁹ by God entails “...not that the language could grasp the revelation, but that revelation...could grasp the language.”⁸⁰

Although our words do not capture the reality of God’s being, God can and does come “to speech as God.”⁸¹ Since “...the Word of God conceals Himself in human words, a relation of correspondence is established, an analogy between the Word and the words.”⁸² For Barth,

⁷³ Barth, *CD II/1*, 225.

⁷⁴ Barth, *CD II/1*, 234-5.

⁷⁵ Barth, *CD II/1*, 233.

⁷⁶ Bruce L. McCormack, “Article Review: Graham Ward’s Barth, Derrida and the Language of Theology,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 49 (1996), 102 (hereafter cited as “Graham Ward’s Barth”).

⁷⁷ Barth, *CD*, II/1, 228. Barth writes, “On the basis of God’s grace in revelation, as Creator, and as enabling and commanding it, we can know God through our language which points beyond our created realm to encompass true knowledge of God.” Barth, *CD II/1*, 228-229.

⁷⁸ McCormack, “Graham Ward’s Barth,” 101.

⁷⁹ Bruce L. McCormack, “Revelation and History in Transfoundationalist Perspective: Karl Barth’s Theological Epistemology in Conversation with a Schleiermacherian Tradition,” *Journal of Religion* 78, no. 1 (January 1998) 25 (hereafter cited as “Revelation and History”).

⁸⁰ Barth, *CD II/1*, 340. Only in this way does human language remain language and revelation, revelation. Barth’s point here is that language, as God’s creation, is intended as a vehicle of God’s revelation through which He creates fellowship with human beings. So it is not an improper use of language, making it something it is not. Rather, God’s intended purpose for language is fulfilled, that is, it becomes genuine language when made to bear partial correspondence to God’s being in revelation.

⁸¹ Jüngel, *God’s Being is in Becoming*, 23.

⁸² McCormack, *Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology*, 340-1. McCormack continues, “God’s act of taking up a creaturely reality and revealing Himself in and through it was no longer restricted to the event of the cross, and not even to the incarnation. God was now seen by Barth as taking up human language, and bearing witness to Himself in and through it. The result of such a divine action is that human words are qualified to be bearers of revelation. The complete inadequacy of human language for revelation is not set aside in the least.” Additionally, this analogy moves only “from above to below”, from “Word” to “words” and this order is not reversible; our human words never become identical with the divine Word.

analogical reference acknowledges “the incapacity of human language to refer to God” and “the essential mystery of its subject matter” on the one hand, yet also “the occurrence of genuine and proper reference” on the other hand.⁸³ This ungraspable, indefinable “open centre” is Jesus Christ, God’s own enfleshed Word that can never be contained, exhausted, nor “illustrated” by human words or “symbols”.⁸⁴ In short, God must “interpret” Himself to us. Obviously this impacts how we can and must speak of God’s being and His spatiality. But even here, Barth is concerned with genuine mutual presence in proper relation and distinction between God and creatures, the vital concern of spatiality.⁸⁵ For Barth, “revelation is the self-interpretation of God”, the event of His personal presence with us in His “threefold repetition” or “reiteration”.⁸⁶ This leads to Barth’s doctrine of the Trinity.

5. Doctrine of the Trinity

Barth formulates his doctrine of the Trinity as the God who is “...One in three distinctive modes of being subsisting in their mutual relations: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”⁸⁷ The source of knowledge of this God is “...the Father who knows the Son and the Son who knows the Father in the Holy Spirit...” Hence, true knowledge of God means participation in “an event enclosed in the mystery of the divine Trinity.”⁸⁸ This knowledge is available only as a sharing in God’s own life, the event of His Self-revelation. Again, such

Such participation and accommodation serve the purpose of engendering an additional relation of correspondence between God and His creatures in the covenantal relationship Barth expounds through his analogy of faith.

⁸³ George Hunsinger, *How to Read Karl Barth; The Shape of His Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991) 43 (hereafter cited as *How to Read Karl Barth*).

⁸⁴ Barth, *CD I/1*, 345.

See Johnson, *The Mystery of God*, particularly pp 13ff and 31ff for a discussion on the “open center” of theology for Barth illustrated in the metaphor of a wagon wheel (hereafter cited as *The Mystery of God*). Sonderegger states, “Barth’s work [*Church Dogmatics*] is never a system: it never controls its Object and the Centre of its study is always ‘empty’, always free and sovereign.” Sonderegger, “On Style in Karl Barth,” 80, 82. For a critique of this “open centre” see S. W. Sykes, “Barth on the Centre of Theology” in *Karl Barth: Studies of His Theological Method*, 17-54, especially 42-44.

For a discussion on Barth and theological “symbols” see Bruce L. McCormack, “Divine Revelation and Human Imagination,” 439ff.

For a discussion of Barth’s use of analogy in contrast to metaphor see Sallie McFague, *Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982) (hereafter cited at *Metaphorical Theology*) and *Models of God: Theology for an Ecological, Nuclear Age* (London: SCM, 1987). For a critique of McFague’s interpretation see McCormack, “The Unheard Message of Karl Barth,” 64-56; also see Robert W. Jenson, *Systematic Theology: The Works of God*, vol. 2 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999) 39, footnote 41. For a philosophical understanding of metaphor in narrative theology that is slightly more akin to Barth’s theology see Eberhard Jüngel, “Metaphorical Truth” in *Theological Essays*, trans. J.B. Webster (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1989) 16-71.

⁸⁵ The difficulty imposed for the use of spatial terms in distinction from common or philosophic usage is addressed later.

⁸⁶ Barth, *CD, I/1*, 311.

⁸⁷ Barth, *CD I/1*, 348.

⁸⁸ Barth, *CD I/2*, 181.

sharing or participation highlights the divine spatiality by which the triune God and the one to whom He reveals Himself are co-present in proper relation and distinction.

Furthermore, it is decisive for Barth's concepts of revelation and epistemology that "...there is no hidden God, no *Deus absconditus*, at the back of His revelation, with whose existence and activity we have also occasionally to reckon beyond His Word and His Spirit".⁸⁹ The revelation of God in Jesus Christ and the Spirit gives true knowledge of the one and only God. There is not another, different God than the one who is revealed in these three modes.⁹⁰ Its corollary is also true: apart from these modes there is no knowledge of the one God. For Barth, God's "hiddenness" in revelation alludes to His "invisibility, incomprehensibility and ineffability" by (fallen) creatures, not to a deity existing "above and beyond" the God revealed to us.⁹¹ Barth's intent is clear (if not always consistent): there is not one God known by us while a different God, about whom we can know nothing, exists in and for Himself. If true, only the revealed 'part' of God can be known, indicating that an unrevealed, so unknown 'part' exists, which reasserts the 'hidden God' notion. Rejecting this suggests that the economic Trinity is materially the same as the immanent Trinity, in a particular sense and with certain distinctions.⁹² The God who reveals Himself in creation "for us" is the same God "in Himself", again with proper distinctions, since God cannot be divided or partly revealed and partly hidden.⁹³ Only in the hiddenness proper to God's movement in revelation, can genuine knowledge of God be given. Therefore, "revelation is to be taken seriously as God's presence" with us in ordered relation and distinction.⁹⁴ The Self-revelation of God proceeds from the Father as "Revealer", is objectively fulfilled in the Son as

⁸⁹ Barth, *CD I/2*, 210.

⁹⁰ Barth, *CD I/1*, 372.

⁹¹ Barth, *CD I/2*, 187. Regarding the hiddenness of God in Barth's theology see for example, Robert W. Jenson, "The Hidden and Triune God," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 2, no. 1 (Mar 2000) 5-12; Daniel J. Peterson, "Speaking of God After the Death of God," *Dialog* 44, no. 3 (fall 2005) 207-226, esp. 211-213; and a response Joseph A. Bracken, "The Hiddenness of God: an Inter-Subjective Approach," *Dialog* 45, no. 2 (Summer 2006) 170-175. For an exposition of the interplay between the presence and hiddenness of God see Ingolf U. Dalferth, "Representing God's Presence," *Systematic Journal of Theology* 3, no. 3 (Nov 2001) 237-256; and regarding doctrines of election and Christology see Paul Helm, "Karl Barth and the Visibility of God," in *Engaging with Barth: Contemporary Evangelical Critiques*, eds., David Gibson and Daniel Strange (Nottingham: Apollos, 2008) 273-299.

⁹² See McCormack, *Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology*, 352. Although this point is made specifically in reference to his *Göttingen Dogmatics*, it holds true for his *Church Dogmatics* as well. See Bruce L. McCormack, "Forward to the German Edition of Karl Barth's *Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology*" in *Studies in the Theology of Karl Barth: Orthodox and Modern*, ed. Bruce L. McCormack (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008) 296.

⁹³ It is correct and necessary that Barth speaks of God "*in se*" in distinction to God "*pro nobis*", particularly, though not exclusively, in the early volumes of *Church Dogmatics*. The focus of God's being in and for Himself for Barth in these early volumes is to assert God's freedom, in accord with traditional theology. While consistently maintaining the divine freedom, the emphasis captured by the phrase "in and for Himself" nonetheless will be expanded in *CD II/2*.

⁹⁴ Barth, *CD I/1*, 353.

“Revelation” itself (by “the fact that He became man”⁹⁵), and is subjectively fulfilled in us by the Holy Spirit as the “Revealedness” (by “His outpouring on all flesh”⁹⁶).⁹⁷ Thus, “The Father addresses us in the Son. And the Holy Spirit receives that address *in us*.”⁹⁸ But how is God present to us; what is the spatiality proper to God in the hiddenness of this Self-revelatory event?

6. Dialectic of Veiling and Unveiling in Revelation

Barth’s use of the dialectic⁹⁹ of “veiling and unveiling” is essential to his doctrines of revelation and of God, and thus to this study of God’s spatiality.¹⁰⁰ “Revelation...means the unveiling of what is veiled.”¹⁰¹ But in Scripture it “...means the self-unveiling, imparted to men, of the God who by nature cannot be unveiled to men.”¹⁰² Since God is “unintuitable” to us as “Spirit”, He must somehow make Himself “intuitable” or perceivable to us and do so without leaving behind the “unintuitability proper to God”.¹⁰³ If God shed something essential to His ‘Godness’ in the event of revealing Himself, He would no longer be God. Again, knowing God entails two main aspects: God must make Himself known and in a way that we can really grasp, and God must make Himself known in a way that He remains God. This “secularity”¹⁰⁴ or “twofold indirectness”¹⁰⁵ attributed to God’s revealed Word is “the mystery

⁹⁵ Barth, *CD* II/1, 197.

⁹⁶ Barth, *CD* II/1, 197.

⁹⁷ “God Himself in unimpaired unity yet also in unimpaired distinction is Revealer, Revelation, and Revealedness.” Barth, *CD* I/1, 295. See §13 “Jesus Christ the Objective Reality of Revelation,” 1ff; and §16 “The Holy Spirit the Subjective Reality of Revelation,” 203ff in Barth, *CD* I/2. See also John Webster, *Barth*, 62-64 where he summarizes Barth’s theological project in this part of *CD* I/2: “The overarching aim of the exposition is to propound that in the work of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, God is both the objective and subjective reality and possibility of revelation. Revelation and its reception proceed alike from the triune God, and so coming to understand how God is known involves nothing more than following the path which is already indicated by the doctrine of the Trinity. Barth moves towards his aim along two interrelated lines. The first, Christological, line ponders the objective aspect of revelation: its intrinsic givenness as the act of God in Christ... The second, pneumatological, line of reflection ponders the subjective reality of revelation... (its presence to and reception by particular people)” [by the Holy Spirit].

⁹⁸ Bruce L. McCormack, “§27 ‘The Limits of the Knowledge of God’: Theses on the Theological Epistemology of Karl Barth,” *Zeitschrift für dialektische Theologie* 15 (1999) 76.

⁹⁹ “Dialectic” refers to Barth’s theology which holds together disparate concepts of reality without resolving them into a synthesis that compromises essential distinctions or into a unity that denies the reality of one concept in favor of the other, and also without over-emphasizing critical differences that prohibits any appropriate relation at all between the concepts.

¹⁰⁰ For example, see Barth, *CD* I/1, 380 and *CD* II/1, 224. According to Bruce McCormack, “...the conception of divine revelation as God’s act of unveiling Himself in and through the veil of a creaturely medium...” becomes for Barth “the single most decisive material presupposition of the *Church Dogmatics*.” McCormack, “*Dankeswort*,” 114.

¹⁰¹ Barth, *CD* I/1, 118-119.

¹⁰² Barth, *CD* I/1, 315.

¹⁰³ McCormack, “Revelation and History,” 26.

¹⁰⁴ Barth, *CD* I/1, 165.

¹⁰⁵ Barth, *CD* I/1, 168.

of God in creaturely reality”¹⁰⁶ which actually contradicts and “conceals” God, since God is not identical with creation. The “miraculous act” of revealing Himself is thus “the tearing of an untearably thick veil, i.e., His mystery.” Yet since no “synthesis” occurs between God and the creaturely media through which God reveals Himself, revelation is always “indirect”.¹⁰⁷ The veil always remains a veil even in unveiling, and it never becomes identical with the divine reality within, just as God also always remains God. Such dialectical “unity in differentiation” maintains necessary and permanent distinctions between divine and creaturely in the single revelatory event. Since no possibility exists for human beings to penetrate this veil, knowledge of what lies behind it comes only through a new work of the Holy Spirit who gives faith to perceive divine reality in creaturely form.¹⁰⁸ Apart from the ongoing activity of the Spirit within the community of faith and individual believers, merely the veil of human words recorded in Scripture and proclaimed in worship, and the man Jesus of Nazareth would be perceptible, being filled with a content of our own making. Ascribing a corresponding significance to those words and Person as God does requires an ever-new miraculous divine act. True knowledge of God conforms to God in His revelation, which is to God Himself. This suggests that since God is spatial and God’s Self-revelation is characteristically spatial, then the act of knowing God from the human side is also spatial. That is, knowledge of God creates genuine co-presence in relation between distinct beings, which is a dialectical unity (sharing God’s own knowledge) in distinction (appropriate to divine and human beings respectively).

Since knowledge of God must conform to God’s own being in revelation and such knowledge is dialectical, Barth claims that God’s being itself must be dialectical.¹⁰⁹ Although God reveals Himself, He never does so directly for He assumes that which is “not God” – a form of creation, and indeed a sinful creation – in order to manifest Himself to us in this creaturely world, and with which He never becomes identical. So both sides of the dialectic hold true: “The secular form without the divine content is not the Word of God and the divine content without the secular form is also not the Word of God.”¹¹⁰ Thus, creatures cannot perceive God’s revelation without encountering it in the creaturely media He takes to Himself for this purpose.

Moreover, in revelation God is not “partly veiled and partly unveiled, but either veiled or unveiled.” Unveiling Himself means God is fully, wholly, entirely present in His

¹⁰⁶ Barth, *CD* I/1, 166.

¹⁰⁷ Barth, *CD* I/1, 174.

¹⁰⁸ Barth, *CD* I/1, 182; I/2, 215.

¹⁰⁹ This is Barth’s *Realdialektik* in which the veiling and unveiling is the “...objectively real dialectic in the Self-movement of God in revelation...”. McCormack, “*Dankeswort*,” 214.

¹¹⁰ Barth, *CD* I/1, 175.

revelation, yet only in the hiddenness proper to His deity. To be totally, perfectly present in hiddenness, then, is the spatiality proper to God in such unveiling. So God's Word is "hidden, not withheld".¹¹¹ In revelation, God's unveiling is simultaneously a veiling and His veiling can also be genuine unveiling. The dialectic of God's own being in revealing Himself thus indicates "...the givenness of a Subject who is not given and the non-givenness of a Subject who gives Himself."¹¹² By upholding each side of this dialectic, Barth preserves two axiomatic concepts: on one hand, the freedom, sovereignty and mystery of God, and on the other hand, the distinction of creaturely existence from divinity. Therefore, the ontological reality of God's movement in revelation forms the basis of the corresponding epistemological dialectic. That reality is the material aspect of Barth's theological epistemology, the Christological formulation of two natures in one Person.¹¹³

7. Christology

The ground of all theology for Barth is given in the entire existence of Jesus Christ, the Son of God who is "very God and very human".¹¹⁴ In Him God has wholly entered our created realm: "'the Word was made flesh' and has 'dwelt among us'."¹¹⁵ The incarnation of the Word in Jesus Christ is divine revelation.¹¹⁶ The significance of the incarnation for epistemology is found in three interrelated points. First, that God actually became human indicates such "becoming" is not foreign to God's being.¹¹⁷ His being is a dynamic event not a static state. The transcendence of God's being, what He is "antecedently in Himself" in eternity, is that which empowers and is the basis of His immanence, His "becoming" in time. Thus, "What is real in God must constantly become real precisely because it is real in God."¹¹⁸ Rather than suggesting a necessity or lack of perfection in God, or a diminution in God's Godness or in the human's humanity, God's becoming reveals the perfection of His sovereign freedom and power to become in time what He already is in eternity.

Secondly, the objective possibility of wholly distinct natures (divine and human) being held together is the actuality of the Person, Jesus Christ. The "mystery" of God's revelatory event in the incarnation of the Son of God is the divine condescension occurring in the

¹¹¹ Barth, *CD I/1*, 174.

¹¹² McCormack, "Dankeswort," 214.

¹¹³ See Barth, *CD I/2*, 124. This serves only to introduce the Christological concepts necessary for epistemology.

¹¹⁴ Barth, *CD I/2*, 125, and the section entitled "Very God and Very Man," 132ff.

¹¹⁵ Barth, *CD I/2*, 132ff from John 1:14.

¹¹⁶ Barth, *CD I/2*, 1.

¹¹⁷ Barth, *CD I/2*, 159ff. See Jüngel, *God's Being is in Becoming* for an exposition of this aspect of "becoming" for Barth in relation to the doctrine of the Trinity.

¹¹⁸ Barth, *CD I/1*, 427.

inconceivable union of the distinct divine splendor and human reprobation.¹¹⁹ For Barth, the humanity that “the eternal Word of God chose, sanctified and assumed”¹²⁰ was “flesh” according to Scripture.¹²¹ This means creaturely existence fallen under the curse of sin, so also under “the judgment and verdict of God”, even while in His own lived existence He remained sinless.¹²² Certainly this “God-man”¹²³ is a “new”¹²⁴ divine act, “unique and peculiar”.¹²⁵ Proper to God’s own being (ontic) since realized as such, this act forms the basis of His revelation to us (noetic). The presence and work of this one Person existing in these two natures overcomes the gulf between sinful humanity and the holy God.¹²⁶

Thirdly, the unique, historical event of the incarnational life of Jesus Christ actually occurring in creaturely space and time creates the revelatory foundation or center for the possibility of our knowledge of God.¹²⁷ “Revelation” proper (Jesus Christ) and so also our knowledge of God (through His Spirit) are concerned with the unintuitable God who reveals Himself to us in and through the intuitable medium of the humanity of Jesus of Nazareth. However, since God is never directly identical with His creation, not even in this humanity that the Son of God takes to Himself in the incarnation, God’s revelation in Jesus Christ is indirect, veiled in human flesh.¹²⁸ Yet only in and through that veil of fleshly humanity are incarnation and revelation possible. So genuine unveiling of God occurs, though in and through the veil of humanity.¹²⁹ Simultaneously, veiling takes place even in that unveiling for the hiddenness and mystery of God is made apparent only in such unveiling. Barth expounds this event in his development of Chalcedonian Christology, the “hypostatic union” of two distinct yet inseparable natures in one Subject, the eternal *Logos* of God.¹³⁰

¹¹⁹ Barth, *CD* I/2, 165.

¹²⁰ Barth, *CD* I/2, 122.

¹²¹ Barth, *CD* I/2, 151-2.

¹²² Barth, *CD* I/2, 151.

¹²³ Barth, *CD* I/2, 162.

¹²⁴ “*Novum*”. Barth, *CD* I/2, 172.

¹²⁵ Barth, *CD* I/2, 178.

¹²⁶ Barth, *CD* I/2, 155, 173.

¹²⁷ Barth, *CD* I/2, 177.

¹²⁸ This accounts for the lack of recognition and acknowledgment of Jesus as the Son of God by those whom He dwelled among, as attested by Scripture. Only with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, who gave them faith to believe, do the disciples exhibit more consistent understanding that Jesus Christ is in fact God. On the other hand, His humanity enabled them to encounter God in a concrete and therefore personal and real way as creatures.

¹²⁹ Barth, *CD* I/2, 183.

¹³⁰ See Barth, *CD* I/2, 126, 163ff.

For the development of Barth’s Chalcedonian Christology by means of a realistic interpretation of the ancient *anhypostatic-enhypostatic* formulation regarding the humanity of Jesus see McCormack, *Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology*, especially Section III, 327ff. See also McCormack’s later critique of the term “Chalcedonian” to explicate Barth’s mature Christology of Volume IV, “*Barths grundsätzlicher Chalkedonismus?*” 138-173. For a more traditional interpretation of Barth’s Chalcedonian Christology see

According to McCormack, Barth's "Christocentrism" is a "methodological rule – not an *a priori* principle" that seeks to "...understand every doctrine from a centre in God's Self-revelation in Jesus Christ."¹³¹ Knowledge of God has its objective basis, criterion, limits and possibilities – its reality – exclusively in the Self-revealed Word of God; its subjective reality is in the Holy Spirit who effects such knowledge of God in us.¹³² Hence, the "reality of Jesus Christ" signifies that by divine freedom "God Himself in person is actively present in the flesh".¹³³ Beyond the spatiality that is proper to God (mutual presence in ordered relation and distinction), the unique spatiality of the incarnate God adds to it the notion of physical and geographical location that is proper to the creature as well. The reality of the Spirit signifies that God Himself is "present to His creature" in His Word "even to dwell in him personally", thereby making us free to be present to God.¹³⁴ This subjective aspect of the Spirit's work, through which He establishes a relation between God and us by making Him continually present to us through Jesus Christ, thus abiding in us, is characteristic of the Spirit's unique spatiality. Therefore, Immanuel, "God with us", is an expression of the spatiality of the triune God in the concrete event of His veiled and unveiled Self-revelation by the Father in the Son Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit.

This examination of Barth's theological epistemology has introduced the framework within which I develop a theology of the spatiality of the triune God. Barth's doctrine of God, his doctrine of the divine attributes and the specific perfection of omnipresence are presented next in Chapter Two. Consideration of Barth's doctrine of election in Chapter Three

George Hunsinger, "Karl Barth's Christology: Its Basic Chalcedonian Character" in *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Barth*, ed., John Webster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) 127-142. See also Charles T. Waldrop, *Karl Barth's Christology: Its Basic Alexandrian Character* (Berlin: Mouton, 1984).

Barth further refines and specifies his Christology in the light of his doctrine of election. So the Christology presented in these early volumes will also undergo development as seen in the later volumes. For the impact of the first, see Bruce McCormack, "Grace and Being: The Role of God's Gracious Election in Karl Barth's Theological Ontology" in *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Barth*, especially 101-104. Also, Jüngel, *God's Being is in Becoming*, 83ff. For the Christological development within the *Church Dogmatics*, see McCormack, "Barth's grundsätzlicher Chalkedonismus?"; and a refuting view, Paul Molnar, "Can the Electing God be God Without Us? Some Implications of Bruce McCormack's Understanding of Barth's Doctrine of Election for the Doctrine of the Trinity" *Neue Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie* 49, no. 2 (2007) 199-222 (hereafter cited as "Can the Electing God be God Without Us?").

¹³¹ McCormack, *Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology*, 454. For example, Christocentrism as an *a priori* principle might predetermine who "Christ" must be and what He can do before any revelatory event. However, Barth suggests coming to such an encounter ready and willing to hear God's talk about Himself, which requires an attitude of humility, prayer, obedience, and faith – all gifts of the Spirit. For brief considerations of Barth's Christocentrism see for example, Marc Cortez, "What Does it Mean to Call Karl Barth a 'Christocentric' Theologian?" *Scottish Journal of Theology* 60, no. 2 (2007) 127-143; Colin J. D. Greene, *Christology in Cultural Perspective: Marking Out the Horizons* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003) especially Chapter 11.

¹³² For the role of the Holy Spirit in the incarnation concerning revelation, see Barth, *CD I/2*, 196ff; for the Person and Word of the Holy Spirit as the "Subjective Reality of Revelation" see the first section of §16, 203ff.

¹³³ Barth, *CD I/2*, 151.

¹³⁴ Barth, *CD I/2*, 198.

necessitates revisiting his doctrines of the Trinity and the perfection of omnipresence, which concludes Part One.

CHAPTER TWO

KARL BARTH'S DOCTRINE OF GOD

Part One of this thesis proposes the spatiality of God's being that Part Two demonstrates and expands through God's work in the world. Chapter Two presents Barth's doctrine of God that narrows to a consideration of his doctrine of the divine perfections which further focuses on the perfection of omnipresence.

I begin with Barth's consideration concerning *how* God is God, and more particularly, *how* the Triune God manifests His own nature through various forms and modes of being. In other words, "...how there is on the basis of the doctrine of the Trinity a doctrine of attributes in which is manifested the nature of God that is hidden from us..."¹³⁵ One aspect of Barth's theological method at this stage of his development is notable here. He aims to develop a doctrine of divine attributes based upon his doctrine of the Trinity which itself is explicated in the context of revelation. However, none of these actually begin with the concrete event of revelation, Jesus Christ. They appear to be following the inherited doctrine built upon an abstract notion of God in a Greek philosophical context whose content is given prior to God's Self-revelation.¹³⁶ But these are two distinct and mutually exclusive methods of inquiring into any attribute of God's being. Stated succinctly, either we know what and how God is, based on His actual and concrete Self-revelation in Jesus Christ through His Spirit or we postulate with abstract human concepts about what and how we think God *should* be based on our experience or feelings or universals in creation that are then applied to God.¹³⁷ Barth's entire epistemological agenda aims at identifying this distinction: the former is wholly an act of God (with a fully genuine human response) and the latter entirely a human activity that posits no reality of God. For Barth, there is no third option. Only the first results in knowledge of the one true God. So while Barth claims to begin with the concrete revelation of God in Jesus Christ as attested in Scripture by the Spirit's power, in fact, he does not always do so. Yet, because this material contains Barth's sole treatment regarding divine omnipresence, I must begin here and raise critical questions as necessary in order to develop a more theological understanding of spatiality.

¹³⁵ Barth, *CD* I/1, 132 (emphasis mine).

¹³⁶ See, for example, McCormack, "The Actuality of God," 210-219.

¹³⁷ Understood correctly in the light of his theological epistemology, "concrete" or "non-metaphysical" and "non-speculative" have the same meaning as "theological" for Barth. One begins either with God's Self-knowledge given in revelation (true theology) or with human cognition (metaphysics) and constructs knowledge of a so-called deity.

1. Doctrine of God

To know “Who and what is God?”¹³⁸ is to specify how or in what way(s) “God is God” from revelation.¹³⁹ For, “What God is as God, the divine individuality and characteristics, the *essential* or “essence” of God, is something which we shall encounter either at the place where God deals with us as Lord and Savior, or not at all.”¹⁴⁰ Rather than a static state of being, the “event” character of God’s Self-revelation “holds together”¹⁴¹ His being and His work in its dynamic “livingness”.¹⁴² So God is a “... ‘being in act’ ... in the act of His revelation... which... declares... not only His reality for us... but at the same time His own, inner, proper reality, behind which and above which there is no other.”¹⁴³ Thus, in speaking of God,

...the word ‘event’ or ‘act’ is *final*, and cannot be surpassed or compromised. To its very deepest depths God’s Godhead consists in the fact that it is an event – not any event, not events in general, but the event of His action, in which we have a share in God’s revelation.¹⁴⁴

God’s being is “pure act” in the particular and “singular” act of His Self-revelation, which is the source of all other acts.¹⁴⁵ So God’s being is not something other than that revealed in His acts but is confirmed precisely in them in the veil of creaturely reality as God’s revelatory Self-movement in the dialectic of veiling and unveiling.¹⁴⁶

Furthermore, God is a “being in person”.¹⁴⁷ For Barth, “person” signifies one “which knows, wills and decides of itself and is moved by itself.”¹⁴⁸ Completely unlike any common notion of human personhood, only God “exists absolutely in its act” and “in the unity and togetherness” of “nature and spirit” as does “the divine person”.¹⁴⁹ Radicalizing what person

¹³⁸ Barth, *CD II/1*, 353, 442. See p. 261 for a slightly different version and emphasis: “What or who ‘is’ God?”

¹³⁹ Barth, *CD II/1*, 273.

¹⁴⁰ Barth, *CD II/1*, 261-262.

¹⁴¹ Barth, *CD II/1*, 262.

¹⁴² Barth, *CD II/1*, 273. Rowan Williams speaks of “God’s being in its character as ‘in motion’”. See R. Williams, “Barth on the Triune God,” 148.

¹⁴³ Barth, *CD II/1*, 262.

¹⁴⁴ Barth, *CD II/1*, 263.

¹⁴⁵ Barth, *CD II/1*, 264. In Aristotelian philosophy, “act” is perfection: that which entails no potentiality or possibility of movement towards its *telos* or place within the harmony of the cosmos, since it already exists in that perfect state, e.g., the Unmoved Mover. Thomas Aquinas attributed this notion to God as “*actus purus*”, the meaning of which Barth transforms in his own theology. In opposition to a static, unmovable picture of abstract deity, Barth’s notion of God as pure act refers to the vitality, movement and essence of dynamic life itself that is the integration of God’s being and activity. The addition of “*et singularis*” is meant to specify this God in His particular incarnate revelation. See McCormack, “The Actuality of God,” 213-215.

¹⁴⁶ See Barth, *CD II/1*, 267, 270. See also, Colin Gunton, “Divine Attribute and Divine Trinity,” *Catalyst: Contemporary Evangelical and Reformed Perspectives for Presbyterian Seminarians* 29, no. 3 (Mar 2003) 1-2.

¹⁴⁷ Barth, *CD II/1*, 267.

¹⁴⁸ Barth, *CD II/1*, 268.

¹⁴⁹ Barth, *CD II/1*, 271.

means, Barth claims God is the “real person” and we are persons only “by extension”.¹⁵⁰ Barth’s rigorous ontological distinctions between divine and human life entail no “confusion”, “comparison” or “contrast” between them “as commensurate”. For the Creator is the sole source of His own existence, unlike the creature that receives its existence only from Him. “God exists in His act. God is His own decision. God lives from and by Himself.”¹⁵¹ So what God does, He is; and what God wills, He is. No separation exists in God in whom willing is doing. Such activity reveals how He *lives*, the reality that is His “Godness”. He is the real Person whose activity (of willing and doing) constitutes His life, His being. In contrast, sinful human creatures may desire one thing and do its opposite, creating a rift between our being and our act. Knowing God in His particular and singular act is to know His being. “Every statement of what God is, and explanation how God is, must always state and explain what and how He is in His act and decision. There is no moment in the ways of God which is over and above this act and decision.”¹⁵² He is Immanuel, God with us.

It is the revelation of the name by which He wills to be known and addressed by us, the name which does not add a second and extrinsic truth to the first intrinsic truth of His intimate, hidden essence, but which is the name and the criterion and the truth (i.e., the disclosure and description of the particularity) of His innermost hidden essence.¹⁵³

What God reveals to us is truly, wholly, eternally God Himself. “The fact that we cannot go behind His livingness for a definition of His being means in fact that we cannot go behind this name of His, because in the very revelation of His name there occurs the act which is His being to all eternity.”¹⁵⁴ God’s being is, first, the eternal act of divine love.

God demonstrates His purpose for us in His Self-revealing act: He “seeks and creates fellowship between Himself and us.”¹⁵⁵ The fellowship desired and actualized in this event reveals God’s spatiality.

He wills as God to be for us and with us who are not God...He places Himself in this relation to us. He does not will to be Himself in any other way than He is in this relationship. His life...which is originally and properly the one and only life leans towards this unity with our life.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁰ Barth, *CD* II/1, 272.

¹⁵¹ Barth, *CD* II/1, 272. The statement “God lives from and by Himself” primarily means God is the source of His own existence.

¹⁵² Barth, *CD* II/1, 272.

¹⁵³ Barth, *CD* II/1, 273.

¹⁵⁴ Barth, *CD* II/1, 273.

¹⁵⁵ Barth, *CD* II/1, 272.

¹⁵⁶ Barth, *CD* II/1, 272.

The first aspect of God's dialectical being in revelation is His passionate love.¹⁵⁷ "Loving us, God does not give us something, but Himself; and giving us Himself, giving us His only Son, He gives us everything."¹⁵⁸

The other aspect of God's dialectical being is His "freedom". Divine freedom infers that "The being of God...His act...His love is His own. In this His being and act God is who He is."¹⁵⁹ Thus, "He Himself, in being, is His own basis". He confirms Himself simply by being "...because nothing can accrue to Him from Himself which He had not or was not already; because...His being in its self-realisation or the actuality of His being answers to no external pressure but is only the affirmation of His own plenitude and a self-realisation in freedom."¹⁶⁰ Free from any lack or need, any external compulsion or conditioning, God is free to love. Choosing to be present with us in relation and distinction that is ordered according to His love, God upholds and exercises His freedom. Contrasted with human notions of freedom as a lack of limitations, divine freedom includes the

...prerogative to be free without being limited by His freedom from external conditioning, free also with regard to His freedom, free not to surrender Himself to it, but to use it to give Himself to this communion and to practice this faithfulness in it, in this way being really free, free in Himself.¹⁶¹

Divine freedom, known by what God has actually done, means that God is unconditioned yet free to condition Himself according to His will. In fact, He chooses *not* to be free from all constraints, but freely "binds Himself" to us.¹⁶² Willing to be co-present with us in proper relation and distinction, "God is free to reveal His existence within the sphere of the reality that is distinct from Himself."¹⁶³ His freedom enables Him to take to Himself that which is not God in order to unveil Himself through a creaturely veil, thereby creating loving fellowship with us while remaining distinctly Himself in both the veil and this communion. God's freedom, dissimilar to human notions of freedom, thus reveals His spatiality.

In relation to everything not divine, God's freedom is the divine "absoluteness" that affects our knowledge of Him and His attributes. "...[N]oetically...God cannot be classified or included in the same category with anything that He is not. There exists no synthesis in which the same attribute...can be predicated in the same sense both of God and of something

¹⁵⁷ Barth, *CD* II/1, 272.

¹⁵⁸ Barth, *CD* II/1, 276.

¹⁵⁹ Barth, *CD* II/1, 297.

¹⁶⁰ Barth, *CD* II/1, 306.

¹⁶¹ Barth, *CD* II/1, 303.

¹⁶² Barth, *CD* II/1, 314.

¹⁶³ Barth, *CD* II/1, 304.

else.”¹⁶⁴ Again, the “noetic” stems from the “ontic”. The absolute ontological distinction from all that is not God, signifies that

...even in relatedness between [created beings] and Him...He does not share His being with theirs. He does not enter with them into a higher synthesis. He does not mingle and blend Himself with them. He does not transform Himself into them. Even in His relationship and connexion with them, He remains who He is.¹⁶⁵

Moreover, the other, positive side of the dialectic indicates that

...God has the freedom to be present with that which is not God, to communicate Himself and unite Himself with the other and the other with Himself, in a way which utterly surpasses all that can be effected in regard to reciprocal presence, communion and fellowship between other beings.¹⁶⁶

Therefore, the absoluteness of God connotes “...not only His freedom to transcend all that is other than Himself, but also His freedom to be immanent within it.”¹⁶⁷ This bears directly on Barth’s concept of spatiality, to be indicated.¹⁶⁸

Barth understands God’s transcendence as that which allows God to “...be sufficiently beyond the creature to be his Creator out of nothing and at the same time be free enough partially or completely to transform its being or to take it from it again as first He gave it.”¹⁶⁹

Regarding His immanence, Barth explains that God

...can so indwell the other that, while He is its Creator and Giver of its life, and while He does not take away this life, He does not withdraw His presence from this creaturely existence which is so different from His own divine life. Now that it has originated in His will and subsists by His will, He does not detach Himself from it in an alien aloofness, but is present as the being of its being with the eternal faithfulness of which no creature is capable towards another. God can allow this other which is so utterly distinct from Himself to live and move and have its being within Himself... He can sustain, uphold and govern it...thus being its beginning, centre and end. God can in fact be nearer to it than it is to itself...not in dissolution but in confirmation of His own divine singularity, and again not in dissolution but in confirmation of the singularity of the creature.¹⁷⁰

In both transcendence (distance) and immanence (proximity), God is moving toward the creature to create and renew its existence in mutual presence with Him in relation and distinction that are proper to divinity on one side and to human on the other. Divine freedom is revealed in the totality of this turning toward His creatures, whereby God is present for

¹⁶⁴ “*Deus non est in genere.*” Barth, *CD II/1*, 310.

¹⁶⁵ Barth, *CD II/1*, 311.

¹⁶⁶ Barth, *CD II/1*, 313.

¹⁶⁷ Barth, *CD II/1*, 313.

¹⁶⁸ Throughout this entire passage Barth refers to the distinction between God’s being in immanence versus transcendence, a concept he reworks in his doctrine of election, and to which I return.

¹⁶⁹ Barth, *CD II/1*, 313.

¹⁷⁰ Barth, *CD II/1*, 313-314.

relationship by upholding the distinctiveness of both Himself and the creature. Thus, God may indwell the creature according to its varied characteristics and to the “plenitude” or “richness” that is God’s being. For His intentional “...presence in the life and being of the world is His personal and therefore actual presence expressed in continually new forms according to His sovereign decisions.”¹⁷¹ Yet all “possibilities of divine presence and action” have a “very definitive centre...basis...consummation...meaning...norm...law” and unity in that “once-for-all and unique” event that actualizes God’s proper presence among us, Jesus Christ.¹⁷² Christology thus grounds and determines knowledge of God’s reality as “the One who loves in freedom”.¹⁷³

2. Doctrine of the Divine Perfections

Within his doctrine of God, Barth introduces his doctrine of divine attributes with a revision of traditional theology.¹⁷⁴ In place of “attribute”, Barth prefers the term “perfection”.

¹⁷¹ Barth, *CD* II/1, 314.

¹⁷² Barth, *CD* II/1, 315. In a remarkable, extended passage Barth highlights the dialectical variety of God’s freedom revealed particularly in Jesus Christ: “It is not, then, the rigid presence of a being whose nature we can, so to speak, formulate in this or that principle. God is free to be present with the creature by giving Himself and revealing Himself to it or by concealing Himself and withdrawing Himself from it. God is free to be and operate in the created world either as unconditioned or as conditioned. God is free to perform His work either within the framework of what we call the laws of nature or outside it in the shape of miracle. God is free either to grant His immanence to nature by working at its heart or by exerting His sway at an infinite height above it. God is free to conceal His divinity from the creature, even to become a creature Himself, and free to assume again His Godhead. He is free to maintain as God His distance from the creature and equally free to enter into partnership with it, indeed, to lift the creature itself, in the most vigorous sense, into unity with His own divine being, with Himself. God is free to rule over the world in supreme majesty and likewise to serve in the world as the humblest and meanest of servants, free even to be despised in the world, and rejected by the world. God is free to clothe Himself with the life of the world in all its glory as with a garment; but free likewise Himself to die the death which symbolizes the end of all things earthly, in utter abandonment and darkness. God is free to be entirely unlimited over against the world: not bound by its finitude, nor by its infinitude; not confined to its time and space as a whole, nor to any one area of space or period of time. He is equally free to limit Himself: to be eternal in the tiny endlessness of our starry heavens, or of our human conceptuality, but eternal also in our finitude; to be shut up in the totality of our time-space universe, but also in all humility to be confined to this or that time and place as contrasted with other times and places. God is free to ally Himself, within creation, to the spirit as against rebellious nature, but also free to ally Himself with nature in opposition to the undoubtedly more rebellious spirit. God is free to be provoked and to be merciful, to bless and to punish, to kill and to make alive, to exalt us to heaven and to cast us down into hell. God is free to be wholly inward to the creature and at the same time as Himself wholly outward: *totus intra et totus extra* and both, of course, as forms of His immanence, of His presence, of the relationship and communion chosen, willed and created by Himself between Himself and His creation. This is how He meets us in Jesus Christ. His revelation in Jesus Christ embraces all these apparently quite diverse and contradictory possibilities.” Barth, *CD*, II/1, 314-5. Yet even some elements of this passage will be recast in the light of his doctrine of election.

¹⁷³ Barth, *CD* II/1, 257.

¹⁷⁴ For expositions on the attributes of God, particularly in the light of Barth’s theology, see for example, John B. Webster, *Confessing God: Essays in Christian Dogmatics II* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2005) and “The Holiness and Love of God,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 57, no. 3 (2004) 249-268; also Colin Gunton, *Act and Being: Towards a Theology of the Divine Attributes* (London: SCM, 2002); Jay Wesley Richards, *The Untamed God: a Philosophical Exploration of Divine Perfection, Immutability and Simplicity* (Downer’s Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004) esp. his section on “Barth’s Treatment of the Divine Perfections,” 125-128; and Krieg, “The Theologian as Narrator: a Study of Karl Barth on the Divine Perfections.” For an application of Barth’s account

“Attribute” connotes categories of shared characteristics among similar beings.¹⁷⁵ But since God is like no other being, He cannot be included in any categories. Also, an “attributed” quality may imply that which is accidental to one’s essence¹⁷⁶ but such cannot be ascribed to God’s nature for He is “simple being”.¹⁷⁷ He is substantively and eternally whole and complete – perfect – in Himself; no need or possibility exists to attribute something additional or occasional to His being which is not already proper to His being or present in perfect measure, nor conversely, to remove anything from it even “in the economy of His works.” Barth stresses that God does not assume some or all of His perfections “...merely in connexion with His self-revelation to the world, but that they constitute His own eternal glory.”¹⁷⁸ Thus, Barth rejects the traditional separation of the so-called “essential” attributes from the “economic” attributes, the first considered essential to God’s being, and the second attributed to God only in relation to His activity towards creation.¹⁷⁹ Discarding this dualistic scheme where God maintains some perfections in Himself and others in His dealings with us (which results in two deities, one being the ‘hidden God’), Barth adamantly claims that God’s attributes are essential to His being.¹⁸⁰ In fact, the “multitude of various and distinct types of perfections” simply reveal more particularly God’s “one perfection” that is His existence, His loving in freedom. Since God’s Self-revelation is always a new event and He manifests Himself freely in variety, we can “...know Him again and again, in ever new ways...as the perfect God in the abundance, distinctness and variety of His perfections.”¹⁸¹ By definition, perfection is a reality only in the being of God.

Expanding this notion, God’s perfection first suggests that wherever and however God exists and reveals Himself, God is entirely and perfectly present as Himself, as the One, indivisibly and distinctively perfect being that He is. God is eternally perfect as Himself, meaning He is eternally, perfectly Himself as the One who loves in freedom. Again, God exists only in the perfection that is the event of His being, in love and freedom, which He reveals in a variety of ways. Stated differently, a “perfection” is not something God *has*, but

of the divine perfections, see Brian Brock, “The Form of the Matter: Heidegger, Ontology and Christian Ethics,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 3, no. 3 (Nov. 2001) 257-279.

¹⁷⁵ Barth, *CD II/1*, 323.

¹⁷⁶ In Aristotelian Scholasticism, “God’s relations to anything outside are not essential to God’s being and so are accidents.” The significance of this indicates that God can have “no real relations” with anything external to God, which Barth clearly rejects. See Allen, *Philosophy for Understanding Theology*, 146.

¹⁷⁷ Barth, *CD II/1*, 332.

¹⁷⁸ Barth, *CD II/1*, 327.

¹⁷⁹ “For as the triune God, both in regard to His revelation and to His being in itself, He exists in these perfections, and these perfections again exist in Him and only in Him as the One who, both in His revelation and in eternity, is the same.” Barth, *CD II/1*, 323-4.

¹⁸⁰ Barth, *CD II/1*, 323. “...[E]very perfection exists essentially in Him.”

¹⁸¹ Barth, *CD II/1*, 322.

“materially” who or what God *is*.¹⁸² For example, God does not *have* or possess holiness; He Himself *is* holy. And the corresponding statement also holds true: holiness is actual only in relation to God’s being. A doctrine of perfections is thus a way of knowing through revelation who God is and the characteristic ways He exists in His acts, by looking at His being in act under specific and distinctive aspects, such as holiness or omnipresence. Moreover, due to the dialectical character of God’s revelation stemming from God’s own being, Barth insists that one aspect of God’s nature cannot be stressed over and against others as if they are in opposition, like wrath versus mercy. What may appear to us, at first glance, to be divergent attributes nonetheless are held together (and perfectly!) in the one being of this *Realdialektik* who is Lord not merely over creatures and the epistemic relation, but as Lord of Himself He is also “Lord over these antitheses”.¹⁸³ Barth’s epistemology and concept of revelation indicate both sides of the dialectic must be maintained in order to have true knowledge about *God*.

This concept of perfection leads Barth to define divine unity as it pertains to God’s attributes. On one hand, God is indivisible; each perfection is not merely inseparable from His being (since actually identical with it) but from every other perfection as well. On the other hand, and seen in the doctrine of the Trinity, unity does not imply singularity in God’s being in eternity or in revelation, nor then in regard to His perfections. God is and reveals His triunity by manifesting His love and freedom in a copious variety of characteristic ways; so God has perfections “in the plural”.¹⁸⁴ To clarify, the multiplicity of perfections of the one, “simple” God does not imply separable “parts” within God’s being. Rather, perfections are merely a way of speaking more specifically of the rich and diverse ways that “God lives His perfect life” and reveals Himself to us.¹⁸⁵ Both the variety of individual perfections (each being perfect and “identical with every other perfection”) and their totality (the combination also being perfect) must be acknowledged in order to reflect the perfect plenitude that is God Himself. Likewise, Barth claims God is “nothing other than each one of His perfections” plus the “fulness of them all”.¹⁸⁶ In sum, “The divine being as the One who loves in freedom is the

¹⁸² Barth, *CD* II/1, 335.

¹⁸³ Barth, *CD* II/1, 461. The understanding that no opposition can exist in the being of God informs Barth’s formulation of the doctrine of divine perfections. For an exposition on Barth’s use of dialectic in his doctrine of divine perfections see Terry L. Cross, *Dialectic in the Doctrine of God* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001) esp. 178-193.

¹⁸⁴ Barth, *CD* II/1, 327.

¹⁸⁵ Barth, *CD* II/1, 322.

¹⁸⁶ Barth, *CD* II/1, 333.

divine being in the multiplicity, individuality and diversity of these perfections. He does not possess this wealth. He Himself is this wealth.”¹⁸⁷

In his treatment of the doctrines of the Word of God and of revelation, Barth contends that God’s individual perfections cannot be known from a general concept of being or through anthropological characteristics that are then ascribed to God, but only in His Self-revelation. So Barth discards traditional doctrines of divine attributes constructed by such speculative schemes to reformulate his doctrine based on revelation, with its content centered in Jesus Christ as attested in Scripture and its form consisting in the dialectic of veiling and unveiling. Regarding the latter Barth writes,

A fully restrained and fully alive doctrine of God’s attributes will take as its fundamental point of departure the truth that God is for us fully revealed and fully concealed in His self-disclosure. We cannot say partly revealed and partly concealed, but we must actually say wholly revealed and wholly concealed at one and the same time...And in both ways, through His self-disclosure and concealment, He is at one and the same time knowable and unknowable for us.¹⁸⁸

The unity and distinction displayed in these dialectics of revelation and of knowledge correspond to the content of the doctrine of God’s perfection, that unity and distinction of “God’s very being” in love and freedom without synthesis, separation or dissolution.¹⁸⁹ Thus, the dialectical unity in distinction of God’s individual perfections manifest in either “...a form of love in which God is free, or a form of freedom in which God loves.”¹⁹⁰ Within these two distinct yet integrated emphases concerning the one being of God, Barth further organizes twelve specific perfections derived from Scripture into “dialectically related pairs that mutually condition each other.”¹⁹¹ Thus, the perfections of the divine loving consist in the grace and holiness, mercy and righteousness, and patience and wisdom of God. The perfections of the divine freedom include the unity and omnipresence, constancy and

¹⁸⁷ Barth, *CD* II/1, 331.

¹⁸⁸ Barth continues: “We must say wholly revealed because by the grace of revelation our human views and concepts are invited and exalted to share in the truth of God and therefore in a marvelous way made instruments of a real knowledge of God (in His being for us and as He is in Himself). We must say wholly concealed because our human views and concepts (the only one at our disposal for the knowledge of God, and claimed by God Himself as a means to this end) have not in themselves the smallest capacity to apprehend God. A true doctrine of the divine attributes must in all circumstances attest and take into account both factors – God’s self-disclosure and His self-concealment...And in both ways, through His self-disclosure and concealment, He is at one and the same time knowable and unknowable for us. In other words, in His self-revelation and concealment He has become for us an object of our human knowledge while remaining completely unknowable to us in both aspects (even in that of revelation).” Barth, *CD* II/1, 341-2.

¹⁸⁹ Barth, *CD* II/1, 343.

¹⁹⁰ Barth, *CD* II/1, 332.

¹⁹¹ McCormack, “For Us and Our Salvation”: Incarnation and Atonement in the Reformed Tradition,” *Studies in Reformed Theology and History* 1, no. 3 (Spring 1993) 28 (hereafter cited as “For Us and Our Salvation”).

omnipotence, and eternity and glory of God. With this context now provided, the focus narrows to the being of God who, among His other perfections is perfectly omnipresent.¹⁹²

3. The Doctrine of the Divine Perfection of Omnipresence

The all-encompassing and particular qualities of God's perfect nature are known in the revelation of His perfect acts. The characteristic ways in which God lives and loves in freedom are specified in the divine perfections. This section focuses upon Barth's treatment of God's perfection of omnipresence, or how God as the One who loves in freedom is omnipresent.¹⁹³ I introduce the primary concepts and terms regarding the spatiality of God and assess Barth's adherence to his own epistemology. My aim in concluding both this section and chapter is to set forth a working conceptual definition of the spatiality of God thus far.

Although occasionally Barth fails to heed his own warning, he nonetheless cautions against slipping back into the method traditionally utilized to inquire into specific attributes of God; one that is drawn from a general principle of being or from an abstract notion of the attribute itself, both without their ground and object in Christology. Mindful of the source and order of our knowledge from God's revelation in Jesus Christ attested in Scripture through the Spirit, "...these concepts are determined and also circumscribed wholly and completely by His deity..." not "...the converse that His deity is circumscribed by the concepts which are at our disposal. The relation between subject and predicate is an irreversible one when it is a matter of God's perfections."¹⁹⁴ So our concepts must originate, develop and be doctrinally explicated by this one standard. This unique starting point, constant reference, and goal, indicates how Barth radically departs from Church tradition (and philosophical treatments) in his discussion of the omnipresence of God.¹⁹⁵ He aims to begin with what God has in fact done and revealed, and then proceeds to develop the specific concept more fully in the light of our broader knowledge of God's being and activity. The entire Scriptures inform Barth's construction of each perfection rather than a single passage or metaphysical idea.

¹⁹² I will refer to these other perfections only as they pertain to this ongoing study of the spatiality of God.

¹⁹³ For a classical treatment of this attribute see for example, Stephen Charnock, *Discourses upon the Existence and Attributes of God*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1840) 407-457.

¹⁹⁴ Barth, *CD* II/1, 448.

¹⁹⁵ As I have discussed in the preceding section, some Barth scholars have pointed out Barth's inconsistency between his stated methodologies and how he actually carried out his theology (see Footnote 56 on pp. 14). McCormack has directed attention to metaphysical elements of Barth's doctrine of God including the divine perfections that need to be weeded out of a truly theological account, as I shall discuss later. See McCormack, "Grace and Being," 101-103; Idem., "The Actuality of God," 212ff.

A perfection or “determination of the freedom of God”, omnipresence follows and is paired with the unity of God.¹⁹⁶ Divine unity has to do with the “one, unique and simple” being of God.¹⁹⁷ Yet God’s oneness is not mono but triune, in multiplicity and diversity.¹⁹⁸ His unity, by definition including every other perfection, is unique to Himself, qualitatively different and wholly other than the unity ascribed to anything of creation.¹⁹⁹ Divine simplicity refers to God’s indivisibility; though distinctions exist, there are no separate parts. Nor is it appropriate to speak of greater or lesser degrees of God’s being and/or His work. Rather, “in all that He is and does, He is wholly and undividedly Himself.”²⁰⁰ Although one may experience, emphasize, or seek to understand one aspect of God’s being or work in differentiation from other aspects, for example, focusing on His mercy in distinction from His righteousness, nevertheless the totality and unity which is the triune God must be constantly upheld. Furthermore, since God’s Self-movement in revelation is manifest in the dialectic of veiling and unveiling, and is our source of knowledge regarding God’s perfections, both sides of this dialectic must also be acknowledged even as each commands individual attention. Only in this manner will our thinking be conformed to God in His Self-revelation. Since God is One, Barth claims God is also omnipresent.

Simply and broadly defined, omnipresence is “the perfection in which He is present”.²⁰¹ God’s omnipresence has two main movements in Barth’s discussion. The first and foremost is “inward”, signifying that God is present to Himself; the second is “outward”, referring to God’s presence in creation. Both movements primarily signal relationship, so Barth describes omnipresence as “an attribute of God’s freedom operative in His love” whereby God “...always and always will be the One who encounters and is related and present, first to Himself and then to others also.”²⁰² God’s nature is such that He is present first to Himself in His own triune unity, then and on that basis also present to everything else that is not God. Barth specifies, “presence does not mean identity, but togetherness at a distance” or co-presence in ordered relation and distinction.²⁰³ The inward movement is the “...togetherness of Father, Son and Holy Spirit at the distance posited by the distinction that

¹⁹⁶ Barth, *CD* II/1, 461.

¹⁹⁷ Barth, *CD* II/1, 322.

¹⁹⁸ Barth, *CD* II/1, 442.

¹⁹⁹ “He is the only one of His kind.” Barth, *CD* II/1, 442.

²⁰⁰ Barth, *CD* II/1, 445.

²⁰¹ Barth, *CD* II/1, 468. I use the term “movement” to highlight the dynamism that is God’s being, and so of course His presence. A static notion of either will not suffice, as will become clear throughout this study. Additionally, these movements will be reconsidered in the light of Barth’s doctrine of election in each chapter.

²⁰² Barth, *CD* II/1, 465.

²⁰³ Barth, *CD* II/1, 468.

exists in the one essence of God.” Outwardly, presence is the “togetherness at a distance of the Creator and the creature.”²⁰⁴ Differentiation in proximity or “togetherness at a distance” is, ironically, a necessary condition for presence. Both distinction and relatedness between two subjects, two “I’s” must exist in order for each to be present to the other.²⁰⁵ In this sense, inward “distance” distinguishes the three modes of God’s being even in the perfect “togetherness” of His unity. Thus, without such so-called “distance” or differentiation in Himself, God would be mono. And yet outward “distance” between “I” (God) and “thou” (human beings) is qualitatively different, given the distinct nature (Creator versus creature) and disposition (holy versus sinner) of each.

Existing in such “togetherness at a distance”, omnipresence is not only the perfection in which God is present but also the perfection in which God “possesses a place”. Barth observes, “...where there is distance, there is necessarily one place and another place” such that “I” am “here” and “you” are “there”. In this sense then, “God’s presence necessarily means that He possesses a place, His own place, or...His own space.”²⁰⁶ Because God is a reality distinct from us, Barth posits that God has His own place or space that is different than ours. Such reformulation demonstrates that God is not a-spatial as most of the Christian tradition and philosophy avow.²⁰⁷ “Non-spatiality means existence without distance, which means identity.”²⁰⁸ But this rebuts God’s Self-revelation. First, in God’s own being, His oneness entails threeness, and His threeness entails oneness. Second, God is also distinct from His creatures. Hence, God’s loving and free presence as the One unified in differentiation and differentiated in unity is His “spatiality”. In fact, Barth directly pronounces “just because of His spatiality, He is able to be the Triune” and Lord of all.²⁰⁹ The “general definition” Barth offers for divine spatiality is that “God is spatial as the One who loves in freedom, and therefore as Himself.”²¹⁰ Since divine perfections are essentially identical to God’s being, divine spatiality denotes a “confirmation” that cannot involve any “curtailment or diminution”

²⁰⁴ Barth, *CD II/1*, 468.

²⁰⁵ For example, you must be distinguished from me (that is, not identical to me or you would be me) and also nearby in some manner for us to be in one another’s presence (this includes physical and what may be called ‘spiritual’ or ‘virtual’ presence such as being in the same room, on the telephone, or even in an internet ‘chatroom’).

²⁰⁶ Barth, *CD II/1*, 468. For various theological considerations of sacred “place” or “space” see for example John Inge, *A Christian Theology of Place* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003); Iain MacKenzie, *The Dynamism of Space: A Theological Study of the Nature of Space* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 1995); .

²⁰⁷ For a proposal in rational theology of the rejection of both spatiality and omnipresence as a divine attribute, see Joshua Hoffman and Gary S. Rozenkrantz in *The Divine Attributes* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2002) 4, 39-58.

²⁰⁸ Barth, *CD II/1*, 468.

²⁰⁹ Barth, *CD II/1*, 469.

²¹⁰ Barth, *CD II/1*, 470.

of God's deity. God is God precisely in His spatiality and in no other way. This is the "general nature" of God's omnipresence.²¹¹

More "specific qualities" of God's omnipresence identify that God is "...everywhere completely and undividedly the One He is and in all the fulness of His being."²¹² Wherever God is (which is everywhere, the basic meaning of omnipresence), God is always and everywhere wholly, totally, and of course, perfectly present as Himself, this One who loves in freedom. Stated negatively, "there is no place where He is not present in His essence" or where He is "less present than in all others."²¹³ Again, this agrees with the perfection of God's unity in its simplicity, connoting His undivided and never other than total presence. Furthermore, God's spatiality denotes His presence in "continually differing and special ways", ways that indeed are not our ways.²¹⁴ This reflects the perfection of God's unity as unique. Given that God's being is a unity in distinction or in multiplicity, God's spatiality, as a perfection of that being, corresponds both to the "relation between His unity and His triunity," and also between "His unity and the wealth of His being."²¹⁵ For Barth, this suggests God is "God in a different way here and there, in a relationship between His here and His there, in a movement from the one to the other and *vice versa*, with greater or lesser remoteness or nearness between the two." So God can be and is present in a "specific way" (e.g., in His love, or even in the humanity of the incarnate Jesus Christ) and in a "differentiated" way as well (e.g., as Father, Son and Holy Spirit; or in Gospel and Law, Church and Israel). Thus, Barth concludes, not only is He "...present to everything with a presence which is not uniform but distinct and differentiated..." but this unique presence is a "...manifestation of His freedom, the fulfillment of His life and the reality of His love."²¹⁶ Concurring with his theological epistemology, Barth summarizes how we know that God is spatial:

If in and with His creation God is the same as He is in Himself, revealing Himself to us in His revelation as not less or other than Himself, then it is characteristic of Him to be here and there and everywhere, and therefore to be always somewhere and not nowhere, to be spatial in His divine essence.²¹⁷

God's spatiality is revealed to us in the concrete reality of His history, His co-presence with humankind in ordered relation and distinction.

²¹¹ Barth, *CD* II/1, 470.

²¹² Barth, *CD* II/1, 472.

²¹³ Barth, *CD* II/1, 470. To hammer the point, Barth states, "There is nowhere where God is not, but He is not nowhere." and "Omnipresence cannot mean God's 'omni-absence'." See p. 471 and p. 472 respectively.

²¹⁴ Barth, *CD* II/1, 470. Such divine ways tend to make this aspect of God's spatiality difficult to grasp.

²¹⁵ Barth, *CD* II/1, 472.

²¹⁶ Barth, *CD* II/1, 473.

²¹⁷ Barth, *CD* II/1, 472.

Hence, God's omnipresence even includes "absence" in a particular sense. That God's Self-movement in revelation is manifest in the dialectic of veiling and unveiling, of disclosure and hiddenness, is significant for divine spatiality in references to His presence and proximity versus His so-called "absence" or "remoteness". Absence does not mean "non-presence". Rather, it alludes to biblical passages that describe subjective experiences of disruptions or confusion in human beings' relationship with God. Such includes darkness, agony or loneliness stemming from seemingly unanswered prayer, God's wrath and judgment, the removal of His specific blessing and preservation, the withdrawal of His (*shekinah*) glory and the turning away of His face. To borrow additional concepts from Barth, absence in this sense indicates God's "No" while presence refers to God's "Yes". However, like the No, the absence (remoteness) is for the sake of the presence (proximity), the Yes. Both sides must be maintained to capture Barth's full concept of divine spatiality actualized and revealed in Word and Spirit, and shared by human beings. For this reason, the term "spatiality" is more instructive to highlight the reality of the being and act of God in encounter with us rather than "presence", since spatiality includes both positive and negative elements while the latter term tends to indicate only the positive.

3.1. God's Presence *Ad Intra* and *Ad Extra*

The spatiality of God *ad intra* is the first and primary movement of the divine omnipresence. As noted above, spatiality *in se* is "...the presence in which God is present to Himself and to Himself exclusively, and therefore the space which is exclusively His own space." Typically the Bible refers to the space that is God's alone as the "throne of God".²¹⁸ This He shares with no other. Yet this implies no isolation or solitary existence since in Himself God is both unity and communion, mutual presence in relation and distinction proper to His modes of being as the one God. Concerning spatiality, Barth states, "As the triune He is living and loving, and this is the basis and the ultimately real source of space in God Himself."²¹⁹ If God were "spaceless", Barth boldly asserts, He would be "lifeless and loveless".²²⁰ Furthermore, God's triune spatiality is the source of all space distinct from His own. First, "As Father, Son and Holy Spirit God uses and has and is space for Himself." Then in turning outward as the Triune God He is also Creator and Lord, meaning "He uses and has

²¹⁸ Barth, *CD* II/1, 474.

²¹⁹ Barth, *CD* II/1, 475-6.

²²⁰ Barth, *CD* II/1, 475.

and is also space for all...which is distinct from Himself – space in created space, and therefore...space in our spaces.”²²¹

The second movement of God’s spatiality is *ad extra*. Barth offers a multi-layered description of God’s spatiality in creation, of His love that freely overflows outwardly. God has lovingly and freely created a space distinguished from His own, “the space of heaven and earth, our space.”²²² As Creator and Sustainer, God’s space encompasses and permeates this creaturely space, for God is present in His creation as the Providential Giver of all life. But that is not to infer either pantheism or the validity of “natural theology”.²²³ Rather, divine providence is God’s “general presence” in relation to the whole of creation. Both “distinction and relationship” are implicit in God’s presence and activity towards and in creation. Again, distinction is continually affirmed between divine and created, between God’s space and our space. Yet relationship also is affirmed for “our space does not exist apart from God’s space.”²²⁴ In fact, God’s space so fully penetrates our space that while we exist in our space (of creation) we also live in God’s space (understood here as His general life-giving and life-sustaining presence). According to Scripture, no space exists out of or beyond God’s loving presence; nowhere can we hide from Him.²²⁵ Thus, Barth concludes, there is “no absence, no non-presence, of God in His creation.”²²⁶ Additionally, the general divine omnipresence in creation can take a variety of forms, such as His presence in holiness or justice, in distance or proximity. So God is not merely present everywhere in the same, undifferentiated way. And knowledge of God’s general presence in creation is given only on the basis of the revelation of His “special presence”.²²⁷

This special “...presence to the whole world from the beginning and for all time is in His Word, which as the Word of revelation and reconciliation occupies a special space.”²²⁸ Therefore, God’s omnipresence specifically concerns “...the special nature of His presence in His revealing and reconciling work ontologically (in its reality) and not merely noetically

²²¹ Barth, *CD II/1*, 476.

²²² Barth, *CD II/1*, 476. For example, God’s space indicates His triunity and can be represented by His throne in distinction from created spaces of creatures.

²²³ Barth, *CD II/1*, 476. For a contrast between pantheistic and traditional theistic views of the omnipresence of God see Robert Oakes, “Divine Omnipresence and Maximal *Immanence*: Supernaturalism Versus Pantheism,” *American Philosophical Quarterly* 43, no. 2 (Apr2006) 171-179. For a theological discussion see for example Stanley J. Grenz & Roger E. Olson, *20th Century Theology: God & the World in a Transitional Age* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992) esp. chapter 12, “God’s Immanence and Transcendence,” 256-277.

²²⁴ Barth, *CD II/1*, 476.

²²⁵ Barth refers to Psalm 139, Hebrews 4:13, Amos 9:1ff, Isaiah 57:15 among others.

²²⁶ Barth, *CD II/1*, 477.

²²⁷ Barth, *CD II/1*, 478. This prevents our knowledge of God from being “natural theology”.

²²⁸ Barth, *CD II/1*, 478.

(pertaining to our knowledge of it).”²²⁹ Barth identifies two special spaces of God’s presence in creation, Israel and the Church. These encompass the history, contemporary reality and future expectation of God’s presence with His chosen people, and through them with all humankind. In its similarities, distinctions and variety, God’s Word reveals the actuality of God’s loving and free presence in, to and through both Israel and the Church. This divine presence attested in Old and New Testaments occurs as Gospel and Law, sacrifice and sacrament. Various modes of God’s special presences in Israel and the Church include geography, particular persons, and “spiritual” encounters.²³⁰ The first, geographically speaking, includes “holy places” of Israel such as the sanctuaries at Shiloh and Bethel, the Tabernacle, Solomon’s Temple, and Jerusalem.²³¹ God’s presence is also acknowledged in particular people empowered by God’s Spirit including prophets (Moses, Isaiah), priests (Aaron, Eli), kings (David, Hezekiah), apostles (Peter, John, Paul) and Christians (“saints”). “Spiritual” presences refer to specific encounters with God as in theophanies, miracles, at Pentecost, on the Road to Damascus and in the Church.²³²

These special presences of God within creation indicate the overlap and interpenetration of special divine and creaturely spaces. This characteristic overlapping and interpenetrating corresponds with the reality of God who encompasses unity and trinity, spiritual and material, infinite and finite, divine and created, revealedness and hiddenness, eternity and time. The reality of God, encompassing all seemingly disparate and contrary things in relatedness, forms the basis of our participation in His spaces. We do so, however, only in ways appropriate for creatures, and as reconciled creatures. Such apparent incongruence is not antithetical to God’s being, but God is God precisely in this dynamic dialectic. Therefore, in all forms of His actuality, the revealing presence of God is never a “given” that comes under human control but a new and excitingly varied “giving” by God of Himself as the One who loves in freedom.²³³

²²⁹ Barth, *CD II/1*, 478.

²³⁰ Barth, *CD II/1*, 480. Though such designations are not without obvious limitations, they can provide an entry into the recognition of the variety of ways in which God is present.

²³¹ It must be noted, these designated places only became “holy” for the Israelite community as a result of an actual personal encounter with the presence of God by an individual, and later confirmed to the community.

²³² Again, all of these certainly have earthly geographic implications as well, given the fact that in this world creatures must be physically located somewhere.

²³³ Following Barth and Gregory of Nyssa, Kathryn Tanner explains “Because divinity is not a kind, God is not bound by apparent contrasts between divine and creaturely qualities; God is thereby free to enter into intimate community with us, without loss to the divine nature, without sacrificing the difference between God and us.” See Kathryn Tanner, *Jesus, Humanity and the Trinity: A Brief Systematic Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001) 11.

Beyond God's general creative and sustaining presence, and His particular revealing and reconciling presences in Israel and the Church, the unique space or "proper presence" of God is Jesus Christ, God's true "dwelling place".²³⁴ With this third type of presence Barth's triadic structure of this doctrine becomes evident, derived from its ontological ground in the triunity of God. As the proper presence of God in His creation, that quintessential Word of His revelation and reconciliation, Jesus Christ is the "...basis and constituent centre of [God's] special presence, and therefore the meaning and presupposition of His general presence."²³⁵ As God's proper space, Jesus Christ is qualitatively different from all other of God's spaces *ad extra*. He is not one in a series of God's "self-presentations" but the beginning and end, the one that determines and qualifies them all.²³⁶ In a unity in distinction particular to Jesus Christ, He is fully God and fully human, Creator and creature, divine space and creaturely space.²³⁷ He is the Word made flesh, the one true sacrament, the distinctive dwelling place of God, and the Israelite whose body is the Church.

Stressing the point most fully, Barth circles back to his starting point. Jesus Christ, in His divine-human unity, sits on God's own throne, in God's unique space; according to His divinity it is His own throne, according to His humanity, "...the Creator has given the creature not only space but His own most proper space. God has raised man to His throne." God's unique space has now become the "permanent space" of this Human, and all represented in Him. Revelation, Barth claims, provides the "demonstration and explanation of the divine space":²³⁸

...the human nature of Christ (and especially in this connexion His corporality and therefore His spatiality), in its unity with the deity of the Son (unconfused with it, but also undivided from it, in real indirect identity), is the revelation, but as the revelation it is also the reality of the divine space, by which all other spaces are created, preserved and surrounded.²³⁹

In His divine-human unity, Jesus Christ alone encompasses the full reality of God's spatiality.

Before concluding with a conceptual definition of the spatiality of God, I raise a critical question: has Barth been faithful to the most essential elements of his theological epistemology in his accounts of the preceding doctrines?²⁴⁰ The material covered is critical for

²³⁴ Barth, *CD* II/1, 480.

²³⁵ Barth, *CD* II/1, 483.

²³⁶ Barth, *CD* II/1, 484.

²³⁷ Barth, *CD* II/1, 486.

²³⁸ Barth, *CD* II/1, 486.

²³⁹ Barth, *CD* II/1, 486.

²⁴⁰ I note that my purpose here has been to consider Barth's theological treatment, not his biblical exegesis upon which he develops his concepts, though I will refer to some of these passages as they impact my more detailed study in subsequent chapters.

his doctrine of the perfection of omnipresence. However, embedded in his exposition are numerous instances of more speculative thinking that are not based in God's Self-revelation in Jesus Christ. For example, in an opening discussion of God's omnipresence, Barth says,

We are not saying that God is omnipresent only in so far as there is this universe. God's omnipresence, like His other perfections, cannot be resolved into a description of His relationship to His creation. All that God is in His relationship to His creation, and therefore His omnipresence too, is simply an outward manifestation and realisation of what He is previously in Himself apart from this relationship and therefore apart from His creation. Even if creation and this relationship of God to creation did not exist, proximity and remoteness in irresolvable unity... would still be a divine perfection.²⁴¹

Like some critiques of his doctrines of the Trinity and of God, how can Barth at this point make claims about how God is God (here as "proximity and remoteness in irresolvable unity") apart from His Self-revelation in creation?²⁴² Asserting that 'God is' and even 'God is God' are not to be denied. But claims regarding what God is or how God is God apart from any relationship-establishing revelation or creation exceed the limit to the human creature's knowledge afforded by Barth's theological epistemology. Axiomatic to that epistemology is the claim that only God can make Himself known, which occurs chiefly by His Spirit in the event of His Self-revelation that is indirectly identical (because veiled) to His Word, Jesus Christ.²⁴³ Human formulations concerning what God is apart from this Self-revelation or without the creation are pure speculation.²⁴⁴ True knowledge of God is based on the movement of God's own being in revelation. Yet Barth appears to engage in the very metaphysical thinking his Christocentric epistemology rules out. Therefore, his doctrine of the perfection of omnipresence will be reassessed after considering his doctrine of election.

Concluding with a conceptual definition of the spatiality of God thus far, the perfection of God's being is a relationship not of identity but in proximity at a distance. Being mutually present with Himself and with creation in relation and distinction that are ordered according to God's unity in three distinct modes of being on one side, and according to the creation in the distinction of general providence, the special community of God's people in Israel and the Church, and the proper Creator-creature, Jesus Christ, on the other side. God's spatiality encompasses the full content of His revealed name: Immanuel, God with us.

²⁴¹ Barth, *CD* II/1, 462.

²⁴² See for example, McCormack's critique of Barth's metaphysical thinking in his discussion of Barth's divine perfections in "The Actuality of God," especially 232-240.

²⁴³ Furthermore, Barth has given more detailed expression to the Christological basis of this divine perfection than has been discussed so far. This will be taken up in Chapter Five concerning the theology of the Person and work of Jesus Christ in Barth's doctrine of reconciliation.

²⁴⁴ Additional determinations will be discussed in Barth's doctrine of election.

Having examined Barth's doctrine of God concerning His perfections and specifically His perfection of omnipresence, Chapter Three explores Barth's doctrine of election. Given the dramatic shift in Barth's theological thinking with this doctrine, pertinent material in his doctrines of the Trinity and the perfection of omnipresence are reassessed and conclude Part One of this study.

CHAPTER THREE

KARL BARTH'S DOCTRINE OF ELECTION

For if it is true that in Jesus Christ there dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Col 2:9), then in all the perfection with which it is differentiated from everything that is not God...the Subject God still cannot...be envisaged, established and described only in and for itself...[T]he doctrine of God must [make] the Subject known as One which in virtue of its innermost being, willing and nature...stands in a definite relationship *ad extra* to another...This relationship belongs to the Subject God...to the extent that it rests upon a definite attitude of God...God is God only in this way and not in any other...In dealing with this attitude, we have to do with His free but definitive decision. We cannot abstract from it without falling into arbitrary speculation... In a Christian doctrine of God, if God is to be exhaustively described and represented as the Subject who governs and determines everything else, there must be an advance beyond the immediate logical sense of the concept to the actual relationship in which God has placed Himself; a relationship outside of which God no longer wills to be and no longer is God, and within which alone He can be truly honoured and worshipped as God. If it is true that it pleased the fullness of God to dwell in JC (Col 1:19)...this...is unavoidable.

Jesus Christ is indeed God in His movement towards man, or more exactly, in His movement towards the people represented in the one man Jesus of Nazareth...Jesus Christ is the decision of God in favour of this attitude or relation. He is Himself the relation.²⁴⁵

Divine spatiality is the perfection of God who is fully present in relation and distinction as the One who loves in freedom. The above quotation from *Church Dogmatics* II/2 introduces the centrality of Barth's mature doctrine of election for a theology of spatiality. This doctrine focuses on the primal divine decision, will and attitude – the very being of God Himself – that is predetermined for relationship, particularly between God and human being(s), and all that follows in fulfillment. What is especially surprising for a theology of spatiality is to consider that the spatiality proper to God in primal eternity may already include creaturely spatiality in time! For this is what Barth's doctrine of election suggests. This chapter delves into Barth's doctrine of election to explore divine spatiality in its origin, determination and goal, its outworking in the spatiality of human being(s) that follows from it, and their interrelations and distinctions.

Some scholars agree that a paradigmatic shift occurred in Karl Barth's theological development toward a more realistic Christocentrism that is first manifest in his doctrine of election in *CD* II/2. While many Barth scholars assess some of this doctrine's ramifications

²⁴⁵ Barth, *CD* II/2, 4.

generally in line with classical theology, others have raised some critical alternatives arising from his theology that move beyond Barth's own theological development or consistency.²⁴⁶ I aim to pursue the latter, acknowledging this direction to be a controversial minority in an ongoing debate. Specifically, this study follows the thesis set forth by Bruce McCormack that election is constitutive of the triunity of God. Although Barth did not specify it in this manner, and can still state its opposite even in *CD IV*, I consider this constructive interpretation that attempts to consistently trace the trajectory of some of Barth's key theological insights has much to offer, especially for a theology of divine spatiality.²⁴⁷ Therefore, I begin by indicating a few points in the development of the doctrine of election in order to verify the need to revisit doctrines formulated prior to the final version in *CD II/2*.²⁴⁸ After offering an overview of his mature doctrine, I revisit Barth's doctrines of the Trinity, the perfections of God and omnipresence through the lens of his new doctrine of election. The ensuing chapters follow the line indicated by this constructive theology.

In contrast to the theocentric orientation of Barth's prior treatment of the doctrine of election in his *Göttingen Dogmatics*, the doctrine of election in *Church Dogmatics II/2* is radically reoriented as a consequence of its new Christological center.²⁴⁹ The sole focus now

²⁴⁶ For a detailed historical account of Barth's theological development regarding the doctrine of election and its impact upon the whole of his theology, see for example McCormack, *Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology*, and Gockel, *Doctrine of Election*. For a recent assessment of secondary sources which have considered various aspects of its development see especially Gockel, *Doctrine of Election*, 4-5. For detailed accounts of the distinctions in Barth's doctrine of elections prior to and after *CD II/2*, see McCormack, *Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology*, 453-63; Gockel, *Doctrine of Election*, esp. Chapter 5, 158-197; Suzanne McDonald, "Barth's 'Other' Doctrine of Election," esp. 138. There McDonald states, "Barth will later acknowledge, albeit indirectly, that his own attempts to circumvent the difficulties raised by his actualism here [in *Göttingen Dogmatics*] are unconvincing and inconsistent, through his critique of Peter Barth's view of election in *CD II/2*. It is, however, somewhat surprising that Barth omits to mention not only that the view held by his brother was one to which he himself had been deeply committed, but most particularly that it is this view which shapes his account in *CD* of the Doctrine of the Word of God."

²⁴⁷ For example see McCormack, "Grace and Being," 101ff; *Idem.*, "The Actuality of God," 210ff; Kevin W. Hector, "God's Triunity and Self-Determination: A Conversation with Karl Barth, Bruce McCormack and Paul Molnar," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 7, no. 3 (July 2005) 246-261 (hereafter cited as "God's Triunity and Self-Determination"); Adam Neder, *Participation in Christ: An Entry into Karl Barth's Church Dogmatics* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009) 16-17 (hereafter cited as *Participation in Christ*).

²⁴⁸ It is again worthy to note that Barth was not always consistent with the implications of his own theology. And even in later volumes where he did redress some of these doctrines that were originally treated in the first volumes, occasionally he neglected to directly address important elements of them that would have resolved some remaining tensions due to the new doctrine of election. Therefore, concerning those impacting this study to which he did not return, such as the divine attributes and specifically omnipresence, my intention is to reformulate these, where necessary, as indicated by and along the lines of his new doctrine of election.

²⁴⁹ Karl Barth, *The Göttingen Dogmatics: Instruction in the Christian Religion*, Vol. I, Hannelotte Reiffen, ed., Geoffrey W. Bromiley, trans. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991) 445-51 (hereafter cited as *Göttingen Dogmatics*). Drawn from the Synod of Dort canons Barth gives the following definition in his *Göttingen Dogmatics*: "Election is the immutable decree of God before the foundation of the world, by the free good pleasure of his will, whereby in sheer grace he chose from the whole of the human race (which by its own fault had fallen from original perfection into sin and corruption) a certain number of people – no better nor more worthy than the rest but sharing the same plight – to salvation in Christ, whom from all eternity he foresaw as the

shifts wholly upon the God revealed in Jesus Christ. This pivotal reconstruction from the *Göttingen Dogmatics* and the first volumes of the *Church Dogmatics* to *CD II/2* has been demonstrated by others to stem from Barth's hearing and development of Pierre Maury's 1936 lecture on election.²⁵⁰ Illustrative of the dramatic shift from traditional formulations of the Reformed doctrine of predestination in which was posited a God whose goodness or at least mercy was suspected of being subordinated to His omnipotent justice in a capricious and mysterious decree, Barth begins his account with the following oft-quoted summation.

The doctrine of election is the sum of the Gospel because of all words that can be said or heard it is the best: that God elects man; that God is for man too the One who loves in freedom. It is grounded in the knowledge of Jesus Christ because He is both the electing God and elected man in One. It is part of the doctrine of God because originally God's election of man is a predestination not merely of man but of Himself. Its function is to bear basic testimony to eternal, free and unchanging grace as the beginning of all the ways and works of God.²⁵¹

The good news of the Gospel is encapsulated in this doctrine because it identifies the originating will and ways of God as pure grace that not only determines creation but primarily Himself for the covenant of grace in Jesus Christ. The primal decision for grace and its actualization in the covenant between God and human beings in Christ reveal God's perfection of co-presence in loving and free relation. Spatiality, like each and all perfections of God's being, is already encompassed and determined in this primal act in which God eternally determines His own being for gracious presence in relation with us in Christ.

Mediator and Head of the elect and hence as the presupposition of salvation, and thus resolved to give them to him for redemption, and to call them effectually and draw them by his Word and Spirit, or to endow them with true faith in him, to justify them, to sanctify them, and finally to glorify those who are kept by his power in fellowship with his Son, in demonstration of his mercy and to the praise of the kingdom of his glorious grace." 459-60.

Although in one sense, the divine foreknowledge concerning each person's choice to believe or not that was made during their individual history was often cited as way of justifying the eternal decree, Barth emphasized a different type of actualism as shall be indicated. For Barth's position on divine foreknowledge in this context see Barth, *Göttingen Dogmatics*, 462-63; Heppe, "Attributes of God," in *Reformed Dogmatics*, 75-81. For Barth's early interpretation of Calvin's theology of predestination, in distinction from even his early doctrine of election, see Karl Barth, *The Theology of John Calvin*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995) 178ff; for various expositions of the Reformed doctrine of predestination, see for example, John Calvin, *Concerning the Eternal Predestination of God*, trans. J.K.S. Reid (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1961); F. Stuart Clarke, "Christocentric Developments in the Reformed Doctrine of Predestination," *Churchman* 98, no. 3 (1984) 229-245; Heppe, "Predestination," in *Reformed Dogmatics*, 150-189.; Richard A. Muller, "The Placement of Predestination in Reformed Theology: Issue or Non-Issue?" *Calvin Theological Journal* 40 (2005) 184-210.

For an exposition of Barth's doctrine of election which focuses on Christ's humanity as God see John Thompson, "The Humanity of God in the Theology of Karl Barth," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 29, no. 3 (1976) 249-269.

²⁵⁰ See McCormack, *Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology*, 455ff; Goekel, "One Word and All is Saved," 199ff. For a brief exposition of the shift from Barth's *Göttingen Dogmatics* to *CD II/2*, with a specific section on *CD I/1* see McDonald, "Barth's 'Other' Doctrine of Election," esp. 138-140.

²⁵¹ Barth, *CD II/2*, 3.

Rather than starting with the decree of an unknown God who has eternally predetermined some for salvation and all others for damnation as in the Reformed tradition, or with the temporal activity of God's revelatory encounter with individuals as in his earlier *Göttingen Dogmatics*, Barth shifts the intended basis and focus of election and of his theology as a whole from this point forward more entirely to divine ontology.²⁵² As we have seen, Barth establishes the noetic ground of theology proper in Christology, in God's Self-revelation in Jesus Christ. Knowledge concerning who and what God is and does in the world has its origin in God's eternal being and activity. Therefore, we can have genuine knowledge of God *in se* through His Self-revelation *ad extra* since God is identical, albeit indirectly, with His revelation in Jesus Christ. While this was his alleged intention in the earlier volumes of the *Church Dogmatics*, what actually manifested is the incongruence created by his attempts to hold his stated methodology, beginning and ending with Jesus Christ, alongside more traditional theology that tended to begin with "general principles" and end with "...supposedly self-evident general conclusions from what is particularly enclosed and disclosed in Him..."²⁵³ Three elements of this revised doctrine will show this theology to be more fully in accord with his stated epistemology, presented in Chapter Two. Most importantly, they clearly demonstrate that divine election wholly determines and actualises both the spatiality of God and of human beings. These elements are: election as God's Self-determination, Jesus Christ as both the Subject who elects and the Object elected, and our election in Jesus Christ as a community and as individuals.

1. Election as God's Self-Determination

First and foremost, and as the ground and goal of all that follows, Barth understands "election as the self-ordaining of God's self."²⁵⁴ That God gives to Himself His own being and is the sole source of His own life, in distinction from any external source, compulsion or necessity, indicates that God is a Self-determined being. As Lord of His own being, God is free to determine how He is God or the way(s) in which He constitutes Himself as God.²⁵⁵ Two facets, both spatial, are decisive here: God has freely determined Himself as triune, one Subject in three modes of being; and God has freely determined Himself to be in fellowship

²⁵² See Barth, *Göttingen Dogmatics*, 445-51.

²⁵³ Barth, *CD II/2*, 4. See Bruce McCormack, "Seek God Where He May Be Found: a Response to Edwin Chr. van Driel," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 60, no. 1 (2007) 71-72, esp. footnote 23. For specific reference to this tension regarding divine perfections see McCormack, "The Actuality of God," 231ff, esp. 232.

²⁵⁴ Barth, *CD II/2*, 89. "*Selbstbestimmung*" can be translated as "self-ordaining" or "self-determination."

²⁵⁵ McCormack states, "God is so much the Lord that he is Lord even over his being and essence." McCormack, "Seek God Where He May Be Found," 67.

with human beings.²⁵⁶ The order of the relation between these two issues will be considered at the end of this section but first, their significance for Barth's doctrine of God.

Election is the primal divine act in which God determines to be God in the covenant of grace with human beings through Christ and to be God solely in this way. This way is spatial for it is the way in which God elects to be present in loving and free relation.²⁵⁷ "Primal" means occurring prior to created reality yet primarily indicates the origin, goal and encompassing of all creation.²⁵⁸ Nothing precedes this choice, for election is God's original decision to be present in relation, from which every other divine decision follows. Moreover, its fulfillment occurs in the person, Jesus, and all elect in Him as God eternally wills His existence.²⁵⁹

We must not seek the ground of this election anywhere but in the love of God, in His free love... If we seek it elsewhere, then we are no longer talking about this election. We are no longer talking about the decision of the divine will which was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. We are looking beyond these to a supposedly greater depth in God (and that undoubtedly means nothingness, or rather the depth of Satan). What takes place in this election is that God is for us; for us, and therefore for the world which was created by Him, which is distinct from Him, but which is yet maintained by Him.²⁶⁰

McCormack interprets "primal" as signifying that nothing exists above or behind this decision such that God's being is determined otherwise than for this relationship with human beings.²⁶¹ God thus determines Himself to be spatial, a being who is present in relation, which is fulfilled in His willing a corresponding spatiality in Jesus and all human beings in Him, as beings who can also be present in relation. For there is "no greater depth in God", nothing that precedes this Self-determination to be God for us in Jesus Christ.²⁶²

Once made [God's decision] belongs definitively to God Himself, not in His being in and for Himself, but in His being within this relationship. It belongs to the reality of God which is a reality not apart from but in this decision... We cannot speak correctly of God in His being in and for Himself without considering Him always in this attitude... We cannot speak accurately or confidently of the work of God unless first

²⁵⁶ For a discussion of the relation between election and covenant in Barth, see W.A. Whitehouse, "Election and Covenant" in *Theology beyond Christendom: Essays on the Centenary of the Birth of Karl Barth, May 10, 1886*, ed. John Thompson (Allison Park, Pa: Pickwick Publications, 1986) 63-86.

²⁵⁷ "God is God only in this way and in no other." Barth, *CD II/2*, 6; see Barth, *CD II/2*, 3.

²⁵⁸ For expositions on the relation between eternity and election in Barth see John Colwell, *Actuality and Provisionality: Eternity and Election in the Theology of Karl Barth* (Edinburgh: Rutherford House, 1989); and Masami Kojiro, "God's Eternal Election in the Theology of Karl Barth" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Aberdeen, 1996).

²⁵⁹ See Barth, *CD II/2*, 25.

²⁶⁰ Barth, *CD II/2*, 25-26.

²⁶¹ Barth, *CD II/2*, 32. See Bruce L. McCormack, "The Sum of the Gospel: The Doctrine of Election in the Theologies of Alexander Schweizer and Karl Barth," in *Toward the Future of Reformed Theology: Tasks, Topics, Traditions*, ed. David Willis and Michael Welker (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999) 489-90 (hereafter cited as "The Sum of the Gospel").

²⁶² Barth, *CD II/2*, 55.

we see clearly that the attitude which God has taken up, and by which His work is determined, belongs to God Himself, and cannot in any way be isolated from Him.²⁶³

Barth warns against inquiring about the being or work of God *ad intra* or in pre-temporal eternity without sole and constant reference to what He concretely reveals about Himself in creaturely space and time. Election reveals an essential divine “attitude” of God’s eternal and spatial being that determines and is inseparable from the acts in which He fulfills and reveals this attitude in creaturely space and time. His attitude in relating (that manifests and determines His spatiality), which is the particular and singular event of His being, is the election of grace. The act in which this attitude is constituted (and His spatiality is actualised) is the covenant of grace between God and human beings, fulfilled and revealed in Jesus Christ. Both this gracious attitude and relationship by which God turns toward humanity in Jesus Christ are essential to God Himself, in the sense that God has freely and eternally determined Himself in this way and for this purpose. Spatiality, both divine and human, is determined in this attitude and relation.

The second noteworthy point regarding God’s Self-determination as a spatial being in and for the covenant of grace is that of actualism.²⁶⁴ In accord with his actualistic epistemology, Barth identifies Jesus Christ as the ontic ground of election and thus of our knowledge of God’s Self-determination. Jesus Christ is “...the actual relationship in which God has placed Himself; a relationship outside of which God no longer wills to be and no longer is God...”²⁶⁵ Moreover, God is the particular and unique being in act that is and is revealed in Jesus Christ, signifying that the divine attitude and relationship are indivisibly one and the same in Him. “Jesus Christ is the decision of God in favour of this attitude or this relation. He Himself is the relation.” So it is in Jesus Christ that spatiality, divine and human, is uniquely manifest and actualised in creation, even as it corresponds to God’s being in Himself. As this relation concerns the creature Jesus Christ and all others in Him, it is *ad extra*. But also,

²⁶³ Barth, *CD II/2*, 7-8. I understand “not in His being in and for Himself” to mean not limiting His freedom or altering His divinity to make this decision, rather than indicating an abstract or unknown God above and beyond this decision.

²⁶⁴ Hunsinger defines Barth’s actualism in reference to God’s being in act: “God’s being cannot be described apart from the basic act in which God lives...” that is, “in a set of active relations” which, again, is particular and singular. George Hunsinger, *How to Read Karl Barth*, 30. McCormack is more specific: “...God’s being-in-act is his being in the eternal act of turning toward the human race in the covenant of grace, and as a direct consequence, it is his being in history as incarnate Lord nad outpoured Spirit as the completion of this eternal act. *The root of Barth’s actualism is to be found in this eternal act of self-determination and in it alone.*” McCormack, “The Actuality of God,” 217.

²⁶⁵ Barth, *CD II/2*, 7.

...it is a relation which is irrevocable, so that once God has willed to enter into it, and has in fact entered into it, He could not be God without it. It is a relation in which God is self-determined, so that the determination belongs no less to Him than all that He is in and for Himself.²⁶⁶

Given this new context of election, Barth's terminology of "*in se*" or "*ad intra*" versus "*ad extra*" now seems to refer to the necessary distinction between divine and creaturely that maintains God's unique freedom and includes pre-temporal and temporal distinctions.²⁶⁷ The relational or spatial aspect in Barth's language of "movement", "turning" or "leaning" towards humanity indicates that God is no longer God for Himself without regard to humanity. There is no abstract God isolated in Himself or absolutely separated from everything outside Himself. Once made, the primal decision means that God is no longer God without this characteristic total regard for the human creature. The free decision to bind Himself to human beings in Jesus Christ has become essential to God's being; this is what it means to be God in the light of His Self-determining election. This way of being God, always moving toward mutual presence in relation, is His spatiality, determined in His election of

²⁶⁶ Barth, *CD* II/2, 7.

²⁶⁷ Instead of necessitating a triune being of God above and prior to His decision to become incarnate in Jesus Christ, this offers an interpretation of Barth that takes into full consideration the drastic impact the doctrine of election had on his theology from this point forward, as delineated by McCormack. As noted above, although Barth also can specifically speak of God as if He were totally independent of the covenant of grace, McCormack judges correctly that such statements no longer accord with the actualism of Barth's revised doctrine of election. Rather, they appear to be a carry-over from traditional metaphysical accounts of the doctrine of God. Furthermore, evidence for my alternate reading of these terms can be found in Barth's own reply to the following question. See Karl Barth, *Karl Barth's Table Talk*, ed., John D. Godsey (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1963) 14.

S: In your theology you always emphasize God is antecedently in Himself what He reveals Himself to be in JC, that God is free from us as well as free for us. What is the Christological reason for this '*extra nos*' in a Church whose sole knowledge is of a God who is '*pro nobis*' in Jesus Christ?

B: The Christological reason for this can only be understood in terms of the Doctrine of Election: God's Gracious Election. If...reconciliation is based on the free, gracious election of God, then we must accept in the living God no external necessity. He wills and acts, but always in freedom. He is what He reveals Himself to be in Christ, but exactly there He reveals Himself as the God of free grace. God is not bound to the world. He binds Himself! The covenant is His eternal will, but His free will. Even in the ontological realm there is an *extra nos*. *In the sense that we are not God, that God is God and we are only His creatures, God is extra nos*. But as such He is not only free to do without us, but He is loving in His freedom. In His love He will not remain *extra nos*! He begins His work with us from eternity. There is no contradiction between God's being *extra nos* and His action for us.

Moreover, Jüngel's insight on Barth's use of 'inner' and 'outer' is most helpful here. First, he states, "...God's election of grace is not only an *opus Dei ad extra* [external work of God] or, more precisely, an *opus Dei ad extra externum* [external work of God directed outward]; it is at the same time an *opus Dei ad extra internum* [external work of God directed inwards] (83-84). Jüngel clarifies, "The category 'outwardly' (*ad extra*) which Barth employs following the older theology, is a hermeneutical aid, which itself needs interpretation. God's being cannot be divided up into inner and outer. But the relation of the modes of being in which God's being corresponds to itself must certainly be distinguished from the 'being over against' (Heidegger) in which God makes *his creature* correspond to God, since God also corresponds to himself in the connection of that relation to this being over against." Jüngel, *God's Being is in Becoming*, 91.

grace. Furthermore, this leaning or movement cannot diminish God's being for it is precisely how God is God and revealed as such in Jesus Christ.

...[E]lection does in some sense denote the basis of all the relationships between God and man, between God in His very earliest movement towards man and man in his very earliest determination by this divine movement. It is in the decision in favour of this movement, in God's self-determination and the resultant determination of man, in the basic relationship which is enclosed and fulfilled within Himself, that God is who He is. The primal relationship belongs, therefore, to the doctrine of God.²⁶⁸

As God is and remains God in this decision even while moving toward human beings, so God ensures that the creature also is and remains a creature without becoming divine, even while being drawn and moving toward God in response.²⁶⁹ Both are spatial, but with a distinct spatiality that is proper to each. Thus, Barth insists, "...the true God is what He is only in this movement, in the movement towards this man, and in Him and through Him towards other men in their unity as His people."²⁷⁰ God's free electing activity (which is spatial) is essential to His being without confusing divine and creaturely.²⁷¹

Moreover, that God has chosen and continues to choose to exist in relation with that which is not divine implies, for Barth, that He has freely determined to be an admittedly "self-limited" being.²⁷²

He has concretely determined and limited Himself; in such a way that we can never expect any decisions from God except those which rest upon this concrete determination and limitation of His being, upon this primal decision made in His eternal being.²⁷³

In Jesus Christ God limits Himself to be the Lord of this particular covenant with humanity and to veil Himself in creaturely realities in order to reveal Himself to us. God's spatiality, determined by His election of grace is limited in the sense that He freely chooses to be present in loving relation with that which is not God. This actuality is based solely in the free decision of His love, without any external compulsion or necessity.²⁷⁴ The concrete reality fulfilled and made known in Jesus Christ thus counters any abstract notion of God's omnipresence,

²⁶⁸ Barth, *CD II/2*, 52.

²⁶⁹ Barth is countering an element of Aristotelian Scholasticism previously noted which posited that God's external relations are not essential to His being, which for Barth implied that genuine external relationships are thus impossible. Barth casts aside this notion in full, as will be discussed in detail with the Christology of *CD IV*.

²⁷⁰ Barth, *CD II/2*, 7.

²⁷¹ McCormack claims that the "...root of Barth's actualism is to be found in this eternal act of Self-determination and in it alone." McCormack, "The Actuality of God," 217.

²⁷² Barth, *CD II/2*, 50.

²⁷³ Barth, *CD II/2*, 50.

²⁷⁴ See for example Barth, *CD II/2*, 25. Barth, *CD I/1*, 165.

freedom or any perfection as entailing no limits since these are Self-generated limitations freely chosen by God in His primal decision.

And yet, in certain aspects, Barth's approach here seems to run counter to his realistic epistemology and his doctrine of election. Rather than moving from an abstract notion of God who is perfect only without limits, perhaps it is more consistent to begin with the God revealed in Jesus Christ who is not limited by existing in relation with human beings but who is 'perfect', perfectly unbounded or free only in this precise relation. What God is in the covenant of grace in Jesus Christ is the starting point for considering what kind of God He is. God bound to humanity in Jesus Christ is the perfect reality of God's being, since He is actually constituted this way and reveals God's primal decision to be this kind of God, a spatial God who is eternally present in relation with human beings. Rather than implying a limit, God's Self-determination is the freely elected perfection of His being that fulfills His will absolutely. This is His true Godness. For if no other divine decision precedes this primal Self-determining election of grace, then no other being of God exists except the One who has chosen to bind Himself to human beings in Jesus Christ, to be God only in this way which is spatial, to be present with human beings in this loving relation. Any way of being 'God' other than this would actually connote a limit to God's being, and as such, would be an idol, not God.²⁷⁵

The final issue concerning God's Self-determination is Barth's reconfiguration of the orthodox articulation of two divine decrees. Among several "general" and "special" divine decrees in the tradition, two are noteworthy, as is their ordered relation: the first in which God gives to Himself His triune being, and the second in which He determines to create a world and enter into relation with it.²⁷⁶ Traditionally, the being of God (or the work God does in giving Himself His triune being as eternal Father, eternally begotten Son and eternal outpouring of the Spirit) is prior to and provides the ground for all the work God does outside Himself, including predestination, creation, reconciliation and redemption. Simply stated, 'being' precedes and determines 'act'. In the first decree, God's spatiality in Himself is strictly divine, meaning God is present in relation solely with Himself; Father and Son are co-present in the presence of the Spirit. In the second decree, God's spatiality moves toward encompassing creaturely spatiality, since God chooses to be present in relation with human

²⁷⁵ In truth, God is not limited by abstract notions of divinity that entail no limits; He limits those notions.

²⁷⁶ See Barth, *CD* II/2, 78ff. For a Reformed exposition of the divine decrees see Heppel, "The Decrees of God" in *Reformed Dogmatics*, 133-149; see also Bruce L. McCormack "Christ and the Decree: An Unsettled Question for the Reformed Churches Today," in *Reformed Theology in Contemporary Perspective: Westminster: Yesterday, Today – and Tomorrow*, ed. Lynn Quigley (Edinburgh: Rutherford House, 2006) 124-142.

beings. However, given the import of Barth's theological decisions in the doctrine of election, McCormack suggests that Barth effectively combines the two into one decree, decision, or more accurately, event. Thus, the eternal and primal decision in which God determines Himself for gracious relation with creation in Jesus Christ is the same decision in which He gives Himself His triune being.²⁷⁷ In Jesus Christ, God's spatiality already anticipates and encompasses creaturely spatiality. Jesus Christ "...is the decree of God behind and above which there can be no earlier or higher decree and beside which there can be no other, since all others serve only the fulfillment of this decree."²⁷⁸ It is in this singular and pure act in which God's being is given, and continues to be given, first as the eternal decision and then as its historical fulfillment within created space and time in the incarnation of Jesus Christ and the outpouring of His Spirit.²⁷⁹ Barth states,

If we are to lay hold of the concept of the true God, we shall do so only as we conceive of Him...in His actuality as Lord and Ruler...in the determination and limitation which are peculiar to Him which He has not taken upon Himself as something additional, in His relationship with the world or as an accommodation to it, but which are the characteristics of His presence and activity in the world because they are the determination and limitation proper to His own eternal being, so assuredly has He decided for them by the decree of His eternal will.²⁸⁰

By holding to two decrees, a rift may arise between the immanent Trinity and the economic Trinity. For if God determines Himself to be triune (first decree) in a decision that precedes His decision to be God for humanity in Jesus Christ (second decree), an eternal Son is posited that has nothing to do with Jesus Christ, whose content is empty. This results in an abstract, unknown God behind the One revealed in Jesus Christ. The God revealed to us in the covenant of grace may or may not be the God isolated from creation and hidden in Himself. Where no assurance exists in the ontological ground of our salvation, neither is there assurance of our salvation. For if "God is who He is in the act of His revelation", and in that act He is God for humanity (second decree), to posit God as a God without humanity (first decree) indicates that a change has occurred in His eternal being.²⁸¹ God would change from being God without humanity to being God with humanity, especially troublesome at the incarnation. In this sense, the immanent and economic Trinities are materially the same, for

²⁷⁷ For example, see Bruce L. McCormack, "Karl Barth," in *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought*, eds. Adrian Hastings, Alistair Mason, Hugh Pyper, Ingrid Lawrie and Cicily Bennett (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000) 66; and McCormack, "Seek God Where He May Be Found," 66.

²⁷⁸ Barth, *CD* II/2, 94.

²⁷⁹ See McCormack "The Actuality of God," 217.

²⁸⁰ Barth, *CD* II/2, 50. It remains true, however, that Barth also continues to posit a triune being of God in distinction from the God revealed in the covenant of grace in Jesus Christ.

²⁸¹ Barth, *CD* II/1, 262.

their identical content is Jesus Christ. Yet formally they remain distinct to uphold the Creator-creature distinction and the divine freedom. These observations are strengthened in the discussion of the Subject and Object of election.

2. The Subject and Object of Election

According to Barth, "...the election of grace is the eternal beginning of all the ways and works of God in Jesus Christ..." through whom God "...determines Himself for sinful man and sinful man for Himself."²⁸² The Person of Jesus Christ, in His divine and human natures, is both the Subject of election as the electing God, and the Object of election as the elect Human. Barth's formulation of "double predestination" centers on the divine election of Jesus Christ who is 'very God and very human'. The movement of God towards humanity in His election of grace is totally encompassed, presupposed and determined by its content, Jesus Christ. His unique spatiality actualises and reveals God's spatiality even while determining, actualising and revealing human spatiality. The Christocentric heart of Barth's mature doctrine of election begins with the surprising claim that Jesus Christ is the Subject of election and then turns to note how He is also the Object of election.

The primary and most radical element of Barth's concept of double predestination is that "Jesus Christ is the electing God."²⁸³ Drawing mainly on his exegesis of the prologue of the Gospel of John, Barth identifies the Word or *Logos* that was with God in the beginning with the Word that became flesh, Jesus Christ.²⁸⁴ This Scriptural interpretation leads Barth to reject traditional theological formulations of the *Logos*. Instead of the "unknown quantity" of both the so-called "Eternal *Logos*" of traditional Church theology and, in an alternate form, the deity of the Reformed *decretum absolutum*, Barth places "the name of Jesus Christ".²⁸⁵ In other words, Jesus Christ is that particular divine decision of grace affirming the covenant between God and human beings to take place in Him. However, if the One who elects is not Jesus Christ, "the God-Man," then Barth concludes "...the electing God is not identical with Christ but behind and above Him..." and something other than Jesus Christ is our concern.²⁸⁶ Dismissing this classical interpretation, Barth asserts that the God who elects is the One who is revealed as triune in and through Jesus Christ.

In no depth of the Godhead shall we encounter any other but Him. There is no such thing as Godhead in itself. Godhead is always the Godhead of the Father, the Son and

²⁸² Barth, *CD* II/2, 94.

²⁸³ Barth, *CD* II/2, 103.

²⁸⁴ See Barth, *CD* II/2, 95-99.

²⁸⁵ Barth, *CD* II/2, 103-104.

²⁸⁶ The Word which is 'the same'" (οὗτος). Barth, *CD* II/2, 101.

the Holy Spirit. But the Father is always the Father of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Father and the Spirit of Jesus Christ. There is no such thing as a *decretum absolutum*. There is no such thing as a will of God apart from the will of Jesus Christ.²⁸⁷

In his doctrine of the Trinity, Barth posits God as one Subject in three modes of being. And according to “...the doctrine of the *homoousion*, or unity of substance of the three distinct divine persons...or hypostases...” there is only one Subject who can be and act as God, even though He does so in three distinct modes of being.²⁸⁸ The mode of being who is the Son, Jesus Christ, is simply a (differentiated) “repetition” of the one and only Subject, God. Saying that Jesus Christ elects in this sense, is to say that God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, elects.²⁸⁹ With regard to His full deity and the unity that is unique to God, Jesus Christ is the Subject of election precisely because He is identical with the One God. Furthermore, it is principally as the electing God that He actively determines Jesus Christ in His divine-human existence.²⁹⁰ Jesus Christ as the Subject of election impacts the doctrine of the Trinity, which will be revisited after noting the second proposition, Jesus Christ is election’s Object.

“Jesus Christ is elected man.” Given that Jesus Christ is fully God and fully human, the Reformed tradition has understood Jesus Christ as Mediator between God and sinful humanity, and thus the One in and through whom our salvation or election is made possible. For Barth, however, Jesus is not just among or even the first of the elect. Rather, He is the actual content of God’s eternal election of grace. Its realization in the particular and unique history of the covenant between God and humankind is revealed in the life and work of “the man Jesus of Nazareth”.²⁹¹ He is not only the object of the divine good-pleasure, but “He Himself is the divine good-pleasure, the will of God in action.”²⁹² As such, He is “*the elect*” human.²⁹³

Barth highlights three aspects, all with spatial implications, of what he calls the “passive election”²⁹⁴ of Jesus Christ in His determination as a man: first, Jesus Christ is “the beginning of all God’s ways and works”; second, His election is to suffering and death on a cross; and third, His election includes our election within His own, forming the ground of

²⁸⁷ Barth, *CD* II/2, 115.

²⁸⁸ Barth, *CD* II/2, 96.

²⁸⁹ Barth, *CD* II/2, 105.

²⁹⁰ See Barth, *CD* II/2, 103.

²⁹¹ Barth, *CD* II/2, 116. See Gockel, *Doctrine of Election*, 173-174.

²⁹² Barth, *CD* II/2, 104.

²⁹³ Barth, *CD* II/2, 116.

²⁹⁴ Barth, *CD* II/2, 118.

ours.²⁹⁵ The first aspect deals with what is prior to and beyond all created reality to that which “God anticipated and determined within Himself”: as the Father, choosing to establish and fulfill the covenant with human beings by giving His Son to become human; as the Son, choosing to obey the Father by offering Himself and becoming human to fulfill the covenant; and as the Holy Spirit to reveal the glory of the one God in the giving of the Father and the Self-giving of the Son.²⁹⁶ Before creation, God already determined to share His spatiality with human beings in and through *the* human, so they might also respond like Him, as creatures who love in freedom. Thus they correspond with God as the One who loves in freedom, fulfilling His decision to be co-present in relation with them.

The second aspect specifically identifies the election of the man Jesus as His foreordination “to suffer and to die.”²⁹⁷ This form, in suffering and death, is the “basic act of the divine election of grace”.²⁹⁸ Grace as “God’s first thought and decree consists in the fact that in His Son He makes the being of this other His own being, that He allows the Son of Man Jesus to be called and actually to be His own Son.”²⁹⁹ God takes to Himself the creature’s spatiality, particularly His presence in relation in the midst of suffering and dying. As the divine Son who is “very man” He willingly takes upon Himself sinful humanity’s rejection, divine wrath and resulting death. All that is deserved by sinful humanity, “...God in His love for men transfers from all eternity to Him in whom He loves and elects them, and whom He elects at their head and *in their place*.”³⁰⁰ It is in this election to suffer unto death ‘for us and for our salvation’ that Jesus Christ is “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world”; and Barth startlingly claims, as “the *crucified*” that Jesus is “the image of the invisible God.”³⁰¹

The third aspect finds the election of others only in the free grace of being elect “in Him”.³⁰² Barth explains that this spatial reference, “in” Him, means not only “with, together with Him, in His company”, nor only “...through Him, by means of that which He... can be and do for them.” Rather, ““In Him’ means in His person, in His will, in His own divine choice, in the basic decision of God which He fulfils over against every man.”³⁰³ Having

²⁹⁵ Barth, *CD* II/2, 120.

²⁹⁶ Barth, *CD* II/2, 101-102.

²⁹⁷ Barth, *CD* II/2, 122.

²⁹⁸ Barth, *CD* II/2, 120.

²⁹⁹ Barth, *CD* II/2, 121.

³⁰⁰ Barth, *CD* II/2, 123. Italics mine.

³⁰¹ Barth, *CD* II/2, 123.

³⁰² Ephesians 1:4. For a detailed exposition of Barth’s exegesis of Ephesians 1:4 in the context of his doctrine of election, see Mary Kathleen Cunningham, *What is Theological Exegesis? Interpretation and Use of Scripture in Barth’s Doctrine of Election* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press Intl, 1995).

³⁰³ Barth, *CD* II/2, 116-117.

forfeited genuine spatiality they regain it only in Christ, in His spatiality. The radical and comprehensive significance Barth assigns to the concept of being “in Christ” is crucial to a theology of spatiality and will continue to unfold. As their Head and Representative, all are elect in the election of Jesus Christ. In fact, Barth starkly claims “...if they were not elected ‘in Him,’ without Him and outside Him they would be forever rejected.”³⁰⁴ If they do not share in His way of being present in relation with God, they will perish. Furthermore, His is the true humanity by which one knows how to be a human in covenant with God, or genuinely spatial, by free obedience to the will of the Father, seen most fully in the attitude and activity of gratitude and prayer.³⁰⁵ This suggests that human beings know what it means to be spatial, present in a mutual relation with God and others, only by knowing how Jesus Christ is spatial, how He lives in communion with God and others. Jesus Christ’s spatiality entails obedience to the Father’s electing will in gratitude and prayer. Being human is what is first and most properly ascribed to Jesus Christ; election of other human beings is possible only because He elects them “in His own humanity.” Thus, “In that He (as God) wills Himself (as man), He also wills them.”³⁰⁶ There is no election of humanity except in and through Jesus Christ, who is Himself the gracious beginning of all God’s ways and works.

Jesus Christ, in His identity with God as the Son, actively elects to do the Father’s will (to become human) and so is already “the Elected of the Father” in eternity.³⁰⁷ As the elected human He also freely elects to do the will of the Father in time. Therefore, “...the unity of God and man in Jesus Christ the God-Man...” corresponds in time to the original and proper electing and being elected in pre-temporal eternity.³⁰⁸ Similarly, all other elected humans also correspond to God’s electing when they themselves elect God or elect to live in faithful obedience to the Father’s will revealed in Jesus Christ. So “...the two things which together constitute the aim and meaning of the covenant willed by God and the election of this man...” are “the glorifying of God and the salvation of men”.³⁰⁹ Jesus Christ realizes both in the way He is present to God and to people in loving relation, that is, in His spatiality. Understanding the divine will in election completes this presentation of Barth’s doctrine of the election of grace as it concerns spatiality.

³⁰⁴ Barth, *CD* II/2, 123.

³⁰⁵ Barth, *CD* II/2, 177.

³⁰⁶ Barth, *CD* II/2, 117.

³⁰⁷ Barth, *CD* II/2, 103.

³⁰⁸ Barth, *CD* I/2, 162. McCormack helpfully simplifies Barth’s terminology regarding the hypostatic union, describing Jesus Christ as “the God-human in His divine-human unity”. See McCormack, “Grace and Being,” 94.

³⁰⁹ Barth, *CD* II/2, 125.

3. God's Will in Election

Barth raises four observations by identifying the eternal divine will with Jesus Christ's election.³¹⁰ The first is epistemological: to know about election or anything following from it is to know Jesus Christ. As the beginning of all God's gracious ways and works, no other 'beginning' exists from which to derive such knowledge except the Word of God revealed in Jesus Christ, the living and concrete particularity of the lived existence of the God-man, through the Spirit's illuminating power. For all that has happened, is happening and will happen in our space and time has been predetermined and conditioned by God's election of grace, His movement towards humanity in Jesus Christ, His decision to be "God with us". Secondly, God's predestination is eternal, so it precedes all creation, including time. Since God's eternal decision founds time and gives time its order, significance and goal, God's eternity also encompasses, encloses and sustains time.³¹¹ Time and eternity are not antithetical to God, even within His own being. For Jesus Christ manifests not just the possibility that God can enter creaturely space and time but the actuality that God has become a creature in our space and time. This eternal-temporal way of being is essential to God's freedom in the eternal election of grace and its unfolding in history, like God's spatiality. They are surely distinct but may be neither isolated from each other nor opposed.

Third, God's eternal will in the election of Jesus Christ is "...His will to give Himself for the sake of man as created by Him and fallen from Him." Thus, in freely turning to humanity He also wills to give Himself up, even imperiling Himself for that sinful humanity who has turned away from Him. Election is the free overflowing of God's love without external coercion. Actualised in Jesus Christ, election determines God's spatiality as divine presence in relation with sinners. In Jesus Christ "...God has elected fellowship with man for Himself...and...God has elected fellowship with Himself for man..." Barth's reformulation of double predestination now means "God wills to lose in order that man may gain."³¹² In Jesus Christ God secures for humanity "election, salvation and life", saying, "Yes" to human beings. For Himself, God ascribes the "No" of "reprobation, perdition and death."³¹³

Negatively, from all eternity

...when God elected Himself for fellowship with man...He elected our rejection. He made it His own. He bore it and suffered it with all its most bitter consequences. For the sake of this choice and for the sake of man He hazarded Himself wholly and utterly. He elected our suffering...as His own suffering. This is the extent to which

³¹⁰ Barth, *CD* II/2, 146.

³¹¹ Barth, *CD* II/2, 155.

³¹² Barth, *CD* II/2, 162.

³¹³ Barth, *CD* II/2, 163.

His election is an election of grace, an election of love, an election to give Himself, an election to empty and abase Himself for the sake of the elect.³¹⁴

And positively, God has ordained the human creature to “blessedness”, for “participation in His own glory”.³¹⁵ Thus, “By the one decree of self-giving He decreed His own abandonment to rejection...” on the one hand, yet “...also the wonderful exaltation and endowment of man to existence in covenant with Himself...” on the other hand.³¹⁶ This is the “...amazing exchange between God and man as it was realised in time in Jesus Christ because already it was the beginning of all things.” In election, divine spatiality wholly determines even sinful creaturely spatiality or presence in relation. The overflowing glory of God in the primal decision in which “...He constituted Himself his God and ordained Himself to solidarity with him”³¹⁷ is “...sacrificial love; love which seeks not her own but the things of others.”³¹⁸ Due to this exaltation of elect humanity in Jesus Christ, “...our place is in heaven where Christ sits as our Representative on the right hand of God.”³¹⁹

Barth’s final observation regarding the eternal will of God concludes this section. As “a divine activity” or event it is “identical with” the election of Jesus Christ.³²⁰

The eternal will of God which is the predestination of all things is God’s life in the form of the history, encounter and decision between Himself and man, a history, encounter and decision which are already willed and known from all eternity, and to that extent, prior to all external events, are already actual before Him and for Him.³²¹

God’s Self-ordained life in the primal decision is that particular and unique being in act, Jesus Christ Himself. The “concrete form” of this divine will in His Self-giving for the sake of humanity is the “...union of His own Son or Word with the man Jesus of Nazareth.”³²² Election is the beginning of fellowship, covenant and history between God and humanity in the divine-human existence of Jesus Christ. This specific relationship, a spatial reality, constitutes the primary “theme of divine election”.³²³ Previously Barth stated, “...in all His willing and choosing what God ultimately wills is Himself.”³²⁴ Now he can say “God’s

³¹⁴ Barth, *CD II/2*, 164-5.

³¹⁵ Barth, *CD II/2*, 169.

³¹⁶ Barth, *CD II/2*, 168.

³¹⁷ Barth, *CD II/2*, 163.

³¹⁸ Barth, *CD II/2*, 173.

³¹⁹ Barth, *CD II/2*, 174. This spatial notion regarding “our place” in heaven with Christ will be considered in due course.

³²⁰ Barth, *CD II/2*, 175.

³²¹ Barth, *CD II/2*, 175.

³²² Barth, *CD II/2*, 175-176.

³²³ Barth, *CD II/2*, 177.

³²⁴ Barth, *CD II/2*, 169.

eternal will is man”; man as a “wholehearted witness to God’s kingdom”,³²⁵ as the “image of God” and of gratitude and prayer.³²⁶ Willing Himself and willing humans, present in proper relation and distinction, is the fulfillment of God’s single, gracious will in the eternal election and temporal history of Jesus Christ, and the subsequent election of humankind in and through Him. God’s primal act of election, whose content is Jesus Christ, determines, actualises and reveals divine and human spatiality. Barth’s previous doctrines of the Trinity and the perfection of omnipresence are now reconsidered in the light of this actualistic understanding of God’s being in election.

4. Doctrine of the Trinity Revisited

Key elements of Barth’s theology have undergone significant development, even as important building blocks were present early on. This continues throughout the *Church Dogmatics* particularly as he works through the implications of his Christocentric doctrine of election in Volume II/2.³²⁷ In what follows, I draw heavily on McCormack’s work for revisiting the relationship between the doctrines of the Trinity and election since it greatly impacts the exploration of God’s spatiality that follows in the next section.³²⁸ He enumerates five interrelated consequences, some already mentioned, that stem from Barth’s claim that Jesus Christ is the Subject of God rather than the unknown and abstract “Eternal *Logos*” of traditional dogmatics.

The first logical consequence to the claim that Jesus Christ is the electing God is that “...there is no mode of being or existence in the triune life of God ‘above and prior to the

³²⁵ Barth, *CD* II/2, 179.

³²⁶ Barth, *CD* II/2, 180.

³²⁷ It will be helpful here to note two important facets for interpreting Barth noted or implied earlier. The first regards interpreting Barth throughout the changes and developments to his theology, and the second, selecting the best line of thought to pursue as a result of his most profound insights. In the sections that follow, my aim is to offer revisions appropriate to and in the light of Barth’s own theology. As such, however, there may be statements made that oppose some of Barth’s; in part due to his own inconsistency, to the fact that he never dealt with the issues in the particular manner I will, and perhaps also due to the fact that he did not fully grasp the wide-reaching implications of consistently working with his epistemology, new doctrine of election, and the resulting Christology as is necessary for my present task. Bruce McCormack has engaged in these particular matters in detail. See McCormack, “Seek God Where He May Be Found,” 66.

³²⁸ Critics of McCormack’s interpretation of Barth concerning the relation between election and trinity include: George Hunsinger, “Election and the Trinity: Twenty-Five Theses on the Theology of Karl Barth,” *Modern Theology* 24, no. 2 (April 2008); Paul D. Molnar, *Divine Freedom and the Doctrine of the Immanent Trinity: In Dialogue with Karl Barth and Contemporary Theology* (New York: T&T Clark, 2002); *Idem.*, “Can the electing God be God without us?” 199-222; Edwin Chr. Van Driel, “Karl Barth on the Eternal Existence of Jesus Christ,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 60, no. 1 (2007) 45-61; with various responses: Hector, “God’s Triunity and Self-Determination” 246-261; Paul D. Molnar, “The Trinity, Election and God’s Ontological Freedom: A Response to Kevin W. Hector,” in *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 9, no. 3 (July 2006); McCormack, “Seek God Where He May Be Found; Paul D. Molnar, “Orthodox and Modern Just How Modern Was *Barth’s* Later Theology?” *Theology Today* 67, no. 1 (April 2010) 51-56; and Bruce L. McCormack, “Let’s Speak Plainly: A Response to Paul Molnar,” *Theology Today* 67, no. 1 (April 2010) 57-65.

eternal act of self-determination in which God ‘constitutes’ himself as ‘God for us’ and, therefore, there is no such thing as an ‘eternal Logos’ in the abstract.”³²⁹ A few points of Barth’s Christology will contextualize McCormack’s position.³³⁰ Barth understands Jesus Christ as one Subject in two natures, the divine mode of being in His divine-human unity. In accord with some basic Chalcedonian tenets, these natures are indivisible yet unmixed. Neither exists in isolation from the other but together constitute the one divine-human Subject, Jesus Christ. Following from his doctrine of election, Barth claims no *Logos* exists (e.g., *Logos asarkos*) in the immanent Trinity that is not already eternally leaning forward toward this particular humanity (the *Logos incarnandus*) that will become Jesus of Nazareth in time (the *Logos incarnatus*). Thus, eternally, which from our perspective includes pre-temporality, temporality and post-temporality, only the one Son of God whose name is Jesus Christ exists or has ever existed. The election of grace indicates God’s free choice to become human in His second mode of being, at which point McCormack claims, God constitutes Himself as the divine-human being. The execution and revelation of that choice is the incarnation and earthly existence of the God-man Jesus Christ by the Spirit; without God’s Word and Spirit there is no genuine knowledge of God’s being. If, on one hand, God were not already in pre-temporality God-to-be-human, the incarnation would constitute a change in God’s being. This means the new incarnate mode could not reveal the ‘real’ but different God ‘left behind’, as it were, so God remains unknown and hidden causing a rift between the modes of God’s own being. On the other hand, presuming to know how such a God is God *in se*, apart from any Self-revelation, by positing an eternal triune God whose second mode of being is an ‘eternal Son’, or by an abstract notion of ‘sonship’ based on human relational experience is pure speculation that has nothing at all to do with the true God as revealed in Word and Spirit. For Barth, election indicates the Word is God’s Son precisely because His Sonship already includes His particular humanity to be assumed (*Logos incarnandus*) having elected Himself to this particular existence in His primal decision. From His Self-election eternally onward He is the Son of God *as* the Son of Man. In this divine decision humanity as such ‘enters’, or more accurately, *is* the eternal will of God, since God determines Himself for covenant with human beings and they with Him, in and through the God-man, Jesus Christ. After all, human beings merely participate in the humanity that is originally and chiefly ascribed to God in His second mode of being and extended to them by God’s gracious

³²⁹ McCormack, “Seek God Where He May Be Found,” 66.

³³⁰ Barth’s Christology will be the focus of Part 3.

election.³³¹ If this decision is truly primal, there is nothing beyond or ‘prior to’ God’s Self-electing act in Jesus Christ.

A second consequence is that “...the eternal act in which God gives to himself his own being as Father, Son and Holy Spirit and the eternal act in which God chooses to be God in the covenant of grace with human beings is *one and the same act*.”³³² Discussed previously and contrasting with the traditional doctrine of the eternal decrees, McCormack’s point is that God does not exist as the triune God ‘first’ and then at some ‘later’ point, in a subsequent decree, decide to create the world with human beings and enter into fellowship with them, to be followed by yet another decree after Adam’s fall into sin in which God graciously chooses to reconcile the world to Himself in the humanity the Son would assume for such purpose.³³³ Rather, God’s activity in His own Self-determination (so-called *ad intra*) and His activity to establish a covenant with human beings and create everything necessary for such (so-called *ad extra*) occur simultaneously, as one and the same act. In the event of God’s free Self-determination to exist in covenant with human beings He simultaneously executes that decision by taking to Himself human nature in eternity, in anticipation of its actualization in time, in a second mode as a repetition of His first mode of being, with a third reiteration in His Spirit as well.

Thirdly, “the triunity of God is a function of the divine election.”³³⁴ This is not a chronological order for McCormack but rather a logical one. It stems, in part, from Barth’s discussion of God’s eternal being in act. “God exists in His act. God is His own decision. God lives from and by Himself.” Barth specifies the uniqueness of God’s being as a being in act. “No other being exists absolutely in its act. No other being is absolutely its own, conscious, willed and executed decision.” Moreover, this single decision which is “the divine person” is “...executed once for all in eternity, and anew in every second of our time...”³³⁵ Before dealing with this fully it will be helpful to mention the remaining consequences McCormack specifies in making Jesus Christ the Subject of election.

Fourthly, given that

...there is no act (or decision) without a subject, the identity of that subject may not be distinguished from the identity of God as constituted *in* the event in which God

³³¹ Barth, *CD II/1*, 272.

³³² McCormack, “Seek God Where He May Be Found,” 66. Italics McCormack’s.

³³³ Note the difficulty and inherent dangers of attributing temporal terms to God’s eternal being, particularly in His pre-temporal existence and activity. See for example, McCormack, “Grace and Being,” 101; “The Actuality of God,” 231ff.

³³⁴ McCormack, “Seek God Where He May Be Found,” 67; for a fuller treatment of this claim, see McCormack, “Grace and Being,” 101-104.

³³⁵ Barth, *CD II/1*, 271.

chooses to be God ‘for us’ – because the being of the subject may not be distinguished finally from the act in which its being is given.³³⁶

According to Barth, “Every statement of what God is, and explanation how God is, must always state and explain what and how He is in His act and decision. There is no moment in the ways of God which is over and above this act and decision.”³³⁷ As the Electing particular and singular being in act, there is no divisibility between God’s being and God’s act. The Self-elected and -electing God and Subject cannot be isolated from His decision to elect Himself. He *is* His decision.

It is the revelation of the name by which He reveals to be known and addressed by us, the name which does not add a second and extrinsic truth to the first intrinsic truth of His intimate, hidden essence, but which is the name and the criterion of His innermost hidden essence. This essence of God which is seen in His revealed name is His being and therefore His act as Father, Son and Holy Spirit... From this name of His we have to conclude what and how He is in His act and therefore in His being: what is divine, what is the character of Him who is God, what makes God God, what therefore His ‘essence’ is. The fact that we cannot go behind His livingness for a definition of His being means in fact that we cannot go behind this name of His, because in the very revelation of His name there occurs the act which is His being to all eternity.³³⁸

McCormack explains further: “Because God’s being is a being *in* the act of electing, the identity of the one divine subject as ‘Father’ is something he gives to himself precisely in this decision – and, therefore, in the one eternal event in which the Son is begotten and the Holy Spirit is spirated.”³³⁹

The last consequence is “...there is no difference in content between the immanent Trinity and the economic Trinity.”³⁴⁰ The reason for this is Christological, as noted above.³⁴¹ In pre-temporal eternity the *Logos* who is to become incarnate (*incarnandus*) is both “not yet embodied” (*asarkos*) and also “embodied” (*ensarkos*) “...by way of anticipation, on the basis of God’s self-determination in the act of electing...”³⁴² And in time, the incarnate *Logos* (*incarnatus*) is both ‘outwith the body’ (*asarkos*) as the omnipresent God who is Spirit and also embodied (*ensarkos*) as Jesus of Nazareth.³⁴³ Thus, McCormack concludes that for Barth the identity of both the *Logos* to be embodied (*incarnandus*) and the embodied *Logos*

³³⁶ McCormack, “Seek God Where He May Be Found,” 67.

³³⁷ Barth, *CD* II/1, 272.

³³⁸ Barth, *CD* II/1, 273.

³³⁹ McCormack, “Seek God Where He May Be Found,” 67.

³⁴⁰ McCormack, “Seek God Where He May Be Found,” 67.

³⁴¹ I shall return to these issues of Christology when dealing with Barth’s doctrine of Reconciliation in Chapter 5.

³⁴² McCormack, “Seek God Where He May Be Found,” 67-68.

³⁴³ Barth deals with the notion of the *Logos* being ‘outwith the body’ particularly in his discussion of ‘the *Extra Calvinisticum*’. See *CD* I/2, 168-170; and *Church Dogmatics: The Doctrine of Reconciliation*, vol. IV, part 1, eds. G.W. Bromiley and T.F. Torrance, trans. G.W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1956) 180-181 (hereafter cited as *CD* IV/1).

(*incarnatus*) are materially “the same” even while important distinctions necessarily remain.³⁴⁴

Consequently, McCormack offers three possibilities concerning the relationship between election and the Trinity: one, agreement with the tradition (including some of Barth’s statements where he thinks along with that tradition) which posit God’s being as Father, Son and Holy Spirit ‘before’ or above and beyond His primal decision to be God for us, based on an abstract concept of ‘pure being’; two, to temporalize God’s being, similar to Hegel, so God is inexorably intertwined with world history such that materially, the concept of an immanent Trinity is no longer viable; or three, to follow the logic of key points of Barth’s theology that the decision in which He chooses to be God for us is His Self-determination to be Father, Son and Holy Spirit.³⁴⁵ The difficulty with the first is that we have a Son without His humanity, an unknown and abstract ‘Eternal Son’. This necessarily infers an unknowable and hidden Trinity as well since Jesus Christ is God’s only Self-revelatory Word to human beings by which one may know anything at all about the Triune God. Yet Barth clearly denies this with his rejection of the *Logos asarkos* except as *incarnandus*, by identifying Jesus Christ as the Electing God, and with his theological epistemology. Additionally, one abstractly speculates about God’s being when one claims to know God as triune apart from His revelation in Jesus Christ. Problematic with the second is the lack of a perfect immanent Trinity above and before creation, thereby denying both the divine freedom and also the eternal ontological distinction between that which is and is not divine. The immanence of God is undeniable when understood as the eternal existence of God prior to the actualization of creation. Even if it were possible to speak of a ‘before’ in God’s being in reference to His primal decision, all that we could state unequivocally is that God exists, He *is*, as McCormack rightly has pointed out. To make statements concerning *how* He exists without reference to His Self-determination that includes creaturely reality and human possibility of knowing, i.e., He is triune ‘prior to’ His primal decision, is to step beyond the limits of human knowing.³⁴⁶ In view of Barth’s mature doctrine of election, the ‘immanent Trinity’ best refers to the actuality of God’s being once the single event of His primal decision and Self-constitution as Triune takes place. It no longer follows the traditional meaning that God is Triune ‘prior to’ His decision to be God for us in Jesus Christ, thus reverting to an abstract Son separated from His humanity (in anticipation). If, however, in accord with McCormack’s constructive

³⁴⁴ McCormack, “Seek God Where He May Be Found,” 68.

³⁴⁵ McCormack, “Seek God Where He May Be Found,” 75.

³⁴⁶ For example, see McCormack, “Seek God Where He May Be Found,” 67

interpretation of Barth's unique insights, God's being is determined as triune in and as a logical consequence of (and simultaneous with) His primal decision, then the Son is eternally the One who was revealed to us in time as Jesus Christ, and the important notion of the immanence of the Trinity is maintained.

Given these logical alternatives, I agree with McCormack that in positing Jesus Christ as the Subject of election, it makes best sense of Barth's theology as a whole to move beyond some of Barth's own statements to conclude that "...it is God's act of determining himself to be God for us in Jesus Christ which constitutes God as triune."³⁴⁷ It is also noteworthy that McCormack specifies a limit to this logic. To the question, "In what sense, then, is the incarnation of the 'Son' and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit 'constitutive' of the eternal being of God?" he responds, "In this sense only: as a consequence of the primal decision in which God assigned to himself the being he would have throughout eternity (a being-for the human race), God is already in pre-temporal eternity – *by way of anticipation* – that which he would become in time." And so, "History" – that which takes place in creaturely space and time – "is significant for the being of God in eternity".³⁴⁸ This critically important concept in my investigation of the spatiality of God will be addressed in the next section.

To summarize this revision of the doctrine of the Trinity, before immediately addressing its consequences for Barth's doctrine of divine spatiality, Barth claims that Jesus Christ is the Subject of election, which, given his doctrine of the Triunity of God as one Subject in three modes of being, emphasizes Jesus Christ's pre-temporal identity with God already as the God-human (human in anticipation). With rigorous application of Barth's epistemology³⁴⁹ to his doctrines of election and Christology, it is immensely cogent to conclude, as McCormack has, that Jesus Christ eternally exists as the God-human in His divine-human unity, and only in this mode of being; and that the decision in which God chooses to be God for us is not only the same decision in which He determines Himself to be Father, Son and Holy Spirit but that, logically, this divine act precedes and determines the way in which the divine being is Self-constituted. How this recasts the doctrine of divine omnipresence follows.

³⁴⁷ McCormack, "Seek God Where He May Be Found," 67.

³⁴⁸ McCormack, "Grace and Being," 100.

³⁴⁹ "God is who He is in the event of His revelation." Barth, *CD II/2*, 262.

5. The Doctrine of the Divine Perfection of Omnipresence Revisited

The Christological developments in Barth's mature doctrine of election and the critical revisions consequently made to his doctrine of the Trinity necessitate revisiting his doctrine of the perfection of God's omnipresence.³⁵⁰ Barth's epistemological 'rule' now declares that any attempt to know God or define a specific divine attribute either apart from God's Self-revelation as the Electing and Elected God (and man) in Jesus Christ or from an abstract concept of the attribute itself is fated to yield no genuine knowledge of the Christian God.³⁵¹ Therefore from this point forward, where "Jesus Christ" appears in my text, the full content just outlined concerning Jesus Christ, the God-human in His divine-human unity as the Subject and Object of Election, is to be understood. The concern of this chapter has been the doctrine of election, with particular focus upon the reality of the pre-temporal existence of God revealed in Jesus Christ through His Spirit as a way of inquiring about the spatiality of the Triune God in His own being. My final task in this chapter is to reconsider that spatiality by reformulating the doctrine of the divine perfection of omnipresence in accord with the full ramifications of Barth's doctrine of election, as necessary. From God's Self-revelation, how does God live His perfect life omnipresently 'in Himself', where 'in Himself' now means in His own eternally elected and Self-determined space? I conclude with a provisional definition of God's spatiality to be refined in subsequent chapters.

Since God determines Himself in a specific way in the election of grace, Barth's first observation of the two-fold movement included in God's omnipresence needs amending. Rather than an 'inward' movement in which God is first and foremost present to Himself and a secondary, 'outward' movement of God's presence in creation, Barth shifts emphases to describe all divine movement as directed by His primal decision for grace. In place of metaphysical speculations about a Godhead complete in and of itself, of a *perichoretic* 'movement' of an abstract Father and Son and Spirit in infinite free love, Barth now focuses concretely on the primal origin in eternity, the dynamic actualization in time and the eschatological fulfillment of the election of grace as revealed by the Father in Jesus Christ the Son through the Spirit. Election is God's Self-determination to be spatial and His determination for human beings to be spatial, both in Jesus Christ and effected through the Spirit. For God has elected Himself to be present in a properly ordered covenant relationship with, although distinct from, human beings and He has elected them to be present in

³⁵⁰ For an example of such reconstruction of the divine perfections of immutability and omnipotence see McCormack, "The Actuality of God," 231-240.

³⁵¹ Materially these two approaches are identical.

communion with and distinction from Him. In Jesus Christ, God perfectly fulfills both sides of this fellowship, for God's glory and 'for us and our salvation'. God's Self-election for the covenant of grace in Jesus Christ is God's Self-constitution; His "becoming" in time corresponds to His being in eternity. Thus, the so-called 'outward' movement is grounded and already encompassed in the so-called 'inward' movement, for that particular 'inward' movement is actually already a leaning outward. In the Self-elected, Self-constituted trinitarian life of God, Jesus Christ is already, eternally fully divine and fully human (in anticipation of His actualisation in time).

The 'beginning' of God's movement towards humanity is the primal decision itself. To speak of an inner movement between the Persons of the Godhead in which each is perfectly present to the other or an outer movement between God and humanity in which each is personally present to the other is to say one and the same thing in this particular material sense, since Jesus Christ is the Electing Subject. Two important notions are upheld: God is fully, eternally present to Himself, in and as His own space, as the eternally perfect being He must be; and proper distinctions are maintained between divine and human. Positively, this grounds the triune being of God in the actuality of His Self-revelation that is identical to the God-human mode of being, Jesus Christ the Son, in whom Father and Spirit are made known. Where God's turning to humanity in the election of Jesus Christ is understood to be constitutive of God's own being, the spatiality of God in Himself, defined not as 'identity but proximity at a distance' of the one God between three modes of being, is still appropriate; but only when limited by, conditioned by and arising from the free Self-constituting primal decision, and when already including humanity (in anticipation). Therefore, in election, God's spatiality 'in Himself' already includes His spatiality 'outward' which is human spatiality, with its necessary distinctions.

A concept of the spatiality of an abstract Godhead separated from the being of Jesus Christ is rejected. To ask *how* God is present to Himself, what *form* He takes 'prior to' His primal decision is logically impossible, given the definition of 'primal'. Nothing 'behind' this decision can be known but that God exists. However, once the primal decision is made and God constitutes Himself as Father, Son (to become human in time) and Holy Spirit, God is fully, perfectly present to Himself in each mode of being, for there is only One Subject who is God. This is God's 'space', in pre-temporal eternity, meaning how God *is*, in unity and distinction, how God is God, or how God is present in relation and distinction with Himself, which already includes being human in His second mode. Such a concrete understanding of *perichoresis* or mutual indwelling of the three modes of being of the one God in each other

begins to capture the distinction in unity that is unique to the way in which God is present in relation in His own space, or *is* His own space, as a consequence of the primal decision. More specifically, the ramifications of that primal decision suggest God is eternally present to Himself not only in divinity to divinity but also in divinity to humanity and humanity to divinity, in anticipation prior to the incarnation and in actuality thereafter. For God's eternity, specifically His eternal decision for the covenant of grace in Jesus Christ, determines all temporality, particularly His temporal actualization as the eternal God, even while our knowledge of God begins in the latter to reveal the former. Therefore, in His second mode of being the Son is fully present to Himself as the God-man in His divine-human unity (Christology) and simultaneously perfectly present to the Father and the Spirit (Trinity). This reality of the divine presence to that which is not divine takes place in pre-temporal eternity within God's own being first as the Son who will become incarnate, and then through His incarnated existence to every other human being that will come into existence. First and foremost, spatiality is a perfection of God, the specific way in which God lives mutually present in relation and distinction with Himself.

Furthermore, as noted earlier, Barth rejects any distinction between "essential" and "economic" attributes of God, since perfection itself and each of the individual perfections signifies nothing can be added to or removed from God's being. (After all, the divine perfection dialectically paired with omnipresence is unity.) This view becomes more theologically grounded where only one eternal decision is posited. For, although a distinction always remains between God and human beings (evident especially in Jesus Christ Himself in whom the two natures are never mixed, confused or synthesized), God constitutes Himself as a being 'for us' such that what He is eternally in Himself in His second mode of being (human in anticipation) already entails what He will become in the economy (human in actualisation). God's spatiality or the way He is present in relation and distinction in eternity thus corresponds to His spatiality in time; He "becomes" in creaturely space and time what He has elected in His own Self-determined space in eternity.³⁵² Thus, God can be and is present in relation and distinction in a multiplicity of ways. And precisely because God is the God-man Jesus Christ in the act of electing, God is perfectly present in genuine relationship with human being(s), from the beginning. This is what God is 'essentially', in and as His own space. Correspondingly, God also makes human beings able to be present in true relationship with Him. This is what human beings are 'essentially', encompassed in God's space as a related

³⁵² For a different understanding of God's "becoming" in the light of notions of "rest" and "movement" in God, see Thomas F. Torrance, *The Christian Doctrine of God* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2001) 242.

yet distinct space. That He actually is, so can be omnipresent to us by Word and Spirit is a determination of His freedom in which He loves Himself, and by loving Himself in His second mode of being, loves all human beings. From this point forward, reference to God's presence '*in se*', '*ad intra*' or 'in Himself' entails these revisions as grounded in election. Having revisited Barth's notion of God's presence 'inward', attention turns to reconsider his three-fold concept of divine presence 'outward'.

The space of God's "general presence" in creation is a function of His being its Creator and Sustainer. The physical, cosmic space of creation becomes the "theatre" for God's work of reconciliation and redemption. The election of grace as God's free choice which, once made, means He exists only in the reality of this decision (in ordered fellowship with human creatures) is 'the beginning' of creation and human beings in particular. God's space, the eternal reality of God's triune existence determined in election, encompasses and permeates creaturely space. His is the source of ours; His determination to be present in relationship and distinction with us, loving in freedom, determines our presence in relation with Him. Furthermore, the divine omnipresence in the world as a whole, which is God's freely elect will to love Himself and us in Jesus Christ, can only be known by the illumination of His Spirit in the event of revelation. Although the fullness of God's presence often is not recognized in the created realm, even so there is no true absence of God. He can be remote and near, transcendent and immanent, and present in a variety of ways. However, given the Self-determined spatiality of His being, He is never absent in reality.

The space of God's "special presence" in creation, for Barth, is His Word of revelation and reconciliation that occurs in Israel and the Church. In his doctrine of election, Israel represents God's rejection of sin and its consequences by declaring its relation with Himself to be out of order. The divine presence in this sense is God's rejection, wrath or judgment, even subjectively experienced as the 'absence' of God, and is demonstrated most fully in the 'God-abandoned' death of Jesus Christ, the Rejected. The Church (also including Israel) represents the election of the justified sinner who is present to God in a rightly-ordered relation through the righteousness of the risen Jesus Christ, the Elect. Both are aspects of the same election of grace in Jesus Christ intended for all from the beginning, the rejection of chaos (sin and death) for order (resurrection life) in our relation with God.

And finally, beyond God's general space of creative and sustaining presence, and the particular space of His revealing and reconciling presences in Israel and the Church, is the unique space or "proper presence" of God in Jesus Christ. As Elector and Elected, true God and true Human, divine space and creaturely space, spirit and nature, His space is the one that

informs, conditions, encloses, mediates and fulfills all others. God's space and genuine creaturely space is known only in Jesus Christ who holds both together without separation or confusion. That humans are elected in Jesus Christ's election signifies that human beings can and do share in a type of spatiality which Jesus Christ actualises on earth in His Father's presence through the Spirit.³⁵³

Even so, an eternal distinction remains since the ontological difference between Jesus Christ and all other human beings is never set aside. On one hand, the created space in which we are present to God and He to us is not the divine space that God shares, or more accurately, *is* in the unity of His triune being; on the other hand, it *is* divine, but solely in the sense that because it takes place in Jesus Christ the God-human through His Spirit, we, always as creatures, can actually enjoy genuine fellowship in God's holy presence through Jesus Christ. The spatiality or fellowship that takes place between God and human beings, how they are present in relation and distinction to each other, occurs only as a type of the spatiality or fellowship that Jesus Christ enjoys with His Father. He is the Firstborn, our Representative in His adoption of a true human nature, the eternally begotten Son; we are adopted as God's children in Him. The divine and creaturely spatialities – ways of being lovingly and freely present in mutual relationship and distinction – are distinct yet united in Christ. Only there, only in Jesus Christ can we *be*, which means living in God's presence and God being personally present to us. But precisely there it does indeed take place for He is the Electing God and the Elected Human who constitutes Himself in the precise way that being truly spatial or enjoying a rightly ordered loving and free fellowship between God and human beings is made actual and thus possible. Eberhard Jüngel writes, "The encounter between God and man which owes its origin to the movement of God's being is, according to Barth, first and above all the encounter between the electing God and the elected man which is fulfilled in Jesus Christ."³⁵⁴ This divine perfection for loving encounter with us is the spatiality of the triune God.

To conclude, the fact that God is for human beings by being eternally present to, with and in us is not something external to His being. Rather, it is indeed constitutive of His being in Jesus Christ. Once His primal decision in election is made, God loves us as He loves Himself for we are already present to God since represented in and through His Son who would become incarnate. In this, God's eternity encompasses but is not limited by creation's

³⁵³ For a discussion of God's presence in Christ through the Spirit see for example, Terry J. Wright, "How is Christ Present to the World?" *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 7, no. 3 (July 2005) 300-315.

³⁵⁴ Jüngel, *God's Being is in Becoming*, xxi.

temporality. Thus, the historicity of that relationship is not impugned, since the relationship is realised only in His history with us. Furthermore, our election is contained in His election while the ontological distinction (between Jesus Christ and us) and material distinction (between His election and our own in Him) remain. In the unity of God's being, *perichoresis* helps describe God's own space, that perfect fellowship of the Trinity of God such that each mode of being (including the God-man in His divine human unity) is wholly present in, with and to the others – coinhering – without losing the distinction as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and in a rightly ordered relation (e.g., the Father is not the Son). As a consequence of God's election of grace, we are invited to participate in a similar though distinct type of spatiality that Jesus Christ manifested while on earth, in vital and ordered fellowship with His Father in heaven through His Spirit. Abiding in God's presence (which is the actualization of our spatiality) not only as His creatures but primarily as His reconciled covenant-partners is the provisional goal for us here and now of God's election of grace in Jesus Christ. The Self-determined spatiality of the triune God derives from His gracious election to be Immanuel, God with us, and is actualised in God's acts for the world including the Father's creation of the cosmos by Word and Spirit.

PART TWO

THE SPATIALITY OF GOD THE FATHER AND GOD THE SON AND GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

In Part One, I offered a theological account of the Self-determined spatiality of the triune God through Karl Barth's theology. Building upon that ontological foundation in Part Two, I explore God's spatiality in His three distinct modes of being through His concrete acts of creation, reconciliation and redemption, following Barth's doctrines. Chapter Four explores God's spatiality as the Father in His act of creation, Chapter Five investigates God's spatiality as the Son in His act of reconciliation and Chapter Six probes God's spatiality as the Holy Spirit in His act of redemption. As demonstrated, spatiality for Barth entails mutual presence in ordered relation and distinction.

To consider God's 'outward' activity, Barth utilizes the traditional doctrine of appropriations, attributing a specific work of the triune God to one particular Person or mode of His being, as suggested by Scripture.³⁵⁵ Creation is the divine work *ad extra* traditionally appropriated to God the Father, while reconciliation is appropriated to the Son and redemption to the Spirit.³⁵⁶ Barth notes a "correspondence and likeness" between the "particular character of the first divine mode of existence", the Father, "and the work of creation as the first of the divine works" *ad extra*, and similarly, between the second and third modes of being with their respective divine works. For instance, God's procreative activity within His own triune being corresponds with His creative activity 'outside' Himself. The Father's Self-originating act of "eternal generation" ("posit[ing] Himself in the Son by the Holy Spirit" or eternally begetting the Son) corresponds with the Father's originating act of creation.³⁵⁷ The claim that God (the Father) is the sole source and origin of His own being corresponds to the further claim that God is Creator since He (the Father) is also the sole source and origin of everything else that exists. Therefore, God the Father as Creator is

³⁵⁵ See for example H.E.W. Turner, "Appropriation" in *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology*, eds. Alan Richardson and John Bowden (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983) 36.

³⁵⁶ Barth's use of this doctrine of appropriations is indicated even in the titles of his later volumes: Volume III: the Doctrine of Creation by God the Father, Volume IV: the Doctrine of Reconciliation by God the Son, and what was projected to be Volume V: the Doctrine of Redemption by God the Holy Spirit.

³⁵⁷ Barth, *CD III/1*, 11. In other words, the analogy of the divine action in creation is the "eternal begetting of the Son by the Father". Barth, *CD III/1*, 14.

appropriately acknowledged to be God the Creator as the Father.³⁵⁸ Not identity but a “proportion” or analogy exists “...between the relationship in God Himself and God’s relationship to the world...”³⁵⁹ Since God’s Self-determined and spatial triune being grounds and determines creation, Creator and creation (particularly the human creature) have a corresponding spatiality, being co-present in ordered relation and distinction.

Barth simultaneously balances the doctrine of appropriations with the principle, grounded in the Trinitarian doctrine of *perichoresis*, that the work of the triune God *ad extra* is indivisible.³⁶⁰ Uniquely and indivisibly one, God exists in the distinct yet inseparable unity in perfect interpenetration and co-relation of the modes of being. God’s work is indivisible not only due to the unity of God’s being; it is the actualization of God’s being as the One who is being in act. This being is Self-constituted solely in one “pure and singular” act, the election of the covenant of grace in Jesus Christ.³⁶¹ Thus, in Trinitarian theology, attributing creation to the “Father”, for instance, can only mean “the Father with the Son and the Holy Spirit.”³⁶² For in Scripture, God is the Father only of this Son, Jesus Christ, actualized and revealed by the Spirit. God the Father is the Creator on the basis of the intra-divine and spatial relations of God’s being, through Word and Spirit.³⁶³ “The eternal fellowship between Father and Son...thus finds a correspondence in the very different but not dissimilar fellowship between God and His creature”, accomplished through the Spirit’s active presence.³⁶⁴

³⁵⁸ “As the Father, God procreates Himself from eternity in His Son, and with His Son He is also from eternity the origin of Himself in the Holy Spirit; and as the Creator He posits the reality to all things that are distinct from Himself.” Barth, *CD III/1*, 49.

³⁵⁹ Barth, *CD III/1*, 49.

³⁶⁰ “*Opera trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa.*” Barth, *CD III/1*, 49. See also Heppel, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 117ff.

³⁶¹ The purpose of the dialectical use of the doctrine of appropriations and the principle concerning God’s works *ad extra* is to protect both the unity and differentiation of God’s eternal being and God’s eternal work, thus safeguarding the former against tritheism and the latter against sundering the singular divine activity into separate and potentially unrelated acts. See Barth, *CD III/1*, 49. Bruce L. McCormack, unpublished lecture, Princeton Theological Seminary, Spring 2003. See also Jüngel, “The concreteness of God’s being: *perichoresis* and appropriation of the three modes of God’s being” in *God’s Being is in Becoming*, 42-53; and Gunton who explains that with the “...Doctrine of Appropriation, which in trinitarian theology balances the doctrine of *perichoresis*,...” it is “...nonetheless appropriate to attribute some acts to God the Father, some to God the Son, and some to God the Holy Spirit, because in revelation we are given a ‘hint’ that this is the case.” Gunton, “Karl Barth’s Doctrine of Election,” 390.

³⁶² Barth, *CD III/1*, 49. This serves as a reminder of the sole and singular ontic ground of the creation and human knowledge of it, and also substantiates his Christocentric methodology.

³⁶³ This understanding of Barth’s Trinitarian theology is lacking in Aung’s critique: “When it became a matter of divine unity, then the individuality of the three persons of the Trinity is dissolved. Consequently when the unity of God and the relationship between God and the world are considered together, then there arises conflict and tension structurally in understanding the relationship between God and the world in a truly trinitarian way.” Salai Hla Aung, *The Doctrine of Creation in the Theology of Barth, Moltmann and Pannenberg: Creation in Theological, Ecological and Philosophical-Scientific Perspective* (Regensburg: Rodere Verlag, 1998) 2.

³⁶⁴ Barth, *CD III/1*, 50.

Therefore on one hand, “God the Creator is the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.”³⁶⁵ On the other hand, precisely because God is one in differentiation and in this way *is* His act or work, it is appropriate from the human perspective to identify the temporally distinct divine works of creation, reconciliation and redemption and attribute them to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, respectively. These are various aspects occurring in time of the one, singular eternal work of the three-in-one God, fulfilling the covenant of grace in Jesus Christ. Beginning with the first aspect, Chapter Four explores the Father’s creative spatiality.

³⁶⁵ Barth, *CD* III/1, 48.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CREATIVE SPATIALITY OF GOD THE FATHER AS CREATOR

Regarding the doctrine of creation, spatiality addresses how God the Father is characteristically present as Creator, both in Himself and towards creation, especially the human creature, and how that creature is present to its Creator and its fellow creatures. This chapter's focus is the space of God's general presence in creation. With a line from the Apostles' Creed summarizing God's act of creation in Scripture, Barth introduces three major material categories comprising his doctrine of creation of interest for this study: "I believe in God the Father Almighty Maker of heaven and earth."³⁶⁶ First, "God" is the Subject who acts, and in this case, who acts creatively. We know of this Subject not as an abstract first cause of creation but concretely as the Father of Jesus Christ. Second, as predicate of this divine Subject, "Creator" means God has acted and accomplished something: He has created. Thus, Barth concludes, "God does not exist alone" but "another exists before, near and with God" in its own particular existence and determination willed and given by God.³⁶⁷ And third, the distinct object of God the Father's creative activity is "heaven and earth" or the sum of the reality posited by and differentiated from God.³⁶⁸

In the "freedom of His love", without compulsion, God did not will to remain alone or without the creature but to exist in an ordered relationship with that which is not God.³⁶⁹ This act of creating entails no loss of divinity for the One whose being is perfect. Instead, "the Eternal Father", precisely by "...determining Himself in His Son by the Holy Spirit and Himself positing everything else..." is God the Creator. In this one divine act God begins to execute in time His own Self-determination and created reality. An "act of the overflowing of His inward glory", God reveals Himself to be the triune God and as such, the Creator and Lord of creation.³⁷⁰ From nothing or non-being, the Father called into existence something distinct from Himself that now actually exists, even as He continues to call it into existence. Thus, God not only becomes Creator in this singular and unique event, He always "remains Creator", present in ordered relation and distinction with the creation He sustains in its very

³⁶⁶ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics: The Doctrine of Creation*, vol. III, part 1, eds. G.W. Bromiley and T.F. Torrance, trans. J.W. Edwards, O. Bussey and H. Knight (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1958) 3 (hereafter cited as Barth, *CD* III/1).

³⁶⁷ Barth, *CD* III/1, 5.

³⁶⁸ Barth, *CD* III/1, 17.

³⁶⁹ Barth, *CD* III/1, 15.

³⁷⁰ Barth, *CD* III/1, 11.

existence with Him. God is "...present to His creation – actively present, and not leaving His work behind, or abandoning it to someone else or to itself, like...a watchmaker his watch."³⁷¹ Such active divine presence in creation, especially with human creatures, wholly determines and conditions it for existence in the presence of its Maker.

Following this introduction, the unique spatiality of God the Father as Creator is explored regarding His own space as the triune God. From this ontological basis, creaturely spatiality is investigated in its distinctions and correspondences with God's spatiality. I aim to examine the character of spatiality in its divinely creative and its creaturely manifestations, as revealed in various relationships between Creator and creature(s). Specifically, in three major sections as indicated by Barth, I first investigate the spatiality of God the Father *as Creator*, the predicate of the Subject of creation, by focusing on God who as Lord of the covenant is also Lord of creation. However, since the spatiality of the Creator is revealed in the actual object of the divine creative activity and not in an *a priori* abstract notion, I examine the spatiality of creation following Barth's exegesis of the two Genesis creation stories. Next, attention focuses on the spatiality of the human creature created as God's covenant-partner, first pertaining to Jesus Christ, then to human beings in general. Finally, I consider the spatiality of God *the Father*, the Subject of all creative and sustaining activity, with regard to Barth's doctrine of divine providence. Moreover, Barth's own spatial language demonstrates the range of spatial concepts comprising his doctrine of creation. Thus, within this doctrine and through the language used to explicate it a theological understanding is gained of the space and spatiality of the Creator as Father, and of their ramifications for His creatures.³⁷² Before tackling the creative spatiality of God, however, an underlying issue regarding the works of the Triune God will be addressed.

1. The Spatiality of God the Father as Lord of Creation and the Covenant

1.1. Creation: Space for the Covenant

According to Barth, the witness of Scripture declares that "...the purpose and therefore the meaning of creation is to make possible the history of God's covenant with man which has its beginning, its centre and its culmination in Jesus Christ."³⁷³ As indicated, Barth expounds his doctrine of creation in the light of his doctrine of election.³⁷⁴ If the event of

³⁷¹ Barth, *CD* III/1, 13.

³⁷² Barth, *CD* III/1, 24.

³⁷³ Barth, *CD* III/1, 42.

³⁷⁴ Bender correctly asserts, "For Barth, Christ is not only the goal but the ground of creation as he is the ontic and noetic basis for all relations between God and the world...Creation and christology are thus intricately tied

God's primal decision for the covenant of grace determines God's own (spatial) being as Creator, then it also conditions, shapes and gives direction to the ensuing creation and the relationship between them.³⁷⁵ The eternal decree whereby God freely elects Himself to be God with and for human creatures and to be God in no other way is actualized in His creative activity.³⁷⁶ Thus, election is a determinant of the Father's creative spatiality by which the Father is present in relation and distinction with His creatures in and through His creative act. Not only is God free to will what He wills, His omnipotent and omnipresent being is perfectly constituted to accomplish it. The event of election includes both Self-determination and determination of the "other", of intra-divine constitution and extra-divine constitution.³⁷⁷ In the act of electing first Himself for the human creature, even before creation and time exist, God is already turning toward that creature which as yet exists only in the will of God in anticipation of its actual creation.³⁷⁸ In His own triunity God turns toward the creature when the Father turns toward or "has regard to" the Son who will become one with human creatureliness by the Spirit.³⁷⁹ Again, this occurs within God's own being prior to creation coming into being. When God speaks His creative Word 'outward', the reality distinct from

together because Christ is the subject of both creation and incarnation. Furthermore, the relation between God and creation is itself established and revealed in God's eternal election to be God for us in the person of Jesus Christ." (165) Kimlyn J. Bender, "Christ, Creation and the Drama of Redemption: 'The Play's the Thing...'," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 62, no. 2 (2009) 149-174.

³⁷⁵ Thiemann writes, "Barth's Christocentrism asserts that God's relationship to the reality external to him is established and determined by his relationship to Jesus Christ. That is why the doctrine of election plays such a central role in Barth's theological perspective, because it is with the doctrine of election that God, Jesus Christ and humankind are brought together within a single focus. The whole of reality external to God is *established* and *determined* in Jesus Christ, and precisely because it is so determined it is also revealed solely through him. Barth is consistent in his claim that the revelation of God in Christ is noetically reliable precisely because in Christ the essence of both God and man receives its sole ontological determination." (131) Ronald F. Thiemann, "Toward a Theology of Creation: a Response to Gustaf Wingren" in *Creation and Method: Critical Essays on Christocentric Theology*, ed., Henry Vander Groot (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1981) 119-136. In his ensuing critique, it is unfortunate he does not fully appreciate that very doctrine of election regarding the role of the Old Testament and "law" for Barth.

³⁷⁶ "As the love of God could not be satisfied with the eternal covenant as such; as it willed to execute it and give it form outside the divine sphere, it made itself this external ground of the covenant, i.e., it made necessary the existence and being of the creature and therefore of creation." Barth, *CD III/1*, 97.

³⁷⁷ Jüngel's insight on Barth's use of 'inner' and 'outer' is most helpful here. First, he states, "...God's election of grace is not only a *opus Dei ad extra* [external work of God] or, more precisely, an *opus Dei ad extra externum* [external work of God directed outward]; it is at the same time an *opus Dei ad extra internum* [external work of God directed inwards] (83-84). Jüngel clarifies, "The category 'outwardly' (*ad extra*) which Barth employs following the older theology, is a hermeneutical aid, which itself needs interpretation. God's being cannot be divided up into inner and outer. But the relation of the modes of being in which God's being corresponds to itself must certainly be distinguished from the 'being over against' (Heidegger) in which God makes *his creature* correspond to God, since God also corresponds to himself in the connection of that relation to this being over against." Jüngel, *God's Being is in Becoming*, 91.

³⁷⁸ Watson rightly notes "There is to be understood relationships and decision between God and the creature in the eternal being of God. In Jesus Christ God and the creature meet in an event which is the origin and type of all other history." Gordon Watson, *God and the Creature: The Trinity and Creation in Karl Barth* (Brisbane, Qld: UC Press, 1995) 400-401.

³⁷⁹ Barth, *CD III/1*, 51.

God's being is called into existence by the Spirit's power. Traditionally, creation is deemed the first divine work *ad extra*; for Barth, creation constitutes the beginning, the presupposition necessary for executing the eternal divine decree of His gracious election.

The dialectic rigorously maintained by Barth in the relation between God and creation on one side, concerns the absolute distinction between Creator and creation yet without any notion of absolute separation to preclude the possibility of relationship between them, on the other side. God is the God who freely determines Himself and the creature as spatial beings, who are mutually present in ordered relation and distinction. It is of God's essential being to be God in this way, to be with and for that which is not God, without diminishing or losing any of His Godness. In fact, Barth insists God is God precisely in this and no other way regarding His creation, particularly human creature(s). Thus, as previously noted, there exists a divine space or sphere of God's intra-divine existence (here, specifically as Creator who freely elected Himself for relation with human creature(s)) and a creaturely space or created sphere appropriate for human existence with God. These meet and overlap while also remaining distinct in Jesus Christ who is both Creator and creature, Electing and Elected, divine and human.³⁸⁰

From Scripture, Barth notes a general point about the spatiality of the Creator and creature: the whole of creation takes place and exists in relation to its Creator within the created space of divine grace. For the human creature, this means "everything relates to faith". For faith in God does not occur as a "special function" in a "special sphere" that is distinct from the so-called "natural" realm of creaturely existence.³⁸¹ Rather, in its entirety and in every aspect, knowledge of creation is a matter of faith in the gracious Creator, the Father of Jesus Christ, who is known only by the revelation of His Word and Spirit. All human creatures are never outside this space of faith and grace, for no other space exists for them to inhabit. The so-called 'natural' realm of creation is already first and foremost the realm of God's gracious presence. So, creaturely space cannot be understood as 'natural' or 'spiritual' as if these are antithetical. Instead, since the presupposition of creation is God's election of the covenant of grace, the natural is already God-given and therefore blessed by God for the fulfillment of that very covenant with elect creatures. Furthermore, the creature's space cannot be understood as being its own autonomous space existing outside of or alongside the Creator's space, as if devoid of the Creator's active presence. On the contrary, God the

³⁸⁰ This is the focus of the next section.

³⁸¹ Barth, *CD* III/1, 62.

Creator's space is distinguished from yet simultaneously in relation with and encompassing created space.³⁸²

A second general point about the spatiality of the Creator and creature concerns the divine purposeful intent of all God's work, including His creative work. In correspondence to the divine act of creating which originates within God's own being (in His election of grace), creation itself not only has its origin in God's own being and will but is guided in a particular direction and for the achievement of a specific goal as determined by that same divine being and will. This does not imply that creation is divine; it simply means creation is from and for God, not of God. Barth states "The creature's right and meaning and goal and purpose and dignity lie – only – in the fact that God as the Creator has turned toward it with His purpose."³⁸³ That purpose is the divine love. The Creator graciously wills to love His creature, thus actualising His spatiality. He loves the creature first within His own space by His eternal Self-determination to be in covenantal relationship with it. Then, outside His unique space He begins to realize its covenantal existence by making the creature in its own space of creation. Yet again, the Creator does not stop with its mere creation and existence. He begins to enact the eternal covenant relationship by revealing Himself to the creature and being present with and for it in the particularity and entirety of its existence. All such divine activity reveals the creative spatiality manifest in the execution of the Creator's ongoing loving purpose and will as it concerns the creature. Indeed, God

...wills and posits the creature neither out of caprice nor necessity, but because He has loved it from eternity, because He wills to demonstrate His love for it, and because He wills, not to limit His glory by its existence and being, but to reveal and manifest it in His own co-existence with it. As the Creator He wills really to exist for His creature.³⁸⁴

³⁸² See Colin Gunton's claim that with a shift in Barth's epistemology from his second *Romans* commentary to *Church Dogmatics* Barth replaced his use of Enlightenment spatial metaphors regarding the distinction or 'distance' between the subject and object of knowledge (God as 'wholly other') for the post-critical notion of ontological 'indwelling' and mutuality "No Other Foundation: One Englishman's Reading of *Church Dogmatics*, Chapter V in Nigel Biggar, *Reckoning with Barth: Essays in Commemoration of the Centenary of Karl Barth's Birth*, (Oxford: Mowbray, 1988) 61-79; and McCormack's critique of Gunton: "When Gunton says of the relation of God and the creature in *CD II/1* that it is now an '*ontological* rather than a *spatial* otherness of God which comes to expression' (p.76), I would suggest that he has aptly described Barth's conception in *Romans II*, not *CD II/1* as Gunton claims." Bruce L. McCormack, Book Review: Nigel Biggar, *Reckoning with Barth: Essays in Commemoration of the Centenary of Karl Barth's Birth* in *European Journal of Theology* 1, no. 1 (1992) 87-89. Metzger follows Gunton by emphasizing the "*ontological otherness or distance*" between Barth's understanding of creation as witness to God and how that witness is perceived as "*ontological proximity*". Paul Louis Metzger, *The Word of Christ and the World of Culture: Sacred and Secular Through the Theology of Karl Barth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003) 196ff.

³⁸³ Barth, *CD III/1*, 94.

³⁸⁴ Barth, *CD III/1*, 95.

Therefore, “the presupposition of the realisation of the divine purpose of love” as rooted in the election of the covenant of grace is creation.³⁸⁵ More specifically, the covenant’s “external basis” is the human creature, who, as a spatial being, is the Creator’s covenant-partner and thus the object of His gracious love.³⁸⁶ Yet, creation and the creature are not merely occasional or subsequent participants in the covenant. Rather, for Barth the opposite is true.

In virtue of its being and nature, the creature is destined, prepared and equipped to be a partner of this covenant. This covenant cannot be seriously threatened or attacked by the nature of the creature or its surroundings, nor by any attribute of man and the world. By its whole nature the creature is destined and disposed for this covenant. There is no peculiarity in man and the world which does not as such aim at this covenant. As a partner of this covenant, the creature will always have to do exclusively with its Creator on God’s side, and exclusively with its own God-given nature on its own.³⁸⁷

In sum, the creature’s origin, direction and goal or the whole of its existence and nature are based in and serve God’s loving, gracious and covenantal will to be Immanuel, God with and for the creature. Therefore, the first execution and form given the divine love that is external to God’s own space is creation, “... the sphere in which the institution and history of the covenant take place...”³⁸⁸ The Creator has willed this space from eternity and made it along with time so He may perfectly love His own creature.³⁸⁹

Reflecting in more detail on the Creator’s created space Barth raises some notable theological observations arising from his exegesis of the first biblical creation story in Genesis 1. Highlighting the creature’s space will reveal more about the spatiality of God the Father as Creator and Lord of the Covenant. I begin with some of Barth’s broad theological observations of the passage as a whole (Genesis 1:1-2:4a) before specifying distinctions within.

From this first account of creation, Barth formulates the first of a two-fold proposition concerning the relations between God and human, and Creator and creature, which are spatial, and also between eternity and time, and divine space and creaturely space: “creation is the external basis of the covenant”.³⁹⁰ The Creator wills and executes an ordered plan that brings

³⁸⁵ Barth, *CD* III/1, 96.

³⁸⁶ Barth, *CD* III/1, 96.

³⁸⁷ Barth, *CD* III/1, 97.

³⁸⁸ Barth, *CD* III/1, 97.

³⁸⁹ “Creation as history fashions the world as a sphere for man who is to be a participant in this grace.” Barth, *CD* III/1, 67.

³⁹⁰ Barth, *CD* III/1, 97. For several discussions on Barth’s view of time and eternity see Paul S. Chung, “Karl Barth and God in Creation: Towards an Interfaith Dialogue with Science and Religion,” *Theology and Science* 3, no. 1 (2005) 55-70, especially 59-62; John D. Morrison, “God, World and “God’s Time For Us’ in Christ: Karl Barth and the Time-Eternity Problem,” *Evangelical Theological Society Papers* (New Orleans, LA: Theological Research Exchange Network, 1990); David L. Mueller, *Foundation of Karl Barth’s Doctrine of Reconciliation:*

a “very good” creation into existence. Its ordered goodness resides in the fact that, wholly and in every facet, creation is designed for and suited to the good Creator’s covenantal purpose of loving and being loved by His human creatures. Existing in such mutual presence in ordered relation and distinction is the spatiality characteristic of the Creator. The human creature is specially “created in and after the image of God” precisely to be God’s covenant-partner.³⁹¹ Therefore, the creature’s spatiality must correspond to the image of the Creator’s spatiality. Living in genuine relationship with God and fellow creatures in this covenant is the human creature’s spatiality. The Genesis 1 story concludes in a particular expression of this covenantal relationship in which the creature is invited to participate, “...the event of God’s Sabbath freedom, Sabbath rest and Sabbath joy...”³⁹² This signals the ordered ways that Creator and creature are to be mutually present, adding specificity to their corresponding spatialities. And because grounded solely in “the divine will and accomplishment”, this beginning of creation and Creator-creature relations or spatiality will also be its goal. The focus of Genesis 1 (contrasting with the second creation account in Genesis 2-3 to follow) directs attention to the space created by God for this purpose or the cosmos created as “a theatre of the covenant”.³⁹³ For Barth, creation ordered in a particular way by its Creator “...makes possible, prepares and lays the foundation for the work and Word of God.”³⁹⁴ Creation makes way for the unfolding and culmination of the Creator-creature relation intended in the covenant and chosen in election. Therefore, the way in which this creaturely space is structured implies a correspondence with aspects of the intended order of the

Jesus Christ Crucified and Risen, Toronto Studies in Theology, vol. 54 (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1990) 137-150 (hereafter cited as Mueller, *Foundation of Karl Barth’s Doctrine of Reconciliation*); Richard H. Roberts, “Karl Barth’s Doctrine of Time: Its Nature and Implications” in *A Theology On Its Way? Essays on Karl Barth* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991) 1-58.

³⁹¹ Barth, *CD III/1*, 98. For discussions of Barth’s view of the *imago dei* see William R. Barr, “Life: Created in the Image of God,” *Mid-Stream* 21 (1982) 472-484, especially 476-477; Meine Veldman, “The Word of God and its Anthropological Implications in the Thought of Karl Barth and Herman Friedrich Kohlbrugge” (M.Th. Thesis: Conrad Grebel College, 2000) especially 132-142; J. Rodman Williams, Jr., “The Doctrine of the *Imago Dei* in Contemporary Theology: A Study in Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich” (Ph.D. dissertation: Columbia University, 1954) who notes Barth’s earlier treatments (even in *CD I/1*) are “so markedly at variance” with his presentation in *CD III/1*, causing him to offer two separate expositions (37); Colin Gunton, “Trinity, Ontology and Anthropology: Towards a Renewal of the Doctrine of the *Imago Dei*” in *Persons Divine and Human*, eds., C. Schwöble and C.E. Gunton, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999 reprint from 1991) 47-61. For a critique and alternate proposal see Nathan MacDonald, “The *Imago Dei* and Election: Reading Genesis 1:26-28 and Old Testament Scholarship with Karl Barth,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 10, no. 3 (July 2008) 303-327.

³⁹² Barth, *CD III/1*, 98.

³⁹³ Barth, *CD III/1*, 99. Fulljames provides a helpful synopsis of the distinctive emphases in Barth’s reading of the two creation stories: “...in Barth’s interpretation of the first story, there is a world distinct from God in order that God may show his love for his creation in Jesus Christ...; in Barth’s interpretation of the second story, it is the unity of God and humanity in Jesus Christ that leads to an understanding of the relationship between God and his creation.” Peter Fulljames, *God and Creation in Intercultural Perspective: Dialogue between the Theologies of Barth, Dickson, Pobee, Nyamiti and Pannenberg* (New York: Peter Lang, 1993) 20.

³⁹⁴ Barth, *CD III/1*, 66.

covenantal relation between its Creator and His human creatures. God's work reveals God's being. So the act of creating reveals what the being of God the Father is as Creator and Lord, here, regarding His spatiality.

First, concerning the divinely ordered created space, Barth juxtaposes that which God chooses to create and actually does create with that which He does not choose to create. The problem concerns the ordered creation of the heavens and the earth versus the chaos that is formless, void and menacing. More precisely, what God positively wills and creates is in accord with and serves the elected purpose of His gracious covenant. All that does not actively serve the Creator and His purpose, whether "ungodly or anti-godly", He thereby rejects and negates. Rejecting "...the reality of a creation that might be neutral or hostile to Him..." Barth states, God "pushed it back and outside the limit of the world willed and determined by Him." Yet, as the possibility that God did not choose, it nonetheless has some sense of reality but "...only as a frontier of that which is and will be according to the Creator's decision and action."³⁹⁵ This rejected possibility is relegated to the past and annihilated since not suitable for God's covenantal purposes. Therefore it has no future and is without any basis in God's plan.³⁹⁶ Barth also refers to this "frontier" as the "shadow" cast upon what God actually created or what is "behind God's back" as He turns towards the possibility, which in positively choosing becomes actuality.³⁹⁷ Barth insists this impossible sphere of neutrality and hostility towards God and His will has no reality in and of itself but only in relation to the good creation that God's Word calls into being. It is contingent upon what God has in fact willed, spoken and created. Following Scripture, this dialectic becomes Barth's prototype in a series of images corresponding with the first three days of creation. These images depict a space of divine blessing and order for God's creatures that is opposed by an ominous realm of "threatening curse" and "misery".³⁹⁸

However, one clarification is needful. These two realms are not conceived as something akin to two physically located spaces that are adjacent to one another, such as one abundantly filled space and its opposite, a dark void. Although the language might suggest images of an ancient container model of space, Barth's intention is different. Here the emphasis rests on the Creator's freedom to choose according to His own being and purpose and to creatively act upon His decision. The freedom of His love becomes manifest in the event of His Word which speaks the chosen possibility into actual existence. Within this

³⁹⁵ Barth, *CD* III/1, 102.

³⁹⁶ Barth, *CD* III/1, 104.

³⁹⁷ Barth, *CD* III/1, 108.

³⁹⁸ Barth, *CD* III/1, 102.

context Barth explains the “chaos” and “formless void” not as “confusion” or disorder but as a “gulf”,³⁹⁹ that which is “intrinsically impossible” since without divine ground or merit.⁴⁰⁰ Everything not based on the Creator’s will and realised by His spoken Word is in fact “nothing”, “waste”, a “vacuum”; it is merely “an empty assertion”.⁴⁰¹ Thus, Barth interprets the Genesis 1 account of a formless, void, dark, flooded earth as a picture of an impossible world, an embodiment of all that is opposed to God’s loving, covenantal will since it lacks the life-giving reality and presence of His Word and Spirit. Co-presence between Creator and creature in ordered covenantal relation and distinction, living as spatial beings, cannot occur here. So the Creator rejects this impossibility simply by speaking into existence a cosmos “...in harmony and at peace with Himself, and therefore, according to His plan, as a theatre and instrument of His acts, an object of His joy and for participation in this joy.”⁴⁰²

Speaking both figuratively and literally, Barth describes God’s creative act by Word and Spirit as separating and setting boundaries or frontiers from that which is not His will: light (representing mediated knowledge of God’s Word) separates and limits darkness (implying ignorance without that Word); both sky and land (providing necessary physical space for human existence) separate and limit menacing atmospheric and earthly waters that would render human existence impossible. To reject and relegate to the past all possibilities that challenge or are opposed to His lordship, will and presence means that any space, realm or sphere – even a so-called “abyss” or “void”, whatever else it might mean – can exist only because its Creator and Lord is none other than God the Father of Jesus Christ, the Word by whom all creation comes into being. Therefore, absolutely no created space exists in which this Word does not already reign supreme from the beginning, being present in relation to it as Creator and Lord. One characteristic of God the Father’s creative spatiality, then, is His loving desire and effective omnipotence to provide a space in which human creatures can positively and actively be engaged in covenant relation with Him. God creates a space in which human creatures may be spatial in response to His spatiality. This protects creation from positions of neutrality or opposition toward its Creator, leading toward its annihilation and non-being, while also creating the opportunity for rightly ordered relation.

Likewise, concerning the creature created to inhabit these spaces, Barth states that there is no “...place from which it might legitimately withdraw itself from the grace of God!” As the “work of the Word of God” the human creature must correspond to that Word. This

³⁹⁹ Barth, *CD* III/1, 102.

⁴⁰⁰ Barth, *CD* III/1, 104.

⁴⁰¹ Barth, *CD* III/1, 103.

⁴⁰² Barth, *CD* III/1, 102.

indicates that “originally and intimately” this creature is “disposed for the grace of God”. Specifically, its creation indicates “...the creature in its totality was allied to this living, divine Person, being wholly referred to it for its existence and essence, its survival and sustenance.”⁴⁰³ Creation *ex nihilo* means owing its existence to nothing except the gracious will and loving purpose of its Creator.⁴⁰⁴ Regardless of the creature’s response, obediently corresponding to the Word from which it comes or not, “God has allied Himself with it.” Barth continues, “That ‘God is with us’ is indeed God’s revelation in the history of the covenant which begins with Israel and is fulfilled in Jesus Christ.” Not just the “secret of creation” generally, this Word is the particular secret of the creature’s “creation, existence and nature” which cannot be negated in any way.⁴⁰⁵ The human creature is created as a spatial being to be with God who is spatial and for God to be with it in covenant. Another characteristic of God the Father’s spatiality, then, includes His steadfast gracious presence with this creation no matter what befalls it.

Before briefly considering the spatial ramifications of the individual days of creation in the first creation saga, I offer an overview of Barth’s understanding of the cosmos’ structure.⁴⁰⁶ The cosmos is

...the divinely ordered world in which heaven and earth – a picture of the relationship between God and man in the covenant of grace – confronted one another in mutual separation and interconnexion as an upper sphere and a lower: the one essentially invisible to man, the other essentially visible; the one transcending him in unknown heights, the other his own and entrusted to him.⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰³ Barth, *CD III/1*, 110.

⁴⁰⁴ This notion, central to Barth’s doctrine of creation, is precisely missed in Hendry’s critique of Barth’s view of “nothingness” and creation out of nothing. George S. Hendry, “Nothing,” *Theology Today* 39 (1982) 274-289. He can properly state, “...the work of Christ is not only the central and decisive work, it is the model, or paradigm of all God’s work. In Christ is revealed not only what God has done, but how God does it – and, indeed, how all God’s works are done.” (283) Yet Hendry fails to be guided by this axiom when he takes inadequate account of Barth’s doctrine of election as the context and ground of his doctrine of creation. Barth is not concerned with a distinction between “absolute and relative nothingness” (284), but that and how God’s eternal election of the covenant of grace unfolds in its fulfillment. In fact, Barth would argue against the abstract philosophical concept of ‘absoluteness’ asserted here since its meaning is already provided without reference to God’s work in Jesus Christ. For a critique of Barth’s understanding of “nothingness” as it relates to creation and evil, see Cootsona, *God and the World*, Chapter 5, especially 153-154.

⁴⁰⁵ Barth, *CD III/1*, 111.

⁴⁰⁶ For a helpful explanation of the distinctions between ‘saga’, ‘myth’ and various notions of ‘history’ for Barth, see Garrett Green, “Myth, History, and Imagination: The Creation Narratives in Bible and Theology,” *Horizons in Biblical Theology: An International Dialogue* 12, no. 2 (December 1990).

⁴⁰⁷ Barth, *CD III/1*, 99. For a misguided critique regarding Barth’s so-called “...creaturely order via the spatial root metaphors of hierarchy (above-below) and concentricity (inner-outer)...” see Octavius Annan Gaba, “Being and Order: An Analysis of the Relation of Triune Being and Creaturely Order in the Theology of Karl Barth” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Emory University, 1984) Dissertation Abstract, and especially Chapters One and Two. Similarly, Braaten rejects Barth evaluation of the realm of creation, claiming that Barth’s insistence to base his “...theology on the one Word of God from which all structures, orders, commandments, and ethical norms for Christian living in the world must be derived” results in a “...soteriological captivity of creation, because it succeeds in emptying the world of its own meaning as a realm of divine governance and human involvement

Using the whole Bible to explain this two-fold structure of the cosmos, Barth notes the “heavens” are generally the higher, invisible realm associated with transcendent divine activity. The “highest heaven” becomes the “creaturely dwelling place of God”, the “throne of His mercy”.⁴⁰⁸ This is God’s own space within creation. In contrast, the lower, visible realm of the “earth” is the human creature’s particular space for existence. God places the human creature in its own space “under heaven and on earth”.⁴⁰⁹ It exists only under the authority and lordship of its Creator as His beloved “possession”, for His covenantal purposes, or more specifically, for the event and revelation of His covenant.⁴¹⁰ Actually, Barth states this order is the “essential condition of man’s existence before and with God”.⁴¹¹ Thus, “...the whole cosmos was precisely created that in it there might be this event and revelation – that man might be what he is by the grace of God and for the grace of God.”⁴¹² Thus, the Creator’s spatiality entails His gracious lordship over His beloved creation.

As Lord of creation, God is present in a relationship that is distinct and ordered. The days of creation recounted in the first chapter of Genesis, indicate some distinctions and order. On the first day God creates light. In doing so He not only orders and separates it from the darkness, pushing back the chaos He did not choose, but He also creates time. For Barth, this first creative work reveals God’s election of the covenant of grace since light is the “sign” of the Creator’s faithful presence with His creatures no matter what darkness engulfs them. His light “shines in” and “overcomes darkness”, signifying the “...promise that nature is not left to itself, but that it moves toward an encounter with the grace of God.” Light is “the symbol of the revelation of grace” in which God discloses knowledge of Himself as Creator and Lord to His creatures. Such enlightened knowledge enables them to exercise their spatiality in response to God’s spatiality and so to be in relationship with Him.⁴¹³ Furthermore, time began with the creation of the first day. Since this cosmos is intended as the unique space in which the historical unfolding of the covenant between Creator and human creatures occurs, the temporal realm cannot exclude the presence of that Creator. God’s eternity encompasses and

prior to and apart from the biblical story of salvation culminating in Christ.” (33) Carl E. Braaten, “God in Public Life: Rehabilitating the ‘Orders of Creation’,” *First Things*, no. 8 (December 1990) 32-38. Yet Barth seeks to infuse the realm of creation with its proper worth in the light of God’s act in Jesus Christ, the only genuine and eternal standard, neither exalting or debasing it improperly.

⁴⁰⁸ Barth, *CD* III/1, 134.

⁴⁰⁹ Barth, *CD* III/2, 3.

⁴¹⁰ Barth, *CD* III/1, 67.

⁴¹¹ Barth, *CD* III/1, 135.

⁴¹² Barth, *CD* III/1, 67.

⁴¹³ Barth, *CD* III/1, 119.

grounds the creature's temporality. Otherwise, the covenantal relationship between God and humans, for which the cosmos is created, would itself be impossible.

In days two and three God creates heaven and earth. Again, the Creator pushes back anything that makes life impossible for the human creature, ordering all according to His purposes for relationship. He separates "waters above" and "below" in the case of heaven to create a "firmament" or atmosphere, and dry land from the seas in the case of earth.⁴¹⁴ He thus secures the "living-space"⁴¹⁵ necessary for the creature, by assigning to the land "its own place". This purposefully limited, good land is separated from threatening waters, which are also assigned their own "special place" away from harming human creatures.⁴¹⁶ Barth states, "Because the divine covenant of grace is the meaning of this world, and God's free mercy, His superior help and deliverance and emancipation are what He purposes for His creation, the creaturely world has to have this periphery" or limit from the chaos which threatens it.⁴¹⁷ Additionally, the second aspect of the work of day two is the creation of the vegetable kingdom. The space created or "house built by God" for His creatures is not merely provided, He also "furnishes" it by spreading a "table" in it. That is, the Creator fills the land with living creatures and plants that can reproduce and bear fruit.⁴¹⁸ The vegetable kingdom serves God's glory and also the enjoyment and sustenance of creatures yet to come, thus making the dry land a "habitable place" for them.⁴¹⁹ Barth discovers a "typical character" in this divine "creative work" making a living-space for human creatures. First, its "...comprehensive opposition of form to formlessness, of the possibility of life to the necessity of death..." aims at a "...peaceful and meaningful existence of the creature before and with its Creator." Second, it reveals that the Creator has created it not "in His wrath, but for freedom."⁴²⁰ Third, there is no threat to the creature that is not limited by and subject to the Creator who intends only life and benefit for the creature, so the creature may live with and before God in full confidence and gratitude. "The ground on which God in His revelation can meet the creature, and on which it can believe His revelation, is laid and cannot be removed."⁴²¹ This created order accords with God's covenant of grace, for the bountiful table of the Lord is spread and He graciously invites His creatures to enjoy it in His presence and give thanks. So even the abundant furnishings of the creatures' particular space on land fulfills God's elected purposes

⁴¹⁴ Barth, *CD* III/1, 133.

⁴¹⁵ Barth, *CD* III/1, 141.

⁴¹⁶ Barth, *CD* III/1, 142.

⁴¹⁷ Barth, *CD* III/1, 142-143.

⁴¹⁸ Barth, *CD* III/1, 143.

⁴¹⁹ Barth, *CD* III/1, 142.

⁴²⁰ Barth, *CD* III/1, 134.

⁴²¹ Barth, *CD* III/1, 135.

to sustain joyful relationship with rich blessings with them, thus activating their spatiality. If God's will, revealed in His free election of the covenant of grace, is both the eternal ground and the goal of creation, then there is further correspondence between the beginning and goal of creation. Creation prepares for the actualisation and fulfillment of the covenant whereby the creature, particularly the human creature, can live with and before God. Therefore the creature can and does exist spatially, here in time, with its Creator, according to the freedom of His good-pleasure.

On the fourth day of creation God creates the sun, moon and stars and so commences to "furnish the cosmos" or the heavens. This is a matter of the "wealth" of the cosmos for Barth, not its duration. In correspondence to the first day, the Creator creates heavenly objects to mediate the light already created so it might be "recognizable or visible" to the creature. Interestingly, Barth suggests the sun, moon and stars are not themselves the light, they only "participate in" it.⁴²² Similarly, creatures can only "live with open eyes in mediated, not unmediated light" so they too may "participate in and become light." Here Barth deepens the biblical metaphor of light as knowledge of God by connecting it with a conscious, active participation of the creature as a partner with its Creator. The creative works of God prior to this are "...aimed generally at man, or rather at God's relationship with man."⁴²³ But with this work the Creator begins "a new order of creation"⁴²⁴ in which "...everything aims particularly at man's interested partnership in his relationship with God." Not only does the Creator seek fellowship with His creatures (exercising His divine spatiality) but He also wills that His creatures seek fellowship with Him (exercising their creaturely spatiality). So the Creator establishes a "sphere of human life", a "dwelling-place" for the human creature in which he can gratefully acknowledge His Creator, "himself and his fellow-creatures", and thus be "a real participant in His covenant".⁴²⁵ One aspect of this participation as God's covenant-partner is that these heavenly bodies "serve the purpose of orientation." Specifically, they provide "guidance in time and space", again indicating the limits within which creaturely existence is intended to be lived.⁴²⁶ Creaturely time and physical space are thus given to the creature, enabling it to live spatially, in covenant relationship with its Creator and fellow creatures. Furthermore, being created in God's image includes living as this conscious, active, willing partner in His covenant of grace. The human creature's space is not simply "orientated by

⁴²² Barth, *CD* III/1, 156.

⁴²³ Barth, *CD* III/1, 157.

⁴²⁴ Barth, *CD* III/1, 156.

⁴²⁵ Barth, *CD* III/1, 157.

⁴²⁶ Barth, *CD* III/1, 158.

God but orientating for man”.⁴²⁷ It is the presupposition for its spatiality, for its being co-present in relation and distinction with its Creator and fellow creatures. So for the creature, the heavenly bodies represent the space and time given by the Creator to live and participate in the unfolding of God’s covenant of grace. This home space gives it opportunity to respond as the Creator’s spatial creature and covenant partner, helping fulfill its gracious election.

On day five God creates the fish and birds. This corresponds to the second day of creation by richly filling the sea and sky created earlier. According to Barth, this is an “entirely new creation” with its “peculiar nature” and its “spheres of operation”. That is, these are the “first autonomous creatures” which have their distinct realms of existence in either water or air.⁴²⁸ In correspondence to their particular natures, these creatures are assigned their own particular spaces in which to exist. The promise that God will sustain them both in the midst of chaos (represented by the sea) and in proximity to chaos (represented by the water-laden sky) indicates that “God will also keep [man] in his sphere.” So the human creature has nothing to fear regarding the “immensity of creaturely space” because its’ subdivided spaces help limit threats towards the creature. It can revel in the vitality and wealth of each sphere of the Creator’s good creation.⁴²⁹ Moreover, God’s blessing to creatures is their “special capacity for movement” and particularly their empowerment for “the procreation of posterity”. Only by “divine permission and the divine promise”⁴³⁰ are they graciously given the ability to continue “each after its kind”, so in successive generations.⁴³¹ Thus, within this “history of creation”, history itself begins “as the continuation of creation”. Entering “the sphere of God’s dealings with His creation”, this beginning “...announces the theme of this history, i.e., the establishment of a covenant between God and His creation which moves independently like Himself and renews itself by procreation after its kind.”⁴³² This brings Barth to the penultimate goal of creation.

On the sixth day of creation God creates land creatures and their “final and proper form”, human creatures. Again, this day corresponds to day three, for the land, the “protected dwelling-place of man” is now filled with living animals.⁴³³ Animals are made prior to humans, thus providing an important “environment and company” for human creatures, so when the latter appears they may begin to exercise their spatiality, co-existing in relation and

⁴²⁷ Barth, *CD* III/1, 158.

⁴²⁸ Barth, *CD* III/1, 168.

⁴²⁹ Barth, *CD* III/1, 169.

⁴³⁰ Barth, *CD* III/1, 170.

⁴³¹ Barth, *CD* III/1, 169.

⁴³² Barth, *CD* III/1, 170.

⁴³³ Barth, *CD* III/1, 177.

distinction, “not in isolation”. Barth unashamedly claims that “creation finds its conclusion in man” and that “the Creator has given him precedence” over all “within the one dwelling place.”⁴³⁴ These claims are not arbitrary or false anthropocentrisms, nor are they a degradation of the extra-human creation on Barth’s part as some critics have supposed.⁴³⁵ Rather, the anthropology within his doctrine of creation is theological, Christ-centered. Barth believes that the covenant history of ‘God with us’ reveals the human creature as the center and conclusion of creation. For, nowhere does God more fully reveal Himself as God and never is God more personally ‘with us’ than when He becomes a human creature in Jesus Christ – a human and not some other creature. To demonstrate this, Barth notes both the similarities and differences between animal creatures and human creatures.

Similarities consist in that they are both creatures of God which “...proceed from the earth, i.e., their existence and nature belong to the earth, to its destiny and preparation as the dwelling-place of man.”⁴³⁶ They are made alive by the Holy Spirit, are created male and female “in differentiation and relationship,” so also “in natural fellowship with God.”⁴³⁷ And they are both, to some degree, participants in the covenant of grace (the human as full

⁴³⁴ Barth, *CD* III/1, 177.

⁴³⁵ For example, Barth qualifies the description of the human “as the crown of creation” with the prior statement that “man is not an end in itself.” Barth, *CD* III/1, 181.

For a critique which misstates this aspect of Barth’s doctrine of creation, see H. Paul Santmire, “Creation and Nature: A Study of the Doctrine of Nature with Special Attention to Barth’s Doctrine of Creation” (Th.D. Dissertation: Harvard University, 1966) especially p 49. There he states, “Barth makes it clear that the whole extra-human sphere of creation is not included in the divine act of election” which, combined with his doctrine of the Word of God, Santmire claims is Barth’s context for developing his doctrine of creation. Santmire misses Barth’s key point that God’s election gives to creation its very purpose and fulfillment, not merely its being and oversight. It is not just an instrument used by God without inherent meaning. But it’s meaning, universally and in particular, is found only in relation to God’s action, specifically in the event of Jesus Christ through whom the world was made. Creation is not an end in itself. For Barth, it is always about God’s gracious good pleasure and what that means in Jesus Christ for us, His creatures and covenant partners, and secondarily for creation as a whole. Rather than diminishing creation’s glory, which it does not have in itself, it only participates in the reflected divine glory by fulfilling this benevolent divine will. This is especially true of the human creature, which can be truly human only in this way.

Hielema also confuses Barth’s notion of creation’s role; he claims a “‘disconnected wire’” exists between Barth’s “...joyfully free affirmation of the creation characterized by ordered creatureliness within a context that denigrates this same creation” (89). Hielema’s erroneous reading stems from his statement that “...we need not accept Barth’s particular account of anthropocentricity...” (91) and suggesting that Barth’s “ordered creatureliness” is “an emerging category” for him (89). Syd Hielema, “Searching For ‘Disconnected Wires’: Karl Barth’s Doctrine of Creation Revisited,” *Calvin Theological Journal* 30, no. 1 (April 1995) 75-93. It is ‘emerging’ only in the sense that, to understand Barth’s anthropocentricity is to understand the True Human, Jesus Christ, which is most fully expounded in Volume IV of *Church Dogmatics*. To reject Barth’s ‘anthropocentricity’ is to reject Jesus Christ as the center of election and revelation about Creator, creation, human creatures, and how all are related.

⁴³⁶ Barth, *CD* III/1, 178.

⁴³⁷ Barth, *CD* III/1, 185.

For critiques of Barth’s understanding of the male-female relationship in creation see, for example, Agneta Sutton, “The Complementarity and Symbolism of the Two Sexes: Karl Barth, Hans Urs von Balthasar and John Paul II,” 418-433, *The Dominican Council*, (Boston, MA: Blackwell, 2006); Rachel Muers, “A Question of Two Answers: Difference and Determination in Barth and Von Balthasar,” *Heythrop Journal* 40 (1999) 265-279.

participant, the animal as sacrificial precursor).⁴³⁸ From this point forward, the term “creature” refers to the unique human creature that alone is created in the “image” and “likeness” of God.

In what does that image and likeness consist? Barth first explores this matter from the side of the Creator. He begins with the “divine soliloquy” in the form, “Let us”, which expresses His “intra-divine unanimity of intention and decision” to create human beings.⁴³⁹ Barth’s doctrine of election claims God’s election of the covenant of grace as the beginning of all the ways and works of God. That divine will and decision is precisely what actualises the creature as the covenant’s presupposition so the covenant itself can be actualised in the historical and spatial relationship between human(s) (one in particular) and God the Father as Creator. Both the creature and the relationship between Creator and creature have their basis in God’s own spatial being.

To demonstrate this Barth begins by noting two things about God: in His “non-solitariness” He exists in “confrontation in the divine being and sphere”, and He does so in “free agreement with Himself”. More pointedly, “The divine sphere, God Himself, does not exist in a vacuum, outside space and time.”⁴⁴⁰ Nor does being Creator diminish or alter His deity.⁴⁴¹ Rather, the basis of the creation of this spatial creature is a “...history which took place in the divine sphere and essence; a divine movement to and from a divine Other; a divine conversation and summons and a divine correspondence to it.” Hence, on the Creator’s side, “a genuine counterpart in God Himself” is found, resulting in “unanimous decision”. This “secret prototype” grounds the “copy” and image reflected in the spatial “co-existence of God and man” in God’s own space.⁴⁴²

From the creature’s side, Barth defines the creature created “in our image” as “...a being which has its ground and possibility in the fact that in ‘us,’ i.e., in God’s own sphere and being, there exists a divine and therefore self-grounded prototype to which this being can correspond.” Made “in our likeness” means having a created nature patterned after God’s own nature, after His spatiality.⁴⁴³ In this spatial creature, the true “counterpart in God Himself finds creaturely form”, actualized as “I” and “Thou” in a mutual, ordered relationship

⁴³⁸ Barth, *CD* III/1, 178.

⁴³⁹ From Genesis 1:26, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” Barth, *CD* III/1, 183.

⁴⁴⁰ Barth, *CD* III/1, 183.

⁴⁴¹ God “...can become the Creator and therefore have a counterpart outside Himself without any contradiction with His own inner essence, but in confirmation and glorification of His inner essence. Creation is something entirely new and free and non-obligatory in relation to His life in Himself, but far from being a denial, betrayal or surrender it is a revelation of His deity.” Barth, *CD* III/1, 183.

⁴⁴² Barth, *CD* III/1, 183.

⁴⁴³ Barth, *CD* III/1, 183.

of “confrontation and reciprocity”. The creature’s “God-likeness” is thus manifest in its being created “male and female”, a duality nevertheless in unity.⁴⁴⁴ The true human is not merely one or the other but, because patterned after God’s Self-repeating and spatial being, is human as male and female in the confrontation and encounter of another. Before God and among its fellows the human creature is the true image of God in its spatiality when living co-presently with another in ordered differentiation and fellowship.⁴⁴⁵

Existence in proper distinction and communion is the “great paradigm” of all ordered relationships, so of spatiality itself, in God’s own space and being and in created space between Creator and creature, and between creatures. Specifically, it involves being a “...type of the history of the covenant and salvation which will take place between him and his Creator.”⁴⁴⁶ Thus, “...for all the disparity in and...differentiation between man as a creature and his Creator...”, nonetheless God creates it as “...a partner who is capable of entering into the covenant-relationship with Himself ...”⁴⁴⁷ Corresponding to the Creator’s spatiality, the crucial characteristic of the creature’s spatiality is being present with God and others in the particular relation and distinction given in the realisation of His covenant and salvation.

To summarize thus far, Barth states,

In God’s own being and sphere there is a counterpart: a genuine but harmonious self-encounter and self-discovery; a free co-existence and co-operation; an open confrontation and reciprocity. Man is the repetition of this divine form of life; its copy and reflection. He is this first in the fact that he is the counterpart of God, the encounter and discovery of God Himself being copied and imitated in God’s relation to man. But he is it also in the fact that he is himself the counterpart of his fellows and has in them a counterpart, the co-existence and co-operation in God Himself being repeated in the relation of man to man.⁴⁴⁸

The spatiality of God’s triune being also forms the basis of a corresponding spatiality of His creature, ordering and enabling the actualisation of the divinely willed covenant relationships between Creator and creature, and fellow creatures. On God’s side, spatiality is the divine perfection that specifies how God is present to Himself in the unity of His being in the distinction of His modes of being, Father present to Son and Son present to Father in the presence of the Holy Spirit; in which the Son is the God-human, the second mode of the triune Being according to the election of grace. In the context of creation, divine spatiality is how the Creator is present to His creature in the unfolding of the covenant of grace in

⁴⁴⁴ Barth, *CD* III/1, 184, 188.

⁴⁴⁵ Barth, *CD* III/1, 186.

⁴⁴⁶ Barth, *CD* III/1, 186-7.

⁴⁴⁷ Barth, *CD* III/1, 185.

⁴⁴⁸ Barth, *CD* III/1, 185.

creaturely space and time. On the creature's side, spatiality is the creaturely reflection of that divine perfection, the creaturely characteristic that specifies how the creature is present to its Creator God and to its fellow creatures in ordered covenant relation and distinction.

A few noteworthy things remain regarding the creature's God-likeness before turning to the seventh day of creation. That God creates by His Word, by speaking, implies the creature has come into being *by* God as it is posited and effected by the free divine declaration. The creature is not *from* God in the sense of an emanation of divine essence; the creature is neither created divine nor becomes divine. Rather, its God-likeness is based in the overflowing of the Creator's loving will and purpose to live in mutual presence with the creature in covenant relation, precisely in the distinction and proper order between Creator and creature. To this way as a creature means living in the full creative spatiality and presence of the Father who creates this possibility as its own proper spatiality. Its spatiality is never identical to the Creator's; how the creature is present to another is different than the ways the Creator is present. Furthermore, the creature is "God-like" regarding its election for family relationships that correspond to the Father eternally begetting His Son and the Son being eternally begotten by His Father in the power and presence of the eternal Spirit.⁴⁴⁹ Humans reflect their heavenly Father when begetting children in procreation. The 'family space' of the parent-child relationship is an important analogy of the spatialities of Creator as Father and creature as His child.

Exploring the final and seventh day of the first creation saga in Genesis 1, Barth sees simultaneously a conclusion and a new beginning. The Creator's creative activity ends with the creation of human creatures, which gives rise to a new divine work. The whole of the Creator's work in the previous six days of creation have aimed and moved toward this new thing, even as it moves toward its consummation in God's own incarnation. With the necessary presuppositions now in place, creation is concluded by the "work of His rest". In Sabbath rest, the Creator regards the results of His creative activity, all that He has created, and judges it "very good". Creation's goodness rests solely upon its perfect suitability for His covenantal purposes chosen in His election of grace. Lacking nothing to achieve His elected will for loving and free relationship with His spatial creature, "the external basis of creation" is laid. So He rests from His creative activity.⁴⁵⁰

Content with the completed creation that presupposes the fulfillment of His covenantal will, God can now turn toward its actualisation, exercising His spatiality to begin

⁴⁴⁹ Barth, *CD III/1*, 170.

⁴⁵⁰ Barth, *CD III/1*, 182.

fellowship with His creation, and enabling the creature to be spatial in response. “He was satisfied to enter into *this* relationship with *this* reality distinct from Himself, to be the Creator of *this* creature, to find in *these* works of His Word the external sphere of His power and grace and the place of His revealed glory.”⁴⁵¹ For Barth, the Creator’s rest reveals His freedom and love. By ceasing from creating, He freely determines and limits His own creative activity, and indicates He has found a “definite, limited object” to love. “Love is a relationship which is itself limited and defined by this object”, which is how God loves. So Barth claims, God is no “...more truly, or more perfectly Himself in the whole course of His work of creation, than in this rest on the seventh day”.⁴⁵² This divine rest actualises the spatiality – the living, loving and free relationship, properly distinct, ordered and limited – of Creator and creature within created space, in correspondence with God’s being and work in His own space. “What God was in Himself and had done from eternity, He had now in some sense repeated in time, in the form of an historical event, in His relationship to His creation, the world and man.”⁴⁵³ The divine Sabbath rest in mutual presence is the beginning of the fulfillment in time of the covenant relationship graciously elected in Jesus Christ in eternity.

Precisely what is divine Sabbath rest according to Barth? Its “general meaning” reveals God’s will for covenant fellowship with His creature(s), so His perfection of relation-creating omnipresence. Refusing to abandon it to itself, the Creator graciously intends to be the creature’s Father and Lord, ‘God with’ it. “When He had made it He constituted Himself its co-existing God in the historical event of the seventh day.” So Sabbath rest reveals “God’s immanence in the world.”⁴⁵⁴ God is present in, with and to His creation in Sabbath rest, for it is in this particular work that God “...made Himself temporal and human, i.e., He linked Himself in a temporal act with the being and purpose and course of the world, with the history of man.”⁴⁵⁵ He rested in the presence and fellowship of that creature, enacting His spatiality and the creature’s. Sabbath rest thus reveals the creature’s God-likeness, being constituted to exist spatially, in free, loving communion and distinction.

Barth’s “particular meaning” of Sabbath rest is the revelation of the Creator’s “true deity”. Having “united Himself with the world” He created, God has “found the object of His love” in the creature, His “direct and proper counterpart” with whom He is well pleased. In this Sabbath event “...He repeats no less than His own perfect being, and declared Himself as

⁴⁵¹ Barth, *CD* III/1, 214-215.

⁴⁵² Barth, *CD* III/1, 215.

⁴⁵³ Barth, *CD* III/1, 216.

⁴⁵⁴ Barth, *CD* III/1, 216.

⁴⁵⁵ Barth, *CD* III/1, 217.

such to belong to what He has created so different from Himself.” This is how “...He is with His creation” as Creator.⁴⁵⁶ In the fullness of His deity and His perfection of omnipresence, the Creator is present in the divine rest, joy and freedom of His love, wholly satisfied with His covenant partner.

The “indirect meaning” for the creature, in confirmation of the Creator’s loving intention, is that the Creator Himself is its own goal. The “...creature finds its completion in that God in His own person has given Himself to belong to it.”⁴⁵⁷ The Creator secures and provides all that is needed for this spatiality, this fellowship; the creature simply seeks His will, corresponding to His spatiality, as the purposed goal of its own existence.

And finally, the “direct meaning” for the creature, again revealing the Creator’s desire, is that it may participate with its Creator in Sabbath rest. The creature’s participation in this event of the Creator’s work, its positive “response” to this invitation is that which actualizes its constitution and relationships, so its spatiality. Stated alternatively, for the creature to be genuinely human, “true man” means first of all to “...rest in the fellowship with the rest of God Himself, of participation in the freedom, rest and joy of His true deity.”⁴⁵⁸ So too, the creature’s spatiality is characterized by its participation in the divine rest, in loving, free fellowship with its Creator.

If creation is indeed the external basis of the covenant, and the history of that covenant commences with this Creator-creature fellowship of joyful rest and delight in the exceedingly good creation now completed, then it also demonstrates the spatiality of both Creator and creature. The spatiality essential to God’s eternal being is actualized in time in this historical relationship between Creator and creature, beginning on this seventh day of creation. Furthermore, throughout Scripture ‘Sabbath’ is established as a weekly repetition of this first (and past) Sabbath rest and also a sign of the promised (and future) Sabbath fellowship between Creator and creature in the new heaven and earth. A divine perfection, spatiality describes how God is God in the closest proximity to that which is distinct, here the human creature. The beginning of the history detailing the relationship of these covenant-partners and how their spatiality is affected are attested in the second story of creation.

⁴⁵⁶ Barth, *CD* III/1, 217.

⁴⁵⁷ Barth, *CD* III/1, 217.

⁴⁵⁸ Barth, *CD* III/1, 218.

1.2. Covenant: Determines the Space of Creation

Creation, for Barth, is the “way and means to the covenant” which realizes the Creator’s “purpose and plan and order.”⁴⁵⁹ Creation itself, especially the human creature at the center of creation, reveals, affirms and gives witness to “God’s free love.” This love is actualised first in God’s own triune being, having freely “...resolved in Himself from all eternity on His fellowship with man in the person of His own Son.” Thus, Barth concludes, “...from the free love of God...the creature receives its meaning and necessity, and it is given to it to be the bearer of God’s intention, plan and order.” Responding to His gracious love, the creature is created to be a “grateful being and for a grateful existence” in covenant relation with its Creator.⁴⁶⁰ Gratitude to God is one characteristic of the creature’s spatiality, living gratefully in His presence. Furthermore, since God created the creature as a suitable covenant partner in fulfillment of His will for relationship with it, nothing is originally or intrinsically alien, neutral or in opposition to this covenant between them.

Its nature is simply its equipment for grace. Its creatureliness is pure promise, expectation and prophecy of that which in His grace, in the execution of the will of His eternal love, and finally and supremely in the consummation of the giving of His Son, God plans for man and will not delay to accomplish for his benefit.⁴⁶¹

The type of existence intended for and given to the creature by its Creator aims toward full, grateful participation in the covenant of grace. The creature’s spatiality is determined by God’s gracious will toward it, and in its God-given nature that prepares it to be a recipient of and participant in that grace. “Creation is one long preparation, and therefore the being and existence of the creature one long readiness, for what God will intend and do with it in the history of the covenant.”⁴⁶² Barth summarizes the divine creative activity:

What God created when He created the world and man was not just any place, but that which was foreordained for the establishment and the history of the covenant, nor just any subject, but that which was to become God’s partner in this history, i.e., the nature which God in His grace willed to address and accept and the man predestined for His service.⁴⁶³

⁴⁵⁹ Barth, *CD* III/1, 229.

To argue as some have, noted above, that Barth maintains a reductionist, ‘instrumental’ view of creation by his anthropocentrism or refusal to engage in scientific dialogue is to miss his focus. It is not at all the case that creation, especially in the light of human creatures, is unimportant to the Creator; rather creation, as a whole and in each part, is truly “good” only as it participates in fulfilling the divine will. Likewise, human creatures in general are not the center of Barth’s anthropological thrust; that is reserved for One human creature in particular.

⁴⁶⁰ Barth, *CD* III/1, 230.

⁴⁶¹ Barth, *CD* III/1, 231.

⁴⁶² Barth, *CD* III/1, 231.

⁴⁶³ Barth, *CD* III/1, 231.

Reflecting on creation's role in the covenant more specifically, Barth seeks how, in prefiguring the covenant, creation already anticipates it by being a "unique sign of the covenant and a true sacrament". This considers the matter from the perspective of "Jesus Christ as the beginning...of creation", not only its goal, seen in the previous section.⁴⁶⁴ Barth's particular focus now is the creation of the first human creatures, the divine event that begins the history of the "willed and ordered" Creator-creature relationship, and so their spatial actuality. This is the presupposition for all subsequent events in that history, even the catastrophic human event of the Fall immediately following the second creation saga. The "background" in Genesis 2 for this history describes the particular created "sphere" or space within which this and all ensuing events will occur.⁴⁶⁵ Barth claims God's intention is already present in this beginning as a "sign and witness" precisely because it portrays the Creator's desired relationship with His human creatures, enacted according to His spatiality. The narrow purview of this "sacramental" creation saga centers on the creation by God of the human as man and woman and their placement in the Garden of Eden in the midst of two special trees.⁴⁶⁶ Each of these elements reveals the divinely willed order of their relationship and specific characteristics about their spatialities. Barth's discussion of Genesis 2 indicates how God the Creator was originally present to these creatures and simultaneously suggests how He wills to be eternally present to them in the future. This, literally, begins to flesh out and actualize what was decreed in God's election of grace, along with the spatiality that is covenant relating. Although the form of the Creator's presence with His creatures necessarily changes, He remains faithfully present as God throughout their whole history. Specifically how the Creator is present to His creatures in this second creation saga, and how it is a sign revealing the ordered relationship of the covenant between its partners are considered next.

Barth notes God's "new name...Yahweh Elohim", revealed to Israel whom He "called and dealt with...as its Lord."⁴⁶⁷ Already the covenantal relationship is prefigured in the Creator's name. Contrasted with the broad cosmological perspective of the first creation story, the earth (significantly mentioned here before the heavens) becomes the focus as the

⁴⁶⁴ Barth, *CD III/1*, 232.

Sherman states, "Although the creation, redemption, and consummation of the world may be distinguished in time, they are one in God's eternal decree and one in God's eternal act. As a result, the biblical witness to the chronologically first of those works not only may but actually must be understood in its connection with the chronologically later acts." Robert Sherman, *The Shift to Modernity: Christ and the Doctrine of Creation in the Theologies of Schleiermacher and Barth* (New York: T&T Clark, 2005) 77. This reminder indicates why the election of grace in Jesus Christ places Him at the beginning and goal of creation for Barth and includes all three temporal acts.

⁴⁶⁵ Barth, *CD III/1*, 234.

⁴⁶⁶ Barth, *CD III/1*, 233.

⁴⁶⁷ Barth, *CD III/1*, 234.

“sphere of man”, of which they are made and designated stewards.⁴⁶⁸ Constituted under the Creator’s lordship, the creature’s assigned vocational role as “farmer or gardener” indicates its purpose for service to Creator and creation. The divinely willed order for creatures is existence “under the law of humility and in the fear of God”. Moreover, in a “direct and personal” act Yahweh Elohim brings this human creature to life by breathing into its nostrils, thereby distinguishing humanity from the rest of creation. Grounded in the “wholly free and special election and compassion of God”,⁴⁶⁹ the creature “...is not just earth moulded into a body, and not just a soul, but a soul quickened and established and sustained by God in a direct and personal and special encounter of His breath with this frame of dust...”⁴⁷⁰ From its beginning, God has “covenanted” with this particular creature by nothing inherent in it but by “God’s free immediacy in His attitude to him”, in its gracious election in His Son to be co-present in relation and distinction.

Having chosen this creature for covenantal relationship, “God has constituted Himself” for it and also constitutes and equips this creature in its readiness for God, enabling its appropriate response and presence with Him. The creature can choose to live in accord with its election, created spatial nature and calling by God. “[C]ommissioned to serve and work”, the creature “fulfils the meaning of [its] own existence” in giving itself to the task appointed by its Creator. Thus, in its election and calling, the creature is a sign of the “future which He has destined for all creation”.⁴⁷¹ Ultimately, the “meaningful fulfillment of [creation’s] God-given hope” is the only creature to perfectly realize its election, nature and calling under the lordship of its Creator; the One to whom the first humans point as its sign; the One in “direct, personal and special immediacy of God”, Jesus Christ.⁴⁷²

Next, Barth describes the Garden of Eden, specially designed by the Creator as the creature’s “dwelling-place” where it may fulfill its vocation. Contrasting with the totality of creation encompassed in the first creation saga, “a definite, limited place on earth” becomes

⁴⁶⁸ For accounts of stewardship and Barth’s ethics of creation in *Church Dogmatics*, vol. III, part 4, eds. G.W. Bromiley, T.F. Torrance, trans. A.T. Mackay, T.H.L. Parker, H. Knight, H.A. Kennedy, J. Marks, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1961), see W.A. Whitehouse, “The Command of God the Creator: An Account of Karl Barth’s Volume on Ethics,” *Creation, Science, And Theology: Essays in Response to Karl Barth*, ed. Ann Loades (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982) 53-66; and Scott Paeth, “‘What Ought We to Do?’ Normativity in Barth’s Ethics of Creation,” *Koinonia* 11, no. 2 (1999) 216-236.

⁴⁶⁹ Barth, *CD* III/1, 236.

⁴⁷⁰ Barth, *CD* III/1, 237.

Cortez offers a lucid summary of Barth’s distinctive human ontology as “embodied soul” or “ensouled body” enlivened by the Holy Spirit. Marc Cortez, “Body, Soul and (Holy) Spirit: Karl Barth’s Theological Framework for Understanding Human Ontology,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 10, no. 3 (July 2008) 328-345.

⁴⁷¹ Barth, *CD* III/1, 238.

⁴⁷² Barth, *CD* III/1, 239.

the focus here. Through this concrete particular the whole is to be viewed and understood. “What kind of place is it?” Barth asks. Although “Eden means ‘delight’”, it is not a “Paradise” according to popular understanding. No intrinsic “perfections” are mentioned. Rather, “What makes this Garden delightful is primarily and exclusively the fact that it is specially planted by God and therefore specially belongs to Him.”⁴⁷³ By this “new creative act” God makes a marvelous “home” prepared for the newly created human whom He “takes” and “puts” there. The creature is “brought home” to delight in “God’s garden” as an “appropriate” place for it to “...fulfil [its] determination for the whole earth and therefore really to live.” More pointedly Barth states, “God’s breath has made him a living being in order that he might live here under the special conditions of this special place on earth.”⁴⁷⁴ This special place and these special conditions are considered, each in turn.

Barth first asks, “where is this place?” In summarizing his answer I seek to define spatial terminology more precisely in this context of Creator, creation and their relationship. On one hand, it is a real place on earth since the biblical witness “localizes the Garden terrestrially” by naming surrounding regions and rivers. The abstract “idea of a perfect country or Utopia” is discounted. On the other hand, its specific geographical location is vague. So, although “...Paradise was planted and existed somewhere and not just everywhere or nowhere...no actual investigation of this ‘somewhere’” can occur.⁴⁷⁵ Barth alludes to a real, geographical understanding of “place” as physical locatedness, which nonetheless is not open to normal scientific inquiry. This infers that both natural and supernatural elements are constitutive of creaturely existence, apparent in Barth’s explanation of the Garden’s special trees and river. So this special space of creation, precisely because it is designed and created by God for covenant history with His creatures, is itself not merely natural or material but is also, in one sense, supernatural and spiritual. Creation itself is not divine, but presupposes a divinely willed space for relationship between creature and Creator. Such distinction and overlapping of creaturely and divine, of natural and supernatural in the created realm points to the genuine sign of the covenant. *The* human creature, Jesus Christ, is where heaven and earth, divine and creature, spiritual and natural meet and overlap, though never fuse.

Barth considers the Garden’s location and also “what kind of place is it?”⁴⁷⁶

...[I]t was a real place on earth, distant from and unique in relation to all other earthly places, yet belonging to the same plane, so that real man could be there on the real

⁴⁷³ Barth, *CD* III/1, 250.

⁴⁷⁴ Barth, *CD* III/1, 251.

⁴⁷⁵ Barth, *CD* III/1, 252.

⁴⁷⁶ Barth, *CD* III/1, 250.

earth, and...that among all the known and accessible places on earth there was and is also that unknown and inaccessible place, that in addition to his own place there is also that which is lost to him and that that place is his home. It was there that God originally put man and gave him rest when He had formed him. It was there that he could and should live. What he was there is his reality as the creature of God. And it is by that portion of the whole terrestrial space created by God that the totality has meaning and is to be understood. It is there that salvation, blessing, joy and peace originate for the whole earth because there is the first seat of the divinely willed life of the earth and plant and man, and a fulfillment already of His purpose in creation.⁴⁷⁷

The “general nature of Paradise” is its character as a “sanctuary” where “God is the Possessor and Lord.”⁴⁷⁸ Interestingly, Barth suggests that the “...establishment of Paradise is a distinctive spatial parallel to the institution of the Sabbath as a temporal sanctuary in the first saga.”⁴⁷⁹ The Garden provides additional knowledge of the spatiality of Creator and of creature. In fact, particular features of this sanctuary designed for co-presence become paradigmatic for understanding the nature of God’s presence in the midst of His people throughout the Bible, delimiting and specifying the spatiality of both Creator and creature or how they are intended to relate in this sacred place.⁴⁸⁰ Such features include ‘located-ness’ (both physically and spiritually), particular elements placed within it (including the creatures) and the purpose of this place (including the creature’s vocation there).

Set apart from but among all other places, the creature is put in a sacred place designated for a particular purpose by the Creator. Its stated task here is to “cultivate and keep it – literally, to serve and watch over it”. Barth notes a similarity to priests’ function in the tabernacle and temple, with their “...centre – not their geometrical but their virtual and functional centre – in the Holiest of Holies”.⁴⁸¹ As the human creature’s dwelling place specially planted by the Creator and nourished by the river He made to flow in it, the unusual richness of this “orchard or sacred grove” provides not only the creature’s nourishment but also its function as “fruit gardener.”⁴⁸² Such work is not relentless toiling, but a sign of the fertile abundance of the Creator’s gracious provision (compared with the fallen creature’s

⁴⁷⁷ Barth, *CD III/1*, 253.

⁴⁷⁸ Barth, *CD III/1*, 253.

⁴⁷⁹ Barth, *CD III/1*, 254.

⁴⁸⁰ For example, Barth writes, “It is made clear by this river with its four branches that the one thing which God is and wills and does in His sanctuary contains and promises and releases the many things which He will be and do outside His sanctuary on His whole earth as such. And it is also made clear by it that all that He will be and do outside it goes back to the promise and revelation and gift which He first actualized in His sanctuary.” Barth, *CD III/1*, 255-256. The river and its branches will be discussed shortly.

⁴⁸¹ Barth, *CD III/1*, 254. It could be argued that both the traveling tabernacle and the fixed temple actually did represent the general geographical centre of the people of Israel. In the case of the one, although the Israelites journeyed behind the ark of the covenant (or God’s mercy seat, which in turn followed the pillar of fire or smoke – yet another representation of God’s presence), they encamped around it; and in the case of the other, the ark was placed in the temple which formed the center of Jerusalem in the near-center of Israel.

⁴⁸² Barth, *CD III/1*, 254

hard labor on the cursed ground). The “freedom, joy and rest” of creaturely existence in God’s presence given with the Sabbath may be fully experienced.⁴⁸³

The Creator graciously creates a physical environment not merely suited to the creature’s maintenance but for its abundant existence. His fruitful provision of essential food and water, available to them without undue labor, reveals His overflowing good will toward them. While not at all identical to or infused within the natural environment (no pantheism or panentheism in Barth), the Creator is indirectly present with them in the creative, life-giving power of His Spirit who effects the establishment and maintenance of such bounty for their pleasurable life in relationship. In this sense, the Creator’s spatiality is indirect, the Source of all good things. This place of sanctuary characterizes the gracious divine will, “beneficence and order in favour of man and the whole earth”.⁴⁸⁴

The divine blessing is also depicted in the single river that springs forth within the Garden to divide outside into four separate rivers. This sign of divine favor, originating within the holy sanctuary and proceeding to the four corners of the earth, reveals the Creator’s ongoing presence and His intention for sustained, fertile life for all of creation. Beyond mere necessity, “the river of blessing” is the source of “all the precious things of the earth”, offering “all the glory and beauty of this life”.⁴⁸⁵ For Barth, the Creator is never identical with the natural fertility of fruit trees and water; they are simply signs testifying to His real indirect and mediate presence and His favor towards His creation, here taking the form of material provision in an actual dwelling place and abundant supply of food and water. The Garden is a “place of glory” as His gracious will and presence overflow toward His covenant partner.⁴⁸⁶ From this broad description of the Garden’s sacramental character regarding all creation, more “distinctive features”, like its two unique trees, further depict the kind of place it is, and thus, the particular spatiality or co-presence to be enjoyed by its inhabitants.⁴⁸⁷

The creature is “allotted [its] place” with reference to the “tree of life” and the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” The Creator plants them among a variety of fruit trees, but notably like the Holy of Holies, the first tree is placed in the center of the sanctuary. Accompanying them is a divine “permission and prohibition” to the creature.⁴⁸⁸ These effectively circumscribe the creature’s existence and so reveal the divine intention for it,

⁴⁸³ Barth, *CD* III/1, 254.

⁴⁸⁴ Barth, *CD* III/1, 254.

⁴⁸⁵ Barth, *CD* III/1, 254.

⁴⁸⁶ Barth, *CD* III/1, 255.

⁴⁸⁷ Barth, *CD* III/1, 256.

⁴⁸⁸ Barth, *CD* III/1, 256.

further indicating the spatiality of both Creator and creature. Barth is adamant that neither tree contains within itself or its fruit the power to give either life or knowledge of good and evil to the creature.⁴⁸⁹ They are signs given by the Creator to His creature about its existence and relationship with Him, how they will be present to each other.

The tree of life is the “sign of the reality given to man by God.” However, since no account is given of its fruit actually being eaten, Barth concludes this tree and its fruit appear to serve a different function than the other special tree. “Its presence means that man is told where he is, to whom the place belongs, and what he may expect and be. It assures him of the benefit of life whose witness he is.” The tree of life stands as the promise of life given to all creation by the Creator, which the creature is to tend but cannot of itself create. “Its presence means that man lives in and with and by its promise”⁴⁹⁰ for life with its Creator, and that “he may really live here where God has given him rest.”⁴⁹¹

After the Fall, the Creator’s fatherly love protects His creatures from eating this fruit (expelled from the Garden, He prevents their return by posting an angel and a flaming sword at its entrance) and thereby sealing for themselves a worse fate. The consequence of the Fall was their death and the end of their covenant relationship, in opposition to God’s will. Had they eaten the fruit of this tree in their cursed state, rather than experiencing “eternal life” with God as the divine goal of their creation, Barth claims they would have experienced “eternal death with no possible hope of resurrection.”⁴⁹² In steadfast fatherly compassion for His creatures the Creator acted to protect them from themselves. Barth sums up the role of the tree of life as the genuine

...centre of Paradise; the sign of life as God gave it to man at his creation and as he was permitted to live it as a divine favour; the sign of the home in which man was given rest by God because God Himself, and therefore the source of his life, was no problem to him, but present and near without his so much as having to stretch out his hand.⁴⁹³

The tree of life is the sign of the creature’s home with its Creator Father, that special place where this creature could actually live, resting and working in, with and by the gracious presence of its Creator, as His beloved creature. The intimacy, abundance and totality of the spatiality willed and provided by the Creator for His creature is signified in this tree. Sadly, the creature rejects this perfect home precisely because of its divinely willed and ordered

⁴⁸⁹ “For it obviously does not mediate this benefit. It simply indicates and represents it.” Barth, *CD III/1*, 256.

⁴⁹⁰ Barth, *CD III/1*, 256.

⁴⁹¹ Barth, *CD III/1*, 257.

⁴⁹² Barth, *CD III/1*, 257.

⁴⁹³ Barth, *CD III/1*, 257.

spatiality, how it is to be present in covenant relationship with its Creator as the grateful, obedient servant and thus ‘good’ creature before its Maker and Lord. Even so, its reality in the fully spatial life elected for it is graciously recreated by the Creator who does not let His creature go its own way as its own sovereign lord forever.

The second special tree in the Garden, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, represents for Barth not the reality of creaturely spatial existence as willed by God but a “possibility presented to man by God.”⁴⁹⁴ This possibility is clearly rejected by the Creator in the “prohibition” declared to the creature: “thou shalt not eat of it.” Even in the form of a prohibition, this divine address, the first recorded in Scripture by God directly to human beings, is “revealed as an act of God’s fatherly care.”⁴⁹⁵ The “divine No” signified in this tree is added to the “divine Yes” asserted in the sign of the first tree.⁴⁹⁶ Both are intended to point to the abundant life actually given by the Creator to the creature. Even the verbalized consequences for disobedience declare God’s desire for life: whoever eats of this fruit “shalt surely die.” Stated “silently and positively” in the promise signified by the first tree and “openly and negatively” in the prohibition signified by the second tree, both insist the creature “shall live by the will of God.”⁴⁹⁷ The Creator created the creature with the freedom to receive and live the life intended by Him in covenant relationship precisely as His creature, a special creature to be sure, but nonetheless a creature and not the Creator.

To be the creature is to do the will of the Father in order to enjoy blessed fellowship with Him and all creation as a fully spatial covenant partner. To be the Creator means something totally different.

To know good and evil, to be able to distinguish and therefore judge between what ought to be and ought not to be, between Yes and No, between salvation and perdition, between life and death, is to be like God, to be oneself the Creator and Lord of the creature.⁴⁹⁸

Judging between good and evil, or knowing, choosing and doing what is right and life giving, is proper to God alone. The creature can and must do God’s will in order to live, accepting only what God has chosen and rejecting what God has rejected. No other proper and free decision and action exists for the creature. But the creature can live as created by its Creator only in its rightful place before Him: acknowledging and serving Him, empowered by His Spirit, living faithfully in His presence. If the creature attempts this in its own stead,

⁴⁹⁴ Barth, *CD* III/1, 257.

⁴⁹⁵ Barth, *CD* III/1, 259.

⁴⁹⁶ Barth, *CD* III/1, 258.

⁴⁹⁷ Barth, *CD* III/1, 259.

⁴⁹⁸ Barth, *CD* III/1, 257.

usurping what is rightfully the Creator's, it tries to put itself in God's place. As the serpent tempts, it desires to become 'like god'. But it was not created for this. Only God is God, the rightful Judge; it is "impossible for any other being to occupy the position", place and role of God. However, attempting to "place" itself "there" in God's place, the creature "...can only pronounce and execute its own sentence – not because it is evil, but because God alone is good."⁴⁹⁹ The creature must not choose this possibility precisely because the Creator rejects it. Leading to the disruption of the fellowship for which it was created, attempts to judge right from wrong distort and jeopardize the true spatiality of the creature. Deadly consequences thus replace blessed life.

The creature's freedom, then, is not for choosing one thing over another, but freedom "to repeat and affirm" "God's decision for man...by his own decision" and existence for God.⁵⁰⁰ Distinct from every other creature, the human is given "freedom to obey" its Creator. It is free to enact an appropriate response, living the fully spatial life given in its creation, in proper humble obedience and gratitude. Freely "keeping to its own place..., affirming and maintaining it" means

...to hold fellowship with the Creator – not merely to have fellowship with Him like plants and animals and all the other creatures of heaven and earth, but to hold fellowship with Him in unassuming but conscious, spontaneous and active assent to His divine decision.⁵⁰¹

The creature's "...place is with and before the God who with his creation has chosen for him, deciding between good and evil, salvation and perdition, life and death." Therefore, "...no other decision than that of obedience will correspond to this place; no other can be commensurate with his being; no other can be an act of life given to him."⁵⁰² The Creator gives the creature a "determination for obedience in fellowship with God".⁵⁰³ The emphasis lies on fellowship between Creator and creature, their co-presence in relation and distinction. The creature's free and proper response is its obedience to God's life-giving, fellowship enabling commands. Only by living spatially, in ordered relation and distinction with its Creator, does the creature's "...existence...receive its meaning in the execution of God's covenant."⁵⁰⁴ This is the creature's proper place, where it may fully exist in the Creator's presence. Most enticing about Paradise, according to Barth, is not the temptation to grab at

⁴⁹⁹ Barth, *CD* III/1, 262.

⁵⁰⁰ Barth, *CD* III/1, 266.

⁵⁰¹ Barth, *CD* III/1, 265-266.

⁵⁰² Barth, *CD* III/1, 264.

⁵⁰³ Barth, *CD* III/1, 266.

⁵⁰⁴ Barth, *CD* III/1, 267.

divine likeness through knowledge of good and evil but simply the "...fellowship exercised in freedom with the God who had willed the good and rejected the evil".⁵⁰⁵ The spatiality by which this creature is to exist is ordered for blessed goodness, and against evil.

Moreover, the creature's determination for free, obedient "decision and existence"⁵⁰⁶ reveals the Creator's desire for its genuine participation "in His judicial office". It confirms God's free, wise and righteous decision to create it for fellowship with Himself through its proper response to the Creator's "address and summons". Corresponding to its creation it gratefully chooses to live in full spatiality with God, being co-present in fellowship. It freely chooses to be for God, to live in obedience to God's will, and thereby participates in and confirms the Creator's decision to be for His creature. In proper distinction, the "true union" of such mutual presence further indicates the Creator's desire for creaturely participation even "in His own divine essence" or space.⁵⁰⁷ With this creature's creation and placement in a special place, a sacred sanctuary, begins the history of the spatial fellowship between Creator and creature in the covenant of grace, the goal of its creation.

Since the covenant is the internal basis of creation, Eden can be viewed (retrospectively) as a paradigmatic sign of the place where the covenant history unfolds, thus signaling typical characteristics of divine spatiality and divine intentions for creaturely spatiality. Similarities noted between the spaces particular to creation in the Garden of Eden and to the covenant in the land of Canaan conclude this section. Barth notes their common "natural character" that each is believed to be a "definite earthly place" (although Eden's precise location is a "mystery"), a particular "place chosen by God" and unusually "fruitful". Their "supernatural character" concerns being "...marked as God's sanctuary by its central point, where the will of God may be known..." and the source of God's blessing for the world.⁵⁰⁸ Both are places among all other lands, specially designed, ordered and created by the Creator as the presupposition for fulfillment of covenant relationship, so of their respective spatiality or so each may live fully present with the other in proper relation and distinction. Yet in neither place did these creatures originate; they were graciously brought to the respective lands already prepared for their sustenance, blessing and rest in God's presence. In each place God's creatures would live with God in their midst. These sanctuaries would be "...where God in all His hiddenness was so revealed and so hidden in His

⁵⁰⁵ Barth, *CD* III/1, 266.

⁵⁰⁶ Barth, *CD* III/1, 263.

⁵⁰⁷ Barth, *CD* III/1, 266.

⁵⁰⁸ Barth, *CD* III/1, 267.

revelation.”⁵⁰⁹ Moreover, both Eden and Canaan were provisional places; they could be and actually were lost to the creature, thereby distorting its spatiality or the way it could be co-present with its Creator. Separated from the original ways for mutual fellowship, in exile the ways Creator and creature could live spatially with the other changed, though a “longing for it” and “the promise of a return to it” remained.⁵¹⁰

For Barth, the most critical parallel between these places concerns their centers: the “relationship between the trees which form the centre of the Garden” and God’s revelation “...which formed the virtual centre of the ‘holy’ land...and of the life of the nation...”⁵¹¹ This indicates more particularities of spatiality. Barth asks,

What does it mean that God wills to dwell in [Israel’s] midst, not just eternally but for this very reason temporally, not just omnipresently but for this very reason locally? What happens in this proximity between God and man? What does it mean that...God meets man *hic et nunc*, and not in a general but in the unique *hic et nunc*, chosen by Himself, of His dealings which are these dealings, which have the specific form of His temporal and local dealings with Israel? What is it that we see as this divine order of the relationship between Himself and man?⁵¹²

Barth suggests Genesis 2 answers these questions through the significance of the Garden’s two special trees that anticipate the divine revelation in Israel’s later history. The Word of God signified in the tree of life will be embodied in Israel’s election for service from among the nations, in “the Law of God” given through Moses and the prophets, in the “tabernacle and later the temple” with its sacrifices. This Word is life. The sign of this tree reveals the “absolute goodness of God” toward His people Israel so they “can live.” More specifically, it shows His gracious decision and its execution that they can live spatially, in genuine fellowship with Him. This is the only way they can be His people. This tree thus signifies its promised “deliverance and salvation.” For “God has made it a nation; God has brought it to this place; God is present with it in this place: the wholly distant God is so wholly near it.”⁵¹³ In response, Israel simply receives this “absolutely secure and blessed life” from God, living fully, mutually present in Sabbath rest.⁵¹⁴

The second tree is “the warning sign” of the possibility rejected by God, the “opposite of life and salvation” promised in the first tree and thus involving Israel’s “destruction and

⁵⁰⁹ Barth, *CD* III/1, 268.

⁵¹⁰ Barth, *CD* III/1, 268.

⁵¹¹ Barth, *CD* III/1, 269.

⁵¹² Barth, *CD* III/1, 269.

⁵¹³ Barth, *CD* III/1, 269.

⁵¹⁴ Barth, *CD* III/1, 270.

ruin.”⁵¹⁵ By rejecting its election, its electing God and fellowship with Him, Israel attempts to assert itself based on its own judicial decisions, of its own knowledge of good and evil. Rather than being “satisfied with the grace of God” it seeks to live by “self-exaltation, self-election, [and] self-justification.”⁵¹⁶ Instead of living by “God’s free goodness towards it” Israel attempts “to live by its own goodness.” Barth declares such “idolatry” merely ends in “suicide”.⁵¹⁷ And so the particularity of the two trees in the Garden reveals the “...type of the order in which Yahweh Elohim and His revelation will encounter man, and in which man will always and everywhere encounter Him.”⁵¹⁸ This order indicates the spatiality proper to each, Creator and creature, throughout covenant history. Signifying Gospel and Law, it is “...the promise of life, but also the threat of death for the sake of the promise of life.” Hence, the spatiality or type of the order in which the Creator will meet His creature is “The grace of God [which] is so profound that it condescends to call and receive man as His free covenant-partner.”⁵¹⁹ As “the sign which points forward”, the Garden’s trees signify that place where the creature can live in abundant, spatial fellowship with its Creator, revealed as a particular type of fellowship with God as His covenant-partner. That ‘place’ is the covenant of grace, the internal basis of the creature’s creation.

However, unlike the Garden, in Old Testament covenantal Law “...everything now seems to be designed for the man who has eaten of the [forbidden] tree of knowledge...” Although God remains present to the sinful creature expelled from the Garden, the way in which He is present has radically changed. Spatiality has been affected, dramatically demonstrated in the many “...precautions [that] have to be taken to keep [Israel] at a safe distance from all immediate contact with the Holy One of Israel!” Barth bemoans the resulting “...absence of direct and simple and unreserved and inwardly assured life before and with God in all the relationships presupposed in the Law and the prophets and concretely displayed in the accounts of Israel’s history!”⁵²⁰

Accordingly, God’s spatiality, the manner in which the Creator is present to the creature takes new form. So the human creature’s spatiality, the way in which it is present to the Creator also is forever changed by its disobedience. Even in the face of this creature’s rejection of Him and its own spatial creatureliness, the Creator desires for it to be as fully spatial as possible, even as He is still present to and with and among these very creatures.

⁵¹⁵ Barth, *CD* III/1, 270.

⁵¹⁶ Barth, *CD* III/1, 270.

⁵¹⁷ Barth, *CD* III/1, 271.

⁵¹⁸ Barth, *CD* III/1, 272-273.

⁵¹⁹ Barth, *CD* III/1, 273.

⁵²⁰ Barth, *CD* III/1, 274.

Rare will it be for them to “walk in the cool of the evening with God” outside the Garden. The form of God’s presence (and even the mode of His being) will be different but the new fellowship will nonetheless be “the accomplished, real fellowship between God and man” occurring “at a given place” by God.⁵²¹ Ultimately both the Garden and Israel point beyond themselves to the true sacrament, the real place of definitive co-presence between Creator and creature, the One who is and actualizes the full spatiality of both, Jesus Christ Himself.

With this reference to “place” it is important to pause in order to note some of the terminological difficulty that exists in this investigation into the spatiality of God the Creator and the creation. The first difficulty arises in using the same term to designate something proper to the divine Creator and something proper to His creation and creature. In other words, there is no unique term to be used of God’s spatiality in distinction to that of creation, similar to that which exists in the terms ‘eternity’ and ‘time’. Generally ‘eternity’ has its first referent to divinity and ‘time’ to creature, though as has been demonstrated not without excluding or mixing the two concepts and subjects. Secondly, terms of “space” and “place” do indeed refer to physical location and geography or cosmology, as the case may be. However, the main thesis of this investigation demonstrates they also refer to presence and relationship that go beyond physical aspects, though they necessarily include these.⁵²² Such blurring of varied meanings in the use of the same few words is demonstrated quite dramatically in Barth’s exegesis of the second creation story to which I now turn. By spotlighting how he utilizes these terms and develops their copious meanings I aim to continue expanding an understanding of the spatiality of Creator and creation and creature. Additionally, I seek to lay the foundation for further exploration of spatiality in subsequent chapters, such as what it means for a human to be “in Christ” by considering first what it means to be ‘in creation’ as a preparatory sign of being ‘in the covenant’.

2. The Created Spatiality of the Human Creature

Part One of this thesis demonstrates that God’s own eternal and Self-determined space is His triune being, constituted by His eternal election of the covenant of grace in Jesus Christ. God’s being eternally turns ‘outward’ in overflowing love to the created reality that is distinct from divinity yet united to it in the Son’s mode of being. This loving act creates relationship

⁵²¹ Barth, *CD* III/1, 276.

⁵²² First in God’s own being, as He elects Himself to be a human creature (even in anticipation of its incarnation) and obviously, with the creature who remains a creature (soul of a body) even in the new creation.

between God and creature, enacting their respective spatialities in covenant history.

Concerning creation's origin and unfolding history with God, Barth states,

Indeed even before the beginning of creaturely history it pre-exists originally in His own life as Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and indeed in the form of contingent history in His eternal decision regarding this creaturely history, in His election of grace as the eternal beginning of all His ways and works.⁵²³

Creation is already anticipated in the second mode of God's triune being (the *Logos incarnandus*) since the creation is presupposed in His election. In His second mode of being God eternally elects to take to Himself, as His own, one particular element of the distinctive reality of creation, the humanity of Jesus of Nazareth. Within the prerequisite creation of earthly space divinely determined for such, the actualisation and manifestation of God's overflowing love and glory culminates in the incarnation of the Son of God Himself (the *Logos incarnatus*). God's creative activity entails the distinction in "unity of God and man, eternity and time" and the spatiality of Creator and creature, which are enacted and made known in Jesus Christ. For Barth, God's creative act is "...the historicity of the eternal being and will of God, and therefore the diversity but not the separation of the inward life of God and His outward life which establishes, sustains and rules the world."⁵²⁴ Continuity between God's transcendence and immanence is found in His Being through Word and Spirit. In Jesus Christ the Creator becomes a creature, the "perfect and definitive revelation" of the "...whole meaning and purpose of [God's] work...His will and therefore His own inmost being..."⁵²⁵ Thus, only this Word made flesh "specifically and emphatically" makes known "who and what man is", including the spatiality essential to human being.⁵²⁶

Furthermore, as the creature of its omnipresent Creator, the true human can never exist in isolation from its Creator. Determining who and what the human creature is, "what kind of being it is", must be sought only and always in its "relationship with God" and so precisely in its spatiality, in its co-presence with God.⁵²⁷ Knowledge of human being and therefore of its characteristic spatiality can be gained only by considering, through Word and Spirit, who is the creature God eternally binds to Himself, and for what purpose He does so.

⁵²³ Barth, *CD* III/1, 15.

⁵²⁴ Barth, *CD* III/1, 15.

⁵²⁵ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics: The Doctrine of Creation*, vol. III, part 2, eds. G.W. Bromiley and T.F. Torrance, trans. H. Knight, G.W. Bromiley, J.K.S. Reid and R.H. Fuller (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1960) 4 (hereafter cited as Barth, *CD* III/2).

⁵²⁶ Barth, *CD* III/2, 13.

⁵²⁷ Barth, *CD* III/2, 19.

Additionally, the true human is known only by the revelation of God's Word since the creature's existence conceals its true nature.⁵²⁸ Its own good "human nature as constituted by God" has been fully corrupted.⁵²⁹ Without the Word of God the creature cannot know it is the "object of divine grace" or of its proper spatiality, nor that it is "totally and radically sinful" or that its spatiality is corrupt.⁵³⁰ The original human nature with its spatiality, intended and created by the Creator and uncorrupted by sinning, is Jesus Christ.⁵³¹ Thus, He "alone is primarily and properly man." God enacts "a relation to the rest of mankind only in and through Him".⁵³² This Word made flesh attests who and what the Creator is and wills, and who and what they are and should will as His creatures. "In His own person He is God's Word to man, of human and divine essence, man in immediate confrontation and union with God, and therefore true man, and the revelation of the truth about man."⁵³³ This Word reveals the relationships between Creator and creature; those willed by God (in grace and proper spatiality) and those not willed by Him (in sin and improper spatiality), since "...this man, and in and with Him He Himself and therefore His kingdom are radiantly present in their midst."⁵³⁴

Therefore, Barth constructs a theological anthropology by beginning with Christology.⁵³⁵ Given both similarities and dissimilarities between the humanity of Jesus Christ and that of every other human creature, there can be no "...direct equation of human nature as we know it in ourselves with the human nature of Jesus, and therefore of a simple deduction of anthropology from Christology." First, our human nature is an existence in contradiction, "antitheses" and sin, while Jesus Christ's is an existence in "unity".⁵³⁶ We live in opposition to our nature and the spatiality characteristic of it, while Jesus Christ actually fulfills that nature and spatiality in His existence in ordered relation and distinction. In this sense, two "different spheres" or places of humanity exist: the place of Jesus' "blameless"

⁵²⁸ Barth, *CD* III/2, 20.

⁵²⁹ Barth, *CD* III/2, 19.

⁵³⁰ Barth, *CD* III/2, 31.

⁵³¹ Barth, *CD* III/2, 41.

⁵³² Barth, *CD* III/2, 42.

⁵³³ Barth, *CD* III/2, 44.

⁵³⁴ Barth, *CD* III/2, 42.

⁵³⁵ For accounts of Barth's anthropology in his doctrine of creation see Henri A.G. Blocher, "Karl Barth's Anthropology" in Sung Wook Chung, ed., *Karl Barth and Evangelical Theology*, 96-135; Stuart D. McLean, "Creation and Anthropology" in *Theology Beyond Christendom* (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick, 1986) 111-142; John Webster, *Barth* (New York: Continuum, 2000) Chapter 5, 94-112; Daniel J. Price, *Karl Barth's Anthropology in Light of Modern Thought* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002) Chapter 4, 97-164; Stanley George Lott, "The Significance of Man in the Theology of Karl Barth" (Ph.D. dissertation: New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 1968); Andrew Lidden Pate, Jr., "Man With God: a Study of the Doctrine of Man in the Theology of Karl Barth" (Ph.D. dissertation: Pacific School of Religion, 1968) especially Part II.

⁵³⁶ Barth, *CD* III/2, 47.

existence and our own self-contradictory place, the existence of “man in general”. Even though “He becomes what we are, He does not do what we do, and so He is not what we are. He is a man like ourselves, yet He is not a sinner, but the man who honours His creation and election by God, not breaking but keeping the covenant of grace.”⁵³⁷ As the righteous human creature in proper relationship with God, we must seek and receive our real human nature and spatiality in Him.⁵³⁸ ‘Real’, here, indicates what is willed, created and judged right by God, rather than what we have chosen in our actually ‘impossible’ contradictory existence. The “connexion of those very different and separated spheres” of humanity is found only in Jesus Christ.⁵³⁹ Specifically, if creaturely spatiality is the characteristic way that creatures are to be mutually present with God in ordered relation and distinction, then Jesus Christ, the God-man in His divine-human unity, reveals the truth in His very existence. This includes first, what the creature really is as God’s good creation and covenant partner; second, how the creature actually lives contrary and opposed to its election; and third, how this contradiction and opposition is overcome. Each of these offers a distinct understanding of the spatiality of the human creature in general.⁵⁴⁰

Another problem arises in attempting to ground anthropology on Christology: the human nature of Jesus is “exclusive to Him”. His humanity is different than the humanity of all others, indicating He is present to God in a way that is unique to Him. He is human, the Son of Man only as He is the Son of God. Alternatively stated, as God Himself, He is human. This is unique to Jesus Christ. “Human nature in Him is determined by a relation between God and Himself such as has never existed between God and us, and never will exist...Our fellowship with God rests upon the fact that He and He alone is one with God.”⁵⁴¹

As both Creator and creature Himself, Jesus Christ is mutually present with God and mutually present with creatures in an inimitable way as sole Mediator between them. “He alone can represent God before men and men before God.” In the unity of His divine-human

⁵³⁷ Barth, *CD* III/2, 48.

⁵³⁸ Heltzel claims that “Because Jesus’ humanity is never formally connected to nature, nature is overshadowed by God’s covenant with humanity” (230). Peter G. Heltzel, “Interpreting the Book of Nature in the Protestant Tradition,” *The Journal of Faith and Science Exchange* 4 (2000) 223-239. It should be noted that Barth’s focus drawn from Scripture concerns God’s act and relationship with humans, especially through the concrete people, Israel, the Church and of course, Jesus Christ. ‘Nature’ has a genuine place in that account but only secondarily. The humanity of Jesus Christ, including ‘real’ human nature and that obscured by sin, is key for Barth from election to consummation; there is no more critical point of contact for the Gospel, certainly not ‘nature’ in and of itself. Such attempts to legitimize an abstract notion of ‘nature in general’ apart from Jesus Christ and call it “theology” are failed from the start.

⁵³⁹ Barth, *CD* III/2, 48.

⁵⁴⁰ These various manifestations of creaturely spatiality will be the subject of the next chapter in consideration of the reconciling spatiality of God the Son, Jesus Christ.

⁵⁴¹ Barth, *CD* III/2, 49.

being He is fully spatial as Creator and fully spatial as creature. His relationship to God is unique in that he has His humanity “...immediately from God to be man in that purity and freedom and peace and clarity.” This very immediacy with God in which Jesus Christ receives His human nature with its spatiality never offsets the distinction between Creator and creature, but is actually maintained in Him. All other creatures have their humanity “...mediately from Him on the ground of the judicial pardon under which we are placed for His sake.”⁵⁴² He alone is the source of true creaturely existence with God, exercising human spatiality in readiness and living co-present with God and fellow creatures.

Barth clarifies, since “...humanity is originally hidden in Jesus... primarily it is His and not ours.”⁵⁴³ Human nature and human spatiality are ours only by extension from Him. In God’s eternal decision for the covenant of grace to be fulfilled in Jesus Christ in creation, God predestines Himself in His Son to be the first to have this human nature. Before anything is created, human nature is assumed by the Son in anticipation of its actualization in creation and affirmed in His incarnation. Because human nature is originally proper to Him, He defines and reveals in His own existence what it means to be human, including everything that is proper to humanity and shared in common with all human beings, even with appropriate distinctions. One aspect of that human nature includes its spatiality, the rich and comprehensive way the human creature is uniquely designed to be present in the particularly ordered and distinct relationship to God and to fellow creatures. From His humanity, and secondarily, this nature and its characteristic spatiality are extended to every other human creature elect in Jesus Christ as it participates in His humanity and His spatiality.

What man is, is determined by God’s immediate presence and action in this man, by His eternal election and the mighty work of His life and death and resurrection corresponding to this election. There in the eternity of the divine counsel which is the meaning and basis of all creation, and in the work of His life and accomplished at the heart of time, the decision was made who and what true man is. There his constitution was fixed and sealed once and for all. For this reason it cannot be different in any other man.⁵⁴⁴

⁵⁴² Barth, *CD III/2*, 49. Barth’s use here of the terms “immediate” and “mediate” has a different emphasis from His doctrine of revelation discussed in Chapter One. There the focus was on God’s use of creaturely media through which He reveals His own divine being and work. However, there always exists a distinction between divine and creature – even in the human flesh of Jesus. But here Barth is highlighting the oneness of God’s being, even in the mode of being fully human as well as fully divine. In that understanding, Jesus Christ as the Son of God is “immediately” present to God the Father in the communion of God the Spirit, precisely because He Himself is God. But God the Father is only “mediately” present to all other human creatures because they are not God; their relation to their Creator, God the Father is possible only through a Mediator using creaturely means, through whom the Father is present, that is, His Word, Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit.

⁵⁴³ Barth, *CD III/2*, 50.

⁵⁴⁴ Barth, *CD III/2*, 50.

All we are elected to be, we are in Jesus Christ who is the content of God's eternal decision; our nature, our spatiality, our relationship with God. "For it is He who, as the ground and goal of the covenant of grace planned for man, is also the ground and goal of man's creation: man as God willed him to be when He became his Creator".⁵⁴⁵ Thus, for instance, sin can corrupt and distort our human nature and our readiness to be present to God but cannot destroy it, for human nature is eternally determined in the primal election of Jesus Christ.

So the dissimilarity between Jesus' humanity and spatiality versus all other human creatures is found in the particularity of His nature in its sinlessness and in the particularity of His relation to God the Father with whom He lives in identity with the Spirit; whereas we are sinners and our relation with the Father is only through the Son by His Spirit. The similarity resides in that the human nature that is Jesus' also constitutes all other human creatures.⁵⁴⁶ The good human nature willed and created by the Creator constitutes the creature as revealed in Jesus Christ; nothing can annihilate it, not even human sinfulness or the resulting disrupted relation with God – what might be deemed the 'fallen' spatiality of the sinful creature. Instead, the faithful love of the Creator is the justifying "...mercy with which God is so far from abandoning creation to itself that He wills to impart to it nothing less than His own immediate personal presence and action, nothing less than Himself..."⁵⁴⁷ Through the election of grace and its fulfillment in Jesus Christ, the Creator does not merely restore to us our true human nature and spatiality. In actuality, He graciously effects an entirely new creation, with a new way of being present with God and fellow creatures, realized and revealed in Jesus Christ's resurrection from the dark chaos and void of death by His Spirit. This is His risen presence, His newly created spatiality formed out of death and shared with us.⁵⁴⁸

Spatiality is highlighted in the following summary concerning "who and what is man within the created cosmos" as revealed in Jesus.⁵⁴⁹ First, Jesus is human as He is one with God; the "presence of God" is actual and revealed "in and through the being of [this] man". The spatiality proper to God, how the Creator is present and relates in distinction with His human creature, is revealed in His Son, in the spatiality proper to Jesus Christ. Right understanding of this divine perfection must correspond to the identity in distinction which is God's being. In the unity of God, the spatiality of the Father is the same as the spatiality of the

⁵⁴⁵ Barth, *CD* III/2, 50.

⁵⁴⁶ Jesus Christ's human nature is nonetheless "creaturely, not creative and divine". Furthermore, this means that while He was sinless, he was nonetheless capable of temptation and sin, as are we. The reason He did not sin is due to the way in which He is human, that is, as God. Barth, *CD* III/2, 51.

⁵⁴⁷ Barth, *CD* III/2, 51.

⁵⁴⁸ These will be considered in the next chapter.

⁵⁴⁹ Barth, *CD* III/2, 68.

Son. In Jesus Christ “God is present and revealed as this creature is present and revealed.” Yet in the differentiation of Father, Son and Spirit, distinctions in the spatiality proper to each mode of being also exist. Furthermore, the Creator is present to this unique divine-human being differently than He is present to all other human creatures. God’s spatiality or presence is “direct and immediate” with Jesus Christ, whereas with the others, the spatiality or presence of the Creator is “indirect”, a mere “reflection”.⁵⁵⁰

Second, Barth specifies that “the presence and revelation of God which distinguish this man” is “resolved, energetic and active in a specific direction.”⁵⁵¹ God “wills and works” in this creature as the Savior of all human creatures.⁵⁵² The Creator is distinctively present in this particular creature directing it towards the fulfillment of the covenant and “deliverance”. Therefore, as “...God is in and with this creature...directly and immediately...He is the Saviour.”⁵⁵³ God the Father’s preeminent creative spatiality is being most fully present as Creator to His creation in and with this particular human creature precisely in its covenant existence.

Third, in God’s saving act which occurs in and through this creature, “He [God] does not lose Himself in Him [this creature] by being present and revealed in His [this creature’s] existence, and in and with Him [this creature] addressing Himself [God] as the Saviour to each and every man.”⁵⁵⁴ Instead, God truly “confirms Himself and triumphs as the Creator” in the saving work accomplished in and through this creature. For “this history of divine help...[actually] characterises the creature.” Understood “*a priori*, indisputably and axiomatically”, this “divine-human history” impacts and determines the spatiality of both Creator and creature.⁵⁵⁵

Fourth, Barth claims, since “...God is sovereign in His presence in and with the existence of the creature, its distinction by this presence means that it exists in the lordship of God.” Indeed, it is only “as God is there in Him” in this act of His existence as Lord and Savior that “He becomes and is real man”.⁵⁵⁶ This human creature lives under the lordship of

⁵⁵⁰ Barth, *CD* III/2, 68.

⁵⁵¹ Barth, *CD* III/2, 68.

⁵⁵² Barth, *CD* III/2, 68.

⁵⁵³ Barth, *CD* III/2, 69.

⁵⁵⁴ Barth, *CD* III/2, 69.

⁵⁵⁵ Barth, *CD* III/2, 69. The salvation history that takes place in Jesus Christ impacts and determines God as Creator in the sense that it is rooted in His freely elected Self-determination to be this human creature for the saving purpose actualized in this history. It determines Jesus Christ as the Elect human, and other human creatures as they are elect in Him for salvation.

⁵⁵⁶ Barth, *CD* III/2, 69.

God or not at all.⁵⁵⁷ Thus, the creative spatiality of God the Father includes His lordship over all His creation, as the creature's spatiality includes living in the presence of this Lord, under His Fatherly rule.

Fifth, no knowledge exists of this creature's "...being and existence in abstraction from its work and office, from what God decides and fulfills in it."⁵⁵⁸ This creature is not merely the object of God's grace, but is itself grace; He is not merely acting in the history of salvation, He Himself is that very history; He is not just a spatial being, He is spatiality, in whom Creator and creature are perfectly co-present in relation and distinction. "For by the fact that God dwells in it the work of God is already in full operation. The divine deliverance comes as it takes up its dwelling in it."⁵⁵⁹ The spatiality of God enacted and revealed in this creature is active; God is present fulfilling His will for the salvation of the world of which creation is the presupposition. The spatiality of Jesus Christ includes this decisive and concrete attribute of the true human creature, being present to His Father in obedience to His saving will, now and eternally.

He is not a real man in spite of but because of the fact that He is the Son of God and therefore acts as the Saviour. For this reason He remains a real man even in His resurrection and ascension and session at the right hand of God, and it is as a real man that He will come again. Hence, He is always to be identified with His history. He is always engaged in His office and work as Prophet, Priest and King... Where can we find any essence or quality in which He is not yet or no longer the Saviour? What point can we name from which He might equally well be the Saviour or not? And could such a neutral point indicate the true humanity of the true Son of God? The New Testament knows of no such neutral point. Whether it looks back to Jesus or upwards to Him or forwards to Him, it knows only the One who was, is and will be the Saviour, and therefore it knows this man only in His work and history. And it is in this capacity that it knows Him as a real man.⁵⁶⁰

To know how God the Father our Creator is present with His creation, we must look always and only to the covenant history of God's saving and gracious presence. There is no spatiality of God as Creator, no presence of the Father isolated from the being of the Son who is this history and presence of grace.

⁵⁵⁷ Referring to the doctrines of *anhypostasia* and *enhypostasia* concerning the human nature of Jesus Christ as discussed in Chapter One, Barth states, "Because the man Jesus came into being and is by the Word of God, it is *only* by the Word of God that He came into being and is. Because He is the Son of God, it is only as such that He is real man." Barth, *CD* III/2, 70.

For a critique of Barth's use of the doctrine of *enhypostasia* see Gunton, *Christ and Creation*, esp. 48ff.

⁵⁵⁸ Barth, *CD* III/2, 70.

⁵⁵⁹ Barth, *CD* III/2, 70.

⁵⁶⁰ Barth, *CD* III/2, 58-59. This will be demonstrated in the next chapter's investigation of the reconciling spatiality of the Son of God.

Sixth and finally, Barth sums up the distinctiveness of this human creature: to be real man is to be “for God.”⁵⁶¹ This means to be for all that God is for, from the eternal election of the covenant of grace in Jesus Christ, its fulfillment in time and its consummation at the end of time. Jesus Christ is present as “a man in order that the work of God may take place in Him”. Barth concludes, “. . .the purpose of the presence and revelation of God actualized in His life becomes His own purpose. And conversely, the purpose of His own existence is to serve the purpose of the presence and revelation of God actualized in Him.”⁵⁶² Proper distinction in the spatial order between Creator and creature is demonstrated here: God’s purposeful presence directs the creature’s existence while the creature’s purposeful presence responds to that divine direction in obedient service, both purposefully co-present to fulfill in time the covenant elected by God (divine and human in anticipation) in eternity. Thus, the origin and goal of human life in the Elect Jesus Christ is identical: His election to fulfill the gracious covenant decreed by God between Creator and creature, to be present in relation and distinction with the God who in Jesus Christ is present ‘with us’. The significance of the entire existence of this real human, and so all others in Him, is that it comes from God, lives in God and is for God.⁵⁶³ Thus, Barth’s twofold determination of the human creature is to live as the Creator’s true creature and as God’s genuine covenant-partner.⁵⁶⁴ While not identical they are perfectly conjoined in the One divine-human being. The human spatiality created by God, thus proper to the creature, is for vital covenant relationship, being co-present in ordered relation and distinction with its acknowledged Creator and Lord. This existence is actualised first in Jesus Christ, and through Him in fellow creatures and covenant partners. How the Creator as God the Father is present to His human creatures is specified through Barth’s doctrine of providence.⁵⁶⁵

⁵⁶¹ Barth, *CD III/2*, 70.

⁵⁶² Barth, *CD III/2*, 71.

⁵⁶³ Barth, *CD III/2*, 71. Stated alternatively, Jesus Christ as real man is “essentially for God because He is essentially from God and in God.”

⁵⁶⁴ For a helpful consideration of the creature’s two-fold determination see Kenneth Oakes, “The Question of Nature and Grace in Karl Barth: Humanity as Creature and as Covenant-Partner,” *Modern Theology* 23, no. 4 (October 2007) 595-616.

See also James H. Cone, “The Doctrine of Man in the Theology of Karl Barth (Ph.D. Dissertation: Northwestern University, 1965) especially 54-100.

⁵⁶⁵ For differing presentations of Barth’s doctrine of providence see, for example, Caroline Schroeder, “I See Something You Don’t See: Karl Barth’s Doctrine of Providence” and a response by Randall C. Zachman, both in George Hunsinger ed., *For the Sake of the World, Karl Barth and the Future of Ecclesial Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004); T.J. Gorringer, *God’s Theatre*, especially Chapter 5, 69-87.

3. The Providential Spatiality of God the Father as Sustainer of Creation

God is both the Creator of the human creature and also the Lord, its covenant partner. While necessarily connected these are not identical, indicating that the external form in which God is present to His creatures in world occurrence in general may differ from His presence as their covenant partner. However the internal ground, God's triune being as constituted by His election of grace, remains unchanged. Barth defines providence as "...God's knowing, willing and acting in His relation as Creator to His creature..."⁵⁶⁶ Thus,

We cannot, of course, develop the doctrine of God's being and perfections, or the doctrine of predestination, without referring constantly to this relationship, because God's being and the decree of His election of grace are revealed to us only in this relationship.⁵⁶⁷

Investigating how God the Creator is present to His creature in His fatherly providence expands our understanding of the omnipresence or spatiality of God the Father.

The doctrine of providence concerns the continuation of creation and creature under the universal lordship of the Creator as God the Father "according to the counsel of His own will."⁵⁶⁸ Such sustaining and ruling activity presupposes the existence of both the human creature and the appropriate context or environment in which it may exist. Since the internal basis of creation is God's covenant of grace in Jesus Christ, the same Lord and will revealed in that covenant also determine the ongoing overruling of the cosmos and creature. The Creator who rules over the whole creation is not merely God as any 'Father' but precisely the Father of Jesus Christ. The Son reveals the Father in the spatiality or desired relation of Creator and creature. The creature can know concretely what kind of Father God is and how He is present preserving, accompanying and ruling the creature that is His child, throughout its temporal life. Knowledge of the Creator Father leads to knowledge about its own life determined and affected by His presence, and for corresponding presence with its Creator as willed by Him. "God the Creator co-exists with His creature, and so His creature exists under the presupposition, and its implied conditions, of the co-existence of its Creator."⁵⁶⁹ The

⁵⁶⁶ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics: The Doctrine of Creation*, vol. III, part 3, eds. G.W. Bromiley and T.F. Torrance, trans. G.W. Bromiley and R.J. Ehrlich (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1960) 5 (hereafter cited as Barth, *CD III/3*).

⁵⁶⁷ Barth, *CD III/3*, 5. Barth continues by cautioning, "...we cannot import this relationship into the being of God as though the creature too were eternally in God." I take this to refer to the freedom God has in His decision for the covenant of grace and the eternal distinction between Creator and creature. But once willed, the creature yet to be created and the relationship yet to unfold between them in time are already eternally present in and to God as the Son who would become human in anticipation of the decree's execution. Again, there is no other Son than the One who would become Jesus Christ in time, fully divine and fully human.

⁵⁶⁸ Barth, *CD III/3*, 3.

⁵⁶⁹ Barth, *CD III/3*, 12.

doctrine of providence deals primarily with the Creator who faithfully is present in relation and distinction with His creature as the Lord of its being in time.

Freely choosing presence in active and ongoing relation with the creature, God sustains it in its own existence and remarkably “causes it to share in His glory.”⁵⁷⁰ It participates by serving “...in His immediate presence and under His immediate guardianship and direction, thus fulfilling its own meaning and purpose, having its own honour and existing to its own joy.”⁵⁷¹ Barth insists that all creatures exist not just “generally in His direct presence, but concretely”, according to His specific will to preserve, co-operate and direct His creatures. There is no space inhabited by creatures where God is not their Lord. He created their space of existence (the cosmos) and themselves in it, and He continually shapes and guides everything to its appointed end by His active presence, according to His gracious eternal counsel and will. “This Lord is never absent, passive, non-responsible or impotent, but always present, active, responsible and omnipotent.” In His own Self-determination and freedom “He co-exists with [the creature] actively, in an action which never ceases...”⁵⁷² such that it also “co-exists with Him...in its own appropriate law and freedom”.⁵⁷³ The Creator Father never abandons His creatures and children.⁵⁷⁴

Furthermore, His fatherly lordship is known by faith in “hearing and receiving” God’s Word.⁵⁷⁵ This Word comes to the creature concretely as God Himself “...in a way in which He can be accepted by man...His person as a human person, His Word in the flesh, His eternal Son born in time”.⁵⁷⁶ Therefore, God Himself in Jesus Christ is both the “ontic basis” and the “noetic presupposition” of all Creator-creature relations.⁵⁷⁷ In the Son’s “...own creaturely existence He becomes the pledge and guarantee of its creaturely existence...” Present in His fatherly lordship, therefore, the Creator is both “with and above the creature”. As “Lord of the covenant of grace” who is ever present to it, He sustains, guides and brings to fulfillment its creation precisely through His “work and revelation in Jesus Christ”.⁵⁷⁸ How the eternal Father is present as Creator with His creature in time occurs and is known in Jesus Christ. “This ‘God with us’ and ‘God for us’ is God in eternity, the Son. And no other, but this

⁵⁷⁰ Barth, *CD* III/3, 12.

⁵⁷¹ Barth, *CD* III/3, 12-13.

⁵⁷² Barth, *CD* III/3, 13.

⁵⁷³ Barth, *CD* III/3, 13.

⁵⁷⁴ Significantly, there is one prime exception to this in Scripture, revealed in Jesus Christ’s cry of dereliction from the cross. How this is to be understood in the light of divine omnipresence is taken up in the next chapter.

⁵⁷⁵ Barth, *CD* III/3, 15.

⁵⁷⁶ Barth, *CD* III/3, 29.

⁵⁷⁷ Barth, *CD* III/3, 53.

⁵⁷⁸ Barth, *CD* III/3, 60.

God, is also ‘God over us’, the eternal Father of this eternal Son.” Since the one will of the one God is the election, execution, fulfillment and revelation of the covenant of grace, the Father is ‘over’ His creatures “...in a way which corresponds to this election of grace, to this eternal ‘for us’ in His Son.”⁵⁷⁹ God the Father is Sustainer of His creation, present in His lordship of world occurrence in general on the basis of and for the purpose of the history of His covenant in the Son. What God determined in eternity is correspondingly actualised in time, serving His one gracious will.

God’s fatherly lordship has the character of an “actual and sovereign work of God”, meaning God Himself encounters His creatures. Such divine presence is either indirect and hidden (in general world history) or direct and revealed (in covenant history). “We certainly have to do with Him in His relationship with His creatures, His presence in their presence, His working in their works, His freedom in their freedom.”⁵⁸⁰ In His fatherly providence God “coordinates” the “subordination”, “integration” and “co-operation” of creaturely activity and occurrence with His own will and activity.⁵⁸¹ Divine providence is the ground for continued creaturely existence and the means for the creature to fulfill its own nature and spatiality, realizing the purpose and freedom given in its creation. Thus Barth claims, it is “objectively real and subjectively true” that “God is present and active in the creaturely world”.⁵⁸² God’s presence with the creature as the Father’s providential rule diminishes neither God nor the creature. God’s will is accomplished and His glory manifest where the creature, as creature, participates and shares in both. The “...fellowship of the creature with God actualized in the person of man is...the goal of the covenant of grace...” so God alone is its “subject”, not the creature.⁵⁸³ God freely elects the creature to be co-present and participate, but the creature never adds to God’s work as co-redeemer. Proper order for active co-presence entails initiating divine presence first, then responsive creaturely presence.

⁵⁷⁹ Barth, *CD III/3*, 29.

⁵⁸⁰ Barth, *CD III/3*, 43. For an exposition on Barth’s notion of freedom for God and creature, and the relation between them see John Webster, *Barth’s Moral Theology: Human Action in Barth’s Thought* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998) Chapter 6, 99-123; and Webster’s essay “The Christian in Revolt: Some Reflections on ‘The Christian Life’” in *Reckoning with Barth: Essays in Commemoration of the Centenary of Karl Barth’s Birth*, ed., Nigel Biggar (Oxford: Mowbray, 1988) 119-144; Colin Gunton, “Barth, the Trinity, and Human Freedom,” *Theology Today* 43, no. 3 (October 1986) 316-330; Cynthia M. Campbell, “Response to Colin Gunton,” *Theology Today* 43, no. 3 (October 1986) 331-333; Willie James Jennings, “Reclaiming the Creature: Anthropological Vision in the Thought of Athanasius of Alexandria and Karl Barth” (Ph.D. dissertation: Duke University, 1993) especially 46-72; Lois Malcolm, “Divine Mystery and Human Freedom: A Study of Karl Barth and Karl Rahner (Ph.D. dissertation: University of Chicago, 1998) especially 230-255 and Chapter 5.

⁵⁸¹ Barth, *CD III/3*, 41.

⁵⁸² Barth, *CD III/3*, 43.

⁵⁸³ Barth, *CD III/3*, 45.

The divine work of grace corresponds to the creature's work of faith and gratitude. God, and God alone, creates and saves. While God "does not act apart from" creation in the covenant of grace He "does not act by means of creation". Instead, "He acts towards it and within it."⁵⁸⁴ The creaturely media is not the source of divine creative and saving presence and activity. Only God sustains and guides the creature as the object of His presence and work to this goal of sustained and reconciled existence with Him, to spatial living. God provides the "time, space and opportunity" for the creature to serve this divine purpose for its own salvation and co-presence in fellowship with its Creator, thus fulfilling its spatiality.⁵⁸⁵ Furthermore, God's providential rule over His creature cannot be "anticipated" by it; it can simply "be ready" for God and His "...action in the covenant of grace and kingdom of Christ." Specifically, the creature "...can only wait for His omnipotent mercy, acquiring its function, *telos* and character, and becoming God's servant and action, the theatre of His action and mirror and likeness of His glory, in the event of His rule and dominion."⁵⁸⁶ Such divine lordship, in its spatiality, means

The hand of God never rests. And it will never withdraw. Everything is always involved in its power and therefore in that receiving and becoming. For the faithfulness of God never ceases in the kingdom of His grace. There is no moment, place or situation in which His creature escapes Him or becomes indifferent, in which He has no further use for His creature or some part of it, or in which He forgets it.⁵⁸⁷

The Father's providential lordship over His creature includes His omnipresence. The spatiality essential to the triune God determines how the Father as Creator is present to His creature in His providential activity. The creation's goodness and fulfillment, necessitating its sustained existence by the Creator's presence, is its suitability and readiness to participate in God's glorious covenant of grace.

From this general view of the doctrine of providence, Barth specifies how God the Father is providentially present to His creature "...by preserving, accompanying and ruling the whole course of its earthly existence. He does this as His mercy is revealed and active in the creaturely sphere in Jesus Christ, and the lordship of His Son is thus manifested to it."⁵⁸⁸ Some aspects of the Father's providential lordship highlight His spatiality. First, "divine preserving"⁵⁸⁹ entails preservation of the created cosmos as the ordered, limited "context"⁵⁹⁰

⁵⁸⁴ Barth, *CD* III/3, 65.

⁵⁸⁵ Barth, *CD* III/3, 46.

⁵⁸⁶ Barth, *CD* III/3, 73.

⁵⁸⁷ Barth, *CD* III/3, 53.

⁵⁸⁸ Barth, *CD* III/3, 53.

⁵⁸⁹ Barth, *CD* III/3, 58.

⁵⁹⁰ Barth, *CD* III/3, 63.

of the creature's existence and preservation in its own "space and time".⁵⁹¹ Yet this preservation of the creature, like creation itself regarding the covenant, is "external and additional" to the "...internal and proper preservation which is by participation in the kingdom of Jesus Christ".⁵⁹² This original, direct⁵⁹³ and most complete preservation derives from the eternal decree, for "fellowship with the perfect and eternal being of God" in Jesus Christ.⁵⁹⁴ Barth even argues that God's election of grace is the truly inconceivable "*modus* of the divine preservation."⁵⁹⁵ The ground of the creature's "permanence and continuity" is God's Self-constituted being who is unceasingly to it "the One who eternally elects". God freely, continually elects Himself for spatiality, for co-existence with it, "having made Himself cosmic and human", so also the creature for spatiality. This free "obligation" to His eternal decree, thus to Himself, is His divine constancy. Thus, the creature's preservation is a divine act whereby "...God continues to be to the creature this [spatial] God, who on the basis of the election of grace elects it to its own specific being and existence" and spatiality.⁵⁹⁶

Furthermore, fulfilling this gracious will, the Creator "indirectly" maintains the creaturely space of the cosmos and its creatures through creation's God-given order and determination for self-preservation, including its capacity for procreation.⁵⁹⁷ This secondary divine preservation intervenes in the creaturely order and activity, helping maintain creatures' spatiality with other creatures. No independent or autonomous existence of the creature or creation is possible, for everything "stands in need" of divine preserving.⁵⁹⁸ God must be present to creation, in its entirety and particularity, for its existence and continued existence. Preservation of the creature within its own space and time reveals God's eternal will to be with His creature throughout its history. He will not abandon it to non-existence or chaos continually threatening it.⁵⁹⁹ Instead,

...from all eternity – ...in the eternal counsel of His grace as it is effective and revealed in Jesus Christ – His merciful will was to take up the cause of the creature against the non-existent, not from a safe height of supreme world-governor, but in the closest possible proximity, with the greatest possible directness, i.e., Himself to become a creature.⁶⁰⁰

⁵⁹¹ Barth, *CD* III/3, 61.

⁵⁹² Barth, *CD* III/3, 62.

⁵⁹³ Barth, *CD* III/3, 65.

⁵⁹⁴ Barth, *CD* III/3, 62.

⁵⁹⁵ Barth, *CD* III/3, 67.

⁵⁹⁶ Barth, *CD* III/3, 71.

⁵⁹⁷ Barth, *CD* III/3, 65.

⁵⁹⁸ Barth, *CD* III/3, 73.

⁵⁹⁹ Barth, *CD* III/3, 78.

⁶⁰⁰ Barth, *CD* III/3, 79.

The creature's total need for preservation is, negatively, not just a continued existence in peril, contradiction and distorted spatiality but, positively, being properly spatial, present to fulfill its destiny to "live of and by the grace of God".⁶⁰¹ The "creature can be present", sustained by divine preservation, only in this rightly ordered spatiality. For the creature is destined to live in God's own presence in Jesus Christ who "...did not redeem us from outside, from a safe distance, but from inside, by taking our place... This is how the covenant of grace is fulfilled."⁶⁰² The creature's "preservation corresponds to the basis"⁶⁰³ in the salvation event, indicating its total need, that "...very place where in Jesus Christ God Himself entered in to save it... which has the brightness of His presence."⁶⁰⁴

Furthermore, the creature is preserved in its creaturely limitations precisely to "continue before Him eternally".⁶⁰⁵ Divine spatiality with its correspondence in creaturely spatiality, is for the goal of never ending co-presence in ordered relation and distinction. God Himself eternally entered into creaturely limits in His Son, Jesus Christ. So everything concerning the creature in Him will be preserved, "...present to God as it was or is or will be, in all its reality, in the whole temporal course of its activity..." By holding the creature and its activity before Him "in the hollow of His hand" and not allowing any of it to perish, the creature will always be present to Him.⁶⁰⁶ This "eternal preservation" is not limited to the creature's temporal existence.⁶⁰⁷ Thus He permits it to participate in His own eternal life, in the divine loving presence overflowing to and for it. God the Father's eternal spatiality encompasses the creature's temporal spatiality in the Son, even in eternal distinction.

A second aspect of God's lordship over His creature, according to Barth, is His "accompanying preservation" as its Father, the Father of Jesus Christ. "Alongside Him there is a place for the creature." He "goes with it" in its own existence and activity as the Lord of the covenant of grace.⁶⁰⁸ The creature's very being in its activity "...takes place in its co-existence with God, in the presence of God, His *praesentia actuosa*. It is therefore accompanied and surrounded by God's own activity."⁶⁰⁹ This co-present activity occurs where the Creator's and creature's activities become a "single action", as divine action takes

⁶⁰¹ Barth, *CD* III/3, 79.

⁶⁰² Barth, *CD* III/3, 81.

⁶⁰³ Barth, *CD* III/3, 83.

⁶⁰⁴ Barth, *CD* III/3, 82.

⁶⁰⁵ Barth, *CD* III/3, 87.

⁶⁰⁶ Barth, *CD* III/3, 90.

⁶⁰⁷ Barth, *CD* III/3, 88.

⁶⁰⁸ Barth, *CD* III/3, 92.

⁶⁰⁹ Barth, *CD* III/3, 93.

place “in and with and over” the creature’s action.⁶¹⁰ Neither Creator nor creature is “alone on the way” but each has a “companion” in the other.⁶¹¹ God’s lordship indicates that “...the free creature does go of itself, but it can and does only go the same way as the free God.” As “the inconceivable goodness and the presence of His grace”, this way of Jesus Christ is the “preceding of the Creator and the following of the creature”, fatherly lordship and “childlike obedience”, that become one action in the Holy Spirit’s presence.⁶¹² Such “mutual relationship” and presence between God and creature includes the activity of both. God is actively present with His creature in “the operation of His eternal love.” The creature is present with God by being “loved by God” and loving Him in response, in the confines of its allotted space and time.⁶¹³ This indicates “distance in the relation between God and the creature”; distance as “qualitative distinction”⁶¹⁴ plus the irreversibility of God’s “pre-eminence”⁶¹⁵ and power over the creature, seen primarily in the “supremacy of God’s eternal love.”⁶¹⁶ Thus, the Creator’s spatiality is qualitatively distinct from the creature’s spatiality.

Moreover, “God does not will to work without the creature but with it” and He “wills to preserve it in its reality”. Since creaturely reality involves “change”, God must accompany the creature in such change. Still, He does so only in the necessity of His free will and love. Barth concludes, “...this law of the creaturely world, that God is present and active in all that occurs within it, is more fixed than any natural law...”⁶¹⁷ Divine accompanying means God freely and sovereignly gives Himself to be present with His creature.⁶¹⁸ His presence and activity determines the creature’s activity so only God’s will is done. He “precedes” creaturely activity in divine foreordination, “accompanies” it as it occurs in time, and “follows” it so its effects may achieve its goal, all according to the elect will of God. The creature responds to this divine accompanying presence and activity in faith by being present in relation and distinction with Him, perceiving, submitting to and doing God’s will.⁶¹⁹

Barth further defines “...*concursum divinum*, the divine accompanying of creaturely activity...as the sovereign act in which the will of God is unconditionally and irresistibly fulfilled in the activity of the creature.”⁶²⁰ Through His accompanying presence, God executes

⁶¹⁰ Barth, *CD* III/3, 132.

⁶¹¹ Barth, *CD* III/3, 93.

⁶¹² Barth, *CD* III/3, 94.

⁶¹³ Barth, *CD* III/3, 107.

⁶¹⁴ Barth, *CD* III/3, 109.

⁶¹⁵ Barth, *CD* III/3, 108.

⁶¹⁶ Barth, *CD* III/3, 109.

⁶¹⁷ Barth, *CD* III/3, 109.

⁶¹⁸ Barth, *CD* III/3, 110.

⁶¹⁹ Barth, *CD* III/3, 113.

⁶²⁰ Barth, *CD* III/3, 117.

His decision for the covenant of grace in Jesus Christ for the salvation of His creature and its “eternal life in fellowship with Himself”.⁶²¹ It occurs within “the whole created sphere, above and in and before and with and after all creaturely activity...which...is completely under His control and subject to Him.” Because grounded in the eternal election of grace revealed in His Word, knowledge of “who God is and what He wills and how He works” enables the creature to know that the Creator Father is always present to it in His accompanying lordship. As the presence and “love of the triune God”, this accompanying Lord is the Father of Jesus Christ.⁶²²

Barth asks “how God works” in creaturely occurrence, or specifically, how God is present in and with the creature’s activity, regarding the unique event of His grace in Word and Spirit that grounds all other creaturely occurrences. God works “...objectively, proceeding from God by His Word; and subjectively, moving towards man by His Holy Spirit.”⁶²³ Though the Creator’s fatherly presence may be hidden in worldly occurrence, He is the creature’s true companion, eternally accompanying it so, by grace, its work may correspond to, participate in, and become His own work.⁶²⁴ In this context, Barth defines being ““with God’ [to mean] in the service of His omnipotent operation.”⁶²⁵ So the Creator’s accompanying presence and spatiality has the fulfillment of the covenant as its specific determination and goal.

The third aspect of Barth’s doctrine of providence, “the divine ruling” highlights the Creator’s fatherly rule of the created realm according to His elected order, purpose and will. Only God rules for “He Himself is the goal of His ruling”. Furthermore, His transcendent rule is not opposed to but encompasses all that is immanent, overcoming the creaturely “antithesis of freedom and necessity.” God’s ruling presence in His own space and creaturely space is determined by His free election of grace. The rule of God is “active”⁶²⁶ because first, it is the living Father who rules by the presence of His Word and Spirit; second, as the creature proceeds from God and is accompanied by God, so also does it “return to God” to be present

For an exposition on Barth’s view of divine *concursum* see Gregory W. Love, “The Role of the Holy Spirit in Barth’s Understanding of the Conjoining of Divine Human Activity in Divine Providence (Ph.D. dissertation: Princeton Theological Seminary, 1996) especially Chapter 6, 372-411. For a consideration of Barth’s *concursum* in regards to Chalcedonian Christology see Paul T. Nimmo, “Karl Barth and the *concursum Dei* – A Chalcedonianism Too Far? *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 9, no. 1 (January 2007) 58-72.

⁶²¹ Barth, *CD* III/3, 117.

⁶²² Barth, *CD* III/3, 118.

⁶²³ Barth, *CD* III/3, 142.

⁶²⁴ Barth, *CD* III/3, 133.

⁶²⁵ Barth, *CD* III/3, 152.

⁶²⁶ Barth, *CD* III/3, 164.

with Him as ordered, directed and accomplished by Him,⁶²⁷ and third, the creature and its work is “the object of His divine ordering” as the fulfillment of His eternal decree of grace by which He “confirms His relation to [the creature] and its relation to Him” in mutual presence.⁶²⁸ Thus, the kingly rule of this heavenly Father is very concrete. Ultimately, “He deals with each [creature] in a direct and immediate encounter and relationship with Himself”, thus further revealing His spatiality.⁶²⁹

As with all Gods works and ways, the Father rules in love and freedom according to His specific and concrete purpose, plan and will for the salvation and reconciliation of His creatures with Him, co-existing in proper relation and distinction. The “spoken and actualized”, so “intramundane...temporal and spatial ‘I am’” is none other than the Lord of the covenant who is the Creator of the mundane, temporal and spatial.⁶³⁰ The fatherly rule of this divine “I am” in the Old Testament is attested in “the history of the presence of God” which is “most actual” even while yet an expected “future towards which it is only moving.”⁶³¹ The fatherly rule of the divine “I am” in the New Testament takes a “new and absolutely clear and full and definitive form”. God becomes flesh in Jesus Christ, so “...King Yahweh Himself has come into the midst of His people on behalf of His people, to turn this people to Himself, to confirm in His own person its election and calling...” The justification and reconciliation of God’s people to Himself in Jesus Christ ultimately “is His kingly rule.”⁶³² Thus, divine ruling occurs in the Old Testament primarily by declaration of His “all-powerful Word” and in the New Testament, by the event of God Himself coming in the flesh as that Word.⁶³³ Barth concludes, “the ‘I am’ is an act of [divine] government.”⁶³⁴ The spatiality of the Creator Father who lovingly and faithfully rules His creation is ultimately revealed in the Son who comes among His human creatures as one Himself, to execute in created space the covenant of grace elected in His own space.

In conclusion, following Barth’s doctrine of creation I have provided answers to the following questions regarding spatiality. First, what is the spatiality proper to God the Father as Creator; specifically, how is the Creator present to His human creatures? Barth indicates God’s creative presence in three broad ways: as Creator, as Lord of the Covenant and as Providential Father. He is present in His creative, sovereign and providential activity by Word

⁶²⁷ Barth, *CD* III/3, 158.

⁶²⁸ Barth, *CD* III/3, 165.

⁶²⁹ Barth, *CD* III/3, 173.

⁶³⁰ Barth, *CD* III/3, 178.

⁶³¹ Barth, *CD* III/3, 179.

⁶³² Barth, *CD* III/3, 180.

⁶³³ Barth, *CD* III/3, 181.

⁶³⁴ Barth, *CD* III/3, 182.

and Spirit in the execution and revelation of His eternal election of the covenant of grace. Speaking into existence the heavens and earth, thereby separating apart everything opposed to His will, the benevolent Creator creates a creaturely space well suited for this purpose. The good space is filled with life-giving limits, abundant provision, creatures of all types, and a sanctified home for the creatures made in God's image. The Creator's spatiality reveals His presence as loving and free, active, creative, life-giving, powerful, order-establishing, gracious, effective, sanctifying, the source of every good thing and filled with promise. Furthermore, the covenant established with human creatures indicates how comprehensively and intimately the Creator Lord desires to be present in relation and distinction with His creatures as "God with us", in the flesh; the Creator becomes a creature yet retains His full divinity. In His own being, in Jesus Christ, the Creator has so wholly and eternally bound Himself to the creature by Word and Spirit that the relationship between covenant-partners ultimately cannot be sundered. Lastly, the Creator's providential lordship of preserving, accompanying and ruling all of creation indicates the benevolent constancy of His presence as "God over us".

The second question raised concerns the spatiality proper to the human creature. As the Creator's beloved possession, the creature fulfills its own nature, spatiality and God's will for it when obeying God's Word, gratefully receiving His abundant provision, enjoying Sabbath rest with its Creator by acknowledging and worshiping Him as Lord, faithfully fulfilling its stewardship of creation and walking in full communion with God and other creatures. As God's covenant partner, the creature is created to receive God's personal presence and gracious activity, faithfully responding to its Lord by doing the will of the Father. Then the creature is genuinely and fully "with God", co-present in ordered relation and distinction. And finally, as the creature and its work are preserved, accompanied and over-ruled by the Creator's general presence in creation, it also may experience and know the tender presence of the Father with and for His beloved children. Purposefully creating this human creature a spatial being in His own image to correspond to His own spatiality, God the Father has determined the entirety of its being as His creature and covenant partner for perfect communion with Him. In so doing, He takes the creature's space into unity with His own space and shares His own space with the creature, even while maintaining their proper distinctions. This spatial characteristic – perfect in the Creator as Father with the Son and Holy Spirit, and made perfect in all creatures by the true creature, the Word made flesh – is enacted, revealed and fulfilled in that most profound and intimate relationship between

Creator and creature declared in the eternal election of the covenant of grace and taking place in the event of its unfolding history of reconciliation in Jesus Christ, "God with us."

CHAPTER FIVE

THE RECONCILING SPATIALITY OF GOD THE SON

The spatiality distinctive to God the Son as Reconciler concerns the God who is present with His fallen human creatures and unfaithful covenant partners. What kind of God is this that can be present and how is He present with and for these in the reconciling event that is the Person and work of God the Son, Jesus Christ? Of primary interest is the spatiality of God in His mode of being as the Son, the God-human in His divine-human unity, in both creaturely space and time and in God's space and eternity. However, the spatiality of the fallen person in need of reconciliation also is enclosed and revealed by the spatiality proper to God as Reconciler. If the place Jesus Christ is elected to occupy and actually does occupy on our behalf is our place, the sinner's fallen place, then to know who God's Son is and the way and extent He is actually present "with us" in ordered relation and distinction entails knowing that place. What is the old Adam's place where creaturely goodness under the benevolent Lordship of the Creator is denied, election as God's covenant-partner in the covenant of grace is rejected, and where God's wrath and our sin are thus experienced with deadly consequences? What is this place that God in His Son has filled 'for us and our salvation', destroying the old place and its occupant so He might create a new place designed for His new creation to participate in the divine life?

This inquiry of the spatiality of God in view of the Person and reconciling work of Jesus Christ will focus on two predominant material aspects of Karl Barth's doctrine of reconciliation; Jesus Christ, the Lord as Servant⁶³⁵ and Jesus Christ, the Servant as Lord.⁶³⁶ The first emphasizes the spatiality proper to God the Son revealed in His justifying work of humiliation as 'true God' while the second spotlights the spatiality proper to God the Son made known in His sanctifying work of exaltation as 'true Human'. I begin with an overview of the doctrine of reconciliation focusing on spatiality through Barth's explication of God's name, Immanuel, noting three ontological forms of the doctrine. Next, the two material aspects of reconciliation are explored as God in our space and we in God's space. What kind of God is with us in His Son, and in what ways?

⁶³⁵ Barth, *CD IV/1*.

⁶³⁶ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics: The Doctrine of Reconciliation*, vol. IV, part 2, eds. G.W. Bromiley and T.F. Torrance, trans. G.W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1958) (hereafter cited as Barth, *CD IV/2*).

1. God With Us

Following his theological epistemology, Barth expounds his doctrine of reconciliation not only from a Christological basis but as Christology proper, aiming not to divide the Person of Christ from His work as is traditionally common.⁶³⁷ God's work of reconciling the world to Himself in His Son according to Scripture is the ultimate expression of the actuality of His being. Hence, "'God with us'...is the description of God Himself in this act of His."⁶³⁸ According to His eternal election of the covenant of grace God desires to be God for us and to be God in no other way, and for us to be His people, creatures and covenant partners in accord with the divine will expressed in that covenant. Full life comes only in relation to this loving and free God. Although distinct from God, people are nevertheless "in the sphere of God." This does not indicate they are or become God. Rather, He is the origin of their being, the sustaining presence maintaining and directing their being, and the goal of their whole being. Human history takes place with God's history as a "common history" that is "by Him...from Him and to Him." Indeed, what "...unites God and us men is that He does not will to be God without us, that He creates us rather to share with us and therefore with our being...life and act His own incomparable being...life and act..."⁶³⁹ This occurs "...in a single and particular event which has a definite importance for all time and space but which takes place once and for all in a definite [here and now]." This divine event is "the redemptive grace of God", our salvation in Jesus Christ.⁶⁴⁰

Barth explains further, "Salvation, fulfillment, perfect being means...being which has a part in the being of God...: not a divinized being but a being which is hidden in God, and in that sense (distinct from God and secondary) eternal being."⁶⁴¹ People alone cannot attain salvation; it must be received by grace from the only One who can give it. So Barth refines his definition of "God with us". God is with those "for whom salvation is intended and ordained". This "...is the original and basic will of God, the ground and purpose of His will as Creator."⁶⁴² To clarify, it is not that God "...first wills and works the being of the world and man, and then ordains it to salvation." Rather, "...God creates, preserves and over-rules man

⁶³⁷ See for example, Barth, *CD IV/1*, 127-128, where he discusses the dangers of "...a doctrine of the work of Christ separated from that of His person...", of abstract formulations of the Person of Christ made separately from His concrete historical existence.

⁶³⁸ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 6.

⁶³⁹ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 7.

⁶⁴⁰ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 8. For a helpful discussion on divinization in Barth, see Bruce L. McCormack, "Participation in God, Yes; Deification, No: Two Modern Protestant Responses to an Ancient Question" in *Orthodox and Modern: Studies in the Theology of Karl Barth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008) 235-260.

⁶⁴¹ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 8.

⁶⁴² Barth, *CD IV/1*, 9.

for this prior end and with this prior purpose...⁶⁴³ As with God Himself, there are not two eternal decisions concerning people (first their creation and then also their communion with God) but one – creation for covenant fellowship with God, originating in God’s primal decision. However, the secondary object of that decision, the human being, has “...forfeited the predetermined salvation...jeopardizing even...[its] creaturely existence.”⁶⁴⁴ How, then, is God present with this sinful creature who rejects its divine salvation and intended participation in God’s life?⁶⁴⁵ The place or “position” occupied by the sinner is not predetermined by God’s will but results from having “...made himself impossible in relation to the redemptive grace of God...and in his created being as man...”⁶⁴⁶ He has put himself in an impossible place. Actually, there is no “...place...for his being...as man, when he has denied his goal, and therefore his beginning and meaning, and when he confronts God in this negation...”⁶⁴⁷ Nevertheless, even in this impossible, negated place, God is present with us in His “divine mercy”.⁶⁴⁸

In this merciful place, “God with us” does not simply mean “God over or side by side with us, before or behind us,” or “...His divine being in even the most intimate active connexion with our human being...” While encompassing these Barth’s emphasis is “...that God has made Himself the One who fulfils His redemptive will...in His own person – at His own cost...on His own initiative...”⁶⁴⁹ God’s saving will is His active and personal presence; He becomes human to take our (impossible) place that He might be “His own partner in our place”. In this event God satisfies covenantal demands on both sides, for God and us, thus making peace. He is our Savior and Salvation, “the giver and Himself the gift”.⁶⁵⁰ Hence, Barth explains, ‘God with us’ includes a “‘We with God’”.⁶⁵¹ This is the second aspect of his dialectic regarding the spatial relationship between God and us. In Jesus Christ, God is first present with us and then we are present with God in our whole existence in an ordered relation and distinction. This is our proper spatiality. Where is this new place where we are with God? It is the “place...where our salvation...can come to us from Him” so we might

⁶⁴³ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 9.

⁶⁴⁴ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 10.

⁶⁴⁵ For a presentation of Barth’s concept of participation throughout the *Church Dogmatics* including the current discussion from §57.1, see Neder, *Participation in Christ*, 43-45.

⁶⁴⁶ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 10.

⁶⁴⁷ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 11.

⁶⁴⁸ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 12.

⁶⁴⁹ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 12.

⁶⁵⁰ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 13.

⁶⁵¹ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 14. For an exposition of Barth’s treatment of this notion see Kurt Anders Richardson, “God with Us and We with God” in his *Reading Karl Barth: New Directions for North American Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004) 161-208.

participate in His being, His place, since He took our (old) place. In this new place "...where we can only give Him the glory, we find our true and proper place."⁶⁵² Concretely, this place derives from the event of God's redemptive grace, the particular history that is Jesus Christ. This spatial place of our salvation, our participation in God's own being and the fulfillment of our creaturely being is where God is with us and we are with God in Jesus Christ.

Thus, the covenant of grace revealing God's eternal, loving and free will is the presupposition of salvation, the reconciliation between God and the world.⁶⁵³ This revelation takes place in Jesus Christ "...because in the giving of the Son it includes within itself God's own presence..."⁶⁵⁴ Fulfilling the covenant, reconciliation achieves the world's conversion to God "By His own active presence in Jesus Christ, by His special presence and activity under this name and in this form..."⁶⁵⁵ An exchange is made: in one sense, God actually changes place with us. First, He becomes a human being in creaturely space and time, "...making His own the situation into which [the sinner] has fallen. Present and active in Christ, He enters into it...to be one with us." He becomes 'flesh' and is made sin for us. Second, as "He takes our place" we are "made the righteousness of God in Him."⁶⁵⁶ So Barth asks,

Where can we stand when our former place and status has been made impossible as such? There is obviously no other place and status than that of...the faithful covenant-partner who is pleasing and acceptable to God...; the place and status of Christ Himself, yes, of the God present and active in Him. In that He took our place, and was made sin for us, we are made the righteousness of God in Him, because we are put in His place.⁶⁵⁷

Jesus Christ actualizes and makes possible our participation in His place, dwelling with Him in proper relation and distinction, which constitutes our new reconciled life with God.⁶⁵⁸ Our true being and vocation is found only in Him, the Mediator who makes God present with us and us present with God in covenant.

This exposition concerning 'God with us' that includes a 'we with God' introduces the concept of the reconciling spatiality of God the Son and also the spatial terminology used to

⁶⁵² Barth, *CD IV/1*, 15.

⁶⁵³ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 22.

⁶⁵⁴ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 73.

⁶⁵⁵ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 75.

⁶⁵⁶ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 75.

⁶⁵⁷ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 77.

⁶⁵⁸ For a presentation of Barth's view of participation in Christ in his doctrine of sanctification, see Daniel L. Migliore, "*Participatio Christi: The Central Theme of Barth's Doctrine of Sanctification*," *Zeitschrift für dialektische Theologie* 18, no. 3 (2002) 286-307; for the development of this concept in Barth's theology see David L. Stubbs, "Sanctification as Participation in Christ: Working Through the Pauline and Kantian Legacies in Karl Barth's Theology of Sanctification" (Ph.D. dissertation: Duke University, 2001); especially interesting is his section on *anhypostatic-enhypostatic* participation, 97ff.

explicate it. Throughout *Church Dogmatics* Volume IV, “place” is the primary term Barth uses to describe the human being’s standing before God based on His judgment of its ontological reality. Although mainly used metaphorically, a sense of actual locatedness is necessarily included; human creatures are always embodied in their existence, so are particularly located. This term indicates the realism of Barth’s theology while its rich nuances suggest its complex content, explored throughout this chapter. Each of Barth’s “three forms of the doctrine of reconciliation”⁶⁵⁹ concern how God is present in the reconciling event, considered from three perspectives: looking, first, “upwards at God who loves the world” or “in His sovereign act of reconciling grace”; second, “downwards at the world who is loved by God” or “the being of man reconciled with God in this act”; and third, at the unity “between the reconciling God above and the reconciled man below.”⁶⁶⁰ Although only the first two forms are discussed below, together all three offer a complete picture of reconciliation, the places of God’s encounter with us, and so the spatiality of both Reconciler and reconciled.⁶⁶¹

2. God’s Place in Our Creaturely, Unjustified and New Place

From the perspective of the divine humiliation of Jesus Christ as “very God”, the reconciling spatiality of God’s Son pertains to the doctrines of the incarnation and justification. In *Church Dogmatics* §59, Barth describes three facets, or “places” even, of the single event of justification: first, God’s place in Jesus Christ the Justifier in His incarnation; second, the fallen creature’s unjustified place in God’s judgment against the sinner in Jesus Christ’s death on the cross; and third, the new justified place of the human being in Jesus Christ’s resurrection. These differentiated but inseparable “places” help expound the divine perfection of omnipresence. They address the ontological issue regarding what kind of spatial being is God the Reconciler in His incarnation and His justifying work as rooted in His primal decision. How the Reconciler is mutually present with Himself and with sinners in proper relation and distinction encompasses the various realities of human spatiality: creatureliness, sinfulness and justification.

⁶⁵⁹ This is Barth’s title for his section. Barth, *CD* IV/1, 128.

⁶⁶⁰ Barth, *CD* IV/1, 122.

⁶⁶¹ See for example, Webster, *Barth*, 115.

2.1. God Takes Our Creaturely Place

For Barth, the atonement accomplished by God in Jesus Christ is "...the very special [covenantal] history...of God with man and man with God."⁶⁶² God's eternal covenant of grace "is the presupposition of the atonement", enacted, fulfilled and revealed in Jesus Christ in time. God's own being as the electing God and the elect Human is its basis: "Ontologically, ...the covenant of grace is already included and grounded in Jesus Christ, in the human form and human content which God willed to give His Word from all eternity."⁶⁶³ God chooses to share His grace with sinful human beings in the form of divine "condescension" in order to reconcile the disrupted relationship with its improper spatiality.⁶⁶⁴ In this free act God "...does something unnecessary and extravagant, binding and limiting...compromising and offering Himself in relation to man by having dealings with him and making Himself his God."⁶⁶⁵ What is the nature of this God, the Subject of this event that He can come in this form to be present with us in relation and distinction? Of this Subject, Jesus Christ, Barth considers

...how He was and is and will be very God in the fact that as the Son He willed to be obedient to the Father, and to become the servant of all and therefore man and therefore the One who fulfilled in His death the reconciling will of God; and how in the power of His resurrection He is all this for us by the Holy Spirit.⁶⁶⁶

How does God as God, with the spatiality proper to Him, come to our creaturely place as a human being, with the spatiality proper to it, so come "...into the far country, into the evil society of this being which is not God and against God"?⁶⁶⁷ How does He take to Himself all creaturely "limitations,...weaknesses and more, all his perversities" and distorted spatiality?⁶⁶⁸ Certainly God recognizes the sinful person as His own creature but,

⁶⁶² Barth, *CD IV/1*, 157. For a brief account of Barth's use of the legal metaphor of justice in his doctrine of atonement see Colin Gunton, *The Actuality of Atonement: A Study of Metaphor, Rationality and the Christian Tradition* (New York: T&T Clark Continuum, 1988) 109-113. For an engagement with Barth's doctrine of atonement focusing on his view of penal substitution see Garry J. Williams, "Karl Barth and the Doctrine of the Atonement" in *Engaging with Barth: Contemporary Evangelical Critiques*, eds., David Gibson and Daniel Strange (Nottingham: Apollos, 2008) 232-272; also Jeannine M. Graham, *Representation and Substitution in the Atonement Theologies of Dorothee Sölle, John Macquarrie, and Karl Barth*, (New York: Peter Lang, 2005) especially Part Three, Chapters 9-14.

⁶⁶³ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 45.

⁶⁶⁴ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 158. Van Der Kooi states, "...the human Jesus is localized as the place where God's condescending to man occurs eminently." Cornelis Van Der Kooi, *As In a Mirror: John Calvin and Karl Barth on Knowing God: A Diptych*, trans. Donald Mader (Boston: Brill, 2005) 272.

⁶⁶⁵ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 158.

⁶⁶⁶ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 159.

⁶⁶⁷ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 158. For a summary of Barth's account of §59 see Damon So, "The Missionary Journey of the Son of God into the Far Country: A Paradigm of the Holistic Gospel Developed from the Theology of Karl Barth," *Transformation* 23, no. 3 (July 2006) 130-142.

⁶⁶⁸ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 158.

astonishingly, how can He take its hostile, deadly place of opposition to Himself in order to destroy its rebellious occupant, thereby also destroying the place itself and the improper way of being present in relation and distinction? Furthermore, remaining true to Himself as God and to His covenant partner, not content simply to destroy the old, how does He create a new place for proper mutual presence in relation and distinction, a reconciled existence for the new creation revealed in His resurrection?

First, what constitutes God's place so He can come to our place, being appropriately present there in the flesh? Barth begins from the non-speculative place revealed in the history of the divine event of reconciliation, Jesus Christ. The Subject of reconciliation is the One who achieves it, "the Lord as servant." Biblical writers attest both "the full and genuine and individual humanity of the man Jesus of Nazareth" and also His lordship that effectively "places Him at the side of God."⁶⁶⁹ Given the "peculiar place and function of the man Jesus"⁶⁷⁰ in "His unity with God," He is "the Son of the Heavenly Father... 'by nature God.'"⁶⁷¹

The kind of God this Son is in created space and time is utterly consistent with the kind of God He is in divine space and eternity. The spatiality of God the Son in time is rooted in the spatiality of God the Son in eternity. God's nature as 'very God' in condescension, examined through the Son's obedience to the Father, reveals His spatiality. Considered 'from below' as revealed in creaturely space and time, the Son's obedience to the Father in the incarnation is "the outer moment" of this event for Barth.⁶⁷² God's nature, viewed 'from above' through the Son's obedience to the Father *in se*, in eternity, is the "inner moment" and ontological ground of the former. These moments, expressing two human viewpoints from which to inquire into Jesus Christ's reality, are actually one in Him. Barth concretely establishes the being and work of Jesus Christ as that of God Himself since "...the nature and essence of the true God is revealed in Jesus Christ."⁶⁷³ What the man Jesus is and does, God Himself is and does; since the man Jesus is both 'very God' and obedient, it follows that the "true God... is obedient."⁶⁷⁴ The obedience the Son renders to the Father in time corresponds perfectly to and reveals the obedience the Son renders to the Father in eternity. Since He is

⁶⁶⁹ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 160.

⁶⁷⁰ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 162.

⁶⁷¹ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 163.

⁶⁷² Barth, *CD IV/1*, 179.

⁶⁷³ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 129-30.

⁶⁷⁴ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 164.

present in proper relation and distinction with His Father, obeying His Father in both time and eternity, obedience is one critical characteristic of the Son's spatiality.

Obedience entails several aspects: the Son freely chooses to obey His Father's will and to do so as a human being; its form is suffering, the history of "the suffering servant of God";⁶⁷⁵ God's election of grace is its ground; and it entails a "self limitation and a self humiliation" by God.⁶⁷⁶ Barth concludes, this One who "...became Jewish flesh...who fulfills the covenant made by God with [Israel]...is the obedient Son and servant of God...who essentially and necessarily suffers."⁶⁷⁷ Essentially and necessarily because "elected and ordained by God...from all eternity" as the actualization of the divine election of the covenant of grace, provisionally given in Israel's covenant history and set within "world history, at a cosmic place". Hence, "'The Word was made flesh' means that the Son of God does not take any place as man, but this place. As God's Son in His unity with the Father He stands necessarily – with a divine necessity – at this place."⁶⁷⁸ In the New Testament, the enfleshed Son of God takes "...the very place...allotted to the 'children' of Israel in their relation with God" in the Old Testament.⁶⁷⁹ Like Israel, "He is the object of the electing will of the Creator...bound to the same obedience and service of God" and a recipient of divine grace. In distinction from Israel, He is also the Subject electing Himself for condescension, commanding obedience, and the Giver of grace. God as this man "...does not merely go into lowliness, into the far country, to be Himself there...now He Himself becomes lowly. He Himself is the man who is His Son."⁶⁸⁰ God does not come to our lowly place in recognizable divine splendor but hidden in lowly humanity. God's spatiality as Reconciler first entails His Self-election to become human as God in His second mode of being precisely to suffer in obedient service to the Father's gracious will. The Son is freely and lovingly present in relation and distinction as the electing and elected Suffering Servant of God.

The nature of our place reveals the magnitude of the divine Self-humiliation and specifies what God's spatiality involves. God's Word condescendingly journeys to the alien place of "flesh". Signifying not only creaturely existence in earthly space and time, 'flesh' primarily refers to humanity in flagrant opposition to God Himself, in resolute disobedience

⁶⁷⁵ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 164.

⁶⁷⁶ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 170.

⁶⁷⁷ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 166.

⁶⁷⁸ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 168.

⁶⁷⁹ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 169.

⁶⁸⁰ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 170.

to His will.⁶⁸¹ For “...who and what is man – his unfaithfulness, his disobedience, his fall, his sin, his enmity against God” – is revealed “only in the light of God’s election”.⁶⁸² Being present in this place, living this “alien life”, Jesus Christ actualizes and reveals God’s election of grace, having eternally “chosen and loved” the wayward people there.⁶⁸³ As sinners, everyone rejects and “negates God”, so all are “negated by God”.⁶⁸⁴ Yet in Jesus Christ, “...God Himself comes amongst sinners in the form of a sinner”, to that very place of sin, contradiction and perishing.⁶⁸⁵ Furthermore, He “...takes [their] place...and allows the bitterness of their suffering to fall upon Himself.” The election to suffering and death of this elect human is “...the work of God Himself as God gives Himself to this most dreadful of all foreign spheres.”⁶⁸⁶ Therefore, the shocking manifestation of His divine nature is precisely the “...obedience of suffering...of the Son to the Father, shown...in His self-humiliation, His way into the far country, fulfilled in His death on the cross.”⁶⁸⁷ Self-elected to suffer and die because present in the place of sinners, He stands “...under the wrath and accusation of God...under His sentence and judgment.”⁶⁸⁸ The Son’s spatiality includes the “secret of God’s making Himself present” in this hidden, contradictory form of condescension unto death.⁶⁸⁹

This outer moment of “...the mystery of the ‘deity of Christ’ ...[concerns] His presence in the world”,⁶⁹⁰ or how or by what right God became human.⁶⁹¹ The incarnated Son goes to the very place of the sinner’s contradiction against God, living there united with him under divine judgment and the “curse of death”.⁶⁹² Yet in distinction, “He does not sin when...He mingles with sinners and takes their place. And when He dies...death does not gain any power over Him.” No contradiction or rift in God’s being is implied since He is “...Lord over this contradiction even as He subjects Himself to it.” As God, “He overcomes the flesh in becoming flesh.”⁶⁹³ Therefore, “What He is and does He is and does in full unity

⁶⁸¹ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 159.

⁶⁸² Barth, *CD IV/1*, 171.

⁶⁸³ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 171.

⁶⁸⁴ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 173.

⁶⁸⁵ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 172.

⁶⁸⁶ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 175.

⁶⁸⁷ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 177.

⁶⁸⁸ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 173.

⁶⁸⁹ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 176.

⁶⁹⁰ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 177.

⁶⁹¹ “*Qui uire Deus homo?*” Barth, *CD IV/1*, 184.

⁶⁹² Barth, *CD IV/1*, 184.

⁶⁹³ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 185. McCormack states, “ ‘God-abandonment’ does not mean that the eternal Father abandons the eternal Son. The thought of a rift in the divine being, of a ‘God against God,’ is already excluded by the fact that in becoming human and dying on a cross, God does that which is proper to Himself.” It is proper

with Himself...especially and above all – in Christ...”⁶⁹⁴ Becoming human, taking the form of a suffering servant to die and rise again, “...God proves...that He can do it, that to do it is within His nature.”⁶⁹⁵ As a free enactment of His love and without surrendering His divinity, He adopts “...the form and cause of man into the most perfect communion with His own, accepting solidarity with the world.”⁶⁹⁶ The “...*forma Dei* consists in the grace in which God Himself assumes and makes His own the *forma servi*.” Taking servant form as God corresponds to and even “supremely assert[s]” the spatiality of His own being and will, being present in relation and distinction with His covenant partner.⁶⁹⁷ Hence,

His particular, and highly particularized, presence in grace, in which the eternal Word descended to the lowest parts of the earth...and tabernacled in the man Jesus..., dwelling in this one man in the fullness of His Godhead,...is itself the demonstration and exercise of His omnipresence, i.e., of the perfection in which He has His own place which is superior to all the places created by Him, not excluding but including all other places.⁶⁹⁸

God’s spatiality in the Son means God’s space includes the sinner’s place.

Further indicating “what Godhead, or the divine nature, is”, God’s presence in relation and distinction can be just as “lowly as... high,...near as...far,...little as...great,...abroad as...home.”⁶⁹⁹ His spatiality includes such unity in differentiation, being present in a variety of forms and ways. So, even in a hidden servant form, God is fully present and knowable as God. The reconciliation accomplished in Jesus Christ depends upon and reveals this spatial reality, being present in the closest possible unity with God while also maintaining proper distinction.

The ‘inner moment’ of God’s nature in Jesus Christ, viewed ‘from above’ through the Son’s obedience to the Father in eternity, is “...the mystery of the inner being of God as the being of the Son in relation to the Father.”⁷⁰⁰ If the humility rendered by the incarnate Son of God is truly an act of obedience, “...a free choice made in recognition of an appointed order, in execution of a will...which was intended to be obeyed...” then the source of this order, will and command must be found in God Himself. The humility proper to God’s temporal servant form in “His presence and action in Jesus Christ” must be the “humility grounded in the being

because in God’s primal decision “God has determined Himself from eternity for death on a cross”. McCormack, “For Us and Our Salvation”, 34.

⁶⁹⁴ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 186.

⁶⁹⁵ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 186.

⁶⁹⁶ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 187.

⁶⁹⁷ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 188.

⁶⁹⁸ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 187.

⁶⁹⁹ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 192.

⁷⁰⁰ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 177.

of God Himself.”⁷⁰¹ Manifesting the electing and elected God as the God-human, the event of divine condescension in Jesus Christ involves “...a divine commission and its divine execution...a divine order and divine obedience...the divine fulfillment of a divine decree.”⁷⁰² The Son executes and fulfills the primal decision and election of grace through His eternal presence in active obedience to the Father, according to His spatiality. Hence the Son’s temporal obedience and spatiality necessarily and essentially expresses the spatiality or being present in “obedience which takes place in God Himself.”⁷⁰³

This obedience is the atonement accomplished in and by Jesus Christ in His spatiality. Confessing “‘God was in Christ’...[acknowledges] the presence and action of God in Jesus Christ as the most proper and direct and immediate presence and action of the one true God in the sphere of human and world history.”⁷⁰⁴ The incarnate Son’s spatiality is the fullest revelation of God’s own spatiality since no material difference exists between God’s economic and immanent being and work.

When we have to do with Jesus Christ we do have to do with an ‘economy’ but not with the kind of economy in which His true and proper being remains behind an improper being, a being ‘as if.’ We have to do with an economy in which God is truly Himself and Himself acts and intervenes in the world.⁷⁰⁵

The work of God occurring in and by this creature (who is God) in creaturely space and time effectively accomplishes the reconciliation between God and sinful, perishing humans, in their place, ‘from within’. Thus, the atonement is a real, human event rooted and passionately assumed into God’s own life, so in His place.

How, then, is God God? For Barth, the Son’s obedient presence with the Father “...implies an above and a below, a *prius* and a *posterius*, a superior and a junior and subordinate.”⁷⁰⁶ How is God present in relation as the obedient One in distinction from the One who demands obedience? Neither subordinationism nor modalism is inferred.⁷⁰⁷ A single Subject in three modes of being, in the constancy of God’s unity and equality, “...the One God is, in fact...a First and a Second, One who rules and commands in majesty and One who

⁷⁰¹ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 193.

⁷⁰² Barth, *CD IV/1*, 195.

⁷⁰³ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 198.

⁷⁰⁴ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 198.

⁷⁰⁵ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 198.

⁷⁰⁶ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 195.

⁷⁰⁷ For a presentation of Barth’s view of the Son’s obedience and the meaning of subordination in *Church Dogmatics* see Kevin Giles, “Subordination and Obedience in the Theology of Karl Barth” in his *Jesus and the Father: Modern Evangelicals Reinvent the Doctrine of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006) Chapter 8, 275-312.

obeys in humility.”⁷⁰⁸ God “...is also a Third, the One who affirms the one and equal Godhead through...by and in the two modes of being, the One who makes possible and maintains His fellowship with Himself as the one and the other.”⁷⁰⁹ In the divine *perichoretic* existence that is “...without division or contradiction...God is God...only in their concrete relationships the one to the other, in the history which takes place between them.” Spatiality is essential to God’s being and works in eternity and in time. The provisional goal of His electing will in His reconciling activity is that “...God Himself becomes a man amongst men in His mode of being as the One who is obedient in humility.” In this event “...the inward divine relationship between the One who obeys in humility is identical with the very different relationship between God and one of His creatures, a man..., as the strangely logical final continuation of the history in which He is God.”⁷¹⁰ The constancy of God is upheld; what Jesus Christ the God-man is in His eternal spatiality, He is in His temporal spatiality.

He does not change in giving Himself. He simply activates and reveals Himself *ad extra*, in the world. He is in and for the world what He is in and for Himself. He is in time what He is in eternity...He is in our lowliness what He is in His majesty (...because His majesty is also lowliness). He is as man, as the man who is obedient in humility, Jesus of Nazareth, what He is as God (and what He can be also as man because He is it as God in this mode of divine being). That is the true deity of Jesus Christ...⁷¹¹

Considering the Father-Son relation more specifically, Barth comments,

In His mode of being as the Son He fulfills the divine subordination, just as the Father in His mode of being as the Father fulfills the divine superiority... He is the same as the Son, i.e., as the self-positing God (the eternally begotten of the Father...) as is the Father as the self-positing God (the Father who eternally begets).⁷¹²

He is present in relation with the Father in distinct obedient humility; the Father is present in relation with the Son in distinct commanding superiority. Triune spatiality means each is not without the other and both are not without the “mutual affirmation and love in the Holy Spirit.” Furthermore, Barth stresses the “...ontological necessity in which this Father has this Son, and this Son this Father, the perfection in which this Father and this Son are one...in the activity of the Holy Spirit.”⁷¹³ This necessity, based in God’s free Self-determination and election of grace, “...shows Himself the One He is [very God] by the obedience which He

⁷⁰⁸ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 202.

⁷⁰⁹ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 202-203.

⁷¹⁰ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 203.

⁷¹¹ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 204.

⁷¹² Barth, *CD IV/1*, 209.

⁷¹³ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 209.

renders as a man”, and as such is “...the self-evident fulfillment of that determination of a son to his father...”⁷¹⁴ The history of this elect and obedient Son is simultaneously the history of the electing and commanding Father in the unifying active presence of the Spirit.

Ontologically grounded in His election and Self-determination to be God as man, the reconciling spatiality of the Son, Jesus Christ, is a perfection of His being present in relation and distinction with Father and Spirit for humiliation in obedience to the Father’s will, and having the provisional and condescending form of sinful human flesh. The active Subject in this servant’s work is the Son of God as the man Jesus.⁷¹⁵ The purpose and goal of this spatial Self-determination in the atoning work of justification is explored next.⁷¹⁶

2.2. God Judges Our Unjustified Place

Why did God become human to be present in relation to render obedience in this distinct way as servant? Understanding the spatiality proper to the Son of God in the whole work of justification, and specifically in the atonement, is the aim of this section. Barth asks, “With what purpose and to what end does God will this and do this?”⁷¹⁷ The explicitly spatial language of his response is concretely instructive.

God freely acts to be present in relation and distinction with us, by a divine necessity stemming solely from His gracious divine decision to be God for us in Jesus Christ and to be God in no other way. The enactment, fulfillment and revelation in creaturely space and time of this decision to be actively present as an obedient servant magnify God’s glory and accomplish the salvation of the world.⁷¹⁸ Barth explores four ways God’s Self-determination to be present “for us” in Jesus Christ is executed in His work of justification as the Judge, the

⁷¹⁴ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 210.

⁷¹⁵ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 211.

⁷¹⁶ For a concise treatment of Barth’s doctrine of justification as rooted in his theological ontology, see Bruce L. McCormack, “*Justitia aliena*: Karl Barth in Conversation with the Evangelical Doctrine of Imputed Righteousness” in *Justification in Perspective: Historical Developments and Contemporary Challenges* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic and Edinburgh: Rutherford House, 2006) 167-196, especially 177ff. McGrath ignores critical distinctions on justification and sanctification between Barth and Calvin, effectively collapsing the two into one, which results in a misguided interpretation of Barth, see Alister E. McGrath, “Justification, Barth, Trent and Küng,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 34, no. 6 (1981) 517-529.

⁷¹⁷ “*Cur Deus homo?*” Barth, *CD IV/1*, 212.

⁷¹⁸ “If we can speak of a necessity of any kind here, it can only be the necessity of the decision which God did in fact make and execute, the necessity of the fact that the being of God, the omnipotence of His free love, has this concrete determination and is effective and revealed in this determination and no other, that God wills to magnify and does in fact magnify His own glory in this way and not in any other, and therefore to the inclusion of the redemption and salvation of the world. This fact we have to recognize to be divinely necessary because it derives from and is posited by God.” Barth, *CD IV/1*, 213.

judged, the judgment, and the justice. These also indicate how God's Son is present in relation and distinction with us as "the Judge judged for us" in our place.⁷¹⁹

First, God the Son becomes human to be Savior of the world. He is with us in our place, changing that place from within as one of us. Jesus Christ is the Savior who comes to our place but does so as our Judge. Since God alone is good, only He is in a place to judge good from evil. God's own being and work, His place, is the standard by which everything is judged. Encountering all human beings in Jesus Christ, God declares the truth about us: we are sinners, opposed to God. We attempt to be like God instead of living under His lordship and within our creaturely limits. The "root and origin" of sin, according to Barth, is this arrogant desire to be the judge in God's place.⁷²⁰ Living only for oneself, the sinner attempts to judge herself innocent, good and in the right while judging others as guilty and in the wrong. Trying to usurp the judge's place, proper to God alone, we have made our own place impossible. We have transformed our proper spatiality, our ordered relation with God from being present in humble obedience to being present in arrogant opposition, our improper spatiality. However, unless the standard of being in the right or righteous before God is revealed to us, we remain ignorant of our disordered spatiality or relation with God. So the true Judge must come to be present among us as one of us. As the true God, Jesus Christ is the very righteousness of God Himself, perfectly present in relation with God and distinction with Father and Spirit; as the true human, He reveals how to live appropriately within God-given creaturely limits, being present in covenant relation with God and distinction as the obedient partner and righteous human. Only in view of the actual existence of God in the flesh, is the place of sinful humanity identified in full reality. God's glory is increased as He comes in the form of a servant, precisely to this impossible, perishing, isolated place of sinners, doing there what they cannot do for themselves – judge rightly in relation to God. So "Jesus Christ as very man and very God has taken the place of every man...[having] penetrated to that place where every man is in his inner being supremely by and for himself."⁷²¹ The sinner's disordered place reveals his disrupted spatiality: he no longer lives in free, loving relation in God's presence as intended by his Creator and divine covenant Partner; having rejected the good created order, he now lives in chaos, threatened by non-being, unable to delight in God's presence or participate in a mutual relationship. He has forfeited his good creaturely spatiality.

⁷¹⁹ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 228.

⁷²⁰ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 231. For an exposition of Barth's Christological view of sin see Allen Jorgenson, "Karl Barth's Christological Treatment of Sin," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 54, no. 4 (2001) 439-462.

⁷²¹ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 232.

Taking the sinner's place as his own judge, God has "dispossessed, expelled, ... displaced" him. The sinner "...has no more say even in this home of his, this place where the flesh is most intensively and happily and seriously flesh." His judgment is no longer valid; actually, "He is no longer judge." The true Judge willingly takes this place, for He is "radically and totally for us, in our place."⁷²² He does this to judge in our place. All are "abas[ed] and jeopardis[ed]"; abased because they sought to exalt themselves to God's place as Judge which was not their rightful place in relation to God, and jeopardized because in doing so they made themselves guilty under God's genuinely right judgment. Additionally, all will experience "immeasurable liberation and hope"; liberation since freed from the burden of judging what was not theirs to begin with, and hope for now they "have space and freedom" for "other more important...happy and...fruitful activities", being present in properly ordered relation and distinction with the true Judge who is for them.⁷²³

Second, Jesus Christ takes "the place of us sinners."⁷²⁴ Barth asks, how can God's Son "...take our place, which means...the strange place where we make the illegitimate and impossible attempt to leave the place which belongs to us and to occupy that which does not...our place as enemies against God?"⁷²⁵ He is present there in a different way than we are. "In taking our place as Judge He takes the place which belongs to Him, which is His own from all eternity." He is the true Judge who can and does occupy this place, and His active presence in this, His rightful place, constitutes His righteous judgment concerning us and our place. We have usurped His place from Him, doing evil, exalting ourselves as our own judge and judging wrongly; but He takes it from us and does good, judging rightly there. He does not sin in this place as we have; He does not oppose and invert the good, ordered relationship between God and creatures. Unfathomably, He judges in our place "...by taking upon Himself, by accepting responsibility for that which we do in this place."⁷²⁶ He willingly bears the consequences of our sin, standing in our place under "the accusation, the judgment and the curse" which must fall on us as sinners, with our chaotic spatiality.⁷²⁷ Because borne by Him who has placed Himself there for us, this place, its evil end and its fallen spatiality are now forever closed to us. Jesus Christ,

⁷²² Barth, *CD IV/1*, 232.

⁷²³ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 233.

⁷²⁴ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 235.

⁷²⁵ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 236. For a philosophical discussion on this divine substitution see Christof Gestrinch, "God Takes Our Place: A Religious-Philosophical Approach to the Concept of *Stellvertretung*," *Modern Theology* 17, no. 3 (July 2001) 313-334.

⁷²⁶ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 236.

⁷²⁷ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 237.

... who is in the one person the electing God and the one elect man is as the rejecting God, the God who judges sin in the flesh, in His one person the one rejected man, the Lamb who bears the sin of the world that the world should no longer have to bear it or be able to bear it, that it should be radically and totally taken away from it.⁷²⁸

The perfection of this Judge is His being present to judge rightly in the place of sinners. God's mercy, freely and eternally electing to bind Himself to them and they to Him, reveals His spatiality; He will not abandon sinners to their chaotic place of inevitable destruction, which is also to abandon His own divine spatiality. God's righteousness also demonstrates His spatiality, neither accepting nor ignoring this place of sinners but making it His own to judge sin, sinner and sinful spatiality, there in His own flesh, with its proper creaturely spatiality. In this place exchange, He becomes "the only One who is judged...condemned and rejected."⁷²⁹ The elected reversal is complete: "Jesus represents men at the place which is theirs according to the divine judgment, by putting Himself in the place which is theirs on the basis of and in accordance with their human unrighteousness." He does what we do not and cannot do: "He maintains the right by electing to let Himself be put in the wrong", judged by being present in our place for us.⁷³⁰

Third, Jesus Christ is for us because "He suffered and was crucified and died."⁷³¹ The Son's work, His properly humble, obedient presence in relation and distinction, is fulfilled in His passion. This freely willed divine act occurs in, with and through the freely willed act of this human, in creaturely space and time, and has universal significance for all humans. By His actively passionate presence their place or "situation has objectively been decisively changed".⁷³² For Barth, the Subject of this action is decisive. Concerning "...His person: it is the eternal God Himself who has given Himself in His Son to be man, and as man to take upon Himself this human passion." Concerning His purposed action or "...mission: it is the Judge who in this passion takes the place of those who ought to be judged, who...allows Himself to be judged in their place." Because the Subject who suffers and dies in this passion is none other than God Himself as this human, the true mystery of the passion is identified. Barth asks how God can do this and still be God; can God "really die and be dead?"⁷³³ He answers, "in this humiliation God is supremely God."⁷³⁴ Knowledge of what kind of being

⁷²⁸ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 237.

⁷²⁹ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 237-238.

⁷³⁰ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 238.

⁷³¹ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 244.

⁷³² Barth, *CD IV/1*, 245.

⁷³³ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 246.

⁷³⁴ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 246-247.

God is given in the revelation of what God has actually done. He is God precisely as this suffering, crucified and dying human, who not only experiences this judgment in His own being as the Son by taking the place of all sinners but in doing so fulfills His eternal will, “the reconciliation of the world with God.”⁷³⁵ God is present with us in the most definitive and personal way, thus revealing His spatiality in the Son who becomes human, judges us and dies for us so we may enjoy proper creaturely spatiality with God in Him. In the saving judgment that God Himself bears for us in our place, God confronts the root of opposition against Him as Creator and Lord, with its chaotic spatiality.⁷³⁶ Not just any evil, sin or death, this is “eternal death” and

... sin itself and as such: the preoccupation, the orientation, the determination of man as he has left his place as a creature and broken his covenant with God; the corruption which God has made His own, for which He willed to take responsibility in this one man. Here in the passion in which as Judge He lets Himself be judged God has fulfilled this responsibility.⁷³⁷

Taking our place of judgment in the passion of Jesus Christ, God is personally present, acting for us in the flesh; He turns the world from itself and its end in eternal death and converts it to Himself for eternal life with Him. God’s passion in Jesus Christ fulfills God’s decision to reconcile the world to Himself, doing that which He alone can and must do

...to remedy the corruption of our being and ourselves, to restore order between Himself as Creator and the world as His creation, to set up and maintain again the covenant broken by man, to carry it through against man for the sake of man, and in that way to save man from destruction.⁷³⁸

His passionate presence with us creates our proper presence with Him; His spatiality activates true creaturely spatiality. The divine act of “...overcoming sin...in its character as the rebellion of man against God, and in its character as the ground of man’s hopeless destiny in death” is the “very heart of the atonement”. God’s judgment against sin is fulfilled when the Son of God as this man takes our place as sinner, to suffer and die there for us, thereby putting an end to us as sinners with our fallen spatiality, to sin itself and our sinful place. This gracious act of atonement occurs for us in Jesus Christ’s passion as “...the judgment of God in which the Judge Himself was the judged.”⁷³⁹

⁷³⁵ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 247.

⁷³⁶ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 247. Thompson correctly writes, for Barth “...man is in a real (ontological) relationship with God. Even in God’s rejection and judgment, man is not godless, nor apart from God but with him, since he cannot escape him.” Thompson, *Christ in Perspective*, 105.

⁷³⁷ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 247.

⁷³⁸ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 251.

⁷³⁹ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 254.

Fourth, Jesus Christ is for us as Judge, judged and judgment “before God”, and by doing what is right He is also God’s “justice or righteousness”.⁷⁴⁰ The “negative form” of the divine action against sin and therefore against us as sinners is the suffering and death of Jesus Christ; but only as an expression of “...the positive divine righteousness, which...is identical with the free love of God effectively interposing between our enmity and Himself, the work and word of His grace.” Christ’s passion is God’s No by which His “Yes to man...determined and pronounced in eternity” takes place in creaturely space and time.⁷⁴¹ God is for us in Jesus Christ, becoming human to do this human work of suffering and dying in our place (the negative form) to accomplish the reconciliation of the world in Him (the positive goal). Jesus Christ is God’s justice in the atoning event since He is both the righteousness of God and the righteousness of man. As the God-man in His divine-human unity, He is the only obedient Son of the Father as He is the only obedient human creature. Being actively present in perfect reconciling obedience to the Father’s will for us, first, as the elected human in relation with God the Creator according to His good human nature, and second, as the faithful human covenant partner in relation to the Father, entails the Son’s spatial existence as Judge, judged, judgment and justice. Having accomplished this in our rejected place without sinning, He also becomes the rejected human in creaturely space and time which corresponds to His eternal election to that rejected place. This form of the divine No is the freely chosen way God’s righteous presence ultimately fulfills His divine Yes.

The righteousness of Jesus Christ’s being and work consists in the “execution of the judgment in the judging of the Judge” for us and in our place. Open to temptation in His human nature, His sinlessness consists not in a state but in “the act of His being”. In our place of rebellion against God He freely chose and actually lived appropriately in God’s presence, under His lordship as the obedient servant and within appropriate creaturely limits. Unlike sinners, “...He acted justly in the place of all and for the sake of all...returning to the place from which they had fallen into sin, the place which belongs to the creature in relation to God.” By this enacted decision “He reversed the fall in their place and for their sake.”⁷⁴² His faithful obedience in our place provides the ground for the new Adam, the new creation, our new place and so our new spatiality. The old is ended, the new has dawned in His righteous presence before God. Summarizing Barth’s four points, having freely taken our place as sinners to reconcile us to Himself by His obedient presence in relation and distinction with

⁷⁴⁰ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 256.

⁷⁴¹ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 257.

⁷⁴² Barth, *CD IV/1*, 259.

God and us, God in Jesus Christ is for us, actively present as the Judge, the judged, the judgment, and the justice.⁷⁴³

2.2.1. God “Abandons” Our Unjustified Place

Focusing on God’s spatial being in the atoning event, this section aims to concretely demonstrate the reconciling spatiality of the Reconciler by reflecting on Barth’s discussions of Jesus Christ’s ‘cry of dereliction’: “My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?” (Mark 15:34). Barth first identifies Scripture’s stark declaration of the Son’s despair as “...a problem of the first magnitude...the problem of all the problems of His existence and relationship to God and His life’s work.”⁷⁴⁴ Exploring what took place on the cross as expressed in this cry of God-abandonment from the aspect of the spatiality of God highlights this divine perfection of spatiality in its most acute manifestation. How is the Father’s so called ‘absence’ to be understood at the very critical moment of the Son’s death, particularly since Father and Son are two modes of being who are eternally and perfectly present to each other in the Spirit as the one indivisible God? Viewed from God’s side, from above, this primarily inquires how God the Father is present (or not present?) to God the Son and the Son present to the Father in the act of dying in this particular way for us. Considered from the human’s side or below, this secondarily asks how is God present (or absent) to this human who becomes the sinner in our place in this event? Both sides of this question regarding presence focus on the single Subject of this action, the God-man in His divine-human unity. Selected passages of *Church Dogmatics* expounding Mark 15:34 serve to highlight aspects of God the Son’s reconciling spatiality.

Jesus Christ’s cry of dereliction first distinguishes and subordinates God the Son from and to God the Father.⁷⁴⁵ In one sense, the Subject of this cry is the indivisible God (Father and Son). God is crucially present to Himself in this act; distinct as Father and Son in the Spirit, and united in fulfilling His one, elect, reconciling will. Considering the Son’s creatureliness within creation, the Subject is the human creature (as God) elected to be God’s reconciliation for all creation. By taking the place of the alienated, sinful creature who has chosen and loved all that the Creator has rejected and hated, God’s righteous judgment falls

⁷⁴³ Barth, *CD* IV/1, 273.

⁷⁴⁴ Barth, *CD* IV/2, 251.

⁷⁴⁵ “How could Jesus be more emphatically separated and distinguished from Him who is properly called God than by putting on His lips the doubly disconcerting: *Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani!* (Mk. 15:34)?...What is beyond question is that the [Lord Jesus Christ] is separate from and subordinate to [God the Father]...” Barth, *CD* I/1, 385.

fully upon this elect creature on the cross, and Him alone. The divine-human Son fulfills His election to death, thus His own being as the creature that is wholly, uniquely present to divine judgment.

Considering what death in God-abandonment entails, Barth describes the type of death Scripture calls “eternal corruption” or simply, “‘hell.’” Although the threat of this particular death for all human creatures is implied in their physical death, only One has experienced it. Indeed, “This is what distinguishes His death from all others.”⁷⁴⁶ Submitting Himself to God’s judgment in our place, “...the man who is wholly and unreservedly for God – has God against him.” Such direct encounter between God and human involves two aspects of human death: alienation from God caused by creaturely mortality, and primarily, alienation resulting from “His vicarious bearing of the sin of...the whole world” living in opposition to God. Thus, ‘hell’ is human existence antithetically in death as eternal “punishment, torment, outer darkness, the worm, the flame”. God’s presence in wrath bestows “infinite suffering” upon the deserving creature. As this creature is God’s Son, “In Him God Himself suffers what guilty man had to suffer by way of eternal punishment.”⁷⁴⁷ For Barth, Jesus’ “death under the wrath of God, with its quality of eternal punishment”⁷⁴⁸ gives His suffering its “representative power...by which the world is reconciled to God.”⁷⁴⁹ Thus, Jesus Christ’s death reveals both the fatal sin of humans that He bore to bear away from them and their death as eternal punishment that He received in their place and on their behalf. Since Jesus Christ, alone, is elected to be in God’s presence as He unleashes His wrath, Barth concludes, “no other really stands under the judgment of God.” All merely stand “under the sign of this judgment” which is death, yet not in its character as eternal punishment.⁷⁵⁰ Only God’s Son experiences death in God-abandonment; for “...in Jesus Christ and Him alone...[man] is preserved from this execution of judgment on him with the severity with which it was executed at the cross.”⁷⁵¹

Does the Son’s abandonment, alienation and judgment by the Father suggested by the cry of dereliction indicate a possible rift in God’s own being between Father and Son?⁷⁵² For Barth, “...the meaning of the incarnation is plainly revealed in the question of Jesus on the

⁷⁴⁶ Barth, *CD* III/2, 602.

⁷⁴⁷ Barth, *CD* III/2, 603.

⁷⁴⁸ Barth, *CD* III/2, 604-605.

⁷⁴⁹ Barth, *CD* III/2, 603-604.

⁷⁵⁰ Barth, *CD* III/2, 605.

⁷⁵¹ Barth, *CD* III/2, 606.

⁷⁵² For an opposing view regarding the absence of the Father see D. Lyle Dabney, “*Pneumatologia Crucis*: Reclaiming *Theologia Crucis* for a Theology of the Spirit Today,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 53, no. 4 (2000) 511-524, especially 523-524.

cross...” Taking servant form in the incarnation entails two things for God: He becomes a human creature and He gives “...Himself up to the contradiction of man against Him...placing Himself under the judgment under which man has fallen in this contradiction, under the curse of death which rests upon Him.” Yet no “contradiction and conflict in God Himself” is suggested.⁷⁵³

He does not come into conflict with Himself. He does not sin when in unity with the man Jesus He mingles with sinners and takes their place. And when He dies in His unity with this man, death does not gain any power over Him...He makes His own the being of man in contradiction against Him, but He does not make common cause with it...[and He] makes His own the being of the man under the curse of this contradiction, but in order to do away with it as He suffers it. He acts as Lord over this contradiction even as He subjects Himself to it.⁷⁵⁴

Rejecting any division between God’s being and act, Barth asks,

If it were otherwise, if in it He set Himself in contradiction with Himself, how could He reconcile the world with Himself? Of what value would His deity be to us if – instead of crossing in that deity the very real gulf between Himself and us – He left that deity behind Him in His coming to us, if it came to be outside of Him as He became ours...if He lost Himself?⁷⁵⁵

The single Subject actualized and revealed in this event involves “...no paradox, no antinomy, no division, no inconsistency, not even the possibility of it.”⁷⁵⁶ He is God precisely in His unity with human nature, especially elected as the Rejected to this antithetical place of contradiction and judgment in God’s presence. No rift exists between Father and Son in this event. God is God such that His deity encompasses divine and human, eternity and time, infinite and finite, the form of Lord and the form of servant. “He is all this as the Lord, and in such a way that He embraces the opposites of these concepts even while He is superior to them.”⁷⁵⁷ In Jesus Christ He personally came to destroy forever this God-abandoned place by stepping into it and receiving there our due. No other creature has or will ever again experience God’s presence in wrath as eternal punishment. He is and does something unique among all other humans: freely obeying His Father, He submits to the holy divine wrath and the curse of death in God-abandonment in our place.

His particular, and highly particularised, presence in grace, in which the eternal Word descended to the lowest parts of the earth...and tabernacled in the man Jesus..., dwelling in this one man in the fullness of the Godhead..., is itself the demonstration

⁷⁵³ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 185.

⁷⁵⁴ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 185.

⁷⁵⁵ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 185.

⁷⁵⁶ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 186.

⁷⁵⁷ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 187.

and exercise of His omnipresence, i.e., of the perfection in which He has His own place which is superior to all the places created by Him, not excluding but including all other places.⁷⁵⁸

Jesus' cry of dereliction further demonstrates how God is for us. "*Deus pro nobis* means simply that God has not abandoned the world and man in the unlimited need of his situation, but that He willed to bear this need as His own, that He took it upon Himself, and that He cries with man in this need."⁷⁵⁹ Freely taking the sinner's "place and status" and thus making them His own place and status, He demonstrates His willingness to suffer the God-abandoned consequences of this place.⁷⁶⁰ Hence, Barth declares Jesus' cry of abandonment is the "...remarkable historical complement to the eternal decision taken in God Himself..."⁷⁶¹ That primal choice constituting God as our God and us as God's people, and Himself as triune, is definitively realized in the event depicted in this cry, the event of His being the God-human elected for this rejection. As such, this cry most fundamentally reveals who and what God is. 'God with us' holds nothing back to be present in relation and distinction with us, not even His own experience of the Son's death in God-abandonment. "Had God forsaken Him?" Barth responds, "No, His God had not really forsaken Him" because even in this human experience of the sinner's death the Son had not ceased to be who and what He is. He realizes His election fully precisely in this act. So the Son's free obedience to the Father's will brings about the "strange and scandalous reversal", "...the transformation of the accuser into the accused and the judge into the judged, the naming and handling of the Holy God as one who is godless." Therefore, "Jesus must and will allow Himself to be the one great sinner among all other men...to take the place which is presumably not His but theirs for the sake of righteousness in the supreme sense."⁷⁶² As the historical counterpart to God's free Self-election, God is supremely God for and with us in this radical exchange. Dying in our place on the cross as the Judge judged, He destroys humanity with its fallen, cursed and judged spatiality, humanity that abandons being mutually present with God in proper relation and distinction. In its place He creates a new humanity with corresponding spatiality to be mutually present with God in a newly ordered relation and distinction that no longer falls under the disordering power of sin and death.

⁷⁵⁸ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 187.

⁷⁵⁹ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 215.

⁷⁶⁰ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 215.

⁷⁶¹ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 238-239.

⁷⁶² Barth, *CD IV/1*, 239.

Moreover, Jesus Christ's full humanity as expressed in His cry from the cross unites Him with all humans; He too constantly must face "the kingdom of darkness", the devil tempting Him to do something besides the Father's will. Barth starkly rephrases Jesus' cry to God: "Does all this have to happen?"⁷⁶³ For, here,

...there is a stumbling, although only for a...moment in which there is a pause and trembling not only on earth and in time, not only in the soul of Jesus which is 'sorrowful even until death'...but in a sense in heaven, in the bosom of God Himself, in the relationship between the Father and the Son; a moment in which the question is raised of another possibility than that which will in fact be realized relentlessly and by divine necessity in view of all that has gone before.⁷⁶⁴

Both Father and Son experience the agony, foreboding and suffering involved in receiving God's full 'cup of wrath'. Rather than indicating a rift between Father and Son, Barth asserts that the Father cannot be neutral since everything the Son experiences and endures as fully human, occurs within the one, indivisible divine life. As the God-man, His death in God-abandonment is event in God's very being. God takes even our alienation, our disordered relation with Him, to Himself in Christ, subjecting it to His Lordship.

The Father's verdict upon Jesus' reconciling act on the cross means "a radical end was made of Him and therefore of the world" in Him. Having fulfilled all righteousness, and in a nod to the divine freedom, Barth raises the "frightening possibility" that God might justly have chosen to leave Jesus in the tomb, refusing to give new life to the creation that unjustly chose death. Obediently abandoning or surrendering Himself to "His Father, to His decree and disposing", He also abandons Himself to "death and nothingness which can triumph over Him" and humankind represented in Him.⁷⁶⁵ In that case, Jesus' cry of abandonment would be absolute rather than momentary, and God would have indeed abandoned Him to eternal chaos, nothingness and death. However, having eternally elected Himself and humans to be co-present in ordered relation and distinction, God did abandon "...Him to chaos, as had to happen because of our transgressions, only in order to save Him from it...He made Him the victor over death by letting death conquer Him, as He had to do in fulfillment of the judgment laid upon Him."⁷⁶⁶ The justified creature thus is "...freed from the claim and power which death and nothingness and chaos necessarily had over him in his former corrupted state, freed for life for Him and with Him, and therefore for life everlasting..."⁷⁶⁷ The Father confirms

⁷⁶³ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 264.

⁷⁶⁴ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 265.

⁷⁶⁵ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 307.

⁷⁶⁶ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 308.

⁷⁶⁷ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 307.

His verdict, justifying His Son and us in Him. Only in Christ can the creature be properly spatial, mutually present with God in justified relation and distinction; the distinction of creature, no longer of sinner.

The next notable reference to Jesus' cry appears in Barth's discussion of "human sin in the form of human pride".⁷⁶⁸ He suggests Jesus' question of God-abandonment indicates He is the sole human being "...who would not help Himself or raise any claim to the help of God."⁷⁶⁹ Common to all other humans, sin as pride is the attitude claiming an ability, capacity or right to help oneself that includes a "claim to the help of God."⁷⁷⁰ Jesus Christ's place is unique among human creatures. His spatiality has the character of humility; humility in the form of acceptance of creaturely and sinful limits, acknowledging the impossibility of helping Himself concerning deadly consequences of sin and God's wrath. He does not claim God's help as a mere extension of His own self-help, thus attempting to "make God a partner in his deception...[or to] take the place of God."⁷⁷¹ His cry starkly reveals how completely He abandons Himself to His Father, to do with Him as the Father wills. Repeating none of the sinner's hubris He knows He can neither save Himself nor receive help from God through human determination. He simply receives genuine fatherly help, predetermined by God in the form of the great reversal, beginning in God-abandoned death. Receiving help from God alone, Jesus Christ steps into the sinner's place of improper relation and distinction with God, to destroy it. The Son's reconciling spatiality entails abandoning Himself to the sinner's unjustified spatiality, and to the Father's verdict affirming justified spatiality. Regarding the atonement event, divine spatiality or mutual presence in ordered relation and distinction means the Son is present with the Father in obedience, humility and faith, and the Father is present with the Son in benevolent, omnipotent help. On the cross, the Son experiences the Father's presence in wrath as eternal punishment, God-abandoned death, in order to fulfill the divine purpose for His justified creature to live eternally co-present with Him.

This suffering and God-abandoned death of Jesus Christ, "...this necessity, this fatherly will and decree, could not be something alien to the Son" since it accomplishes the predetermined, Self-electing divine purpose of reconciliation in fulfillment of the covenant of grace. For Barth, the cry highlights the Son's freedom to obediently respond to His Father's command, even as both fulfill the single divine will. The event and cry are the free "execution

⁷⁶⁸ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 458.

⁷⁶⁹ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 459.

⁷⁷⁰ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 458.

⁷⁷¹ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 461.

of His right as the Son” of this Father.⁷⁷² The Son’s spatiality includes His freedom to be present to the Father in this suffering and death, abandoning Himself to the Father’s righteous judgment and gracious verdict. The cry of dereliction reveals the fundamental nature of the Son’s spatial relationship with the Father in the unity of the divine will and the distinction of the Son’s fulfillment of it in His own death as creaturely and sinner.

Additionally, Barth suggests that both Father and Son experience a similar isolation from the creation that rejects its Creator. Obeying the Father’s will that is disobeyed by all other humans and thus taking their original, good place, the Son “...was absolutely alone in the world, even to the point of asking...whether God Himself, and God especially, had not forsaken Him.” Barth states, “He could not enter more radically than He did into the isolation of God in this world or fulfill more basically His agreement with Him in this respect.”⁷⁷³ Thus, the reconciling spatiality of the Son of God even contains an aspect of isolation, in the sense that by actualizing in Himself the only proper response to the Father’s gracious presence intended for but rejected and abandoned by all others, His obedient life sets Him apart from the sin and evil of the world. The reconciling Son is present in peaceful relation established by distinct holiness.

In His flesh and cry of dereliction, Jesus Christ, the prophetic Word of God witnesses to the true sinful place and dire situation of all people in relation and distinction to God.⁷⁷⁴ The reality of the sinner’s place or oppositional presence with God is attested particularly where the divine No is spoken most perfectly and dreadfully. The Son journeys to a distant place precisely to proclaim God’s judgment on “the misery of man...his being in exile in the far country.”⁷⁷⁵ Like strangers and aliens abandoned in an unknown place far from home, the reality of human existence willfully opposed to and withdrawn from God’s fatherly presence, is somberly expressed in Jesus’ cry of abandonment. Yet Barth is clear: “God does not abandon” sinners even in their abandonment of Him. Jesus’ experience is singular among humans and unrepeatable; no creature shares the Golgotha experience of God-abandonment. In our place He received the full brunt of God’s wrathful presence in this type of death; in Him we experience only the “shadow of His death touching us”,⁷⁷⁶ the shadow of “the great

⁷⁷² Barth, *CD IV/1*, 566.

⁷⁷³ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 168.

⁷⁷⁴ See Barth, *CD IV/2*, 194-195.

⁷⁷⁵ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 486.

⁷⁷⁶ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 487.

dereliction of Golgotha”.⁷⁷⁷ The Son’s spatiality has the character of truth and right judgment, mercy and righteousness, No for the sake of Yes.

Moreover, “...in His suffering and dying He is still the same as He always was, although in another form.” The passion, with its unfathomable cry, “is not an alien element in His work as a whole”. From the beginning, in accordance with His election of grace, “all that He did was done under this sign.”⁷⁷⁸ For God to die as a human in God-abandonment is the penultimate goal of His Self-election and Self-constitution in this mode of being to accomplish the salvation of the world. His spatiality is constant, loving and free.

Questioning whether God had abandoned Him reveals the genuine temptation to doubt the true presence and action of God in His own life at the moment of death. For Barth, the suffering of the Son of God in our place, expressed in the cry of dereliction, remains “the bitterest form of the cross”. Only Jesus experienced the cross “finally and supremely in this form.”⁷⁷⁹ Living in the creaturely sphere “under the law of sin” means bearing this cross, being tempted continually in this form of doubt. But such a provisional, temporary, penultimate form of existence has been put to death in Jesus’ death on the cross.⁷⁸⁰ An eternal form of life in mutual presence with God in proper relation and distinction replaces the old, disordered and disappearing life, where doubt of God’s presence and action in the new life has no place, is abandoned. The cry thus expresses both the sharpest form of human doubt and its objective end in His death. His spatiality reveals the evil powers that are present within us. Tempted and repeating the first Adamic sin in our own existence, we doubt the benevolent character of God and His promise to be ever present with us. How we are present in relation and distinction with God changes from divine order to deadly chaos. Yet His spatiality also indicates hope, courage and assurance in God’s omnipotent and merciful presence and His already completed victory over evil, sin and death. In view of Jesus Christ’s death, resurrection and ascension, Barth suggests even “His presence and revelation on earth...in the promise of the Spirit” is heard in the agonizing cry from the cross.⁷⁸¹

Passion was the action in which...God reconciled the world to Himself in the humiliation of the Son of God and exaltation of the Son of Man, and...the justification of man...before God and his sanctification for him were accomplished. It is...

⁷⁷⁷ Barth, *CD* IV/3.2, 660.

⁷⁷⁸ Barth, *CD* IV/2, 251.

⁷⁷⁹ Barth, *CD* IV/2, 612.

⁷⁸⁰ See Barth, *CD* IV/2, 613.

⁷⁸¹ Barth, *CD* IV/3.1, 389-390.

inevitable, that the revelation of this action should correspond to its content...that... the prophetic work of Jesus Christ should have the form of passion.⁷⁸²

Hence, in this One

...who trembled and shrank back in Gethsemane,...who offered up His life, who shed His blood, who found Himself abandoned in death even and above all by His God – in this passion of His He is not only the reality but the true revelation of reconciliation today as yesterday.⁷⁸³

The reconciling God, present in relation and distinction with us here and now, is He who cried out on the cross, dying in God-abandonment. Barth asks, “What does it mean that it is only as this One who is rejected and abandoned by God that He is His Elect and therefore the true Witness of the kingdom of God come in His person?” Although differing in form, the Word encountering us in the promise of His Spirit must have the same content as its human and “alien form of His passion.”⁷⁸⁴ For “...the place in which He encounters us, is the temporal and historical sphere between...” Jesus’ reconciling death and His revelatory return, consummating the world’s redemption.⁷⁸⁵ Still in our temptations yet also in our “displacement” as sinners already effected in Christ, we move toward the goal of living in perfect mutual presence in relation and distinction with God.⁷⁸⁶ In the Spirit’s power,

...the form in which Jesus Christ the Victor is on the way with us, accompanying and encountering us, should be none other than that of the Victor of Gethsemane and Golgotha, and therefore of the suffering Servant of God, the afflicted Prophet... The Jesus who lives and is among us in our time is the One who is still harassed and forsaken, accused and condemned, despised and smitten.⁷⁸⁷

Even as Victor He is present in relation and distinction with us as “the Man of Sorrows”,⁷⁸⁸ testifying in His isolation and alienation “that the man of sin is not yet abolished” in our present time and sphere.⁷⁸⁹ However, as the afflicted and abandoned, He also bears witness in His resurrection life that He is indeed the Victor over all sin, death and suffering. After the ascension, the Son’s spatiality involves a mediated form of His presence in His Spirit, the Comforter and Pledge of our future life with God that is already present though not yet complete in us.

⁷⁸² Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 389-390.

⁷⁸³ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 390.

⁷⁸⁴ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 391. “Alien” here does not mean in opposition to God’s will or its execution, but in distinction to God as Spirit, it is dying flesh.

⁷⁸⁵ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 391.

⁷⁸⁶ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 392.

⁷⁸⁷ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 393.

⁷⁸⁸ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 393.

⁷⁸⁹ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 394.

Barth's most extensive treatment of Jesus' cry, "My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me?" resides in his discussion of the mystery that Jesus Christ is the true Witness, identical to God's Word. First, Jesus Christ "...speaks from the place from which God alone has the power to speak", the place of reconciliation in the One elected to die.⁷⁹⁰ There, the sinner is judged and displaced by the obedience of this one Man who bore God's judgment in the place of all others, Himself rejected for the justification of all people before God. There, also, the new, free human existence of mutual presence in rightly ordered relation and distinction with God is given in Christ's new resurrection life, the firstfruits in the place of all others. There, all find direction for their lives as participants in His eternal life, sanctified in their movement towards the redemption of all things in Him. So Barth claims this cry is "...at once the death-cry of the man who dies in Him and the birth-cry of the man who lives in Him."⁷⁹¹ In this place, this cry, "...this action God has expressed Himself, His innermost being, His heart, His divine person, His divine essence, Himself as the One He is."⁷⁹² Since only God can reveal God and His acts (more accurately, God in His acts), the content of what God pronounces about Himself and what He has done is identical. The passion and death of the Son of God as God's reconciling act is the very Word of God. In His death and resurrection the old is put to death and the new is given life, actualizing, revealing and attesting the Word of God rooted in His eternal election of grace.

Barth draws attention to the remarkably different words Jesus speaks from the cross. Those addressed to people around Him reveal the depth of His passion and love for the very people whose sin put Him on this cross, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."⁷⁹³ While those addressed to God in the cry of dereliction reveal the consequence and reality of the terrifying and isolated place of God's judgment against the sinner. "It corresponds exactly to the situation."⁷⁹⁴ He was ordained to occupy this very place before the foundation of the world; enacting the sinner's disrupted presence with God in the abandoned covenant relation, and suffering the consequences of God's holy presence with the sinner, abandoning the sinner to merited judgment, wrath and eternal punishment. As the Elect of God, He is the one and only Rejected of God, not apart from but according to God's gracious will.

⁷⁹⁰ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 411.

⁷⁹¹ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 413.

⁷⁹² Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 412.

⁷⁹³ Luke 23:34. Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 413.

⁷⁹⁴ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 414.

God has never forsaken, and does not and will not forsake any as He forsook this man. And ‘forsook’ means that He turned against Him as never before or since against any – against the One who was for Him as none other, just as God for His part was for Him as He never was nor will be for any other. But the very fact that He was for Him – for Him as our Reconciler, Saviour and Mediator – necessarily entailed that He was wholly against Him as the One who took our place as the place of evildoers.⁷⁹⁵

Thus, the abandonment by the Father that Jesus Christ experienced on the cross is not the absence of God, an impossibility given the singleness of the divine Subject. Rather, this abandonment is the presence of God’s comprehensive righteous judgment borne by God Himself in His Son; the presence of the almighty Creator refusing to lose His good creation to chaos and nothingness, the presence of the gracious Lord refusing to allow His covenant with His partners to remain unfulfilled – for His own glory and the salvation of the world. Quoting Barth at length, he presses the full meaning of this event of God-abandonment, thus indicating the reconciling spatiality of God.

In the person of this one man Jesus of Nazareth, it is His own eternal Son... who has come down as the Representative of the world and our common Substitute, offering Himself as such, and thus having to bear the wrath and curse of God and to suffer and die according to His will. But this means that God Himself is not a remote and aloof spectator or non-participating director of this event, of the dreadful thing which it includes and entails for this man. With the eternal Son the eternal Father has also to bear what falls on the Son as He gives Himself to identity with the man Jesus of Nazareth, thus lifting it away from us to Himself in order that it should not fall on us. In Jesus Christ Himself, the God who is the one true God, the Father with the Son in the unity of the Spirit has suffered what it befell this man to suffer to the bitter end. It was first and supremely in Himself that the conflict between Himself and this man, and the affliction which threatened this man, were experienced and borne... [T]he meaning of the event of Gethsemane and Golgotha... is of this fellow-suffering of God Himself borne on earth and also in heaven to the greater glory of God and the supreme salvation of man; it is of the God who has not evaded, and on the very grounds of His deity could not evade, thus suffering with and for the world, that the crucified man Jesus Christ speaks.⁷⁹⁶

The conflict expressed in the cry of abandonment is chiefly between God and sinner. Jesus Christ becomes this sinner, taking the place of all sinners. Only in this sense is there conflict between Father and Son. But there, the truly devastating conflict arises as the sinner who abandoned God is confronted by that very God who Himself abandons this possibility for His creature and covenant partner. The Word of God spoken by Jesus Christ takes “...the special form of the true Witness... who encounters us in His form of suffering...” For Barth, this “is what continually isolates Jesus Christ in every age and place” because we flee this

⁷⁹⁵ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 414.

⁷⁹⁶ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 414.

horrifying form of witness, "...the suffering and dying man in all his nakedness, abandonment and rejection..." which is the precise "...reflection of our own human reality divested of all illusion".⁷⁹⁷ Nevertheless, God's No to the sinner is not His final Word.

Receiving God's Word, the human is "to live by and with and in it"; for "...the One who speaks this Word lives in him, and he in Him. Hence, Christ is where the Christian is, and the Christian is where Christ is."⁷⁹⁸ Receiving this Word means living in mutual presence with Christ in proper relation and distinction. Although this world is still a suffering and afflicted place, it is not the unique place suffering under

...the great passion and affliction of Jesus Christ Himself, not under a fellow-suffering of the atoning suffering endured once and for all by the one Son of God and Son of Man,...not under the dreadful, isolated responsibility in which He did it, not under the final and supreme extremity which this fulfillment entailed for Him, not under the agony of the question of Mk 15:34...⁷⁹⁹

Rather, the Christian's "own place and manner of suffering" is "...in reflection of and an analogy to the suffering of the one man of Gethsemane and of Golgotha", as a "secondary form appropriate to His follower and disciple".⁸⁰⁰ In His death, Jesus Christ "...took the place of all men – the place where they all should have died in a hopeless death as sinners...[W]e ourselves neither must nor can die the death which we ought to die as sinners...nor... experience any more the dereliction of this death..."⁸⁰¹ His spatiality entails being in God's presence in a distinct way that is impossible for any other creature, even while that spatial event of divine encounter on the cross precisely enables us to be properly spatial, living in God's presence in justified relation and distinction.

The reconciling spatiality of the Son of God, the Reconciler, takes form as each divine perfection of God's being and their totality. It takes form in our place as the human creature and covenant partner of God; both as the chaotic creature and unreconciled sinner who has abandoned God, others and even his own place and also the newly determined creature and reconciled child of God at peace, at home with God and others. The mutual presence of God and human beings, in ordered relation and distinction on both sides, and in disordered relation and distinction on the sinner's side, occur and are revealed solely in the Mediator, Jesus Christ through His Spirit as proclaimed in His cry of abandonment.

⁷⁹⁷ Barth, *CD* IV/3.1, 415.

⁷⁹⁸ Barth, *CD* IV/3.2, 637.

⁷⁹⁹ Barth, *CD* IV/3.2, 637.

⁸⁰⁰ Barth, *CD* IV/3.2, 637.

⁸⁰¹ Barth, *CD* IV/4, 16.

2.3. God Creates Our New Justified Place

Divine spatiality is demonstrated first in the relationship between Jesus Christ's particular work of atonement and its universal effects before considering it in the Father's decision regarding the Son's work. Barth asks how Christ's accomplishment 'there and then' in that specific place and time can become truly ours in our present 'here and now', and so for all people in all places and times. Not merely a temporal or spatial problem, it involves the difference between God's eternity and our temporality or the "...historical distance between the being and activity of Jesus Christ in its own place and our being and activity in a different place."⁸⁰² The underlying theological problem of the reconciling spatiality of the Reconciler is signaled: ontologically, how God can be present with us in ordered relation and distinction and how we can be present with God in such? Emphasizing the Son in His atoning work, what kind of spatial being is the holy God that He can be in the same place as the sinful human? "How is it that You have come into my presence and what will become of me in Yours?" Asking how this takes place is the problem of the "direct encounter" between God who is 'for us' and we who are "against God."⁸⁰³ This issue of "...our contemporaneity with the Word of God made flesh, with the Judge judged in our place..." presupposes that the Christ for us there is already the Christ who is present for us here.⁸⁰⁴ That "...He is present here and now for us in the full efficacy of what, according to the Gospel, He was and did then and there..."⁸⁰⁵

What happened to us in the place that Jesus Christ occupied in His atoning work? Barth answers, on Golgotha "...then and there, in the person of Christ taking our place, we were present, being crucified and dying with Him. We died."⁸⁰⁶ What then becomes of the sinner's place when the sinner is no more? Barth describes it now as "a vacuum, a place where we apparently have no place or future". Our place of sin is no longer; having come to our place to make it His own, He has pushed us out of that place, thereby destroying it. But now where are we; into what place has He pushed us by His death which destroys our old place? Barth is clear: we are now 'in Christ', that new "space to live which is granted to us after that event" of His death.⁸⁰⁷ Then what becomes of us there, in the "...directness of our encounter and presence with Him, and of the overcoming of the temporal barrier between

⁸⁰² Barth, *CD IV/1*, 288.

⁸⁰³ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 290.

⁸⁰⁴ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 291.

⁸⁰⁵ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 292.

⁸⁰⁶ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 295.

⁸⁰⁷ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 291.

Him and us...when we are in His environment and time and space?”⁸⁰⁸ Negatively, the reconciling “being and activity of Jesus Christ for us” first means “...the ending of all other human being...the reversal of [the world’s] creation, only as its end.”⁸⁰⁹ God could have stopped here with the destruction of the sinful humans’ place and time, so of themselves, which took place in Jesus Christ’s death. Instead He chose to do a wholly new thing, connected to and proceeding on the first act of the Son’s death.

This new act is the Father raising the Son from the dead. Positively, the being and activity of Jesus Christ for us actualized and revealed in His resurrection accomplishes the creation of a new place and time for the new human creature now turned toward God. In fulfillment of His election of the covenant of grace in Jesus Christ, God freely chooses to give new life, creating and sustaining this new creation in His own presence and life. That the “one whole Jesus Christ, very man and very God, was dead and buried”, declares this new act in its entirety is a divine act.⁸¹⁰ Absolutely no human cooperation whatsoever occurs in it. Consequently, Jesus Christ “...came amongst [His disciples] again in such a way that His presence as the man He had been (had been!) ...[was] understood by them only and exclusively...and therefore unequivocally as the self-attestation of God in this man...” The mediated understanding and perception of His deity was now made immediate: “God in Christ became conceivable to them in the inconceivable form of the unmediated presence and action of its origin and subject matter without any other mediation at all.”⁸¹¹ Barth is not contradicting his earlier concept of revelation in which God makes Himself known to creatures in a creaturely veil such that His presence is mediated indirectly. Rather, precisely within that creaturely veil, in this case, of the truly dead humanity of Jesus of Nazareth raised to new life, God reveals Himself as God by doing what God alone can do. Raising Jesus from the dead, the Father does the impossible (from the creature’s perspective); He brings new life from death. He reveals what kind of God He is: as Father, He desires the reconciliation of the world be accomplished by His Son’s death, yet not to abandon His Son to death eternally; as Son, this God-man in His divine-human unity can obediently experience human suffering and death fully yet also receive gracious new life from the Father. This act also points beyond itself to its underlying reality, the ontological truth that the old human and its old place is past, now replaced by this new human in its new place and time. The revelation of this distinctively

⁸⁰⁸ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 293.

⁸⁰⁹ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 294.

⁸¹⁰ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 303.

⁸¹¹ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 302.

divine act establishes the Christian community, illumines the whole life and death of Jesus Christ, the Father's gracious will and the enlivening power of the Spirit. The spatial human being in its entirety as body and soul and as elected covenant partner is recreated to live in God's presence in proper relation and distinction. Ontologically, a wholly new spatial human being stands before God and participates in His eternal life, for the old sinner has been put to death, its place destroyed, and the new righteous human being is raised in its place. The old human's sinfully disordered spatiality is replaced by the new human's righteously ordered spatiality.

Barth further specifies the ontological ground of this divine resurrection act.⁸¹² Although a movement and act in history (in creaturely space and time), it is first and primarily a movement and act in eternity (in God's space and 'time') between Father and Son. In humble obedience to the Father's will, the only begotten Son, as human, is Himself the new place where the Father's grace of new, reconciled life is received and executed, with its new spatiality.

...[A]s in God Himself...in the relationship of the Son to the Father (the model of all that is demanded from man by God), there is a pure obedience, subordination and subjection, so too in the relationship of the Father to the Son (the model of all that is given to man by God) there is a free and pure grace which as such can only be received, and the historical fulfillment of which is the resurrection of Jesus Christ.⁸¹³

The Son of God is the God-man in His divine-human unity who renders humility in obedience unto death that is well pleasing to the Father and affirmed by the gracious gift of resurrection. Who is God? What kind of God can be and do all this, not just here in creaturely space but in such a way that it is true of His own being and space? The single divine Subject who exists in this singular and particular event is both the spatial divine Son (as the human Jesus of Nazareth) in His definitive and ultimate Self-giving in humility, obedience, even subordination to His divine Father, and also the spatial Father of this Son in His demand of such obedience. This God is the Son who places Himself totally in the care of His loving Father, receiving all things from Him, and also the Father who graciously affirms the Son's Self-giving, redeeming the Son's life from death by giving His own eternal life. This divine

⁸¹² For a monograph of Barth's doctrine of the resurrection see R. Dale Dawson, *The Resurrection in Karl Barth* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007). For a comparison of Barth's actualistic understanding of the resurrection with Hegel's see Adam Eitel, "The Resurrection of Jesus Christ: Karl Barth and the Historicization of God's Being," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 10, no. 1 (January 2008) 36-53. For an exposition of a doctrine of the resurrection with reference to Barth, see for example, Thomas F. Torrance, *Space, Time and Resurrection* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1976).

⁸¹³ Barth, *CD* IV/1, 304.

event of Father and Son takes place in the communion and omnipotent presence of the Holy Spirit of God; communion of the One who unites Father and Son, and omnipotence of the One who breathes new life into the dead Jesus. Being present in this particular ordered relation and distinction as this Father and this Son, actualized by the Spirit in these two loving and free acts of obedient death and gracious life, is what and who the spatial God is.

To specify, the Father's gracious act of raising the dead Son by the Spirit to new life in relation and distinction with the Father is primarily "God's acknowledgement of Jesus Christ, of His life and death." The Father's second act corresponds to the Son's first act, both divine acts of justice. The resurrection constitutes and reveals the Father's approval and acceptance of the Son's obedience, of His way into our alien place by receiving God's righteous judgment of that sinful place. This divine approval, accepting the Son's self-offering in our place, brings "into force...the saving consequences of His action and passion in our place."⁸¹⁴ Both acts fulfill and reveal the one eternal, primal and gracious divine will, to be this spatial, relational God for us in Jesus Christ and to be God in no other way, and for us to be God's spatial creatures and covenant partners in Jesus Christ and to be so in no other way. Again, there is no division of works between God's three modes of being; where one is present in relation and distinction the other two are also present as such, working in accord with and in fulfillment of the indivisible divine good-pleasure determined in His free election of grace.

Therefore, in Jesus Christ's resurrection from the dead God justifies Himself as God, His Son as human, and in Him all humans. In Jesus Christ, the Father justifies Himself as the Creator who recreates His creature for newly reordered co-presence in relation and distinction, since chaos and nothingness threaten and overpower him due to his disobedience and rebellion against the Creator's good order. God also justifies Himself as the genuine Lord of the covenant, broken by sinners but fulfilled by Himself in Jesus Christ, in several ways. First, the Father justifies His righteous judgment against sin and sinner, with its sinful spatiality, not by ignoring or merely setting them aside but by executing His judgment in the form of His all-consuming wrath, thereby destroying them. Second, He justifies His primal decision for the covenant of grace by executing that judgment upon His elect Son on the cross. In Christ, God takes to Himself the impossible possibility of choosing against what He ordained in the primal decision to be God for us, in order to destroy that possibility forever. He thereby reestablishes the covenant in Christ and the human's proper spatiality for full participation in it. Furthermore, the Father justifies His Son who, as a perfectly spatial human

⁸¹⁴ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 305.

being, is obedient unto death. “His obedience consists in that He commends or offers up His spirit, that is, Himself – He delivers up Himself...to God His Father, to His decree and disposing”. He commits Himself (and in Him “the whole human race represented by Him” and the individual sinner) “to death...to nothingness which can triumph over Him”; and also “to the wrath of God”.⁸¹⁵ His total surrender to and reception of the Father’s gracious love and good pleasure fulfills His election as the Rejected and the Elected Son. The Son is the beloved and spatial Child of this loving and spatial Father, as the One who is present in relation and distinction by responding to free, gracious love in free, obedient love. Therefore, God justifies all human beings in Him who, having taken our place of judgment and accepting our sentence and punishment unto death, shares His new resurrection life with us. All this, leading to new and proper divine-human spatiality, is affirmed and revealed in the Son’s resurrection from the dead by the Father.

The divine acts of Jesus Christ’s death (fulfilling God’s judgment by executing His sentence against the sinner) and resurrection (affirming God’s acceptance of the Son’s obedience in the place of all sinners and revealing His judgment and sentence) constitute “the basis of life for men of all ages”.⁸¹⁶ Together these acts, which actually are one, form the ground of the destruction of the old sinful place and spatiality and the creation of the new justified place and spatiality. Human beings “...are no longer what they were but they are already what they are to be”; their place, situation and spatiality has been radically altered. “The event of Easter Day is the removing of the barrier between His life in His [space and] time and their life in their [space and] times, the initiation of His lordship as the Lord of all [space and] time.”⁸¹⁷ Therefore, “...all men are in Him the One, and...He the One is in them, He the One in the midst of them.”⁸¹⁸

How is the Son, crucified and raised there and then, present as the Reconciling Lord to all people of all places and times? This asks how everything accomplished in His death is made a present reality for people everywhere and in every age; or how the sinner’s place is altered by the presence and place of this Crucified and Risen One. Specifically, what spatiality is proper to Jesus Christ in “His living presence, His *parousia* in the direct form of Easter”? And what further distinctions exist in His spatiality revealed in that forty day period between resurrection and ascension from other forms of His presence? Already fully achieved

⁸¹⁵ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 306.

⁸¹⁶ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 316.

⁸¹⁷ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 316.

⁸¹⁸ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 317.

through His death, this new Easter form becomes the basis of all subsequent forms of His presence where "...He was no longer, or not yet again, directly revealed and visible and audible and perceptible (as He had been)...to His disciples, the community, or the world..." After the resurrection, Jesus Christ is not spatial, or present in relation and distinction, in the same human form He took to Himself in the incarnation representing the 'old man'. That dying form or deadly place of the sinner has been put to death once and for all in Christ's death. Nevertheless, in one sense, He is directly revealed and present "...in the divine verdict pronounced in that [resurrection] event and received by [the disciples], but not without the mediation of recollection, tradition and proclamation..."⁸¹⁹ It is by the Holy Spirit's power that Jesus Christ is truly, directly present in and as God's living Word spoken in the event itself, the ongoing revelation of the event, and the corresponding human word giving witness to this Word and event.

In His Easter spatiality entailing His relation-forming presence as the Crucified and Risen, Jesus Christ reveals various ways He is present: first, the form of His Easter appearances to the disciples in the forty day period after His death; second, the form seen in His ascension signifying "...His exaltation to the right hand of God...His transition to a presence which is eternal and therefore embraces all times";⁸²⁰ third, the form in which He is "directly present and revealed and active in the community" by the Spirit's mediation; and fourth, the eschatological form of His second coming.⁸²¹ Noteworthy is Barth's temporal framework (based on the ontological reality) regarding atonement efficacy for all people in every place and age, whereas mine, clearly, is spatial. Each explores how Jesus Christ is present to us (along with His works and their effects, as inseparable from His being), which involves both spatial and temporal aspects proper to creaturely existence in this creation. While distinct, these aspects are inseparable in the present creaturely realm, so their meanings tend to overlap. Regardless, Barth's point is unmistakable: everything, especially the divine-human relationship and the creaturely space-time realm in which it unfolds, is invested with new meaning for us. This results from our new participation in the reality already actualized, revealed and made effective in the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of God's original purpose.

Such participation includes Jesus Christ's "community in the world", acknowledging and giving witness to His life, death and resurrection in view of "His presence and revelation

⁸¹⁹ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 318.

⁸²⁰ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 318.

⁸²¹ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 318.

in the forty days”.⁸²² His community acknowledges the Crucified and Resurrected as “...the One who for us took His place for ever at the right hand of the Father, who therefore lives and reigns in every age, who from there speaks and acts and works on earth, in human history, by His Spirit...”⁸²³ It further acknowledges “...He is no longer present and revealed to its own time as He once was in the forty days, but in a way which does not correspond to that type and form and appearance.” This, for Barth, is “the time of the new present of the Crucified”, the time of His community. The effect of His reconciling presence and work is never past since in it He encounters every person of every age. His time is always present because *He* is always present, in relation and distinction through His Spirit. The risen and ascended Lord is everyone’s “Contemporary”.

What matters is His living existence in the community and therefore in the world. What matters is His history as it has indeed happened but as it is present and not past...It is a matter of living with Him the living One, and therefore of participating in His history as the history of the salvation of the world and our own salvation...It is a matter of discovering and receiving as the life of all men and our own life...that life of His which is the life of the Son of God in the place of all men and as the Mediator between all men and God.⁸²⁴

Acting in our old place, the sinner’s former life was nailed to the cross and destroyed; the new righteous life before God was raised from its destruction. In Jesus Christ, both this death and this life are given to us to “stand in this [new, altered] place” gratefully receiving and sharing in God’s grace.⁸²⁵

Living into the reality of His new existence and place, the community looks forward to His future return, “...awaiting and expecting the coming of the Lord in His new Easter form, understanding Him in that way too as the One who is already present...today and here.”⁸²⁶ His past presence, what He *was* and *did*, is revealed and understood in view of what He *is* and *does* in His provisional Easter presence as declared in the divine verdict; and the “eschatological aspect” included in His Easter presence means the community also “...reach[es] forward to a new...different...complete and definitive form of His presence...to a new form of life with Him.” The time of the community is thus “...a time between the

⁸²² Barth, *CD IV/1*, 320. For an attempt at constructing a doctrine of missiology as an attribute of God with reference to Barth’s doctrine of election, see Stephen R. Holmes, “Trinitarian Missiology: Towards a Theology of God as Missionary,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 8, no. 1 (January 2006) 72-90.

⁸²³ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 320.

⁸²⁴ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 320.

⁸²⁵ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 322.

⁸²⁶ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 322.

times...between a first and present form of His presence and a form which is still to come but will come...”⁸²⁷

Hence, Jesus Christ as Reconciler is present with us in the constancy of His being, while the way He is present differs. The constancy of God means “The one, omnipresent God remains the One He is” precisely in a multitude of forms.⁸²⁸ Barth specifies:

The differentiation of the times does not, of course, affect as such the action and revelation of the Crucified as He was made eternal and therefore always present in His resurrection and for every age from the days of His resurrection...But the differentiation of the times does affect the manner of the making present of the Crucified and His living word and effective action...⁸²⁹

The wealth of forms His reconciling presence takes with us encompasses past, present and future: His life ending in death on the cross and in the tomb, in humiliation; His new provisional life seen in His Easter appearances to the disciples; His ascension to the right hand of the Father in heaven, in exaltation; His presence in the community and world by the Holy Spirit in God’s Word and human proclamation; and His future *parousia* in glory. The objective place of our reconciliation is finished indeed; God’s kingdom has come. In Christ, we can be citizens of this kingdom already, although the current form and manifestation of being mutually present in ordered relation and distinction are provisional, yet to be completed by Him in His final return. In the twofold act of the Son’s crucifixion and resurrection, God is revealed to be present not as a “...non-spatial and timeless being of certain general truths, orders and relationships...”⁸³⁰ In the Son and without ceasing to be God, He actually is and becomes and will be human, having reconciled the world with Himself according to His reconciling spatiality for the most personal fellowship possible.

Returning to Barth’s earlier question regarding “...the incompatibility of the existence of Jesus Christ with us and us with Him, the impossibility of the co-existence of His divine-human actuality and action and our sinfully human being and activity...” Barth asks, “...what will become of us if the real presence of Jesus Christ is going to be a fact in our time and therefore in the sphere of our existence?” Simply stated, “Where are we now?” Since all sinners have died with Christ, they are now “...those who have a place with Jesus Christ, who do in fact belong to Him because He belongs to them, who are not only there, but as the men

⁸²⁷ Barth, *CD* IV/1, 323.

⁸²⁸ Barth, *CD* II/1, 491.

⁸²⁹ Barth, *CD* IV/1, 322.

⁸³⁰ Barth, *CD* IV/1, 337.

they are can be there as His...”⁸³¹ God’s “No” to our old place is for the sake of His “Yes” to a new place for all in Jesus Christ.⁸³² For

...as the Son of the Father He posited Himself for us – really for us and for our salvation – to suffer in our place the divine rejection, the divine No, the divine judgment, and faithful to His election to fulfil the divine Yes, the divine grace. As the One who has done this He was raised again from the dead by the life-giving Spirit... He lives...as the word of the divine assent, as God’s permission and command that as the sinners we are we should be there with Him...Because Jesus Christ the Crucified is risen again and lives there is room for us...⁸³³

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is God’s gracious act in which the Father gives new life, the Son receives that life and the Holy Spirit “mediates His action and revelation”. As such, it is “...the sure and unequivocally transcendent place, the true other side here on this side...” Taking place within the creaturely realm as a pure divine act without any human cooperation, this new place transcends the “not yet” of the current place offering glimpses of its eschatological reality already secured in His own place. From this transcendent place of resurrection, we look back to our past place, dead and gone, and ahead to the already perfected yet future place. Both places, actualized in Jesus Christ, determine our new place in movement from one to the other, from death to new life. Therefore, “Jesus lives” includes “and I with Him.” In the election of Jesus Christ, God “has also elected and loved” all human beings from eternity.⁸³⁴ His reconciling spatiality is the ground of our reconciled spatiality; we can be co-present with Him in relation and distinction in various ways as appropriate to His reconciling Person and work, and what we become in Him as new reconciled human beings. This concerns the corresponding dialectical movement and reality concerning the spatiality proper to God the Son that takes place in the form of His exaltation to God as the true human creature.

3. Our Participation In God’s Place

Simultaneous with God’s gracious ‘downward’ movement to our place that He destroyed and recreated, Barth describes a corresponding movement back to God’s place. These two aspects comprise what is actually one unified movement by God for us, the atonement event in Jesus Christ. The first aspect of God’s movement to us concerns His going out from His own space into our lowly place. Such humiliation shows that “...without ceasing

⁸³¹ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 348.

⁸³² Barth, *CD IV/1*, 349.

⁸³³ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 350-351.

⁸³⁴ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 356.

to be true God, in the full possession and exercise of His true deity, God went into the far country by becoming man in His second...mode of being as the Son – the far country not only of human creatureliness but also of human corruption and perdition.”⁸³⁵ The Son’s journey from the Father to us reveals He is our God while, simultaneously, the Son’s journey back to the Father with us reveals we are His people. “...[A]s God condescends and humbles Himself to man and becomes man, man himself is exalted, not as God or like God, but to God, being placed at His side, not in identity, but in true fellowship with Him, and becoming a new man in this exaltation and fellowship.”⁸³⁶ Living co-present with God in relation and distinction suggests no retreat into “isolation...a certain spatial withdrawal from the world”, like the Church’s monastic movement.⁸³⁷ For God Himself is not “isolated or alone”.⁸³⁸ Rather, Jesus Christ’s exaltation forms “the type and basis” of our own exaltation and reordered spatiality, based in His gracious election, though with necessary distinctions.⁸³⁹ As true God He shares His being with Father and Spirit; as true human He shares our human nature. He becomes like us, taking upon Himself our creatureliness and our corruption by sin and death. But in this likeness He is also unlike us: He is human but only as God, and in His humanity He Himself does not sin.⁸⁴⁰ The particularity of His life and history is totally unique, for only in His history is humanity exalted to the side of God, to the place it does not belong, in intimate co-presence with God it does not merit.⁸⁴¹ In what does this exaltation consist and what distinctive spatial characteristics of God and human beings are actualized and demonstrated in it? The One true Human who returns home to God’s place and, as Man, sits in His unique place on God’s throne, reveals the dynamic existence from humiliation here to exaltation there, and so the unique spatiality of the Reconciler.

3.1. God, as One of Us, Returns to His Own Place

The second of the two aspects of God’s movement toward us as it takes place in the historical existence of Jesus Christ involves His return from our place, as one of us, back to His own exalted place:

...without ceasing to be man, but assumed and accepted in his creatureliness and corruption by the Son of God, man – this one Son of Man – returned home to where

⁸³⁵ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 20.

⁸³⁶ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 6.

⁸³⁷ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 12.

⁸³⁸ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 13.

⁸³⁹ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 19.

⁸⁴⁰ See Barth, *CD IV/2*, 27.

⁸⁴¹ See Barth, *CD IV/2*, 28.

He belonged, to His place as true man, to fellowship with God, to relationship with His fellows, to the ordering of His inward and outward existence, to the fulness of His time for which He was made, to the presence and enjoyment of the salvation for which He was destined.⁸⁴²

The event of this “exchange” is the existence of Jesus Christ: the Son of God departs as a Servant, sent by His Father to descend to our alien place so the Son of Man may return as Lord, ascending to God’s lofty place.⁸⁴³ This exchange includes those places where the sinner turns away from God, disrupting their mutual presence or his spatiality, and is turned back to Him for renewed fellowship in his new spatiality, according to the reconciling spatiality of the Son.

Barth asks, “How does [God] really take our place as the Son and in the power of God” in this entire movement?⁸⁴⁴ What is the humanity that God assumes in His second mode of being in this event and what effect does that have on our humanity? With His movement in exaltation He activates the creature’s movement from his own place to God’s place, “...from below to above, from the earth which is his own sphere, created good by God and darkened by himself, to heaven which is the most proper sphere of God...”, from his place of opposition to God to God’s place of peace and fellowship.⁸⁴⁵ The Word addressed to us in the form of divine humiliation is answered by the obedient existence of that same Word, exalting the creature, glorifying God, thus reconciling them to be co-present in proper relation and distinction. What does the humanity of God mean and what is the spatiality proper to it? Three areas are explored, following Barth, concerning its origin and reality in God’s election of grace, its actualization in the incarnation event, and its revelatory basis in Jesus’ resurrection and ascension.⁸⁴⁶

First and briefly, for Barth, the basis of all God’s ways and works is His eternal election of grace, which has as its primary content the “true humanity of Jesus Christ, as the humanity of the Son”. As “*the purpose*” of God’s will and the “sum of all divine purposes...[it]...limits and determines all other occurrences.”⁸⁴⁷ Even in this provisional form, His humanity is the ultimate actualization of God’s spatiality in His second mode of being, having freely chosen to be mutually present to Himself and to us in this particular and eternal way, in ordered relation and distinction. His Self-election and Self-determination for

⁸⁴² Barth, *CD IV/2*, 20-21.

⁸⁴³ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 21.

⁸⁴⁴ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 25.

⁸⁴⁵ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 29.

⁸⁴⁶ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 31.

⁸⁴⁷ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 31.

us in the Son includes our election and determination for Him; His reconciling spatiality includes our reconciled spatiality. He elected Himself for rejection in the place of the sinner who is elected “to participation in His own holiness and glory” in His own place. As the Son of God, Jesus Christ elects the human and so His own humiliation; as the Son of Man He is elected by God, so to His own exaltation. All of God’s ways and works serve to execute and reveal this “twofold predestination” in Jesus Christ.⁸⁴⁸

That His humanity is based in God’s gracious election means already in that decision “God was not alone... without man” but that “man should be there for God and in His presence,...loved by Him and love Him in return...” As such, “The man who by the grace of God is directed to the grace of God, and therefore exalted and caught up in this homeward movement is not one who comes late on the scene...He does not exist only secondarily.”⁸⁴⁹ Rather, in God’s election of grace “...he is with God’s Son the first, i.e., the primary object and content of the primal and basic will of God.” Already existing before creation, this human is “really before and with God”. Therefore, “At no level or time can we have to do with God without having also to do with this man.”⁸⁵⁰ Scriptural references about the Son’s predestination do not indicate an abstract “*logos asarkos*” for Barth, but “an anticipation of the incarnate *Logos*”.⁸⁵¹ The Son of Man’s election is “His election to a fellowship with God corresponding to God’s fellowship with Him,...to His wonderful exaltation to be the faithful covenant-partner of God,...to His participation in His own, eternal life.”⁸⁵² His election includes His Self-determination to be a spatial being, existing in mutual presence in ordered relation and distinction with Himself, fully God who is also fully human, and with all humans represented in Him. Thus, the historical existence of Jesus is not “a mere economy of only provisional and practical significance”; indeed, “...the true humanity of Jesus Christ is...primarily and finally basic – an absolutely necessary concept – in exactly the same and not a lesser sense than that of His true deity.”⁸⁵³ Rooted in God’s election “...as God sees it the fellowship of man with Himself is just as basically serious as His own fellowship with man.”⁸⁵⁴ According to His election of grace, the spatiality most proper to this Self-electing God is to be in fellowship with His Self-elect human; and the spatiality most proper to the

⁸⁴⁸ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 32.

⁸⁴⁹ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 32.

⁸⁵⁰ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 33.

⁸⁵¹ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 33.

⁸⁵² Barth, *CD IV/2*, 34.

⁸⁵³ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 35.

⁸⁵⁴ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 36.

elect human is to be in fellowship with this God. The way God is God is to be omnipresent with this human.

The object of God's gracious election is the human with this particular spatiality, Jesus Christ, "the true Man". His spatial existence determines the spatial existence of all humans, in His election all are elect, and His history of salvation is their own. In His atoning work, He is the Mediator "representing God to them and them to God."⁸⁵⁵ The spatiality of this true Man entails being present in ordered relation and distinction with both God and humans. True humanity is revealed in the existence of this true Human. Given, actualized and revealed in Him, the spatiality proper to all human beings consists in being genuinely present with God in relation and distinction as His elect and exalted creature, and with one another as co-creatures before God.

Considering now in detail what the humanity of God and the spatiality proper to it entail, the second point concerns the actualization and revelation of the Son's incarnation in creaturely space, which is grounded in and corresponds to His election for it in God's space. Actualizing and revealing Himself "as the One He is", the God-man, the incarnation is the personal property or characteristic of God in His second mode of being, which includes His incarnated spatiality.⁸⁵⁶ What God "freely resolved from eternity" in His own space He "freely executed in time" in our space. Therefore, that God becomes human or assumes "a being as human into unity with His being as God"⁸⁵⁷ reveals a divine humility that cannot be "...alien to the nature of the true God, but supremely proper to Him in His mode of being as the Son."⁸⁵⁸ Proper to the spatiality of the exalted Jesus Christ, such humility is also proper to the spatiality of those who are exalted in Him and given their spatiality in His. To be present with God and others in relation and distinction means to be humble before God and others even in exaltation.

Furthermore, "Reconciled man is originally the man Jesus" and vice versa, "...because and as God Himself, without ceasing to be God, willed to be [in God's space] and actually became [in our space]...this man Jesus." Our reconciliation with God completely depends upon both His "full likeness to us" as a human being and "only in this likeness unlike us" as God.⁸⁵⁹ The incarnation of this particular man is the event of "a being which does not cease as

⁸⁵⁵ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 36.

⁸⁵⁶ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 38.

⁸⁵⁷ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 41.

⁸⁵⁸ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 42.

⁸⁵⁹ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 40.

such to be a becoming” in its own reality or in its effect for others.⁸⁶⁰ For humanity, it “...signifies the promise of the basic alteration and determination of what we all are as men.”⁸⁶¹ Our spatiality will become new, reflecting what is already actualized in the Reconciler, which enables us to share in His own exalted co-presence with God and others. So our spatiality will be similar to and different from His spatiality, due to His likeness as Son of Man but unlikeness as Son of God.

The “real exaltation of human nature” occurs with the uniting of human nature with divine nature in Jesus Christ.⁸⁶² Decisive is Barth’s focus on the single Subject of the hypostatic union that occurs when the Son of God takes human nature to Himself and becomes a man as God. This is a “...union in that two-sided participation, the *communio naturarum*...in the one Subject Jesus Christ...”⁸⁶³ Barth’s use of the *anhypostasis-ehypostasis* description of the human nature of Jesus Christ in combination with his doctrine of election suggests that from God’s primal decision onward, neither divine nor human nature exists in isolation but only in this one divine-human Subject in His divine-human unity (either in anticipation or actualization); so neither can be separated from Him or left behind as in some kenotic Christologies.⁸⁶⁴ A genuine and “mutual participation”, there is “no element of human essence which is unaffected by or excluded from its existence in and with the Son of God, and therefore from union with and participation in this divine essence.”⁸⁶⁵ Additionally, Barth maintains no direct communication of attributes from one nature to the other as in Lutheran Christology; rather, they remain distinct, being indirectly mediated by the one Subject in whom they subsist.⁸⁶⁶ Thus, even in this union humanity never becomes divinity,

⁸⁶⁰ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 46.

⁸⁶¹ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 49.

⁸⁶² Barth, *CD IV/2*, 60.

⁸⁶³ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 63.

⁸⁶⁴ For a cogent presentation and critique of Barth’s view of the *anhypostasis-ehypostasis* within an historical survey see Ivor Davidson, “Theologizing the Human Jesus: An Ancient (and Modern) Approach to Christology Reassessed,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 1, no. 2 (July 2001) 129-153, especially 141ff; for a critique see F. LeRon Shults, “Anthropology and Christology: The *Anhypostasis-Enhypostasis* Formula” in *Reforming Theological Anthropology: After the Philosophical Turn to Relationality* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003) 156-160; see also, U.M. Lang, “*Anhypostatos-Enhypostatos*: Church Fathers, Protestant Orthodoxy and Karl Barth,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 49 (1998) 630-657; Matthias Gockel, “A Dubious Christological Formula? Leontius of Byzantium and the *Anhypostasis-Enhypostasis* Theory,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 51 (2000) 515-532; and A. Grillmeier, *Christ in the Christian Tradition, Vol. 2: From the Council of Chalcedon (451) to Gregory the Great (590-604)* (London: Mawbray and Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995) 181-229.

⁸⁶⁵ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 64.

⁸⁶⁶ For a Lutheran position of the *communicatio idiomatum* in relation to the Trinity see Robert W. Jenson, “Christ in the Trinity: *Communicatio Idiomatum*” in *The Person of Christ*, eds., Stephen R. Holmes and Murray A. Rae (London: T&T Clark, 2005) 61-69; for a brief historical survey of Reformed positions see Stephen R. Holmes, “Reformed Varieties of the *Communicatio Idiomatum*,” in the same book, 70-86.

not in Jesus Christ, certainly not in others. So, reconciled and exalted human spatiality entails presence in genuine *distinction* from God.

The reality of two natures in Jesus Christ also does not constitute a duality. As the single Subject existing in two natures, He “pre-existed as such in the divine counsel.”⁸⁶⁷ The human nature is given in and with the decision and act of the one God who, in His divine-human mode of being is this Subject. The God-man is not a third thing existing in isolation or distinction from the two natures, nor of their mixture, but is itself the God-human in the unity of His divine and human natures.⁸⁶⁸ In this union of natures, His only existence, He is the one Subject of incarnation and atonement. Therefore, reconciled human spatiality entails being present in genuine *relation* with God and others. For the Subject who acts in these events is not simply His divine nature. Barth is very clear there is no abstract Godhead above and beyond His revealed being in three modes.

For Godhead, divine nature, divine essence does not exist and is not actual in and for itself. Even Godhead exists only in and with the existence of Father, Son and Holy Ghost, only as the common predicate of this triune Subject in its mode of existence. ...Godhead with all the perfections proper to it, is only the *modus* in which He is... The Godhead as such has no existence. It is not real. It has no being or activity.⁸⁶⁹

If Jesus Christ is not identical to the one true God, then there is another deity hidden and superior to Him. The atonement wrought in Him, along with our knowledge of it, is rendered ineffective since no longer grounded objectively in God’s own being. However, where Jesus Christ is and acts, He is and does so as the fully divine and fully human One in an appropriate cooperation of genuine divine and human wills, energies and natures that occur in the One divine-human Subject. Similarly, the one work of this particular and singular being in act is simultaneously a genuinely divine work and a genuinely human work in cooperation.

As the Son of God “of divine and human natures, He is the Son of Man, the true man.”⁸⁷⁰ Because conjoined to His divine nature, the “new and true man” means that human nature is truly exalted once for all “to Him, to His side, to fellowship with His Son in His divine essence.”⁸⁷¹ It is not that He is only divine as Son of God and as Son of Man He is only human. Rather, as Son of God, He is both divine and human and as Son of Man He is also

⁸⁶⁷ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 64.

⁸⁶⁸ This expresses the limit of human talk concerning the mystery of the hypostatic union of the two natures in the one Subject.

⁸⁶⁹ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 65.

⁸⁷⁰ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 69.

⁸⁷¹ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 70.

both. Barth's emphasis on the former is that *God* became human and the latter, that God became *man*. Both titles entail both natures conjoined as His single, unique existence or event. This also describes one aspect of the spatiality unique to Jesus Christ, occurring as His own singular existence; divine is perfectly present to human and human is perfectly present to divine in the closest possible and actualized properly ordered relation and distinction in the being of this one Subject, the God-man in His divine-human unity. The spatiality proper to all other humans is derived from and a type of His, but nonetheless different. Our spatiality is the human characteristic to be mutually present in fully reconciled relation and distinction with God and other humans, which is possible only through this reconciling Mediator. In Jesus Christ, the Subject of the union mediates the two natures in His own existence, uniting them while maintaining their distinction. He also turns to us, mediating our presence in appropriate relation and distinction with God. So His spatiality and relationship with God is direct in Himself while ours are mediated or indirect as we participate in His existence; and both are established and maintained by His Spirit.

Barth further explains that the order of participation of the two natures in Jesus Christ is irreversible. Since divinity is "originally proper to Him" and humanity is "adopted by Him", this suggests that "the determination of His divine essence is *to* His human, and the determination of His human essence *from* His divine."⁸⁷² Giving is proper to His divine nature; receiving is proper to His human nature. Yet receiving is also characteristic of His unique being as the Son who receives the commands of the Father and receives the distinct human nature in unity with His divine nature. Unique to the second mode of God's being, the God-man in His divine-human unity, is this personal property of receiving. This holds true for His spatiality also; from God He receives His characteristic to be present in relation and distinction with God and with others as a human creature. And from Him we receive our spatiality.

Turning toward the human as God, He elects and creates the human for participation in His life. Such participation does not entail divinization: human nature does not become divine nature. Even in Jesus Christ the human nature remains distinctly human. The movement of God toward the human occurs originally in Jesus Christ in His election and corresponding incarnation and atonement; it happens for other humans in Him through His Spirit. In Jesus Christ, God takes to Himself the totality of human existence in sin and death and gives to humans a new justified, but still human existence, also in Christ. This reveals that

⁸⁷² Barth, *CD IV/2*, 70.

the communication of attributes of each nature in Jesus Christ occurs only from each nature to the Subject of the union, to Jesus Christ. No mixing of the two occurs. The human nature retains all attributes and characteristics proper to humanity and the divine nature retains what is proper to divinity. Both take place in the event which is the existence of this one “God-man” in his “divine-human” unity.⁸⁷³ His human nature has no existence except conjoined to His divine nature, just as, from God’s election of grace eternally onward, His divine nature has no other existence except in unity with this human nature (either by anticipation or incarnation). His unique divine-human spatial existence originally participates in God’s life so that through it humanity may also be exalted to participate in God’s life.

In this original sense, then, and without confusing the two distinct natures, Barth can even say, “As very man Jesus Himself is the Son of God and therefore of divine essence, God by nature.”⁸⁷⁴ Humiliation of His divine nature occurs in this union with His human nature, fulfilling His divine spatiality; and exaltation of the human nature is not divinization but being placed “in perfect fellowship with the divine essence”, fulfilling His human spatiality. Furthermore, His human nature, united with His divine nature and so exalted in that union, is “...set at the side of the Father, brought into perfect fellowship with Him, filled and directed by the Holy Spirit, and in full harmony with the divine essence common to Father, Son and Holy Spirit.”⁸⁷⁵ The spatiality of Jesus Christ in His existence in two natures is unique to His mode of God’s being, the mystery of the hypostatic union. His being, and the spatiality proper to it for direct, personal, intimate fellowship uniting God and humans, is precisely the ontological basis of the reconciled, exalted, receptive spatiality proper to humanity. It is actualized differently and indirectly in us since He alone is the God-human. The character of His spatiality in the triunity of God is identical with the Father and the Spirit in the common divinity, yet distinct in His election, assumption, and atonement of flesh.

Since both natures exist in the unity that is the one Subject, Jesus Christ, the attributes of the human nature and the perfections of the divine nature are both wholly proper to Him as the single Subject. Divine omnipresence is just as proper to Him as are human limitations and “...susceptibility to temptation...suffering...mortality... abandonment to nothingness...and its character as ‘flesh’”, though these attributes are neither mixed, nor improperly assigned to each other.⁸⁷⁶ Thus, human nature does not employ divine powers of omnipresence or

⁸⁷³ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 116.

⁸⁷⁴ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 71.

⁸⁷⁵ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 72.

⁸⁷⁶ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 73.

omniscience but is fully limited by its creatureliness (and fallenness), like all human beings. The single Subject exists in genuine cooperation of both wills, energies and natures such that each nature retains its proper distinctions even as, together, they constitute His one being and His one work, according to God's gracious election of this God-man.

Therefore, the sovereignty of God dwells in His creaturely dependence as the Son of Man, the eternity of God in His temporal uniqueness, the omnipresence of God in His spatial limitation, the omnipotence of God in His weakness, the glory of God in His possibility and mortality, the holiness and righteousness of God in His adamic bondages and fleshliness – in short, the unity and totality of the divine...with the humanity in the one Jesus Christ.⁸⁷⁷

The reconciling spatiality of this Reconciler means that in Him God is properly present with the human in relation and distinction to give creaturely and justified participation in the divine life, and that the human is properly present with God in relation and distinction to receive creaturely and justified participation in that exalted divine life.

Additionally, Jesus Christ's divine nature includes its indivisible totality since "...each perfection of God [is] itself the perfection of His whole essence, and therefore in any modification the sum and substance of all others"⁸⁷⁸ Nothing proper to deity is omitted or altered when the totality of humanity, also omitting nothing nor altered, is added to it in Jesus Christ.

The Son of Man exists only in His identity with the Son of God, and His human essence only in its confrontation with His divine. Its determination by the electing grace of God is not only its first but also its last and total and exclusive determination. It is human essence, but effectively confronted with the divine...so that without itself becoming divine it is an essence which exists in and with God...⁸⁷⁹

True human spatiality is realized only in confrontation with genuine divine spatiality.

As the actualization of God's election of grace, the incarnation of Jesus Christ reveals the heart of God's gracious will, the effective confronting, the personal fellowship of divine and human as it occurs in Him, and in Him for all others. "...[T]he One who in Jesus Christ is present in human nature is the Son of God,...the Son is present as this man is present, and... this man is none other than the Son."⁸⁸⁰ God's spatiality, revealed in Jesus Christ, is the perfection to be personally present to that which neither is nor becomes divine, thus preserving their distinctions in the unity of intimate fellowship. Since the divine God

⁸⁷⁷ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 86.

⁸⁷⁸ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 86.

⁸⁷⁹ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 88.

⁸⁸⁰ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 91.

originally receives humanity into His own being, where it concerns the hypostatic union of Jesus Christ and the corresponding uniting of humans with God in reconciliation, the primary property of divine nature is to give grace and the primary property of human nature is to receive that grace. In Jesus Christ, divine and human are perfectly co-present in ordered relation and distinction, actualizing and revealing the origin, reality and goal of reconciliation between God and the world, and thus the spatiality proper to God and humans for union in Him.

Regarding His work, Barth notes that the exaltation of His human nature means it corresponds to the grace of God in its gratitude and conformity to the divine will, so “to the obedience in whose exercise...is...true human freedom.”⁸⁸¹ In Jesus Christ this is the “sinlessness” of His human nature.⁸⁸² It is “...not a condition of His being as man, but the human act of His life working itself out in this way from its origin.”⁸⁸³ The determination of His human nature by God’s electing grace does not mean “He could not sin as a man, but...[as a] participant in our sinful essence, He did not will to sin and did not sin.”⁸⁸⁴ Corresponding to His election and determined spatiality, He exercised His freedom to obey the will of God and remain present with God in proper relation and distinction. Although He is not like us in this He actually confirms His solidarity with us in His sinless existence; He partakes in “the fellowship with our true human essence” and spatiality that we disrupt by our disobedience and sinfulness.⁸⁸⁵

Perfect spatiality is His not just in His divine nature but also in His actual human existence of perfect obedience to God. As Mediator between God and humans He makes each perfectly present to the other in His own existence. “In Him, in His action, a decision is made for and concerning them all. As the Son of God He has power to act in the place of God and in our place...” for He is “...the Executor of the divine will and decree in the place of God, the One who acts in our place and for and to us all...”⁸⁸⁶ When the Son of God goes into the far country and returns home as the Son of Man, “...what He places in the closest proximity to God from the greatest distance is the human essence assumed by Him...into an inward and

⁸⁸¹ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 92.

⁸⁸² Barth, *CD IV/2*, 92. For an engaging discussion on Jesus Christ’s sinlessness and the agency of the Holy Spirit see Ivor J. Davidson, “Pondering the Sinlessness of Jesus Christ: Moral Christologies and the Witness of Scripture,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 10, no. 4 (October 2008) 372-398.

⁸⁸³ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 92.

⁸⁸⁴ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 92-93.

⁸⁸⁵ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 93.

⁸⁸⁶ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 98.

indestructible fellowship with His Godhead.”⁸⁸⁷ Existence in such determined and ordered ‘proximity at a distance’ is the spatiality unique to Jesus Christ.

Moreover, “Already in the eternal will and decree of God He was not to be, nor did He will to be, God only, but Immanuel, God with man and, in fulfilment of this ‘with’ according to the free choice of His grace, this man, Jesus of Nazareth.”⁸⁸⁸ In the corresponding act in creaturely space, He bound Himself eternally with human nature so even “...in its very creatureliness, [His human nature] is placed at the side of the Creator...”⁸⁸⁹ God’s primal decision and election of grace in Jesus Christ contain and reveal His purpose, direction and goal: “God becomes man in order that man may – not become God, but come to God.”⁸⁹⁰ Spatiality is the divine perfection under which God’s primal desire to be God in intimate relationship with humans is clearly revealed in its actualization in the Person and work of Jesus Christ. Appropriate to each, both natures cooperate in the single work of the one Subject to fulfill the will of God for reconciled mutual presence in relation and distinction with humans. For it is only “...where the divine rules...reveals and gives that the human serves...attests and mediates.”⁸⁹¹ Divine spatiality graciously determines, directs and gives to the human its proper spatiality as grateful, obedient response, for the goal of eternal existence in rightly reordered mutual presence in relation and distinction between God and humans.

In summary, the incarnation is God’s majestic act in which He takes human nature into union with His divine nature in the second mode of being, and becomes the man, Jesus of Nazareth, in creaturely space. Uniting disparate natures results in divine humiliation for human exaltation and genuine participation of each nature in the Person, Jesus Christ. Human nature, exalted in Him, works in common with divine nature to fulfill the will of God’s decree and election of grace in creaturely space. This exaltation is not to deification but to “perfect fellowship with Himself”, the goal of God’s Self-determination and creative act that reveals divine and human spatiality. All humans are included in Jesus Christ. The human nature He assumes entails our creatureliness, being present in properly limited, ordered relation and distinction, but also its ‘fleshly’ nature of sin in opposition to God, being present in improper, chaotic relation and greater distinction. He eradicates all that is “alien” in our relationship with God, replacing it with His own perfect fellowship with God. The Son has returned home;

⁸⁸⁷ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 99.

⁸⁸⁸ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 100.

⁸⁸⁹ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 100-101.

⁸⁹⁰ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 106.

⁸⁹¹ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 116.

“The true man is already present.”⁸⁹² What is finished in Him is promised to us, reconciliation to God for perfect fellowship in Him or being mutually present in reconciled relation and distinction by receiving a share in His life. Our only appropriate response to God coming to us is to go to God. This “great divine direction” is Jesus Christ’s dynamic existence, given to all humans. Being perfectly co-present with God and humans, He comes to us from God as Son of God in order to take us back to God as Son of Man. We follow this divine direction given in His existence: based in God’s election of grace and Self-determination in His space, historically fulfilled in the incarnation in creaturely space, and revealed in the resurrection and ascension, from creaturely space to God’s space.⁸⁹³

Exploring God’s act of the Son’s incarnation increases our understanding of God’s spatiality. First, as a perfection of God’s own being, so inseparable from God’s primal decision of Self-determination and election of grace, God’s spatiality is one divine characteristic that reveals the very heart of God’s intention for the world. Because Jesus Christ is the content of that election, it is supremely actualized and revealed in our space that perfect fellowship between God and humans is the goal of all God’s gracious acts and ways. Uniting Himself with human nature to achieve the closest possible union while maintaining their distinctions shows the way in which God is spatial in His second mode of being. His spatiality is similar to other humans’ spatiality because He shares the same human nature, yet distinct because He is human as God. The way He, as a man, is spatial or present to God determines how others are spatial or present to God for fellowship, as creatures and sinners. That His journey is completed, having returned home to His rightful place in His Father’s space, is the promise, revealed in His resurrection and ascension, that our spatiality is being perfected as we follow His direction, which leads us to genuine, if provisional, fellowship with God that will one day be fully realized.

The third aspect of God’s humanity in Jesus Christ concerns the spatial character of His incarnation as revelation. The objective reality of His incarnation, His being and work, is the completely new and singular divine work that reveals God’s true being, work and will. The subjective reality is our knowledge of the incarnation given in new divine acts that correspond to the objective event as its content. Both occur by the power of the Holy Spirit and both are the event of God’s gracious presence. The noetic event in its “secondary character of revelation” is a “perfect analogy” of the ontic event in its “primary character of

⁸⁹² Barth, *CD IV/2*, 117.

⁸⁹³ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 118.

revelation”.⁸⁹⁴ The incarnation as the Self-revelation of Jesus Christ is a once for all, unrepeatable event; the revelation to people of that original revelation in Jesus Christ is the ongoing work of the awakening power of the Holy Spirit. As “...the powerful and effective presence of Jesus Christ Himself”, the Spirit enables people to acknowledge, receive and respond to His presence.⁸⁹⁵ In both forms, in His own flesh and in our knowledge of Him, “...Jesus Christ encounters and approaches men who are far from Him, who cannot see and hear Him, but live somewhere and somehow in the world in isolation from Him...” He does this through His Spirit so they may know Him as He is and be restored to fellowship with God. Thus, “...the Holy Spirit is the coming of Jesus Christ Himself, and His witness is this disclosure to men concerning themselves, He and His witness are...the self-revelation of Jesus Christ and as such the basis of the knowledge of Jesus Christ.”⁸⁹⁶ This knowledge reveals that the Son of God came to and for them as one of them, the Son of Man, Jesus of Nazareth, to be “freed by Jesus Christ for Jesus Christ.”⁸⁹⁷ Not only the incarnation itself, but the ongoing concrete revelation of it continues to actualize God’s spatiality and to activate or effect the recipients’ reconciled spatiality for the purpose of dynamic fellowship. His promise to be with us always is being fulfilled in a way that we may be with Him also.

Knowledge of Jesus Christ as revealed in His Self-witness through His Spirit must be given its “proper place”.⁸⁹⁸ That Jesus Christ “indirectly” attests Himself to us through His Spirit does not mean it is ineffective or a lesser revelation. Nor does it imply we can possess this knowledge by possessing this Spirit of Jesus Christ. The Spirit’s divine witness has Jesus Christ as its “content...origin and goal”; “He does not bear witness to Himself.”⁸⁹⁹ Rather, the Spirit’s witness is the fulfillment and accomplishment of Jesus Christ’s Self-witness. What the Spirit accomplished in Jesus Christ’s own incarnation will be revealed by that same Spirit, and actualized in a new community and its members. Giving proper place to this divine witness by the Spirit manifests the ongoing execution of God’s election of grace for fellowship through the actualization of this new form of divine spatiality within creaturely space.

In the Spirit’s witness, Jesus Christ attests Himself as the Risen and Ascended One. Having lived and been put to death, this One has risen and ascended into heaven. Adding

⁸⁹⁴ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 118.

⁸⁹⁵ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 122.

⁸⁹⁶ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 128.

⁸⁹⁷ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 129.

⁸⁹⁸ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 130.

⁸⁹⁹ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 130.

nothing to the completed event of His existence in humiliation and exaltation, this witness is a revealing of what was hidden, a “lifting of the veil” so He might be known as the One He is, Reconciler of the world.⁹⁰⁰ The revelation of His resurrection and ascension recalls the incarnation and atonement already fulfilled in Christ while anticipating what is yet to be fully realized in creation, the divine goal of reconciliation with God. All these events taking place in creaturely space involve the personal encounter of God with humans, according to their respective spatiality. The resurrection reveals Jesus Christ as the One He was, alive again.

What God willed and wills and will will as the Lord of the covenant, who from all eternity determined Himself for man and man for Himself, is no longer hidden in His counsel, or true only in heaven, or only actualised objectively on earth, but as actualised truth it is now declared to the world, imparted by God Himself to the man for whom He willed and did it. This declaration and impartation of the will and act of God is the event of the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ.⁹⁰¹

From this event, knowledge of God’s love and gracious will is given, leading to response of love for Him. The character of God’s spatiality as love – both loving and creating love in the loved one – is seen in this work of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. His spatiality and love are determined by His election of grace and directed to its goal of reconciled fellowship. Like the events themselves, revelation of the resurrection and ascension are miraculous acts of God, creating receptivity and response in those given it. They are given a type of participation in the events themselves when they also are made aware of their deadly place and receive their new place, being exalted in Christ to fellowship with the Father through the Spirit.

The “history of revelation”⁹⁰² begins with the resurrection of Jesus from the place of the dead, those judged and condemned by their sin and its consequences, “wrapped in total concealment”, so unknown.⁹⁰³ From the place of no return, Jesus Himself returned. Awakened to new life by the Father, He is made known. The ascension is the end of this history, when He went to “...the absolutely inaccessible place...the hidden sphere...to God...placed as man at the side of God in direct fellowship with Him in full participation of His glory.”⁹⁰⁴ He went into heaven, the created “...dwelling place of God in the world...the place of His throne, from

⁹⁰⁰ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 133.

⁹⁰¹ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 146. For a discussion of Barth’s concept of impartation within his doctrine of sanctification see Katherine Sonderegger, “Sanctification as Impartation in the Doctrine of Karl Barth,” *Zeitschrift für dialektische Theologie* 18, no. 3 (2002) 308-315.

⁹⁰² Barth, *CD IV/2*, 151.

⁹⁰³ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 152. For an exposition on Barth’s view of Jesus’ descent to the dead after His crucifixion see David Lauber, *Barth on the Descent into Hell: God, Atonement and the Christian Life* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004).

⁹⁰⁴ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 152. For studies on Barth’s doctrine of the ascension see for example Andrew Burgess, *The Ascension in Karl Barth* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004); Douglas Farrow, “Karl Barth on the Ascension: An Appreciation and Critique,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 2, no. 2 (July 2000) 127-150.

which He acts as Creator, Reconciler and Redeemer...⁹⁰⁵ While not the proper place for humans apart from divine grace, it becomes that in the ascension of this man; God is present there with this human. He does not ascend to deification or assumption into the Godhead which was "...unnecessary for Him as the Son of God and impossible for Him as the Son of Man..."⁹⁰⁶ Jesus Christ went home to the Father, revealed to some as the Lord in His resurrection and ascension. He is the Royal Man who reigns on God's throne in heaven. From this heavenly place He will send His Spirit as His presence and action in the earthly place until He comes again to be present in the flesh. In the humiliation of the Son of God that was the exaltation of the Son of Man, He was put to death, raised to new life and ascended to the side of the Father for perfect fellowship with Him. The event that is the being and existence of Jesus Christ becomes a corresponding event in its revelation to and actualization in us by the Holy Spirit. In the reconciling spatiality of God the Son as the Reconciler between God and fallen human beings, the full exercise of divine spatiality and the human spatiality enabled by it is realized and revealed. How, and to what end, the reconciliation accomplished in Jesus Christ is made effective for us as His community through the redeeming spatiality of God's Holy Spirit is the subject of the next chapter.

⁹⁰⁵ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 153.

⁹⁰⁶ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 153.

CHAPTER SIX

THE REDEEMING SPATIALITY OF GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

Chapter Six discusses some material projected by Karl Barth to be in Volume V of his *Church Dogmatics* concerning the being and work of the Holy Spirit in the final redemption of the reconciled creation with God. Since that volume was never written and Volume IV also remains incomplete, material for this chapter is drawn from previous volumes and some of Barth's other works, constructively following his theological trajectories as required.⁹⁰⁷ Barth's structure for these last two volumes is instructive: according to George Hunsinger, Barth demonstrates in Volume IV that reconciliation is the "abiding ground and content" of redemption while Volume V was to show redemption as the "dynamic consequence and goal" of reconciliation.⁹⁰⁸ Thus, to explicate redemption, and specifically the meaning and extent of the spatiality of God the Holy Spirit in His redeeming work, consideration is given to the reconciliation which makes it actual, viewed through His presence and action in the Church's reconciliation and its consummation. Beginning with Barth's discussion of God's presence with us in Jesus Christ's various resurrection forms, concentration remains on the period between ascension and final return that highlight some aspects of final redemption. Barth called this church age the "time between the times".⁹⁰⁹ The community called, gathered and sent is discussed next, as the particular place of the presence and work of God's redeeming Spirit among us, with a view toward its consummation. After a brief assessment of Barth's pneumatology, a glimpse at his understanding of the eschaton, our final place, concludes this inquiry of the redeeming spatiality of the Holy Spirit.

As in the previous two chapters, the purpose here is twofold: primary interest concerns the spatiality of God, specifically the spatiality of the Holy Spirit in His redeeming work; since He does this in and among us, insight into the spatiality of redeemed humankind

⁹⁰⁷ For one account of Barth's assessment of the unfinished *Church Dogmatics* see Eberhard Busch, *Karl Barth: His Life from Letters and Autobiographical Texts*, trans. John Bowden, 2nd revised ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976) 485-490. For an early (1929) essay by Barth on the Holy Spirit and Redemption, see Karl Barth, *The Holy Spirit and the Christian Life: The Theological Basis of Ethics*, trans., R. Birch Hoyle, ed., Robin W. Lovin (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993) revised from *The Holy Ghost and the Christian Life* (London: F. Muller, 1938).

⁹⁰⁸ George Hunsinger, "The Mediator of Communion: Karl Barth's Doctrine of the Holy Spirit" in his *Disruptive Grace* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000) 178 (hereafter cited as "Mediator of Communion").

⁹⁰⁹ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics: The Doctrine of Reconciliation*, vol. IV, part 3, first half, eds. G.W. Bromiley and T.F. Torrance, trans. G.W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1961) 276 (hereafter cited as Barth, *CD* IV/3.1).

follows. Additionally, since the Spirit's active presence makes effective the reconciliation accomplished by Jesus Christ, which of necessity is also the primary source for inquiring into redemption, the reconciling spatiality of the Son of God is further explicated. This is possible since the focus on the Holy Spirit's presence and work that reveals, actualizes and brings to fulfillment in the world, in the community and in us is that which is already accomplished and pledged in the presence and work of Jesus Christ by His life, death, resurrection and ascension. The significance of the spatiality of the triune God in our "anthropological sphere" is demonstrated as it impacts and determines this world, His community and the world to come.⁹¹⁰

1. God's Place Between the Places

Beyond the Trinitarian section in Volume I/2 discussed in Part One, Barth considers the Person and work of the Spirit in a section of §69 entitled "The Promise of the Spirit".⁹¹¹ Having objectively reconciled the world with God and fulfilled the covenant in the event of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection, God's grace does not end. It includes the revelation of this event to His community and the world: who Jesus Christ is and what He did is not only made effective for the individual and the world but an opportunity to participate in this new reality, this new place of fellowship with God is extended to all by His Spirit. Only the sphere of Christ's own being and work can illumine our sphere since "...the Christological sphere is not to be found only in God, or somewhere in heaven, but at a specific point in the great field of human being and occurrence." For "here" in this place "...reconciliation is enacted, and therefore reconciliation in its character as revelation, the prophecy of Jesus Christ." Understanding reconciliation's "effects on the remaining places in this great field" thus highlight the spatiality of the Holy Spirit who accomplishes these effects by His presence in and with us.⁹¹²

Before addressing the Spirit's redeeming spatiality, Barth's raises a pertinent question concerning the legitimacy of considering the reality of Jesus Christ and His work occurring in one place and time, with its effect on the world and on us in another place and time. As God's Word addressed to us in Jesus Christ, what bridges the gap from Him to us that effects "a real presence of the prophecy of Jesus Christ?"⁹¹³ Barth first responds that "in the glory of His

⁹¹⁰ Barth, *CD* IV/3.1, 276. See Barth, *CD* I/2, 203-274 for his section on the Holy Spirit.

⁹¹¹ Barth, *CD* IV/3.1, 274ff.

⁹¹² Barth, *CD* IV/3.1, 276.

⁹¹³ Barth, *CD* IV/3.1, 277.

mediatorial work” we are already present and included.⁹¹⁴ Not only is He “glorifying Himself among and in and through us,” but “...we are ordained and liberated to take a receptive and active part in His glory.” Thus, for those who believe in, know and serve Him as their Lord, “He is, and His work takes place, in fellowship with them, for them, among them, in them and also through them.” Jesus Christ’s spatiality is His perfection to be co-present with them in ‘proximity at a distance’ or in ordered relation and distinction. In fact, Barth explicitly states, “Where He is, they are.”⁹¹⁵

He is not a Head without a body, but the Head of His body and with His body. Even in the eternal divine decree of election He was not alone, but the One in whom as their Firstborn and Representative God also elected the many as His brethren because He also loved them in Him before the world was created and established. Hence He did not will to be the eternal Son of the eternal Father for Himself, but for us men. Nor did he become man for Himself, as though to be of divine essence as this one man, but in order to confirm His election as our Brother, and therefore our election as our eldest Brother, and therefore our election to divine sonship. Thus His humiliation as the Son of God took place in fulfilment of our justification before God. And His exaltation as the Son of Man took place in order that He might draw us all to Himself...in fulfilment of our sanctification for God.⁹¹⁶

The Head and body, therefore, form a unity (‘proximity’) even though they are distinct (‘distance’). “He can as little be separated from them as they from Him.” So, Barth insists, His presence in the world is His presence in and with His community, “...in the communion which He Himself has established, in the communication which He Himself has actualized, ...and therefore in their reality as promised, given, maintained and controlled by God in Him.”⁹¹⁷

Using vivid spatial language to express the intimacy of such co-presence in relation or spatial fellowship, Barth states that Jesus Christ

Himself is not merely there in His own place, but as He is there in His own place He is also here in ours. He is the One who is on the way from there to here. Hence, as He is for Himself, He is also among and for and in and through us. He is and acts on His way from His own particular sphere to our surrounding, anthropological sphere.⁹¹⁸

A “direct connexion” exists between His active presence and spatiality and us and our spatiality, a “continuity...between His sphere and our sphere”.⁹¹⁹ In fact, the “...reconciliation which has taken place in Him, in His person and work, is as such an occurrence which reaches

⁹¹⁴ Barth, *CD* IV/3.1, 278.

⁹¹⁵ Barth, *CD* IV/3.1, 278.

⁹¹⁶ Barth, *CD* IV/3.1, 278.

⁹¹⁷ Barth, *CD* IV/3.1, 279.

⁹¹⁸ Barth, *CD* IV/3.1, 279.

⁹¹⁹ Barth, *CD* IV/3.1, 279.

beyond its own particular sphere, which embraces our sphere...⁹²⁰ Jesus Christ's mediatorial work as prophetic Word is "His being and action in self-declaration", so His revealed and shared glory. He does not "remain aloof" but "...discloses...manifests...announces...imparts Himself, moving out from Himself to where He and His being and work are not yet known and perceived..."⁹²¹ God's movement in revelation effects knowledge of His reconciling presence, which includes participation in that glorious divine presence.

As Self-revelation it is based in and is a repetition of the event itself, the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Repetition does not mean Jesus must die and be raised again, for "His work is finished".⁹²² He has objectively accomplished what was intended, reconciliation between God and the world. Rather, as that event is revealed, it reiterates itself subjectively, in us, through the presence and work of the Spirit, who is a reiteration of Father and Son. His resurrection penetrates our sphere disclosing its "practical significance" for us. Its "prophetic character" prevents His effective reconciling presence from remaining in "isolation and remoteness from us without being reached by Him."⁹²³ The resurrection event is "thus the primal and basic form of His glory...His Word as self-expression".⁹²⁴

The "universality" and "inclusiveness" of Jesus Christ's resurrection life is seen in "...the continuity in which He has His own special place but reaches out from it to embrace ours too..."⁹²⁵ By coming to our place Jesus Christ actually places us in His space "to breathe His air, to share His life", and so to "know Him as ours, as our Lord". Participation in the space of His new life does not make us divine, but ensures universal effect upon all who are "...granted the freedom to know Him, and in Him His being for, among and in them, and therefore theirs with and in Him." Such "Easter knowledge"⁹²⁶ is Jesus Christ's Self-giving, His "uniting Himself with us and us with Himself."⁹²⁷ Therefore, to know "the interrelationship between Jesus Christ and the world", we must always submit to "His self-declaration" as we "...count upon the sovereign presence and action of the Resurrected Himself..." In "astonishment",⁹²⁸ yet with "certainty",⁹²⁹ we yield to Him precisely "that He Himself may come from this place to our place" effecting the transition from being

⁹²⁰ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 279.

⁹²¹ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 280.

⁹²² Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 281.

⁹²³ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 282.

⁹²⁴ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 281.

⁹²⁵ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 281.

⁹²⁶ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 283.

⁹²⁷ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 284.

⁹²⁸ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 286.

⁹²⁹ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 288.

objectively true in His sphere to subjectively true in ours. Then the promise, ““Lo, I am with you alway”” is actualized.⁹³⁰

The “immediacy and perfection” of the prophetic Word declared in this “new and specific divine act” of resurrection stems from its identity with the Risen Lord who makes Himself present in it. Newly “...alive from the dead...as the Lord and Saviour present and active among and with and in...” the disciples to whom He first appears, He declares to them what God has done in His life and death.⁹³¹ In His previous coming, Jesus Christ was particularly located, “...enclosed yesterday within the limits of His existence...not exercising the latent power and range and significance of His presence...” In His new coming today, Jesus Christ is “...declaring Himself, making known His presence and what has been accomplished in Him for all men and for the whole created order, putting it into effect.” Here and now He is “the Prophet, Witness and Preacher”⁹³² as the One He was there and then, “the divine-human High-priest and King.”⁹³³ With death eternally behind Him, the world is now “what it is enabled to be in the presence of this factor, in encounter with Him”⁹³⁴

The “*parousia* of Jesus Christ” is His Easter presence, defined as “effective presence.”⁹³⁵ Although the Easter event is unique and singular, its effective presence takes a variety of forms. The Easter event itself, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, is the first and original form; the “impartation of the Holy Spirit”, the second and current form; with the eschatological return of Jesus Christ as the third and definitive form.⁹³⁶ Taken together these distinct ways of being present, of His coming again, constitute the totality that is the Easter event. Each neither adds nor removes anything materially new. His coming as “...the Resurrected, His coming in the Holy Spirit and His coming at the end of the age...” simply reveal how the living Lord is present in the “three forms of His one new coming”, each with a distinct but inseparable spatiality.⁹³⁷ The first two forms have already occurred, while the second form continues to occur until the final anticipated return that has yet to occur, but will according to everything already elected, accomplished and pledged. Interconnected in the

⁹³⁰ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 286.

⁹³¹ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 289.

⁹³² Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 291.

⁹³³ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 290.

⁹³⁴ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 291.

⁹³⁵ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 292. For a discussion of Barth’s eschatology of hope in the light of his debate with Brunner, see John C. McDowell, “Karl Barth, Emil Brunner and the Subjectivity of the Object of Christian Hope,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 8, no. 1 (January 2006) 25-41.

⁹³⁶ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 293.

⁹³⁷ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 295.

singularity of the event revealed, they also participate in and manifest each other “by way of anticipation or recapitulation”.⁹³⁸

As the first, basic form of Jesus Christ’s new coming, the resurrection occurred “once for all and irrevocably”.⁹³⁹ His Self-declaration, completed ontically in His own existence, is now actualized “in noetic form also as [His] prophecy”. The “presence and efficacy” of His prophetic Word concerning the reconciliation accomplished in His original coming means that He has “publically bound and committed Himself to man” eternally. This public “decision for the world and man taken and fulfilled in Jesus Christ” also declares that God “...Himself in all His divine being and action...can and will act only as the One who is bound to man, who has espoused his cause...who has humbled Himself to save him, and exalted him to His own right hand.” This once for all, irrevocable, “great divine Yes and Amen” proclaimed in the resurrection reveals God’s eternal faithfulness to Himself and to the world, and the perfection of His omnipresence or spatiality.⁹⁴⁰ Since God’s “Word is effected as it is spoken”, the presence of the risen Lord has immediate and eternal significance.⁹⁴¹ Having occurred in our creaturely sphere, in Jerusalem, the prophetic Word is a cosmic occurrence, but one whose universal effect is limited neither by place or time nor by our position regarding it. Now that Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead all of creation is forever changed, particularly those “determined... and addressed by” this Word.⁹⁴² Summarizing thus far, in His prophetic office, Jesus Christ declares God’s faithfulness to the world by revealing humanity’s altered place that is accomplished in the resurrection event; a place for mutual presence in newly ordered relation and distinction. His presence in His prophetic Word thereby effects transformation that corresponds to this new place, including transformation of humanity’s spatiality.

Furthermore, the singularity of His Easter presence is seen first as the irreversible, assured act of God Himself: Jesus Christ died and was raised from the dead as attested by eyewitnesses. Its reality and effect cannot be relegated to the past in “distance or remoteness” from all other occurrences in all places and times. Rather, it is the very “...exit, transition and entrance of Jesus Christ from His own sphere to ours and that of the world.”⁹⁴³ No chasm or

⁹³⁸ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 296. Drawing from an analogy of the doctrine of the Trinity, Barth refers to the relation of the event in its three forms as a type of *perichoresis*.

⁹³⁹ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 296.

⁹⁴⁰ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 297.

⁹⁴¹ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 298.

⁹⁴² Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 299.

⁹⁴³ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 300.

separation exists between Christ in His work and us in our world. His new spatiality or new way of being present in His Easter form, effects the beginning of the world's transformation for reconciled relationship with God. There is no going back; objectively, that old place no longer exists. Moving forward in our new place towards our final perfected place is our new reality determined by Jesus Christ. Second, in its primal form the disciples saw what the rest of creation has yet to see: the Resurrected, and the world's new determined place effected by Him. His resurrection declares "...God's faithful acknowledgment of the creature which had fallen away from Him but which He had not forgotten or abandoned and which was not therefore lost to Him."⁹⁴⁴ The positive determination of this new place is "total"; it cannot be altered or restricted given the divine love unleashed on "the world loved by Him in His only-begotten Son".⁹⁴⁵ The spatiality of those in this new place is also total in the sense of their determination to be wholly present in relation and distinction in a way that genuinely corresponds to the accomplished reconciled relationship between God and humans. The determination of this new place is also "universal"; "...the real goal and end of the resurrection of Jesus and its attestation was His going out into...all the world." The Word determines His followers as a missionary community to attest "His living presence and action in its midst". Furthermore, all future disciples were anticipated and universally included in the first disciples. "[T]o turn in witness to all to whom He has already turned in His resurrection" is to follow after the Word spoken in resurrection.⁹⁴⁶ Thus, the determined spatiality of these missionary followers also is universal; they are to be present in relation and distinction with the world as representatives and witnesses of God's active presence. The third determination of this new place is "definitive" or the reality throughout the entire process. Barth summarizes that resurrection "...is life lived with Him, in the power of this whole work of His, in the fellowship of faith in Him, of love for Him and of hope in Him..."⁹⁴⁷ No place to live exists except in this resurrection life; and no spatiality, or way of being present in relation and distinction with God and the world exists except in this resurrection life. This Easter Day "commencement", and its new forms in "continuation" and "conclusion" are definitive; they cannot be disturbed, destroyed or diminished. The first Word proclaimed in Jesus Christ's

⁹⁴⁴ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 301.

⁹⁴⁵ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 302.

⁹⁴⁶ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 304.

⁹⁴⁷ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 305.

resurrection is also the last. Therefore, nothing exceeds our new place and our new spatiality, being “‘in life’ in and with Him”, and as such, also with the world.⁹⁴⁸

The final unique aspect of this first form of Jesus Christ’s coming again is “...the absolute newness of the form in which...He imparts Himself, His mediatorial work, the life of the reconciled creature as the fruit of His work, to the world and us.” Still “the suffering and active Mediator between God and man,”⁹⁴⁹ His coming again is “radically and totally and absolutely new”; He comes “...from beyond the frontier of all creaturely life as the Resurrected from the dead.” He comes again from the place “from which none other has returned” even as He is on the way to “...the place where none other has gone, to heaven... the hidden and inaccessible dwelling-place of God in the sphere of His creation.”⁹⁵⁰ Between Hades and heaven is established the singular place of His revealed glory, and the place of our transformation from earthly to heavenly life. His first Easter form thus occurs in this “transition” from the place of the dead to the place of eternal living.⁹⁵¹ Death is the undeniable, unrelenting limit to creaturely existence. One who comes again from that place can do so only by receiving a new type of existence that is no longer subject to and endangered by death; “life from God and for God...which is not its own but is given to it by God” who alone is beyond, above and after death.⁹⁵² This future “...new life from God and with God...is eternal life...after the manner of His own life.” The “present form” of the creature’s life is not destroyed but is “taken up into the new form”. Since “God...is present to [the creature] in death itself...what it was before death [in its earthly life], it may thus be present and live eternally even after death in the power of His presence.”⁹⁵³ Continuity of individual identity is given to each person as a result of God’s spatiality or the way God is present to it, maintaining its being in life, death and beyond. Without God’s presence, the creature is no more.

Barth considers the particular significance of Jesus Christ’s coming again after death, the “...concrete, visible, audible, tangible new presence of the man Jesus who was crucified, dead and buried.” This “...perceptible and active presence and appearance...is comparable with the presence and appearance of a man who has not yet died.” However, having just come again from the place of the dead, this life must be “from and with God and after the manner of

⁹⁴⁸ Barth, *CD* IV/3.1, 306.

⁹⁴⁹ Barth, *CD* IV/3.1, 309.

⁹⁵⁰ Barth, *CD* IV/3.1, 310.

⁹⁵¹ Barth, *CD* IV/3.1, 311.

⁹⁵² Barth, *CD* IV/3.1, 310.

⁹⁵³ Barth, *CD* IV/3.1, 311.

God, i.e., eternal life.” His resurrection means the man Jesus has crossed the frontier in the “reverse direction”, coming from the place of the dead to the place of the living. Thus “He participated in the existence of men who were still moving forward to death, of perishing creation in all its corruptibility, of world occurrence in its spatio-temporal contingency and limitation.” But this reverse movement occurs only by “the presence of God who alone is immortal and transcendent”.⁹⁵⁴ The resurrection of the man Jesus reveals the “radically new thing” of new life after death, life that participates in the immortal, transcendent and incorruptible life of God, and as such is necessarily imbued with divine glory. Avoiding Docetic tendencies regarding the forty-day resurrection presence before His ascension to heaven, His coming again is in the same “...psycho-physical totality of His temporal existence familiar from His first coming...in space and in time...being present spiritually, of course, but also corporally as the same man He had been before.” What is new is that “His participation in the glory of God...previously concealed” is now revealed, remarkably, by “...concretely participating also in...the concrete temporal [and spatial] existence of all creation...” as He had before.⁹⁵⁵ Thus,

...the glory of God is here present in the personal, real, visible, audible and even tangible coming again of this man. Both as true God and also as true man Jesus Christ was again present in the midst of world-occurrence. Not only did God break out from His transcendence, but He broke into the this-worldliness of His creation. Here, as His temporal and spatial life, there shone in the resurrection of Jesus Christ...the light of His eternal life. His temporal and spatial life shone as His eternal life.⁹⁵⁶

Regarding the impact the presence of the Resurrected has on the world and us, Barth concludes:

For it took place in this event that in the appearance of the one man Jesus in the glory of God there was made immediately present as a new but concretely real element in the existence of the world the goal given to the world in and with its reconciliation to God, its future of salvation as redemption from the shadow of death and the antithesis which pursues it, its future of salvation as its completion by the creation of its new form of peace, its being in the glory of God.⁹⁵⁷

The Risen One’s presence in creaturely space reveals the reconciliation with God already fully accomplished in Him, and the future life in which that accomplished reconciliation is fully actualized in us, thus enabling us to be wholly present with God and one another in perfectly ordered relation and distinction. The world’s “...future, goal and end as the world

⁹⁵⁴ Barth, *CD* IV/3.1, 311.

⁹⁵⁵ Barth, *CD* IV/3.1, 312.

⁹⁵⁶ Barth, *CD* IV/3.1, 312-313.

⁹⁵⁷ Barth, *CD* IV/3.1, 315.

reconciled to God...has become directly present...” to it.⁹⁵⁸ In Jesus Christ risen from the dead, the world sees both its old unreconciled place in its antithetical “form” against God as judged, condemned and put to death, and also its radically new reconciled place in its “form” as the “corrected... situation” with God. In the here and now of its new justified and sanctified place, is revealed the promised future place with God based on the past place that God has left behind and destroyed. Therefore, the world cannot continue in its lost place but must begin to move forward in and toward correspondence to the new life of reconciliation that God gives after death. This movement towards the future determination is grounded on the reconciliation effected and revealed in Jesus Christ’s Easter presence. Replacing the world’s old character, which pitted divine against human, eternity against temporal and life against death, the world’s new determination and future is

...its redemption as the making eternal of its temporal life, the transcending its this-worldly, the investing of its corruptible with incorruption, the clothing of its humanity in divine glory, the perfecting of its creation by the new creation of its form in peace with God and therefore in and with itself.⁹⁵⁹

The new determination of the reconciled human’s spatiality moves toward being totally present for and with God and others, in peaceful and perfectly ordered relation and distinction, from being isolated from God and others or present in disordered, chaotic relation that lacked proper distinction. The world can know its new place with God by seeing it realized already in Jesus Christ “...who as the one Son of God was the basis and goal of all divine election and creation and as the one Son of Man the Firstborn of creation and the Head of all other men...” In Him His people already had eternal life, they “...already lived from and with and for God in all its humanity.” The world’s future determination and reconciliation are already “its true and concrete present.”⁹⁶⁰ Thus, the Easter event itself was the end of creation’s old place in its form of disordered spatiality and death, and the coming into being of creation’s new place in its new form of reordered spatiality and eternal life, corresponding to the accomplished reconciliation.⁹⁶¹

Regarding the efficacy of Jesus Christ’s resurrection for the world, Barth asks how reconciliation and future determination for eternal life with God is already fully realized in

⁹⁵⁸ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 314-315.

⁹⁵⁹ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 315. For an account of Barth’s understanding of time and eternity with regards to eschatology see Eberhard Busch, *The Great Passtion: An Introduction to Karl Barth’s Theology*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004) 264-288; for eternity and eschatology see George Hunsinger, “Mysterium Trinitatis: Karl Barth’s Conception of Eternity” in his *Disruptive Grace: Studies in the Theology of Karl Barth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000) 186-209.

⁹⁶⁰ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 315.

⁹⁶¹ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 316.

Jesus Christ, "...whereas for the rest of the world...it can only be a goal which is manifest, indicated and certain, yet unattainably distant in virtue of the frontier of death which still divides Him and them?"⁹⁶² More pointedly,

How could it be that this event, so laden with incomparable force, should not yet have by a long way the corresponding total, universal and definitive effect, but that time and world-occurrence in time should seem to go forward...as if nothing had happened...as if Christ were not risen?⁹⁶³

And how can the spatiality of reconciled humanity actualized in Jesus Christ not be realized in the spatiality of humanity in general? First, the Easter event's efficacy is not in question but rather its hiddenness or "apparent absence".⁹⁶⁴ Concealed everywhere except in the event's revelation or the risen Jesus Christ Himself, the "veil" is removed only by faith. Secondly, the Easter event is merely the "...commencement of the revelation of reconciliation and its fruit in the ensuing redemption and consummation, but not with this revelation in its full development."⁹⁶⁵ This first form of His Easter presence yields two more to come. Therefore, tension remains in this in-between space, between these forms of His coming again, the "already" and "not yet", the "distance and difference" between new life actualized in Jesus Christ and life actualized in us and the world.⁹⁶⁶ Thirdly, visible effects, including the Church, actually exist since "the risen Jesus Christ Himself really [does] meet us" in these places. So, reconciled spatiality occurs occasionally and provisionally in the Church between the Head and body, for instance, and between members. While not the final "present possession of the glorious presence of their Lord", nevertheless, it is "His truly promised and therefore undeniable presence among them" even in this "Advent" form.⁹⁶⁷

Barth concludes that such contradictions between the reality of our reconciliation with God actualized in Jesus Christ and the reality actualized in our world and lives must serve a divine purpose indicating a "genuine order chosen, willed and arranged by God."⁹⁶⁸ That purpose is the reality of Jesus Christ Himself, the Word of God spoken only in the Easter event, the place of old endings and new beginnings where the reconciliation of the world with God is already completed and its revelation begins. But He does not remain in "this place."⁹⁶⁹ Instead, as the "divine-human Mediator" He reveals Himself as the Risen One "...moving

⁹⁶² Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 317.

⁹⁶³ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 317.

⁹⁶⁴ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 317.

⁹⁶⁵ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 318.

⁹⁶⁶ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 320.

⁹⁶⁷ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 322.

⁹⁶⁸ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 326.

⁹⁶⁹ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 327.

forward from this place, from this commencement...to the goal already included and indicated in it.”⁹⁷⁰ The effects of the Mediator’s prophetic work extend from His own life to the lives of all people of all places and times because His encompasses theirs. He is in movement: He moves from the beginning of the already accomplished reconciliation revealed in His own life to “...the end of His not yet accomplished revelation in the life of all men and all creation as enclosed in His life, of their life as the new creation on a new earth and under a new heaven.” The goal is already included and actual in the beginning “by way of anticipation”. However it is not yet completed in us because He is still on the way, where, “at this stage of His being and activity...He encounters us in His resurrection.”⁹⁷¹

Since the ground of reconciliation already accomplished in the Easter event is the One who will also bring it to completion in the world and in us, the “certainty of [future] victory” cannot be overshadowed by the present “incompleteness” and tension.⁹⁷² Jesus Christ continues on this way without being at the goal not because we “are not yet there and do not yet live in the presence of our future of salvation.” Rather, “...the ‘not yet’ in which...we all exist has its basis in the fact that it is the good will of Jesus Christ Himself to be not yet at the goal but still on the way so that the rest of creation has no option but to participate in and adapt itself to His situation.”⁹⁷³ Since He goes before us, our calling in response to Him in view of His accomplished work is “...to follow Him, to accompany Him on the way to His goal, in His movement from here to there, from the first to the final form of His coming again, in His still incompleting conflict...” in which He is “giving Himself time and place for combat” with darkness remaining in the world.⁹⁷⁴ His spatiality in this movement grounds our corresponding spatiality as we follow Him.

The divine good will “to determine us for discipleship on this way” makes possible this place of continuation between the place of commencement and the place of consummation. “[D]istance” between our “unsettled” place in this “alien land” and the goal of being “at home” with God is His perfect will which “...has as its aim the granting and procuring for the creation reconciled to God in Him both time and space not merely to see, but actively to share in the harvest which follows from the sowing of reconciliation.”⁹⁷⁵ As we are present with Him in relation and distinction, participating in His life and work He

⁹⁷⁰ Barth, *CD* IV/3.1, 326-327.

⁹⁷¹ Barth, *CD* IV/3.1, 327.

⁹⁷² Barth, *CD* IV/3.1, 328.

⁹⁷³ Barth, *CD* IV/3.1, 329.

⁹⁷⁴ Barth, *CD* IV/3.1, 331.

⁹⁷⁵ Barth, *CD* IV/3.1, 331.

“confirms...His whole being and action.”⁹⁷⁶ The world loved, elected and created by God in Jesus Christ to be present in covenant relation and distinction with Him, for free, active participation in His eternal life and work, is now given the space and time to live in correspondence to His original good will and decision based on the accomplished reconciliation, revelation and actualization of the Easter event. Furthermore, God “...wills to preserve the world, to cause it to persist, in its present and provisional form, in order that it should be the place where He can be perceived and accepted and known and confessed by the creature as the living Word of God.”⁹⁷⁷ His love and work for us indicate “He did not will to ignore or pass by ourselves...He willed to have us at His side and in His discipleship in our own free work...” present with Him on this way. By giving us “...time and place and opportunity for this free action...between the commencement and the completion of His presence...” we correspond to the reconciliation accomplished in Him, and so to our future determination and spatiality.⁹⁷⁸

Jesus Christ’s “...exit, transition and entrance into our anthropological sphere...His coming again as the Revealer of the reconciliation effected in Him includes this sphere or time [and space] of ours within itself.”⁹⁷⁹ The determinations given with His Easter presence in our space and time, in its beginning, continuing and ending forms, determine our own sphere, since we have our “...place...existence...structure and persistence in virtue of this continuing revelation.”⁹⁸⁰ His movement from beginning to end “...opens up for the creature which is reconciled but not yet redeemed and perfected a field on which it can...demonstrate...its freedom.”⁹⁸¹ In His prophetic work, Jesus Christ and the world “co-exist in their encounter.” Although “fruitful” for some and “unfruitful” for others, only God can distinguish them.⁹⁸² Those ignorant of His effective presence dwell in the “same provisional sphere”, though it appears they inhabit a different sphere of falsehood, darkness and confusion. Yet, “everything is totally different” for those acknowledging and responding to His Easter presence.⁹⁸³ Free to express their new reconciled nature with its proper spatiality, determinations of their existence and conditions of the world are no longer “prison

⁹⁷⁶ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 332.

⁹⁷⁷ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 332.

⁹⁷⁸ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 333.

⁹⁷⁹ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 333.

⁹⁸⁰ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 335.

⁹⁸¹ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 334.

⁹⁸² Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 335.

⁹⁸³ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 339.

walls” but gracious objective limits of their new place.⁹⁸⁴ This sphere, although provisional, is nonetheless a distinctive space, illuminated by the light and life of the Risen Christ, and offering glimpses of their future place.

Those dwelling in the reconciled place are pilgrims between the places of commencement and consummation, on the move from a particular beginning, in a particular direction and towards a particular goal. These pilgrims follow and accompany the One who leads them along this, their only way, being mutually present in a particular relation and distinction. Attending to those who only know “their own place and are not on the way”, who “exist alongside us in this direct proximity”,⁹⁸⁵ Christians must fulfill their calling to follow Him and participate in His prophetic work by attesting Him in the dark, ignorant world.⁹⁸⁶ The Christian’s place thus is modified by the non-Christian’s presence and co-existence, in addition to their own actual and provisional existence. For their imperfect, partial knowledge succumbs to evil and falsehood, forgets the beginning place and loses sight of the ending place. Hence, Jesus Christ must be “the perfect Christian...in our place”, for our life “signifies a tarrying in or regression to” the place of ignorance.⁹⁸⁷ Antithetically, Christians live in both places: in knowledge of their accomplished reconciliation in the revelation and presence of Jesus Christ that determines, conditions and gives meaning to the whole of their existence and future, and also in ignorance.

This place between the places is the only possibility yet available to Christians because “...their existence, their situation, their very all is grounded in and begins with the fact that Jesus Christ is risen.”⁹⁸⁸ And yet, Barth wonders if this place might be a vacuum, devoid of any “personally present and active” encounter with Him, or present only through representatives “...indirectly, from the distance behind and before, but not primarily, properly and directly...”⁹⁸⁹ Maybe the Church has taken His place, for instance, substituting “His own living presence and action” for “...a Jesus Christ who speaks with us only on the borders of our sphere but is absent from the sphere itself...” But such notions of His absence contradict the Easter revelation: “He *is* the hope of all.”⁹⁹⁰ Jesus Christ was, is and will be all in all. So He not only illumines this place forward from His first Easter “coming again” and backward

⁹⁸⁴ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 339.

⁹⁸⁵ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 341.

⁹⁸⁶ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 344.

⁹⁸⁷ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 341.

⁹⁸⁸ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 343.

⁹⁸⁹ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 347.

⁹⁹⁰ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 348.

from His final coming again. “He is the hope which shines here and now, among and in them ...in the present at the place and time where they now are... He is...just as present and active on the field on which they exist as He was...and as He will be...”⁹⁹¹ Leading through this place where we follow, He “...Himself is present and active in it for us all...as active Subject in His Word”, speaking not from a “distance, but as the One who is in the place where we are.” Therefore, no interruption of Jesus Christ’s Easter presence occurs in our sphere; He is not absent. “His coming again, His *parousia*, His revelation goes forward...and becomes and is an event in our sphere...”⁹⁹² Accompanying and following this One who, in coming again here in His second form,

...comes to us in our place and time, not tarrying here, for He hurries on the way to His goal, yet not abandoning us but associating us with Him on this way, so that He may be really ours, and we His, as already here and now we are made His companions in travel on this way.⁹⁹³

He is present with us as hope and enables us to be present with Him in hope, in corresponding relation and distinction; His spatiality determines and affects ours for characteristic hope. Nothing can take or alter His place with us since “He Himself is fully present and active.” As the One who came again on Easter Day and will come again in final glory, He “...encounters us in our today, He is with us all the days, and is the hope of us all.”⁹⁹⁴

Finally, Barth identifies this “middle form” of Jesus Christ’s Easter presence as “the promise of the Spirit”, who is “His direct and immediate presence and action among and with and in us.”⁹⁹⁵ The Spirit is the effective presence of Jesus Christ in His prophetic Word in this transformative place between the beginning and ending places. Thus, primary to the Holy Spirit’s spatiality is its character to be mutually present in ordered relation and distinction with us by revealing and actualizing in us God’s reconciliation in Jesus Christ. Entailing several dimensions, the Spirit is present first in His revelatory and actualizing act making the past effectively present to us; Jesus Christ’s accomplished reconciliation is newly enacted in us by His Spirit. By “promise” Barth highlights “the distinctive feature of His being in our sphere [which]...materially consist[s] in the fact that Jesus Christ as the hope of all is present

⁹⁹¹ Barth, *CD* IV/3.1, 348-9.

⁹⁹² Barth, *CD* IV/3.1, 349.

⁹⁹³ Barth, *CD* IV/3.1, 349.

⁹⁹⁴ Barth, *CD* IV/3.1, 350.

⁹⁹⁵ Barth, *CD* IV/3.1, 351.

to us as the One who promises and is promised.”⁹⁹⁶ As the sole ground of our hope and future, God in Jesus Christ is already present here in His mode of being as Spirit. This second dimension of the spatiality of the Holy Spirit indicates He also already reveals and actualizes in us our future redemption. The Spirit is present making our future effectively present to us; actualized for humans in Jesus Christ’s resurrection, eternal life begins here and now.

The promise of the Spirit has two meanings. First, “the Spirit promises” connotes the assurance of Jesus Christ’s final coming again since already included in the first two forms that have already occurred and are occurring. The hope of His full revelation of “...the redemption and perfecting of the world reconciled in Him, of its participation in the life of this new cosmic form, and therefore of its own eternal life...” is guaranteed by His Spirit’s presence who is actualizing this in us.⁹⁹⁷ Therefore, “...the Holy Spirit, i.e., Jesus Christ acting and speaking in the power of His resurrection, is present and active among and with and in certain men.”⁹⁹⁸ The Spirit’s presence and work includes a twofold promise: the future redemption is assured and their current striving in this place toward that goal will become effective movement by His presence. This highlights a second aspect of the Spirit’s spatiality: He is present in relation and distinction, empowering, enabling and moving us forward toward full redemption. Both pledges are addressed to those who already know Jesus Christ in His first form, who believe in Him as the One risen from the dead, present and active with them here and now. They “...know His presence and work in subjective correspondence with His objective reality...” They know Him in His reconciling presence and themselves as those who are present with Him on the way to being fully reconciled with Him, thus, “determined and characterized by this promise” even in their struggles and imperfections. “[A]ctivated, capacitated and equipped” by the Spirit’s promise who “sets them on their way to this end, and accompanies them on it,” He confirms their way is correct, the end sure, and enables their free participation in it.⁹⁹⁹ Those who know Jesus Christ in His second Easter form thus are “...already recipients, bearers and possessors of the...mighty promise of the Spirit...”¹⁰⁰⁰

For Barth, “the Promise of the Spirit” also means “the Spirit is promised.” Knowledge of the promises included with resurrection must be grounded in knowledge of the Risen One. The ignorant cannot acknowledge God’s promises to provide a future redeemed place with Him or of His presence empowering them in their movement in the present place toward their

⁹⁹⁶ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 350.

⁹⁹⁷ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 350.

⁹⁹⁸ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 351.

⁹⁹⁹ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 352.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 353.

future place. Their subjective realization, what takes place in them, does not yet correspond to His objective reality, to what has already taken place in Him. The Spirit, not yet “present and active in them” to conform and determine their existence by Jesus Christ’s accomplished reconciliation, is for them “the content of a promise which is given but not yet fulfilled.”¹⁰⁰¹ This raises a critical issue regarding the omnipresence of the Spirit. Starkly put, Barth asks “How can the Holy Spirit guide, comfort, admonish and strengthen them when He is not present? How can He so do among and with and in the men to whom He is not given and who do not therefore have Him?” Surely Jesus Christ died and rose again for them, the twofold promise of the Spirit is offered to them. Nevertheless “...in them the Holy Spirit comes up against closed doors and windows, not reaching or dwelling or working in those who do not know Jesus...”¹⁰⁰² However this is not necessarily their future, either in this present place or the final redeemed place. The promise means the Spirit is “...already on the way to him, and on the point of reaching him, of indwelling him, of giving him the promise, of causing him to participate in its lights and powers and gifts, of radically refashioning...his existence.”¹⁰⁰³ The promise and hope of the world’s reconciliation with God is in process of being actualized in those who do not yet know what God has done in Jesus Christ, through the power, presence and promise of His Spirit. The above quotation notwithstanding, the Spirit’s spatiality does in fact mean that He is neither absent from some places nor less present; He is always, everywhere present, though in differentiated relation and distinction. He is present to those who do not yet know Jesus, not intimately, but as the Sustainer of life and as the One who continues to reach out to them to make Jesus and His work known to them.

In His second Easter *parousia*, Jesus Christ was “present and manifest to His disciples” in their place and time differently than He is present and manifest to us in this in-between place. Nevertheless, the current form is just as truly “...His own direct and personal coming, His *parousia*, presence and revelation...” as it was on Easter Day and will be in the final revelation. Now “in heaven”¹⁰⁰⁴ having “entered the mystery of the living God”, Jesus Christ, “...is not present...as He was once as the One who came before, or as He was in the

¹⁰⁰¹ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 353.

¹⁰⁰² Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 354.

¹⁰⁰³ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 355.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 356.

Easter event at a specific and limited point in creaturely space. Nor is He extended over all points in creaturely space as maintained by the original Ubiquitarianism of the Lutherans.”¹⁰⁰⁵ In His incarnated form, Jesus Christ’s humanity, with its limitations, was common to all humankind. Newly risen, His first Easter form revealed interesting differences: while still limited in place in that He appeared only in one place at a time, He also could suddenly appear in and disappear from places, no longer limited by creaturely spatial obstructions such as walls (or closed tombs). Jesus Christ’s presence is not an undifferentiated presence. He is currently “in heaven ‘at the right hand of God the Father Almighty’”. Yet this does not imply any absence from “working and revealing Himself here too.” For “How can He who is there not also be willing and able to be here too, and to do His work here?” Being at God’s side means He has God’s “authority of rule...disposal of grace” with freedom to exercise them in creaturely space. He does so in the form that is “...the power of His resurrection and the promise of His Spirit...His own direct and personal coming...”, so truly His own “*parousia*, presence and revelation.”¹⁰⁰⁶ In this form, the spatiality of Jesus Christ means the Word is fully present in heaven with the Father and also on earth with all people through His Spirit, in variously ordered relation and distinction. The Spirit’s spatiality means He is also present in relation and distinction in heaven with the Father and Son and on earth, making known and effective the Son’s reconciliation with all people.

This second form is also the coming of “...the Son of God, the Mediator between God and the world, in the totality and not merely a part of His being and existence.” Jesus Christ’s coming again in the form of His Spirit does not mean, for instance, that His human nature is left behind in heaven and He comes only in His divine nature. Barth’s Christology and doctrine of election establish Jesus Christ eternally as the one God-man in His divine-human unity and undivided in any manner or sphere. The one, indivisible Son of God as Son of Man is present, both before God and human beings. It is “...in the unity of His divine and human natures that He went to heaven and entered the mystery of the living God, and now lives at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.” So also will He come again in His final form, “very God and very man”.¹⁰⁰⁷ How could He be the hope of the world if “...His presence and action in the promise of the Spirit were those of another, of a Word of God without and apart from the flesh assumed by Him?” No, “He is the incarnate Word of God, not abandoning this flesh

¹⁰⁰⁵ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 357. Barth rejects the Lutheran doctrine of Ubiquity that claims the human nature of Jesus Christ partakes in the omnipresence of the divine nature, such that He is present in, with, and under the particular elements everywhere the Lord’s Supper is celebrated.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 357.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 358.

of ours, not leaving it behind somewhere (even in heaven, in the mystery of God), but acting, speaking and revealing His glory in the flesh.”¹⁰⁰⁸ In this place between the places, He is fully present, acting in the presence and promise of the Spirit. In this form, Jesus Christ’s spatiality means He, including the body of Christ, is undividedly present in heaven with the Father and also on earth with all people through His Spirit, in variously ordered relation and distinction. The Spirit’s spatiality indicates He is also present in relation and distinction with God and with fleshly humanity, making effectively present the reconciliation accomplished in Jesus Christ’s entire being, in enfleshed soul.

Thirdly, His coming again in this form means His action is “qualitatively no less” than it was and will be, the presence of Jesus Christ in the power of His resurrection.¹⁰⁰⁹ This power raises the dead to new life, justifies and sanctifies sinful human creatures, reveals their new reconciled place with God, enables them to live in it and to move forward toward its culmination. Jesus Christ’s prophetic work is no less powerful than His priestly or kingly work, so the power of His presence and action in the Easter Day revelation is the same power that is being revealed in this place and ultimately will be revealed to all creation in His final work. In all forms it is the almighty power of God because it is God Himself in all His modes of being. An attribute of God like omnipresence, His omnipotence is neither divisible nor variable, in the sense of being diminished or augmented. Minimizing the presence and action of God the Spirit in this in-between place from the Son’s or Father’s presence and actions implies rejecting God Himself, “...the God who in this time [and place] acts and speaks in the Son by the Holy Ghost.” Such “sin of blasphemy” against the Spirit is unforgivable “...because it denies the presence of God as the source of a life of forgiveness.”¹⁰¹⁰ Thus, the “...*parousia*, presence and revelation of Jesus Christ in the promise of the Spirit...” is not another or lesser *parousia*, presence and revelation than the Easter presence and appearance or the final presence and appearance.¹⁰¹¹ The one *parousia*, presence and revelation of Jesus Christ is manifest simply in a different form. Figuring it less significant or satisfactory than the other forms, Barth suggests, is due not to the form itself but to struggles and contradictory conditions of sin and evil in the in-between place. Lacking nothing of Jesus Christ’s presence in the promise of the Spirit, no dispersions may be cast upon its “perfection”. In the ordained order of this place “...which is present already, being established by the presence and action

¹⁰⁰⁸ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 359.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 359.

¹⁰¹⁰ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 358.

¹⁰¹¹ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 358.

of Jesus Christ in the promise of the Spirit...God is glorious here and now in the promise of His Spirit, He Himself being present and active yesterday, today and tomorrow.”¹⁰¹² The spatiality of Jesus Christ in this form indicates He is present in the full, effective reconciling power proper to His divine omnipotence through His Spirit. The Holy Spirit’s spatiality means the same divine power present to create and reconcile is wholly present to fulfill God’s redeeming will, working in and through spirit and nature, divine spatiality and human spatiality, so God and humans may be mutually present in relation and distinction through Jesus Christ.

Barth wonders why there is an intervening place at all, rather than immediate existence in the final place of full redemption. He responds, “...for His own glory and the salvation of the creature...He wills to give and gives it time and space and opportunity for the expression of its freedom within the context of His work.” Specifically, “...the return of Jesus Christ in this middle form...the reconciliation of the world with God as it is not yet concluded as revelation but still moves forward toward its goal, has its own specific glory.”¹⁰¹³ This place of ongoing transition and contradictions, of “already” and “not yet”, is actually “...a specific form of the greatness of the pitying love of God, a specific demonstration of the reconciliation of the world as it is accomplished in Jesus Christ”. Hence, there is no lack; Jesus Christ is the hope of all and present in the promise of the Spirit. In this place between the places God Himself is present. “He is on the way with us and we may be on the way with Him.”¹⁰¹⁴ God has not abandoned us to go our way in this place alone, perhaps having set us on this course only to meet us again at the finish line. Instead, we are here on this way precisely because Jesus Christ Himself is here on this way in the presence and promise of His Spirit and we are following Him. He “...is in transition, living, acting, speaking and working under the same sign...to His distinctive glory, so...He is present in the form of the promise of the Spirit...to our full salvation.”¹⁰¹⁵ Jesus Christ, whose prophetic work continues in this place, invites us to participate in it as we travel this way with our true “Companion”.¹⁰¹⁶ For “He wills “...not to do what He does without us, nor we without Him. Our action is wholly ours, yet it is determined by His.”¹⁰¹⁷ Only here on this way by His Spirit is there “...life in hope in Him as the hope of all men, for life under the promise of God and in the power of this

¹⁰¹² Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 359.

¹⁰¹³ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 360.

¹⁰¹⁴ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 362.

¹⁰¹⁵ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 361-362.

¹⁰¹⁶ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 361.

¹⁰¹⁷ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 363.

promise.”¹⁰¹⁸ The hope and promise declare that the contradictions and difficulties of this place are provisional; they too will find their end. Everyone, whether knowingly or ignorantly, is “alongside Him and with Him.” In His Spirit Jesus Christ “...passes through our midst, striding through our time from His commencement to His goal.”¹⁰¹⁹ In this place between the places “...we do actually take part in the *parousia*, presence and revelation of Jesus Christ as the hope of us all, in the promise of the Spirit addressed to us all...” by following Him and sharing in His glory.¹⁰²⁰ Thus, co-presence in redeemed relation and distinction is divinely willed and established between God and all people of all places and times. Moving in the middle place from beginning place to culminating place, the reconciling spatiality of the Son is made known and effective in people through the redeeming spatiality of the Spirit, which effects a correspondingly new spatiality in them. This is especially realized in God’s special space within creation, the community of His people, gathered, built up and sent to enjoy mutual presence in ordered relation and distinction with God and people for salvation and sharing God’s glory.

2. God’s Special Space in His Community

In three chapters of Volume IV of *Church Dogmatics* Barth discusses the ‘special place’ of God’s presence in this place between the places, the Church of Jesus Christ.¹⁰²¹ The Holy Spirit’s spatiality in His work of awakening, gathering and sending this community is demonstrated in brief expositions of §62, §67 and §72.¹⁰²² These also offer insights into the Spirit’s spatiality in His work of ultimate redemption. The primary focus on the presence of God the Holy Spirit in His redeeming work within the community of Jesus Christ, and through it to the world, further indicates the significance of the Spirit’s spatiality for human beings. For His work in this context is to reveal and effect the reconciliation accomplished in Jesus Christ to the community, by actualizing the new creation that occurred in and through

¹⁰¹⁸ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 362.

¹⁰¹⁹ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 363.

¹⁰²⁰ Barth, *CD IV/3.1*, 363.

¹⁰²¹ For a comparative study on Barth’s ecclesiology as a “Free Church” ecclesiology see Edward Eberlin Blain, “Karl Barth and His Critics: A Study in Ecclesiology” (Ph.D. dissertation: Drew University, 2001). For an account of Barth’s ecclesiology in the Reformed tradition specifically in reference to *CD IV/3* see Craig A. Carter, “Karl Barth’s Revision of Protestant Ecclesiology,” *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 22, no. 1 (Spring 1995) 35-44. For a study contemporary with Barth in conversation with the Roman Catholic Church regarding the Holy Spirit’s work in the Church see Maurice B. Schepers, “The Work of the Holy Spirit: Karl Barth on the Nature of the Church,” *Theological Studies* 23, no. 4 (December 1962) 625-636.

¹⁰²² For accounts of Barth’s pneumatology and its role in ecclesiology focused primarily on these sections, see for example, Joseph A. Akinjo, “The Role of the Holy Spirit in the Renewal of the Church in the Ecclesiology of Karl Barth” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Catholic University of America, 1988);

the Crucified and Risen. This future in Christ, pledged and guaranteed by the Spirit, becomes the community's present. Through the Spirit, Jesus Christ is present with His community in ever new encounters with the living Word, causing His community to be present to Jesus Christ through the Spirit's awakening, quickening and enlightening work which results in its gathering, upbuilding and sending.¹⁰²³ Thus, the Holy Spirit's spatiality has an objective and a subjective aspect to it; objectively, being co-present in ordered relation and distinction with God, here specifically the mode of the Son, whose accomplished existence and work are the primary content of the Spirit's ongoing work in this special space, and subjectively, co-present in ordered relation and distinction with the community effected by that objective content. He empowers it in its own existence to correspond in faith, love and hope to its justification, sanctification and vocation accomplished and given in Jesus Christ. The Spirit's subjective work in the Church's origin, direction and goal corresponds to the divine order determined by God's primal decision and its objective execution in the covenant of grace in Jesus Christ also through the Spirit. As the Spirit is actively present and the community responds with its own work, the eschatological hope of reconciled fellowship, co-presence between God and His people, is becoming a present reality in this special place. Here, the provisional co-presence in ordered relation and distinction of this present community most fully expresses both divine and human spatiality as a foretaste of the perfect spatiality to be experienced in the perfectly redeemed co-present communion there in the New Jerusalem where we shall once again see the risen Jesus Christ 'face to face'.

2.1. The Holy Spirit Creates His Special Place

The Holy Spirit is actively present with us following Jesus Christ on the way to the redemption of all creation. Within this general continuing place between the beginning and ending places, God creates a new form of His 'special presence' in the world, the space of His own people. The previous form before the incarnation was Israel; the new form after the ascension is Christ's community or Church that includes Jews and Christians. As God's presence totally, universally and definitively conditions, determines and makes new the place between the places, so His special presence conditions and determines this special space for co-presence with Him in a special relation and distinction. These determinations reveal

¹⁰²³ According to Sykes, Barth's open ecclesiology offers "...a faithful account of the significance of the indwelling divine presence in the Church." S.W. Sykes, "Authority and Openness in the Church," in *Karl Barth: Centenary Essays*, ed., S.W. Sykes (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 60.

aspects of the Spirit's spatiality, indicating the manner, extent and effects of His active presence in this space, and also of this people's corresponding spatiality.

Barth begins with the Holy Spirit's gathering presence: "The Holy Spirit is the awakening power in which Jesus Christ has formed and continually renews His body, i.e., His own earthly-historical form of existence, the one holy catholic and apostolic Church."¹⁰²⁴ Gathering some, not all, people into Christ's community indicates that they stand "in a particular relationship" to Him.¹⁰²⁵ His Spirit first awakens some in faith to knowledge of Jesus Christ and His accomplished work of justification, and gathers them into a new space, reality and community.¹⁰²⁶ In this new space, they begin to live as the justified people they actually are, corresponding in their own existence to His reconciling act. But he "...who actively participates in the divine act and offer in the form of the Christian community and Christian faith..." cannot do so by himself, lacking both capacity and desire. Therefore, it must occur "...on the basis of a particular address and gift, in virtue of a particular awakening power of God, by which he is born again to this will and ability, to the freedom of this action, and under the lordship and impulse of which he is another man, in defiance of his being and status as a sinner."¹⁰²⁷ God the Holy Spirit gives "a living knowledge of this objective realisation", the atonement completed in Jesus Christ which begins its "subjective realisation", its effects taking place in his own being and existence.¹⁰²⁸ God's glory is manifest in the Spirit's awakening presence.

The Spirit of God is not "...the spirit of the world...the community, nor...of any individual Christian..." He is "...God Himself, as He eternally proceeds from the Father and the Son,...unites the Father and the Son in eternal love,...[is] worshipped and glorified together with the Father and the Son, because He is of one substance with them."¹⁰²⁹ As God's Spirit He bears witness to the spirits of human beings regarding who and what God is in Jesus Christ. In this Self-witness He becomes God's Word addressed to them and He also receives

¹⁰²⁴ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 643.

¹⁰²⁵ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 644.

¹⁰²⁶ For a helpful account of Barth's view of the faith event as an event of double agency, or how the Spirit awakens one to faith, see Gregory W. Love, "The Role of the Holy Spirit in Barth's Understanding of the Conjoining of Divine and Human Activity in Divine Providence" (Ph.D. dissertation: Princeton Theological Seminary, 1996) especially 412-422. For an inquiry into the presence of Christ in the Church regarding Jesus Christ's high priestly work see Dietrich Ritschl, *Memory and Hope: An Inquiry Concerning the Presence of Christ*, (New York: Macmillan, 1967) chapter 6, 202-230.

¹⁰²⁷ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 644.

¹⁰²⁸ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 645.

¹⁰²⁹ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 645.

that Word in them, thereby effecting a new spatiality in them or way of being co-present with God in rightly ordered relation and distinction corresponding to that Word.

The Holy Spirit is God in this His self-attestation, God in the power which quickens man to this profitable and living knowledge of His action. He is God intervening and acting for man, addressing Himself to him, in such a way that He says Yes to Himself and this makes possible and necessary man's human Yes to Him.¹⁰³⁰

The Spirit causes “fellowship with Him” but also “distance from Him” in that He never becomes mingled or fused, possessed or controlled by the spirit of the individual or community awakened by Him.¹⁰³¹ Creating this spatial relationship in proximity at a distance, the Spirit of the living God always “remains free in relation” to them.¹⁰³² So their “...relationship to Him...can only be one of obedience and of prayer for His new coming and witness and quickening...” Their desire for His coming again to continue the work begun in them is “the infallible sign of His presence.”¹⁰³³ Hence, the Spirit’s spatiality creates a corresponding spatiality in this special place of His community, awakening it and creating a desire to live in reconciled mutual presence with God in proper relation and distinction.

The awakening power of the Holy Spirit specifically awakens people to faith and knowledge of “the God who acts in Jesus Christ, reconciling the world to Himself” in the obedience, judgment, atonement, justification and verdict of God on behalf of and in the place of sinners. As the Spirit of this Father and this Son by whom He is sent to them, His awakening power is not a new action but a new form of Jesus Christ’s action making Him “present to the man to whom He gives Himself and who receives Him”. Hence, the Spirit “...is the power in which Jesus Christ...attests Himself effectively, creating in man response and obedience.” They know Jesus Christ “is theirs and they are His”¹⁰³⁴ without knowing “the mode of His working”, how sinners become Christians, although effects and manifestations of His presence are visible in the community’s existence and faith.¹⁰³⁵

Moreover, the community gathered by the Spirit’s presence is a form of Jesus Christ’s own existence and presence. As such, “Its act is its being...its essence its existence.”¹⁰³⁶ Therefore, “The Church *is* when...God lets certain men live as His servants, His friends, His children, the witnesses of the reconciliation of the world with Himself as it has taken place in

¹⁰³⁰ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 646.

¹⁰³¹ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 647.

¹⁰³² Barth, *CD IV/1*, 646.

¹⁰³³ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 647.

¹⁰³⁴ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 648.

¹⁰³⁵ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 649.

¹⁰³⁶ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 650.

Jesus Christ...¹⁰³⁷ This special co-presence is "...not the being of a state or institution, but the being of an event, in which the assembled and self-assembling community is actively at work: the living community of the living Lord Jesus Christ in the fulfilment of its existence."¹⁰³⁸ Having been "fused together...into a definite human fellowship" of individuals, this community exists "in time and space...and therefore in a concrete human form".¹⁰³⁹ Thus, "in its spatio-temporal existence", the Church must be concrete and visible. Yet its hidden reality, the "secret" of its existence, is the presence and being of the living Jesus Christ in His Spirit. Therefore, "...what it is, the character, the truth of its existence in time and space is...a matter of ...a very special visibility" that is generally imperceptible.¹⁰⁴⁰ Visible to the world is the "two-dimensional view" common to any human society, a group of people gathered for activity. The Church must know "the third dimension"¹⁰⁴¹ of its existence, the living Jesus Christ in the awakening power of His Spirit, visible only with the "perception of faith". Since the basis of its being is the being of Jesus Christ, and the glory of His being is still concealed in this place between the places, so too the Church's glory is hidden until the final revelation. Its "particular visibility"¹⁰⁴² known only by faith includes its visible historical existence enlivened by its invisible "spiritual character". Some "manifestations and analogies" of its form are visible to the world, yet "no direct identity" exists between those and the invisible "mystery" of its being.¹⁰⁴³ Corresponding to the spatiality of its living Lord by the spatiality of His Spirit, the Church *is*, so is spatial only in the unity in distinction of corporeal and spiritual, visible and invisible, human and divine.

Furthermore, since the existence of the Church, its invisible reality in its visible form, is a divine act, it must continually receive its existence in a new divine act. Thus it can never be controlled or exist by human ability or work. Even its work attesting its invisible character, for God's glory and people's salvation, through its visible activities and manifestations is itself a work of the enabling Spirit. Where it denies or betrays its invisible and spiritual character it ceases to be the Church, reducing its gathering to a mere human society like all others. God alone can "guarantee its hidden character"; where He does, the "visible attests the

¹⁰³⁷ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 650.

¹⁰³⁸ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 652.

¹⁰³⁹ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 653.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 654. For an in-depth study on the visibility-invisibility nature of the Church for Barth, see Charles Aden Wiley, III, "Responding to God: The Church as Visible and Invisible in Calvin, Schleiermacher, and Barth" (Ph.D. dissertation: Princeton Theological Seminary, 2002).

¹⁰⁴¹ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 655.

¹⁰⁴² Barth, *CD IV/1*, 656.

¹⁰⁴³ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 657.

invisible.” Thus, “...the place where this takes place is hidden in its concrete form, with which it is only indirectly and not directly identical”, corresponding to its ontological ground, Jesus Christ.¹⁰⁴⁴ Barth identifies the Church in its invisible-visible being as “the earthly-historical form of existence of Jesus Christ Himself.”¹⁰⁴⁵

That the risen Jesus Christ, body and soul, is present in heaven at the right hand of God the Father means “...Jesus Christ also lives as the Crucified and Risen in a heavenly-historical form of existence...”¹⁰⁴⁶ Indicating neither His heavenly imprisonment and the world’s abandonment nor the existence of any gap between Him in that heavenly place and us in our earthly place, the promise of the Spirit entails divine omnipresence. Yet, Jesus Christ is not just generally and abstractly present; nor is He merely spiritually present, as if His divine nature were here while His human nature remained in heaven. Indeed, His presence necessarily entails His whole unified being as very God and very human: He is present by His Spirit in the community whose being is the earthly-historical form of His body. Both forms are distinct though inseparable manifestations of His own being. The earthly-historical form of Jesus Christ’s existence as the Church must correspond to His heavenly-historical form of existence at the right hand of the Father. As Mediator between God and human beings, Jesus Christ is not limited to one form of existence. First He exists co-present with the Father in a hidden (to us) form of glory as the Crucified and Resurrected. He also exists co-present with us in the visible though provisional form of the Church when enlivened by His invisible Spirit. The “...community belongs together with the living Lord Jesus Christ because He belongs together with it...” as the Head of His body.¹⁰⁴⁷ But perhaps these multiple forms indicate multiple “...bodies of Christ: the historical, in which He died and rose again; the mystical which is His community; and that in which He is really present in the Lord’s Supper.” For Barth, “one Christ” means “one body of Christ”.¹⁰⁴⁸

The Church is His body only regarding the “divine action” that gives it existence, the event of Jesus Christ’s co-presence with it in His living Spirit who is identical with Him. As event, His body “...actually takes place in the space and time of...men, in the sphere of their experience and activity” by the awakening and gathering presence of the Spirit.¹⁰⁴⁹ Moreover, Barth adamantly asserts the community of Jesus Christ is not *made* the body of Christ by the

¹⁰⁴⁴ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 658.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 661.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 661.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 662.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 666.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 666.

Spirit's presence and work. "It is the body, and its members are members of this body, in Jesus Christ, in His election from all eternity...And it became His body, they became its members, in the fulfilment of their eternal election in His death on the cross of Golgotha, proclaimed in His resurrection from the dead."¹⁰⁵⁰ No mere afterthought to God's other, perhaps more important work, the Spirit's presence and work are already included in God's primal decision to be our God and for us to be His people, for God and His people to be mutually present in elected relation and distinction. The Spirit is "...to 'realise subjectively' the election of Jesus Christ and His work as done and proclaimed in time, to reveal and bring it to men and women." He gives to the elect "knowledge of Jesus Christ and themselves", creating a special "union" between Jesus Christ and them "...by God's decree from all eternity and as it has become in virtue of His act in time..." What God declared and did in divine space and eternity is now correspondingly being declared and executed in creaturely space and time. Both are aspects of the one act of God to achieve covenant spatiality between God and people in Jesus Christ by His Spirit. Knowing Jesus Christ by the awakening power of His Spirit entails knowing they "are really in Him as He is in them, 'in the midst'"¹⁰⁵¹ Even with the "temporary, provisional and teleological character" of His body, He is perfectly co-present in His Spirit in relation and distinction with it.¹⁰⁵²

The Self-witness of Jesus Christ in His death and resurrection is the origin, content and goal of His Spirit's witness. The Spirit's spatiality in this special space that is Christ's earthly, provisional body also corresponds to the spatiality of its Head as its origin, content and goal. Therefore, Jesus Christ Himself is wholly co-present with His community in His Spirit's presence, conforming it to His own image. In its "visible in faith" character, where the Church *is*, it corresponds to the heavenly-historical form of His body as "one, holy, catholic and apostolic".¹⁰⁵³ Further highlighting the Spirit's spatiality, a brief summary of each follows from Barth's presentation.

The Church is "one".¹⁰⁵⁴ For Barth, God is One in multiplicity, so too for His community. The Holy Spirit is the communion holding together distinctions in unity according to and maintaining their proper order and differentiation. He also brings order out of chaos, light from darkness, and life from death. The spatiality of the Holy Spirit entails His being present to each individual member such that they are truly ordered, unified and

¹⁰⁵⁰ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 667.

¹⁰⁵¹ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 667.

¹⁰⁵² Barth, *CD IV/1*, 668.

¹⁰⁵³ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 668. Barth draws these predicates from the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (381 C.E.).

¹⁰⁵⁴ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 668-685.

enlivened as one body while enabling their individuality. His spatiality means He can be effectively present to all individuals and their community to whom He makes known and actual the one reconciliation accomplished in the one Savior. The way He is present to these enables the visible form of their witness to correspond to the invisible secret of their existence, the living Lord Jesus Christ. So He is present holding together the Church's invisible reality and its visible form, the heavenly-historical form with its earthly-historical form. His presence makes Jesus Christ present to His community, holding together the Head with this form of His body. The spatiality of the Spirit is seen in its execution of the one divine will which determines the origin, content, direction and goal of its activity to fulfill God's election of grace reconciling the world with God in the one work of Jesus Christ. Yet the Spirit fulfills this one will in a multiplicity of ways and forms. The Spirit is present even to those who have died, as demonstrated by His activity in the tomb of Jesus Christ and the Church Triumphant. The latter is made one with the present reigning Church and the future consummated Church, indicating the Spirit's spatiality is restricted neither by time-eternity nor life-death. As the life-giving Spirit, He brings past history into present history and brings the future history into both. His is an eschatological spatiality. This aspect is seen in His active presence in gathering the one people of God as Israel and the Church, actualizing in them the one covenant already fulfilled and yet to be fully revealed in the one Messiah and Savior, Jesus Christ. The spatiality of the Holy Spirit also entails His presence with every group of people in all places and times. As the Creator of languages at Babel, such differences reveal the wealth of His being, not an impediment to His active presence gathering them into the one Church of the one Lord. Thus, the Spirit can be present to all congregations using their various forms of Church government and theology, commandeering their words to become the Word of God, revealing and actualizing their reconciliation, moving them onward to the goal of its fulfillment in each member and the whole. Even in a visibly disunited body, the presence of the Spirit of Jesus Christ holds all things together in Himself; His presence can move the "plurality of Churches" toward a closer correspondence, a true unity in plurality, with its one Head and thus its goal as the one Church of Jesus Christ.¹⁰⁵⁵

The true Church is "holy".¹⁰⁵⁶ The spatiality of the Holy Spirit denotes His holy co-presence with His people, effecting their reconciliation, their righteousness in Jesus Christ's accomplished work for them in their place. Gathered and sanctified or set apart from the

¹⁰⁵⁵ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 672.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 685-702.

world to be built up and sent back into the world, His holy presence orders and determines the Church's whole existence and mission according to the holy divine will and its holy Lord. Jesus Christ is present to His elect by the Spirit's powerful co-presence in awakening knowledge and faith, gathering the community together, and making effective their justification; in enlightening the body, building it up to give it direction and making effective their sanctification; in enlightening the body of their vocation to be sent into the world attesting the prophetic Word of God. By His empowering and sanctifying presence the Spirit makes their obedient response correspond to Jesus Christ's grace thus making effective their reconciliation with God accomplished in Jesus Christ and bringing them into mutual presence in holy relation and distinction with Him and others. When these occur by the powerfully active presence of His Holy Spirit, giving it its own holiness, the body reflects the holiness of its Head in its visible form.

The Church is also "catholic".¹⁰⁵⁷ The spatiality of the Holy Spirit entails a universal aspect, making present and active the distinct being of Jesus Christ within diverse manifestations of His earthly-historical body in all places and times. The unalterable reality of its living Lord Jesus is maintained in all its forms by the presence of the Spirit. Hence, neither space as locality or distance, nor time as history, nor any other limitation inherent to the created order of the in-between place in which the Church exists can diminish, alter or destroy the peculiarity of its being in this special space following its Head. The Spirit's co-presence in universal relation and distinction maintains the Church's unique identity within the world of many communities even as it engages with them. Catholic thus refers to the particularity found in individual Christians comprising the Church that are held together in that single common reality, which is Jesus Christ, by the power of the Spirit's awakening, quickening and enlightening presence.

Finally, the Church is "apostolic".¹⁰⁵⁸ The Spirit is co-present, mediating and forming how the Head is co-present to the body, corresponding earthly history with its ground in heavenly history. The Spirit is co-present by objectively speaking the apostolic Word of God that is the Word made flesh addressed to the Church, and by subjectively enabling it to be heard, received and to respond. In this repetition of the apostles' and prophets' witness of the Lord's living co-presence with them, God's Word becomes event by the Spirit's enabling co-presence as it comes to form in their own proclamation and existence. Furthermore, His

¹⁰⁵⁷ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 702-712.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 712-725.

redeeming spatiality will be manifest in the conclusion of earthly history, bringing it and the eternal covenant to completion by universally revealing God's Word in its final, perfect, definitive form and by enabling its corresponding attestation by all creation. Omni-presently perfecting all things in Christ to their appointed end, thus fulfilling their origin in the divine election of grace, the Spirit's spatiality is teleological.

In summary, for Barth, the in-between place, where the Holy Spirit's presence is the present form of Jesus Christ's Easter presence, is a manifestation of God's good pleasure for us. It indicates "there is still space for humanity, and in that space it can still exist". There are "...more opportunities for human existence from God and before God and to God..."¹⁰⁵⁹ By the Spirit's spatiality people may genuinely encounter the living Lord Jesus Christ, even in His hiddenness in heaven. Having the "space" and opportunity to respond to their election, they can live as the justified community in correspondence to God's grace in Jesus Christ by the awakening power and presence of His Spirit.¹⁰⁶⁰ Providing this special space reveals "...the seriousness of the solidarity to which He has committed Himself with us men in the person of His Son." He wills neither "to be without man" nor for "the isolation of His Son".¹⁰⁶¹ God's reconciliation in Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit's co-presence and co-activity with His community, in justified relation and distinction, reveals and fulfills His decision to be God with us. Consideration of the Spirit's spatiality in His work of gathering the Church now turns to its development and continuation.

2.2. The Holy Spirit Builds Up His Special Space

The second aspect of Barth's triadic presentation of the Holy Spirit's empowering presence and work in the Church concerns the Spirit's spatiality in His quickening power to equip that community to live its sanctification. The first section explores the Spirit's spatiality in His awakening power to gather the new justified community and the last section considers His spatiality in His enlightening power to send the community according to its vocation.

Barth summarizes: "The Holy Spirit is the quickening power with which Jesus the Lord builds up Christianity in the world as His body...causing it to grow, sustaining and ordering it as the communion of His saints..." Centering on the doctrine of sanctification, God acts in us by the "...powerful and living direction of the Resurrected...and therefore the Holy Spirit..." who as "...the principle of sanctification, effects the upbuilding of the

¹⁰⁵⁹ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 736.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 737.

¹⁰⁶¹ Barth, *CD IV/1*, 738.

Christian community...the eventuation of Christian love...and...the existence of individual Christians.”¹⁰⁶² Although the community concretely exists in its members and their “common being...life...action”, the focus rests primarily upon the sanctified community, since the individual is known only here, “at the place where he is the one he is”.¹⁰⁶³ Sanctification has two aspects: “...God is at work and there is a human work which He occasions and fashions.” So God works on both divine and human sides, objectively and subjectively. Genuine human response is not restricted or denied by the Spirit’s divine work that occurs “for men and to them as the determination of their human action”. Actually, His work effects the only true response to the sanctification accomplished in Jesus Christ, a corresponding human participation.¹⁰⁶⁴ By His quickening presence, the Holy Spirit empowers the Church to be maintained in its existence, being co-present with its Head in proper relation and distinction. For its part, the community *is* only in this mutual presence as it actively responds to God’s work, elected and completed in Jesus Christ, that “...points beyond itself and witnesses to the fact that it is occasioned and fashioned in this way, attesting the divine work of sanctification...”¹⁰⁶⁵ Although its witness and true co-presence is compromised by its ongoing struggle with sin and evil in this place between the places, nevertheless, the Spirit sanctifies its work. He thereby endows it with its reality, enabling its work not merely to correspond to that reality but also to be made visible by faith. As the Spirit is actively present in the community’s work, making it become actual and visible, the Church *is*. This space is God’s special presence and work in creation.

All divine work has a specific purpose, direction, determination and goal rooted in God’s primal decision and election of grace. Here, the goal is to reveal “the sanctification of all humanity and human life” that was accomplished in Jesus Christ in His exaltation as the Son of Man who was first humbled as the Son of God.¹⁰⁶⁶ Justification and new life, complete in Jesus Christ, take effect in human beings as they are made right before God and participate in His new life. How they are to live in this new space and identity as Christ’s body is the subject of their sanctification. It unfolds in the history of their new existence with God and the world, an existence totally and radically determined by their origin in the justification, exaltation and establishment of all human life in Jesus Christ. Likewise, it is determined and ordered by and for its attainment of the ultimate goal set for it, the eternal redemption and

¹⁰⁶² Barth, *CD IV/2*, 614.

¹⁰⁶³ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 615.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 616.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 617.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 620.

consummation of all creation in Jesus Christ. In the movement that occurs from this place of commencement, revealed in Jesus Christ's first Easter presence to the place of completion, to be revealed to all of creation with His return in His final Easter presence, the Church is given space and opportunity to live here and now as God's sanctified community.¹⁰⁶⁷ By the Spirit's presence and work in and with the Church to enable its own presence and work, it attests the sanctification in Jesus Christ for the whole world.

However, Christians are both already saints (objectively in Jesus Christ) yet still sinners (subjectively in their actual lived existence). Therefore, the community inevitably fails to correspond with the completed sanctification in Jesus Christ and be co-present in sanctified relation and distinction with God and others through its obedient, grateful service. Nor is it fully co-present with the world to visibly demonstrate in its own existence the sanctification completed and intended for the whole world. Yet in Jesus Christ, God will not abandon the Church in this endeavor, leaving it on its own to accomplish. He is always present, accomplishing the task in the Church's co-present existence by His Spirit who empowers it for this service. As the Church becomes and lives this provisional representation on the way to the perfection of all creation in this in-between place by the co-presence of the Spirit in His quickening power, "a living redemptive happening" occurs which is "the saving operation of the living Lord Jesus"¹⁰⁶⁸ By His powerful co-presence, the Spirit does "create...maintain and continually renew" the Church's provisional representation which is always in need of such redemptive work in this in-between place. Its dire need is manifest in its "characteristic sin" attempting to "represent itself rather than the sanctification" available in Jesus Christ.¹⁰⁶⁹ So, the Holy Spirit must actualize in its being this "...representation which is the meaning and purpose of its existence." He accomplishes this by being actively present in and with the Church's own work, in its "...history in which it is unfit, but continually fitted, in and with its human thought and word and will and work to make this provisional representation." Although the church lacks the desire and ability to be present in this witness, God graciously gives to it the "necessary qualities" and "freedom to be able to serve Him" by being mutually, actively present with Him and through Him with the world in this work of His.¹⁰⁷⁰

¹⁰⁶⁷ For an extended treatment of Barth's understanding of the reconciled person's activity see John Webster, *Barth's Ethics of Reconciliation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); for a few key observations see Gerrit W. Nevin, "Just a Little: The Christian Life in the Context of Reconciliation," *Zeitschrift für dialektische Theologie* 18, no. 3 (2002) 173.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 621.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 622.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 623.

A provisional representation of Jesus Christ's past and present, the Church is also a provisional representation of His future. Having already attained the goal in His own existence, His future is now brought into the Church's present reality. Barth's eschatological vision places the glorified Jesus Christ already here, in God's special space that is the being of the Church, even as it still presses forward toward the completion of all things in Christ. The Church moves toward the goal, the "complete presence and lordship of God in and over all things." Viewed from this aspect, the realization of such perfect spatiality for ultimate covenant communion between God and human beings is the goal of God's decision and election. The Church exists as Christ's body precisely in this forward movement, being co-present in sanctified and glorified relation and distinction with the Spirit of Jesus Christ. He equips it to reveal, precisely in the actualization of its co-present existence, the reconciliation of all creation already completed in Jesus Christ. Moving "forward to Him in His future form" means moving "therefore to itself in its future form."¹⁰⁷¹ Not a result of its own work, its future form will "...be something completely new...something which comes to it from God; its genuine eschaton, and therefore that of the whole cosmos."¹⁰⁷² The Church's future being in fully redeemed co-presence with God is not merely a future version of its present, provisionally redeemed form; it is "transcendent."¹⁰⁷³

Architectural imagery enhances Barth's eschatological picture and further illuminates God's spatiality. Strikingly, biblical references for the city of Jerusalem and tabernacle denote places specifying the special presence of God in the midst of His elect community as a blessing for the entire world. The eschaton, including the future form of God's community, is the "new Jerusalem" that "...does not grow up from earth to heaven, but 'comes down from God out of heaven...'" God Himself has built this place for His specific purpose. It is "...the tabernacle of God with men, in which He will dwell, and they shall be His people, and He shall be with them." This fully spatial living with God is the true "home" already known yet still yearned for by the Church.¹⁰⁷⁴ In its being, direction and goal, the pilgrim community already heading home to be co-present with God is completely eschatologically determined by the God in Jesus Christ who comes from there to meet it on its way, ensuring its blessed arrival through His Spirit's co-presence and work. Barth envisions the completed heavenly city established and built by God for habitation with His people along with the ongoing

¹⁰⁷¹ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 625.

¹⁰⁷² Barth, *CD IV/2*, 629.

¹⁰⁷³ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 628.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 628.

construction of that corresponding city on earth. As the “temple of God”, the community is “the place where God’s glory dwells”; here, provisionally and improperly, there in the eschaton, properly and fully.¹⁰⁷⁵ So Jesus’ claim to rebuild the temple in three days after the old is destroyed refers not just to His own bodily death and resurrection to new life. It also signals the destruction of the community in its old, provisional form and its reconstruction in its as yet hidden but “eternal form.”¹⁰⁷⁶ Barth is clear: the community’s human work or capacity is not what makes the Church the place of God’s glory. It becomes God’s temple only where ““the Spirit of God dwelleth in [it]””.¹⁰⁷⁷ There the Church’s being is event and genuine spatiality, divine and human, is manifest.

Although the divine “purpose behind the building and direction in the execution of this purpose” is concealed, it is indicated in “a definite arranging and relating and integrating.” Ordered by God as “a progressive building upon that which is already built” it occurs only as “a fresh building from the very first, from the foundation upwards” without any notion of a “finished task.”¹⁰⁷⁸ Reminiscent of Barth’s theological epistemology, the Church must always start again at the beginning, in a fresh divine work, ‘following after’ the God who reveals the new ordered way determined by Him in this event. For only God knows the ultimate destination and specific way to get there; only He has the power to accomplish this in the presence and action of His Spirit who is our guarantee to “see this city and dwell in it”. Thus, “God Himself and He alone” is the “true builder” of the community in “the strict...primary and ultimate sense”.¹⁰⁷⁹

This includes God’s active co-presence in the work of human beings to make their work correspond to His own.¹⁰⁸⁰ “[T]hrough the man Jesus in the power of His Spirit” God concretely builds up the community, having already laid its “sure foundation” in Jesus

¹⁰⁷⁵ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 629.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 630.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 629.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 631.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 632.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Barth’s high view of divine action that does not supplant or inhibit human action but enables it by freeing the human for appropriate response is a point of contention for some, i.e., divine action and human freedom and what this means in and for the church. See for example, Stanley Hauerwas, *With the Grain of the Universe: The Church’s Witness and Natural Theology, Being the Gifford Lectures Delivered at the University of St. Andrews* in 2001 (Grand Rapids, MIL Brazos, 2001). For comparisons between Barth and Hauerwas, see Joseph Mangina, “Bearing the Marks of the Church: The Church in the Economy of Salvation in Barth and Hauerwas,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 52, no. 3 (1999) 269-305; also see *Idem.*, “The Stranger as Sacrament: Karl Barth and the Ethics of Ecclesial Practice,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 1, no. 3 (November 1999) 322- 339; Nicholas M. Healy, “Karl Barth’s Ecclesiology Reconsidered,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 57, no. 3 (2004) 287-299. Of particular interest is Healy’s admission of his changed understanding of Barth’s ecclesiology (295, n.13).

Christ's completed activity. As its "master" and "Lord", His Spirit's presence and "...activity directs and determines all the activity of men in this work of construction".¹⁰⁸¹ This "community is what it is as He Himself is present and speaks and acts". Thus, the "...more faithfully and distinctly His activity is...attested and reflected by its own activity, the more definitely there takes place its edification in and with that which is done in all humanity in its own sphere."¹⁰⁸² As in the man Jesus, the Spirit is co-present in ordered relation and distinction, working in the community and each individual member, quickening all to be built up and to respond by actively being co-present with Him and others, building up itself.

Upbuilding entails "integration" or forming various people into a "union" around a common cause, thus producing a mutuality and bond between them. Individuals are not negated here but are "fitted together" so their common task is achieved.¹⁰⁸³ The Holy Spirit integrates disparate people into the one body of Christ as He also self-integrates each individual, all engaged in the one task of attesting the sanctification of humanity in Jesus Christ. Such integration results in a reciprocal relationship with fellow members in which the whole body is properly subjugated to its Head. The spatiality of individuals and of the whole community is realized and made visible in this integration; each individual and all together are lovingly co-present with God and each other in sanctified relation and distinction. God's special space as this unity in distinction is the being of Christ's body that conforms to its Head by the co-present activity of the Spirit. Integration in Christ's love is one aspect of the upbuilding of the Church by the Holy Spirit's active, powerful presence. The Church becomes event under this particular aspect primarily in its worship where "all Christians are present" and moving toward its "goal in communion". In worship, "...the Christian existence as a whole takes place and is revealed...*in nuce*" for its election to "divine service" is most fully revealed there.¹⁰⁸⁴

Of primary significance regarding the Spirit's spatiality, Barth develops this notion of integration of love and worship in the Church's upbuilding as "the communion of saints". Communion, *koinonia*, is "...an action in which on the basis of an existing union...many men are engaged in a common movement towards the same union." The Holy Spirit effects this communion of loving co-presence in special relation and distinction as both "divine and human work" occur in the movement from the place of commencement to the place of

¹⁰⁸¹ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 633.

¹⁰⁸² Barth, *CD IV/2*, 633.

¹⁰⁸³ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 635.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 639.

culmination of this provisional existence.¹⁰⁸⁵ Responding to God's spatiality and action in Jesus Christ with their own "corresponding action" and spatiality, the Spirit uniquely binds them to God and to one another, quickening them for such spatial communion.¹⁰⁸⁶ This ongoing work in mutual presence, both divine and human, occurs as the unfolding history between God and His community. By the Spirit's presence in His upbuilding activity that transforms the communion of isolated sinners into the genuine communion of co-present saints, the new, sanctified humanity is provisionally present in the old, perishing world. Again, "...the basis of their particular being and action...is God's eternal election, His love directed towards them and embracing and activating them in this particular way...", thus revealing God's spatiality.¹⁰⁸⁷ As they respond in faith and love, Christians participate in a holy fellowship, the event of shared existence with God and one another, thus revealing their sanctified spatiality. Such loving communion as mutual presence in ordered relation and distinction is the goal of divine and human spatiality. In the Spirit's own presence, God Himself is truly, actively, fully present to them, and in the Spirit's presence, they are enabled to be genuinely, though in this in-between place, provisionally present to God and through Him to one another. The objective and subjective aspects of the Holy Spirit's spatiality effects and reveals true co-present communion between God and His people accomplished in Jesus Christ's reconciliation. The Spirit is God's sacred *koinonia* in God's own space and in His special space, the Church.

The primary quality inherent to the event of sacred co-presence as upbuilding is its capacity for "growth."¹⁰⁸⁸ Growth as "numerical increase"¹⁰⁸⁹ or the addition of newly awakened and quickened members into its collective presence is a "horizontal" and "spatial expansion", extending the number of members and the amount of geography involved.¹⁰⁹⁰ More essential is the "vertical" and "intensive" dimension signifying "spiritual growth". This is "...the power in which the saints increase in the reception and exercise of the holy things entrusted to them..."¹⁰⁹¹ United in their common task, common worship and mutual love and care for one another by the powerful event of communion in co-presence, they participate in the history of Jesus Christ in their own history. Engaged in these sacred activities together the

¹⁰⁸⁵ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 641.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 641.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 642.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 644.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 645.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 646. "Spatial" as used here by Barth means simple geographical territory.

¹⁰⁹¹ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 648.

community progresses toward its goal, actualizing its “true nature and essence”, including its spatiality, as a provisional representation of Jesus Christ’s sanctification of humanity in its own existence in the creaturely space and time of the in-between place.¹⁰⁹² The power within the co-present communion of saints causing such intensive and extensive growth is the “immanent power of life” that is the presence of Jesus Christ Himself in His Holy Spirit’s co-presence.¹⁰⁹³

Summarizing thus far, after the ascension, the Holy Spirit’s active presence in the world makes present the “...authentic and effective self-attestation of the risen and living Lord Jesus.”¹⁰⁹⁴ This Self-attesting presence of Jesus Christ’s being and work by the Spirit encompasses a twofold declaration. The Spirit’s awakening presence first makes known that the sanctification of all humanity is fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Second, those elected to hear this Word by the Spirit’s quickening presence receive its immediate and comprehensive effect: a repetition of this event occurs in their own existence, as they are present with the Spirit they are enabled to enact in word and deed a corresponding response. It is at once both a fully divine and a fully human work. As their ongoing and deepening communion occurs in this in-between place, being co-present with God and one another in quickened relation and distinction, they actually although imperfectly become the one sanctified body of Jesus Christ. Answering the Father’s own action and Word, His verdict affirming the Son’s completion of their justification and sanctification in raising Him from the dead, they are enabled to be present to participate in the new and holy things of God. They begin to and actually do reflect His holy communion as saints who are yet sinners, here in the midst of the old and unholy things of the world.

This holy mutual presence is accomplished by the twofold activity of Jesus Christ who is present with them. The first aspect of His activity in this communion of saints is His “remote operation” or transcendent presence. “Risen from the dead, ascended into heaven, seated at the right hand of God the Father, Jesus is remote from earthly history and the community which exists in it.” As the firstborn, the only human being to be raised from the dead and exalted to the Father’s right hand, “the man Jesus” has already crossed the chasm separating creaturely space to participate fully in God’s eternal space. His unique spatiality includes His presence in a “...heavenly form of existence characterized by His unique

¹⁰⁹² Barth, *CD IV/2*, 651.

¹⁰⁹³ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 651.

¹⁰⁹⁴ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 651.

fellowship with God”.¹⁰⁹⁵ His unique spatiality also includes His presence in an earthly form of existence characterized by His unique fellowship with His community. Being set apart in heaven from the community existing in the in-between place on earth, Jesus Christ is neither absent nor has He abandoned His community. Through the perfection of His spatiality “...He overcomes that abyss in the Holy Spirit, operating here from that exalted status, working in time...from the eternity of the life which He has in common with God”, being present to His community in “...the power of growth and life which...reach[es] it from the majesty of God...” The community is enlivened “from without” by this transcendent power of God. By the powerful presence of His Spirit who gathers, builds up and sends His community, Jesus Christ is genuinely present to it, working in its midst even from the “distance” of heaven.¹⁰⁹⁶ His spatiality regarding God’s special space reveals His presence in ‘proximity at a distance’, even His immanence in transcendence, in this sense.

Thus, the second aspect of Jesus Christ’s presence and activity in His community is His immanence. In the Holy Spirit’s presence, He also “indwells and is immanent to” His community. He is the power of life and growth present within the community, and the power within the community and each member enabling their correspondence to God’s presence and activity in their midst. Since Jesus Christ is both “here and there, [in] height and depth, near and far”, it must be proper to His being to exist in both heavenly and earthly forms in this in-between place.¹⁰⁹⁷ His spatiality entails existing “in the height...distance and hiddenness of God” as well as “here and now with sinners in this history which has not yet concluded”. In the first He is present as the Head of His community, in the second He is present as the body; Jesus Christ “as the One who is with God...is also with us”.¹⁰⁹⁸ His Spirit is co-present to unite such antitheses while maintaining their distinctions in the being of Jesus Christ. This God-man in His divine-human unity is co-present with His Father in His heavenly space and simultaneously co-present with His community in His special space on earth, both by the co-presence of His Spirit, and all in proper relation and distinction according to God’s election of grace in Jesus Christ.

In conclusion, the Holy Spirit’s spatiality is revealed in His quickening power that equips the community for its sanctification and enables its corresponding response. Through the Spirit’s co-presence in proper relation and distinction with both Jesus Christ and the

¹⁰⁹⁵ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 652.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 652.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 652.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 653.

community, Jesus Christ and His community also are co-present in ordered relation and distinction. For instance, the Head is related to but distinct from the body, Jesus Christ's heavenly-historical form is related to but distinct from the provisional earthly-historical form of existence, both in the unity of the Spirit. His gathering presence constitutes the beginning and basis of the community at Pentecost, by awakening it to knowledge and faith of God's justification accomplished in Jesus Christ according to its election in Him. His quickening presence governs and activates its historical existence in this in-between place.¹⁰⁹⁹

As the Self-attestation of Jesus Christ in this place, the Spirit has Jesus Christ as His "only content; His only work is His provisional revelation; His only effect the human knowledge which has Him as its object (and in Him the knowing man himself)..." Hence, where Jesus Christ "...attests Himself in the power of the Spirit of God, He makes Himself present..." and "...where He makes Himself present in this power, He imparts Himself..." By the Spirit's powerful presence they become the one body of Jesus Christ, as each member is "...united only by and with Jesus, and only in this way with one another, and only for the fulfilment of His will and purpose."¹¹⁰⁰ Jesus Christ's Self-witness and Self-giving in the Spirit is the event in which the community exists as the body of Christ. Therefore, "Jesus Christ is the community", as it is "exhausted and enclosed...taken up and hidden in His [existence], and absolutely determined and governed by it." In the Spirit's presence in this in-between place awaiting the direct, universal and definitive revelation to the world, Jesus Christ the Head "is already present and at work in His own earthly-historical form of existence"¹¹⁰¹

Jesus Christ's body is the 'special space' of God's sovereign rule on earth that corresponds to His rule in heaven by the Spirit's quickening power and presence. This "corresponding sphere" on earth is the presence of "the kingdom of God" in the "transitional movement" from the first to final Easter presence.¹¹⁰² The immanent and transcendent presence of Christ in the Spirit is the secret of the community's existence, "upholding" and growth.¹¹⁰³ For Barth, Jesus Christ's being constitutes the community's being; the community is not Jesus Christ, for this order is irreversible. It exists as the Spirit gives it Jesus Christ's existence, corresponding in its own sanctification to the sanctification accomplished in

¹⁰⁹⁹ See Barth, *CD IV/2*, 653.

¹¹⁰⁰ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 654.

¹¹⁰¹ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 655.

¹¹⁰² Barth, *CD IV/2*, 656.

¹¹⁰³ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 660.

Christ.¹¹⁰⁴ The community has no other “place” to be except “in Christ” through the Spirit’s presence. As “...the air which they breathe, the ground on which they...walk...they have not being or life apart from Him...”¹¹⁰⁵ Jesus Christ, in His provisional earthly-historical form, is the special space where the communion of the saints becomes event by the Holy Spirit’s powerful quickening presence, and where the saints themselves are most fully spatial in this in-between place. That special space, however, is not an end in itself. It exists to attest the past, present and future glory of God in the world where it is sent.

In a threefold structure following Barth, the Spirit’s spatiality is considered first, in His awakening power that reveals to the elect their justification and gathers them into Christ’s community; second, in His quickening power that equips the community for its sanctification and enables its corresponding response; third, in His enlightening power that reveals the community’s vocation to be sent into the world.

2.3. The Holy Spirit Extends His Special Space

The final aspect of Barth’s triadic presentation of the Holy Spirit’s empowering presence and work in the Church concerns the Spirit’s spatiality in His enlightening power that sends it into the world according to its vocation.¹¹⁰⁶ His powerful presence enlightens it to engage in Christ’s prophetic work as “the provisional representation of the calling of all humanity”, accomplished in Him.¹¹⁰⁷ Proclaiming God’s covenant in Jesus Christ with all people, they confess and call others to Him, thus revealing the purpose and goal of human existence and the hope already present to them. However, “...He does not put them in a place which is occupied in immediate proximity to Himself but otherwise empty.” Rather, Barth claims, “He sets them among and alongside others who are also His own and therefore with Him in [a] special sense.”¹¹⁰⁸ Set within the general space of creation in the midst of world occurrence, the special space of His community is appointed to attest God’s reconciliation in Jesus Christ in their own existence and proclamation. So, for instance, the local congregation

¹¹⁰⁴ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 661.

¹¹⁰⁵ Barth, *CD IV/2*, 659.

¹¹⁰⁶ For a comparison of Barth’s distinction between “vocation” and “calling” see Rhys Kuzmic, “*Beruf* and *Berufung* in Karl Barth’s *Church Dogmatics*: Toward a Subversive Klesiology,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 7, no. 3 (July 2005) 262-278.

¹¹⁰⁷ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics: The Doctrine of Reconciliation*, vol. IV, part 3, second half, eds. G.W. Bromiley and T.F. Torrance, trans. G.W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1962) 682 (hereafter cited as Barth, *CD IV/3.2*).

¹¹⁰⁸ Barth, *CD IV/3.2*, 682.

exists not in isolation from the world but in the midst of the neighborhood, to be present in ordered relation and distinction attesting God's reconciliation to it.

The Holy Spirit's work in the Church enlightens those already gathered and built up as Christ's body, enabling them to be spatial and fulfill their calling to participate in His prophetic work. They do this provisionally, haltingly, yet genuinely when they are present to confess Jesus Christ and His work to others who are not yet aware that they also belong to God. Such confession is possible only by the power of the Spirit who is present preparing and enabling them in their own witness to others to correspond to God's prophetic Word to them. Thus, for Barth, the "...one effective action of God in this twofold form [of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit] is the basis and secret of the Christian community..." called to this vocation.¹¹⁰⁹ The community exists only where God is mutually present in ordered relation and distinction with it, calling and upholding it "...as the people of His witnesses bound, engaged and committed to Him."¹¹¹⁰ It can respond to God's presence and fulfill its calling in the world only by being present with Him as it "belongs...listens...and is obedient to Him", the one Word of God addressed to humans for the world's reconciliation.¹¹¹¹ The Holy Spirit enables this witness by being present to receive God's Word in them and illuminate their understanding and execution of it. He is present to awaken them to faith and knowledge of Jesus Christ, themselves and the world, to build them up for loving service to the world and to enlighten them to confess Jesus Christ as the world's hope. The community, with each individual Christian, is empowered by the Spirit's presence to enact the accomplished reconciliation in its own words and existence by being present with other people in its prophetic work in every place and time throughout the world.

Its being and calling is given in the being and calling of Jesus Christ, so no separation or isolation of the community from the world is warranted. While Jesus Christ "does not exist without" His community, He is "...who and what He is...for Himself...yet also with His own, and by anticipation with all who will become His own..." As very God and very man, being mutually present in relation and distinction with His community, He represents and makes present "all men to God and God to all men." United with His elect by the Spirit, including both those already and not yet awakened, "His being does not exclude but includes within itself" the community's own being. The objective place of the elect is in Jesus Christ. For "...it is true and actual that God alone is God, yet that as the only God He is not alone, but

¹¹⁰⁹ Barth, *CD IV/3.2*, 752.

¹¹¹⁰ Barth, *CD IV/3.2*, 752.

¹¹¹¹ Barth, *CD IV/3.2*, 753.

that as the Creator, Reconciler and Redeemer of His creature He has ordered and bound Himself to this other which is so wholly distinct from Himself.”¹¹¹² However, subjectively they remain in the place of sin, evil and death, in the world. Following Jesus Christ in His movement from Easter to eschaton, His community has, as it were, one foot in both places. In Jesus Christ they already are the justified, sanctified and called people. In their lived existence in this place between the Easter places, they are still sinners in need of justification, sanctification and being called. In this sense, the spatiality of the elect in Christ indicates similar objective and subjective aspects corresponding to the Son’s and Spirit’s spatiality; they are already definitively present with God in fully justified relation and distinction in Christ by the Spirit, but they also are provisionally present with God in unjustified relation and distinction, still in need of justification in their current existence. By His Spirit’s presence, God’s grace continues to actualize the accomplished reconciliation in Jesus Christ in each of the elect within world occurrence. Therefore, the community cannot withdraw from its own place in this twofold existence as sinners and saints. Since Jesus Christ is bound to the whole world as its Creator, Savior and Lord, so too is His body bound to the world as the provisional representation of eternal life and hope already available and actual here in its midst.

The communion of saints occurs where God and His people representing the world are mutually present in ordered relation and distinction. For His people living “in their own time and place”, God Himself “in speech and action...always comes to their time and place.” Barth specifies two ways Jesus Christ is present in His Spirit to His community, and through them to the world. First temporally, He is present as the community’s past, recollecting the event of His death and resurrection by which it came into being through the Spirit’s awakening presence. Christ is present as their future hope that they confess to the world and toward which they strive through the Spirit’s upbuilding and enlightening power and presence. He is present also as its present existence. He is “...present within it not merely as its recollected and expected but also as its present life.”¹¹¹³ The second way in which Jesus Christ is present to the community and world is spatial. As the true Mediator between God and human beings He lives mutually present with God above and with the community in the world below. Barth explains this spatial character of Jesus Christ’s presence using Scripture: “‘I am in the midst’...and ...‘Lo, I am with you alway’...cannot indicate merely the presence of a by-

¹¹¹² Barth, *CD IV/3.2*, 754.

¹¹¹³ Barth, *CD IV/3.2*, 757.

stander or spectator who might give occasional support...”¹¹¹⁴ Indeed, “...Jesus is not far from His community but directly present with it...the true and primary acting Subject in the Christian gathering and fellowship, constituting, maintaining and directing it by His presence and action.”¹¹¹⁵ The spatiality of Jesus Christ and the Spirit thus encompasses the extent of common spatial and temporal notions; by the Spirit He is concretely present above and below, and He is also present in past recollection, present existence and future expectation. These are not general or abstract terms. For Barth, Jesus Christ is actually and fully present in relation and distinction with His community and with each member. Through them, He also is present with the world, though in a differently ordered relation and distinction. No place or time exists in which He is not already actively present with people, although the form varies.

The Holy Spirit is Jesus Christ’s living presence to the community, and through it to the world, thus enabling it to respond to His presence. “The Holy Spirit is the power of God proper to the being of Jesus Christ in the exercise and operation of which He causes His community to become what it is.” The Spirit’s work in and through this community is “...the power of the grace of God addressed to the whole world in the one Son of God and Son of Man...”¹¹¹⁶ By His presence, the Spirit gives to them the power to participate in Christ’s prophetic mission to the world, being present to their neighbors by confessing Him in word and deed. Where this takes place, Jesus Christ is co-present with His people, and through them with the neighbor, thus affirming the community in its own existence.

The Holy Spirit is the “bond of peace” between the two forms of Jesus Christ’s body. The Spirit “...constitutes and guarantees the unity...of Jesus Christ in the heights and...depths, in His transcendence and...immanence...[in] His primary and secondary dimensions and forms of existence...” The Spirit is the unity whereby Jesus Christ is simultaneously “...the heavenly Head with God and the earthly body with His community.”¹¹¹⁷ The community confesses the presence and work of the one Jesus Christ in both forms. Only the Spirit can unify the Son with the Father, the Head with the body and the community with its diverse and many individual members, and the community with the world. Manifest in multiple ways, the Holy Spirit’s spatiality characteristically unites in ordered relation what is distinct or disparate, without loss of those distinctions.

¹¹¹⁴ Barth, *CD IV/3.2*, 757-758.

¹¹¹⁵ Barth, *CD IV/3.2*, 758.

¹¹¹⁶ Barth, *CD IV/3.2*, 759.

¹¹¹⁷ Barth, *CD IV/3.2*, 760.

The Spirit's unifying presence enlivens the community and its work to be a "counterpart here and now" with Christ and His work. The Spirit freely wills correspondence between Jesus Christ and the community's free confession of its "faith...love...hope and knowledge",¹¹¹⁸ thereby constituting its existence "afresh in the event of His presence".¹¹¹⁹ Since Jesus Christ is for Himself, His community and the world, then His community also exists for Christ, fellow members and the world. Likewise, since the Head is sanctified and set apart from the world precisely to be present in the world for its salvation, then the body also is "called out of the world" only to be "genuinely called into it." Both are separated from the world in distinction not isolation, so that, turning to the world, they may be present in service. The Spirit's unifying spatiality permits "no gap" to exist between the Head and this form of His body. Co-present in ordered relation and distinction, their existence is a "single movement" from one origin and to one goal.¹¹²⁰ By the Spirit's enlightening presence, the Church *is* only in the co-presence of its Lord in His one work and movement.

The Spirit's presence enlightens the Church to know "God and man and the covenant between them", so it may enact its commission by proclaiming the world's reality as a lost and dying place.¹¹²¹ Enlightened knowledge of the various places of human existence in Jesus Christ includes "God's good creation, man's own sin and the reconciling grace of God".¹¹²² The Church is tasked with attesting to the world the place of created goodness, being mutually present with God and others in ordered relation and distinction; the place of sin and death, being co-present with the Holy Judge and other sinners in chaotic and fatal relation and distinction that is destroyed and recreated in Jesus Christ; and the new place of resurrection life, being provisionally co-present with God and others in newly reordered relation and distinction.¹¹²³ Enacting God's loving presence in "solidarity" or unity with the world yet in distinction, not "conformity", the Church must not retreat but be placed by the Spirit "...at the side and indeed in the midst of this world which God has loved..." Reflecting its Head, the community must exhibit "full commitment to it, unreserved participation in its situation" and place. It cannot truly love "externally and from a distance", but corresponding to its Head, the body must be present in, to, among and with the world.¹¹²⁴ The community's existence and

¹¹¹⁸ Barth, *CD IV/3.2*, 761.

¹¹¹⁹ Barth, *CD IV/3.2*, 763.

¹¹²⁰ Barth, *CD IV/3.2*, 764.

¹¹²¹ Barth, *CD IV/3.2*, 769.

¹¹²² Barth, *CD IV/3.2*, 770.

¹¹²³ For an exposition of Barth's concept of union with Christ see W. Duncan Rankin, "Carnal Union With Christ in the Theology of T.F. Torrance (Ph.D. dissertation: University of Edinburgh, 1996) Chapter 4.

¹¹²⁴ Barth, *CD IV/3.2*, 773.

commission to be a provisional representation of Jesus Christ's reconciling love for the world places the community "under obligation to the world."¹¹²⁵ Its own existence is given by Christ in His Spirit, who calls it to give itself for the world as He did.

The Church's commission can be fulfilled only by the power of the Holy Spirit who is present and active in it. By God's "free power" and purpose, all is moving toward the ultimate goal and future.¹¹²⁶ Empowered and enlightened by the Spirit, the human responsibility or work, in view of God's revelation and reconciliation in Christ, is simply to confess Him.¹¹²⁷ But this confession is only "a grateful response" to Jesus Christ's own confession of it as His body sent into the world. A genuinely "free...obedient action", it can confess only when enlightened in knowledge that is revealed by the Spirit.¹¹²⁸ Hence, the spatiality of the Spirit involves uniting divine freedom and human freedom such that knowledge of God in Jesus Christ results in grateful confession and deepening faith, love and hope.

For the Church's confession of Jesus Christ to reflect His own confession as God's Word, the Spirit must enlighten its sole content, Jesus Christ, which includes "...the true and living God and true and living man; their encounter, co-existence and history with its commencement, centre and goal..."¹¹²⁹ The Gospel is the Word of God attesting the grace and goodness of God in Jesus Christ through the power of the Spirit. "Jesus Christ signifies God, not without man or – which would be even worse – against him, but God with man, and indeed for him, as his Friend and Helper and Saviour and Guarantor...Neighbor and Brother, akin and alongside..."¹¹³⁰ The spatiality of God is manifest in Jesus Christ's presence who is with, for and alongside human beings in the Spirit's presence. Not only given in a provisional form, God's goodness is "...actualised in the act of God, which is already accessible, revealed and perceptible in the Word of God, and which is impregnably grounded in the eternal counsel of God, in His own triune essence." Barth is clear: "Jesus Christ Himself as Immanuel, 'God with us,' is this divine goodness." God's active presence with sinful humanity in the covenant of grace in Jesus Christ is the content of the Church's confession. Through the Holy Spirit's active presence, divine spatiality takes human form in the covenant of grace in Jesus Christ. God "made Himself the God of man and man His man."¹¹³¹ In this

¹¹²⁵ Barth, *CD IV/3.2*, 776.

¹¹²⁶ Barth, *CD IV/3.2*, 786.

¹¹²⁷ Barth, *CD IV/3.2*, 787.

¹¹²⁸ Barth, *CD IV/3.2*, 790.

¹¹²⁹ Barth, *CD IV/3.2*, 797.

¹¹³⁰ Barth, *CD IV/3.2*, 798.

¹¹³¹ Barth, *CD IV/3.2*, 799.

provisional in-between place, Jesus Christ is present through His Spirit in the earthly-historical form of His body, to be reunited with His community in His final, definitive and fleshly form in the future redemption by His Spirit. Responding to this good news, the Church's "cause" is to affirm in its own existence and confessed 'yes', God's own "great Yes" to humanity.¹¹³² God and the community are mutually present in proper relation and distinction where the community affirms God's own affirmation.

As the Church exists concretely in various and distinct places and ages, it understands and fulfills its prophetic vocation to attest the one Word in diverse ways according to the "temporal and spatial conditions of their Christian existence".¹¹³³ Barth identifies two "elements of [human] existence" addressed by its confession. The first, "subordinate, static and present" is the person "in virtue of his ignorance". The second, "superior, dynamic and future" is the person "...in virtue of the work of God and the Word of God addressed to his ignorance." The former is the miserable life of the sinner who knows no hope or future, whose place is only dead and dying. The latter is the gracious new life of participation in God's place, as a result of a "decisive visitation by God." In this divine visitation the "never-resting love of the living God" is present to the individual, revealing to him a future already here in the Spirit's eschatological presence, yet also the goal toward which he moves in the Spirit's quickening power. In this place of encounter and properly ordered co-presence, he now knows "God loves him and that in His love He takes him to Himself and will not let him go again."¹¹³⁴ The community's vocation is to proclaim this prophetic Gospel addressed to "him as the one he is already in process of becoming" by the presence and work of Word and Spirit.¹¹³⁵ Such prophetic existence hastens in the Spirit's presence toward its future and complete sanctification in the eschaton. The community fulfills its existence and mission where enabled by the Spirit's presence to confess this future hope to "the one who will be within even though he is now without".¹¹³⁶ As Jesus Christ Himself is present on this way with His community in His Spirit's presence, in-between the places of commencement and completion, so too, it is called and sent to be present on this way with and for the world, attesting and enacting the reality of both already present here and now. The community must pray, continually asking for the Spirit to come and enlighten it, since "God Himself, His

¹¹³² Barth, *CD IV/3.2*, 801.

¹¹³³ Barth, *CD IV/3.2*, 801.

¹¹³⁴ Barth, *CD IV/3.2*, 809.

¹¹³⁵ Barth, *CD IV/3.2*, 810.

¹¹³⁶ Barth, *CD IV/3.2*, 811.

presence and action, are required” so its service to the world may be in service of God.¹¹³⁷ To be the true ministry of God’s Word, its service must follow the movement of its Head, coming from God to human beings. Only then can its prophetic witness point back and ahead to the God who has initiated and will fulfill everything by His particular presence and action.

To summarize, the third aspect of the spatiality of the Holy Spirit in the community of Jesus Christ is characterized by His enlightening power that sends the community into the world to attest the good news of God’s reconciliation with the world in Jesus Christ. The Spirit is present empowering the awakened and built-up community, and enlightening it in its vocation to participate in Jesus Christ’s prophetic work. In this calling, the community becomes the provisional representation of God’s calling of all humanity to be present with God in reconciled relation and distinction by the Spirit’s active co-presence that enables the Church’s work to correspond with Jesus Christ’s prophetic work. Enlightened by the Spirit’s presence to the event of God’s Word, it confesses Jesus Christ. This confession includes the past reality of the place of sin, death and broken fellowship with God overcome in Jesus Christ’s death, the future place of redeemed creation in perfect fellowship with God revealed in the resurrection, and the present place as the body of Christ, moving from commencement to consummation, following its Head in faith, love and hope. By His presence, the Spirit makes effective in the elect the reconciliation already perfected in Jesus Christ, enabling in them a corresponding response in its vocation to the world. The present communion or mutual presence with God and His people centered in Jesus Christ who is present by His Spirit, offers a provisional but genuine form of that perfect participation in the divine life, which is the definitive co-presence with God and His people. The promised fulfillment of the divine decision and the election of the covenant of grace in Jesus Christ through the Spirit signifies the consummation of all creation that will be perfectly, eternally co-present with Immanuel, God with us and we with God. Spatiality, divine and human, will find its goal as we take our place in God’s own space with our Father, through the Son of God as Son of Man and in the Holy Spirit who is the communion of God’s love and freedom.

Having examined the redeeming spatiality of the Holy Spirit in the Church, a critical assessment of Barth’s pneumatology is offered next, before considering our final consummated place with God.

¹¹³⁷ Barth, *CD IV/3.2*, 832.

3. The Holy Spirit's 'Place': Revisiting Barth's Pneumatology

Barth's doctrine of the Holy Spirit is often impugned by scholars, who suggest his pneumatology is essentially non-existent, impersonal or merely subsumed into Christology.¹¹³⁸ Acknowledging the absence of a fully expounded doctrine of the Holy Spirit intended for Volume V, the question has to be raised if he has done justice to the third mode of God's being.¹¹³⁹ Given Barth's theological development, the earlier Barth's claim that the Holy Spirit is "the fellowship, the act of communion, of Father and the Son" is greatly expanded.¹¹⁴⁰ Little is said about the Spirit's role in creation by the Father in Volume III, yet Barth gives the Spirit a much more prominent role regarding the Son's reconciliation as it takes place in the Church, as this chapter demonstrates. Barth identifies the Holy Spirit as the effective power of the presence and action of Jesus Christ in reconciling the world to God. Considering his pneumatology in view of his mature historicized, actualistic and Christocentric epistemology provides a glimpse into Barth's richer understanding of the differentiation of God in His third mode of being. Since this material is covered above in detail, only a few comments are needed.

For Barth, God is a single divine Subject existing in three modes of being, so the Holy Spirit executes the one divine will that is His own. Rooted in His election of the covenant of grace in Jesus Christ and His Self-determination to be this kind of God, He executes His gracious will by His own free power. Divine omnipotence, for Barth, is not absolute power; it is the personal, effective, teleological perfection of God's being that perfectly executes and

¹¹³⁸ For example, see Robert W. Jenson, "You Wonder Where the Spirit Went," *Pro Ecclesia* 2 (1993) 296-304; Eugene F. Rogers, "The Mystery of the Spirit in Three Traditions: Calvin, Rahner, Florensky or, You Keep Wondering Where the Spirit Went," *Modern Theology* 19 (2003) 243-60; *idem.*, *After the Spirit: A Constructive Pneumatology from Resources outside the Modern West* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005) 19-23; *idem.*, "The Eclipse of the Spirit in Karl Barth," in *Conversing with Barth*, eds., John C. McDowell and Mike Higton (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004) 173-190; John Thompson, *The Holy Spirit in the Theology of Karl Barth* (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick, 1991); John Yocum, *Ecclesial Mediation in Karl Barth* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004); Rowan Williams, "Barth on the Triune God," in *Karl Barth: Studies of His Theological Method*, ed., S.W. Sykes (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979) 171; Sung-Yong Jun, "Karl Barth's Pneumatological Doctrine of Baptism" (Ph.D. dissertation: University of Aberdeen, 1995) esp 134-146. "The Spirit is regarded as the common element or the fellowship between the Father and the Son not as the third person along with them." Ontologically, the Spirit is virtually identified with the Son in the doctrine of the Trinity." (34); Mark Weedman, "The Spirit in the Church: The Universal Christ, Particular Spirit and Christian Unity," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 11, no. 3 (July 2009) 347-364, esp. 349-353.

¹¹³⁹ For scholars who defend Barth as having a robust doctrine of the Holy Spirit, albeit intertwined particularly with Christology, see for example, G.W. Bromiley, "The Abiding Significance of Karl Barth" in *Theology Beyond Christendom* (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick, 1986) 331-350; Robert E. Cushman, "Karl Barth and the Holy Spirit," *Religion in Life* 24, no. 4 (Autumn 1955) 566-578; Kilian McDonnell, "A Trinitarian Theology of the Holy Spirit?" *Theological Studies* 46 (1985) 192 n.10; For an interesting literary debate over Barth's doctrine of the Spirit staged between Jenson and Hunsinger, see James J. Buckley, "Field of Living Fire: Karl Barth on the Spirit and the Church," *Modern Theology* 10, no. 1 (January 1994) 81-102, esp 82-86.

¹¹⁴⁰ Barth, *CDI* I/1, 470.

consummates God's benevolent will, in accord with His constancy, in His Self-constitution and election of grace in Jesus Christ.¹¹⁴¹ But what makes the Spirit distinct from the Father and the Son and more firmly establishes His own mode of being? Beginning with a broad view of the Spirit's acts in the world according to Scripture, He brings creation and human beings into existence as the Father's creative, life-giving power (the wind or breath of God) that is spoken by His Word. He maintains that creation by effecting the Father's providential care and enabling creatures to respond as the good creation and stewards. He comes upon various people throughout the Old Testament, empowering them to do God's will. He effects the entirety of the Son's existence and work: the Son's being in two natures is united eternally by the Spirit, from His primal Self-constitution together always the divine-human mode of God's being, incarnation and earthly life as sent by the Father (including Jesus' teachings, miracles, death, resurrection); the Son's return to the Father (ascension and existence at the Father's right hand); and the Son's coming again in glory (the universal revelation of His full identity as the divine-human being) in order to return again to the Father with His community (those caught up in the Spirit) – all by the Spirit's enabling and unifying power (holding together disparate things in order to effect the divine will). He is the empowering presence of the Risen, living Jesus Christ in the Church and through it to the world (the subjective agent of reconciliation making effective in His community and individuals the reconciliation objectively accomplished in Jesus Christ by His Spirit, which is their justification, sanctification and vocation). In short, He enables the elect to be and to know they are “in Christ” by joining Head to body, and maintaining and directing that body. He is the Promise and eschatological hope of the community's future that is already (provisionally) present, accomplishing the consummation of all creation as He empowers it to move toward that goal (convicting, justifying, regenerating, sanctifying, gifting, calling, etc.).

With his Christocentric focus, Barth can concretely explicate his earlier description of the Spirit as the communion between Father and Son, and the subjective aspect of revelation.¹¹⁴² The Spirit clearly has Jesus Christ as His sole content, effecting fulfillment of the covenant of grace. He does not add to or complete the Son's objective work as if

¹¹⁴¹ For Barth's presentation of the divine perfection of omnipotence see *CD* II/1, 522-607.

¹¹⁴² Travis Ables attempts to build a constructive 'grammar' of pneumatology focusing on Barth's early concepts of the subjective aspect of revelation and the trinity which he believes change little throughout the *Dogmatics* “*CD* I/1 proffers in highly compressed, formal languages what *CD* IV narrates in a material mode as the history of Jesus Christ.” (211) See Ables, “The Grammar of Pneumatology in Barth and Rahner: A Reconsideration,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 11, no. 2 (April 2009) 208-224. Reexamination of some of his presuppositions would help his project.

something were lacking. His subjective work, now specifically directed to the atonement event in Jesus Christ (rather than to revelation in general), makes that event (Person, work and effects) known and actual in the community and through it to the world by His varied presence in relation and distinction with them. This third mode of being is an eternal repetition of the Son and the Father; His work is to reiterate the finished work of the Son given by the Father to His community (and world) to which it was directed, thus also fulfilling the elected covenant purpose of creation. As the Subject of that work, the Son is the only objective ground upon which a community of its recipients may exist. Everything the Son, the Word of God did in his particular place and time in obedience to the command of the Father, God's Spirit makes present and effective in all places and times. In an ever-new encounter, He addresses that Word to His community and receives the Word in it for its salvation and communion with God, being co-present with God and His people, and empowering their mutual presence in Christ. The Spirit is the communion holding together divine and human in all actualizations, and mediated through Jesus Christ.

Thus, the Holy Spirit is the mode of being whose divine power enacts the commands of the Father and the obedience of the Son in the created realm, making them both present to the community in His own presence. As the single divine Subject, where the Spirit is, the Son and the Father are present also. The distinctiveness of the Spirit is seen in the eternal processions in which He is present as the eternal outpouring from the eternally generative Father and the eternally begotten Son. Differentiation also includes His "personal properties", those distinct characteristics that, while mysterious, nonetheless account for Him being the effecting presence and agent of the presence and acts of the Father and Son in the world.¹¹⁴³ These include confronting the community anew with the Word of God, awakening and preserving and directing it in faith to the coming Kingdom of God that is here, though provisionally, even now in His presence. This ever new divine act of Self-giving in which, ever and again, the Father gives Himself in the Son through His Spirit, is due solely to the free grace of God's loving good pleasure. Such grace, rooted in His primal decision for the election of the covenant and Self-constitution, and accomplished in the Father's command and the Son's obedience is being actualized in us as we follow Jesus Christ home to the Father – all by the powerful presence of the Spirit. Both here and there in our consummated place, the

¹¹⁴³ Bruce L. McCormack, "The Lord and Giver of Life: A 'Barthian' Defense of the *Filioque*," unpublished paper, 2010, 27-28. [Forthcoming in *Rethinking Trinitarian Theology: Disputed Questions and Contemporary Issues in Trinitarian Theology*, eds., Guilio Maspero and Robert Wozniak (New York: T&T Clark, 2011.).] See also David Guretzki, *Karl Barth on the Filioque* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009).

spatiality of the Spirit is being realized in the personal co-presence He effects by continually uniting God and human in the closest proximity and proper distance, first in Jesus Christ Himself and through Him with us, as Immanuel, God with us and we with God. Such perfectly ordered co-presence in properly fulfilled relation and distinction occurs in the covenant home already prepared in Jesus Christ that will be God's 'kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven'.

4. God's Consummated Place With Us

Although Barth apparently left no indication how Volume V concerning eschatological redemption by the Holy Spirit would be organized, no doubt it would have been Trinitarian in structure and would have ended with an ethics, patterned after Volumes III and IV.¹¹⁴⁴ Barth's *Lecture Fragments* intended for Volume IV/4 offer a few glimpses regarding his views of this material.¹¹⁴⁵ As reconciliation's future and goal, redemption is the unique work of God the Spirit, who will bring the old, in-between, worldly place to an end, consummating the work already accomplished by Father and Son in its new, final place. George Hunsinger claims that for Barth, redemption "...represented the consummation of all things, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal life in communion with God."¹¹⁴⁶ According to Eberhard Busch, Barth

...understood the eschaton brought about by the Holy Spirit in particular as an "apocalypse," a definitive, total, and universal "revelation" of the eternally decreed and beneficent counsel of God fulfilled temporally in Jesus Christ, that is, of his covenant with created humanity as its eternal validation. With this validation God sets aside forever all human opposition against himself, and his work is thus consummated as all creation gives him thankful praise."¹¹⁴⁷

Barth notes that this "...act of God [is] the goal and end of all human history and of all the history of faith and the church within it."¹¹⁴⁸ As the fulfillment of God's eternal election of the covenant of grace, several overlapping aspects meriting exploration in this context include apocalypse, kingdom, new creation, reconciliation, God's children, passion and union with God as Sabbath rest.

¹¹⁴⁴ Eberhard Busch, *The Great Passion*, 54.

¹¹⁴⁵ Karl Barth, *The Christian Life: Church Dogmatics IV/4, Lecture Fragments*, trans., W.G. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1981) (hereafter cited as *CD IV/4*).

¹¹⁴⁶ Hunsinger, "Mediator of Communion," 178. Together, he notes, Volumes IV and V would have yielded a "...twofold perspective[:]...reconciliation [as] redemption's abiding ground and content, redemption [as] reconciliation's dynamic consequence and goal."

¹¹⁴⁷ Busch, *The Great Passion*, 54.

¹¹⁴⁸ Barth, *IV/4*, 247.

First, God's final apocalypse by the Spirit will reveal to the entire cosmos who and what God is and does in Jesus Christ according to His election of grace. In the old place, "He is the God who in His concealment is not absent but present, not veiled but manifest" to His people.¹¹⁴⁹ In the new place Jesus Christ will be fully revealed and imparted "in his inexhaustible significance for the whole creation."¹¹⁵⁰ This includes positive and negative aspects. Positively, the cosmic unveiling of His final Easter *parousia* will be seen and acknowledged by everyone, of every place and age. That presupposes some manner of general resurrection from the place of the dead.¹¹⁵¹ In His definitive and perfected form, all will see Jesus Christ as the One He was, the Crucified and Risen, the Elected and Rejected in their place and for their sake. Negatively, "...he will bring his self-declaration to its goal with the manifestation of his light that destroys all darkness."¹¹⁵² All "lordless powers"¹¹⁵³ contending with God and His covenant of grace will be eradicated; all human opposition will be cast aside; all flawed, impartial knowledge and all "ignorance of God"¹¹⁵⁴ will be replaced with God's true Self-knowledge. His apocalyptic presence "terrifies [His people] as judgment and already comforts them as grace."¹¹⁵⁵ For, the true Lord comes in His glorious presence to complete the righteous "revolt"¹¹⁵⁶ against the "whole injustice and evil of the system which rules the world".¹¹⁵⁷ His rightful place as Ruler of an ordered creation will be restored against

...the great disorder that controls and characterizes the state and course of human things...the human unrighteousness that contradicts and opposes the salutary order and righteousness of God...the plight that plagues and disrupts and devastates humanity... man's fall and alienation from God...[as] the true unrighteousness which darkens and burdens human life and fellowship.¹¹⁵⁸

Second, God's kingdom will come as the "...absolutely *new* thing vis-à-vis the given world...that inaugurates its total renewal..."¹¹⁵⁹ A new network of relationships will be created since the human's "...alienation from God at once carries with it his self-alienation:

¹¹⁴⁹ Barth, IV/4, 115.

¹¹⁵⁰ Hunsinger, "Doctrine of the Holy Spirit," 178.

¹¹⁵¹ For an exposition on this theme in Barth see for example, A. Katherine Grieb, "Last Things First: Karl Barth's Theological Exegesis of 1 Corinthians in 'The Resurrection of the Dead,'" *Systematic Journal of Theology* 56, no. 1 (2003) 49-64. For a comparative study see Claudia Janssen, "Bodily Resurrection (1Cor. 15)? The Discussion of the Resurrection in Karl Barth, Rudolf Bultmann, Dorothee Sölle and Contemporary Feminist Theology," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 79 (2000) 61-78.

¹¹⁵² Barth, CD IV/4, 114.

¹¹⁵³ Barth, CD IV/4, 206.

¹¹⁵⁴ Barth, CD IV/4, 205.

¹¹⁵⁵ Barth, CD IV/4, 247.

¹¹⁵⁶ Barth, CD IV/4, 205.

¹¹⁵⁷ Barth, CD IV/4, 203.

¹¹⁵⁸ Barth, CD IV/4, 213.

¹¹⁵⁹ Busch, *The Great Passion*, 280.

the denaturalizing of the humanity and fellow humanity of his own existence, the contradiction of the determination, inalienably given to him as God's creature, that he should belong to God and have in him his Lord...¹¹⁶⁰ Only God can do this new thing because it is God's new act. In fact, Barth says,

God's kingdom is God himself and...it is God himself as he not merely is somewhere and somehow (not even in the highest height or as the God beyond God...) but as he comes. As God's kingdom is God himself, so God is his kingdom in his own coming: his coming to meet man, to meet the whole of the reality distinct from himself...this special dynamic reality...[is] breaking forth and breaking through and breaking into the place...to encounter with [man] and therefore with all creation. God comes – this is why his coming is the coming of his kingdom – as the legitimate King and almighty Lord of the human world which belongs to him.¹¹⁶¹

God Himself is the objective basis of the new coming kingdom for He has already come. Indeed, "Jesus Christ is the new thing."¹¹⁶² Actualized in His original Easter coming, the Spirit's outpouring, which enabled His second Easter coming in the Church's presence, becomes the promise and pledge of the completion in creation of His final and definitive coming again.

He comes and creates righteousness, zealous for his honor as Creator and burning with love for his creature. He creates the righteousness which is the right order of the world that belongs to him. He comes and in creating righteousness he abolishes the unrighteousness of people both in their relationship to him and also in their relationships to one another...He comes and with him comes that "peace on earth among men with whom he is pleased", among those who are elected, created, loved, saved, and kept by him. This peace on earth, actualized when God himself comes as King and Lord and creates and establishes it, is the kingdom of God.¹¹⁶³

God accomplishes this by the transforming, redeeming presence of the Holy Spirit who makes Jesus Christ in the flesh present with all creation in new, actually redeemed relation and distinction.

Third, God "...will cause his righteousness to appear and dwell on a new earth under a new heaven..."¹¹⁶⁴ According to Busch, the new creation inaugurated with God's coming "...cannot mean that a better or totally different second creation will replace the first, so that in the process the first creation is destroyed."¹¹⁶⁵ God's original creation was good; only the disorder, chaos and nothingness that threatened creation was judged bad and is to be negated.

¹¹⁶⁰ Barth, *CD IV/4*, 213-14.

¹¹⁶¹ Barth, *CD IV/4*, 247.

¹¹⁶² Barth, *CD IV/4* 252.

¹¹⁶³ Barth, *CD IV/4*, 237.

¹¹⁶⁴ Barth, *CD IV/4*, 203.

¹¹⁶⁵ Busch, *The Great Passion*, 280.

However, it also cannot mean simply a return to the pre-Fall creation, which smacks of “natural theology”.¹¹⁶⁶ For, there is no natural capacity to know God inherent within the human creature that remains unaffected by the fall, as assumed by natural theology; his total being is affected. As the external basis of the covenant for which it was created, everything in creation opposed to God’s covenant of grace must itself be destroyed, including the sinful human creature.¹¹⁶⁷ As the old has been destroyed and the new has come into being objectively in Jesus Christ, so also must it take place subjectively in creation.

Fourth, ushering in the final space of His kingdom means God’s work in the old in-between place is finished. Time, no longer needed to complete the covenant, also will end. The redeemed creature’s new place, previously hoped and petitioned for, is at hand. What was promised and already an event there in the presence of Jesus Christ and the Spirit becomes a universally visible and known event here in the Redeemer’s new space. God’s atoning grace as executed there in the Son, is fully revealed here and acknowledged to be perfectly effective. Rooted in God’s own space in His primal decision and election, and fulfilled in Jesus Christ who exchanged our place of humiliation for a share in His exalted place, God’s eternal covenant with His people will be consummated here in the whole of the new creation.

Fifth, as the redeeming presence of the Holy Spirit enables the whole creation to see and know Jesus Christ and His work, He consecrates our participation in this final space as His children. Having been called by the Son through the Spirit’s presence, the new creation exists here “in particular proximity to Him and therefore in analogy to what He is.”¹¹⁶⁸ Thus, in Him, the Father of the only begotten Son adopts us as His children in whom we “...may recognize God as his Father and [ours], and [our]selves as his children.”¹¹⁶⁹ To be fully human means following the Son’s way of utter dependence upon the loving Father by the Spirit’s enabling co-presence, living in “...obedience to [God’s] command to the extent that it is a human life whose purpose, will, and work focuses always on the one action of invocation of God.”¹¹⁷⁰ Therefore, acknowledging God as Sovereign Lord and Savior by calling on their “...‘Father’ will finally, as the goal of the rule and work of Jesus Christ, be the word of all men and indeed of all creation ringing out in the harmony of universal invocation.”¹¹⁷¹ The final eschatological place will be filled with “universal praise of God”, for the Redeemer’s

¹¹⁶⁶ Busch, *The Great Passion*, 281.

¹¹⁶⁷ See Busch, *The Great Passion*, 281.

¹¹⁶⁸ Barth, *CD*, IV/3.2, 532.

¹¹⁶⁹ Barth, *CD* IV/4, 49.

¹¹⁷⁰ Barth, *CD* IV/4, 49.

¹¹⁷¹ Barth, *CD* IV/4, 69-70.

consummating presence will bring home all creation to be mutually present with God in redeemed relation and distinction.¹¹⁷²

Sixth, such eternal cosmic praise and adoration of God will be the culmination of creation's "zeal for the honor of God".¹¹⁷³ "For the holy name of God which is desecrated in the world is unequivocally the name of him who is not without or against man but for man, the God who liberates and thus rules man, the God who loves him."¹¹⁷⁴ This Redeemer is not an abstract or natural force, nor "...anonymous. He has a name...He has made known as his holy name...He has already hallowed it...[and] invested it with honor, validity, radiance, and glory."¹¹⁷⁵ Zeal for the divine Name is the passion of God's people. By definition, Christians are "people who suffer from" a passion, "...an unfulfilled desire which seeks the fulfilment in which it can transform itself and become delight and joy instead of pain."¹¹⁷⁶ The Redeemer's powerful presence, enabling their mutual presence with God in perfectly ordered relation and distinction, will fulfill their hope even as they continue to be co-present in faith and love.¹¹⁷⁷ Their passion to continually glorify, magnify and attest this passionate, co-present God perfectly corresponds to His being and acts for them which culminated in the event of His "great passion", dying on the cross in their place.¹¹⁷⁸ His name is His executed reality, the event that is Immanuel, God eternally present with us so we can be eternally present with God in perfect relation and distinction.

And last, in Christ we are finally and perfectly united to God in the communion of the Holy Spirit in Sabbath rest. That will be "...unequivocally visible in the light of the last day of Jesus Christ which is also the first day of redemption, like the Sabbath which is the last day of creation and the first day for man."¹¹⁷⁹ Not merely unfettered covenant relationship, but mutual presence in ebullient relation and distinction between God and His people is the only reality for the new human; in "the sabbath day of the light of God which abolishes all the division" and obstacles, comprehensive spatiality is eternally attained between covenant partners.¹¹⁸⁰ The new human existence to be mutually present in perfect freedom, faithfully

¹¹⁷² Barth, *CD IV/4*, 70.

¹¹⁷³ Barth, *CD IV/4*, 111.

¹¹⁷⁴ Barth, *CD IV/4*, 203.

¹¹⁷⁵ Barth, *CD IV/4*, 115.

¹¹⁷⁶ Barth, *CD IV/4*, 111.

¹¹⁷⁷ Barth, *CD IV/4*, 115.

¹¹⁷⁸ Barth, *CD IV/4*, 111.

¹¹⁷⁹ Barth, *CD IV/4*, IV/3.2, 903.

¹¹⁸⁰ Barth, *CD IV/4*, 168.

loving God and people by the Spirit's presence corresponds to the communion of divine freedom and love present and revealed in Jesus Christ.

In summary, all the work of the Triune God achieves its end in the eschatological space by the active presence of the Spirit who makes the glorious Jesus Christ present as God's "...last, comprehensive, immediate and definitive Word...announced in His resurrection and... declared in the power of His Holy Spirit".¹¹⁸¹ This divine work is comprehensive in its "*universal* extension"; immediate in its "*exclusive* capacity" to remove all opposition to God in justified but still sinful humans; and definitive in its "*ultimate*" authority" to exercise sovereign judgment.¹¹⁸² This place of grace is Jesus Christ's "...new coming to consummate the revelation of the will of God fulfilled in Him" by the powerful presence of His Spirit.¹¹⁸³ Barth concludes,

The coming of the kingdom of God is the appearing of God's righteousness on a new earth and under a new heaven...It is the setting up of his ordering of human life and life together, of his order of life, right, freedom, peace, and joy which is good for man as his creature, covenant partner, and child, which saves and keeps him. In Jesus Christ and the power of his Spirit this order is fully present...[and] fully revealed in him. In its majesty, as the grace and benefit addressed to all in him, but also as the judgment executed on all human unrighteousness and disorder, it is their [consummated] hope.¹¹⁸⁴

In the end, where we "let God be God but...let Him be [our] God" we may joyfully participate in God's glorious presence, blessed with the creative, reconciling, redeeming spatiality of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.¹¹⁸⁵ God's election of grace is consummated in "eternal life in which God will be all in all, and thus in [us] too."¹¹⁸⁶ To live in the consummated space of free and loving covenant communion, wholly present with God and others in perfected relation and distinction, is to be perfectly 'in Christ' through the redeeming presence of His Spirit.

¹¹⁸¹ Barth, *CD IV/3.2*, 903.

¹¹⁸² Busch, *The Great Passion*, 286-7.

¹¹⁸³ Barth, *CD IV/3.2*, 902.

¹¹⁸⁴ Barth, *CD IV/4*, 263.

¹¹⁸⁵ Barth, *CD IV/4*, 210.

¹¹⁸⁶ Barth, *CD IV/4*, 40. Discussing Barth's "radically future-oriented theology throughout the *CD*", Nevin's observation is fascinatingly on target here: "What is special is that Barth doesn't allow himself to be discouraged by the fact that the radical renewal of the world, as it was and is desired by so many people, does not come. It seems to me that this unbroken strength is related to the confidence in Barth (as a theological author) regarding *a presence of God* which becomes more and more familiar to him through his exposition of the Lord's Prayer. It induces him in his thinking to follow this Jesus of Nazareth as the first-born among many brothers and sisters." Garrit W. Nevin, "Just a little. The Christian Life in the Context of Reconciliation," *Zeitschrift für dialektische Theologie* 18, no. 3 (2002) 355-356 (emphasis mine). Living in such confident hope in the triune God, no matter what, is a primary benefit for engaging in a theology of spatiality.

CONCLUSION

GOD'S 'REAL' SPACE WITH US

This study has presented a theology of spatiality based on Karl Barth's doctrine of the divine perfection of omnipresence, through an exposition of his theology in *Church Dogmatics*, and interpreted in the light of Bruce McCormack's critical reading. Three basic goals are achieved: an understanding of 1) the spatiality of the triune God in His Self-determining election of the covenant of grace, 2) the spatiality particular to each of God's three modes of being in His work, and 3) the spatiality of the human being, based upon, derived from and illuminated by the first two goals.

Barth claims that God is spatial, thereby rejecting the common belief that God is a-spatial. Spatiality, defined as "proximity at a distance", describes the way in which one is present to another in the most intimate and personal fellowship possible yet without becoming the other. Individual distinction ('distance') is not merely upheld but is real only in the union of a rightly ordered fellowship ('proximity'). Barth also asserts that God has His own space and even *is* His own space. Furthermore, God makes space for others to have their own place.

Considering the problem of spatial terminology, I mention three issues: first, the lack of distinct terms to speak of 'God's space' (i.e., 'eternity') in differentiation from 'creaturely space' (i.e., 'time'); Barth's interchangeable use of 'space' and 'place', signifying a similar if not identical meaning; and the varied ways in which these terms are meant to be interpreted, for example, metaphorically, literally, descriptively or analogically. For a theologian who is normally quite meticulous in his choice of theological terminology, this is somewhat unusual. However, I suggest that there is purpose in this variety. For instance, 'space' is usually a general term, connoting an infinite, open-ended, unattainable, uncontrollable and dynamic mystery which surprises, terrifies and delights. 'Place', on the other hand, tends to be more specific, normally referring to a particular, limited location or status, one that indicates knowledge and identity, encounter and community. This study has demonstrated that these common meanings for both terms partially indicate, *a posteriori*, the multifarious reality that is the spatiality proper to God and/or to human beings. Furthermore, Barth's analogy of language is instructive. Human language cannot capture the reality of God's being. In the act of revelation God encounters us in person, in Word and Spirit, sharing not just knowledge about Himself, but giving Himself to us to be known by us. He affirms the covenant

relationship with us, imparting knowledge within that context (and affirming His spatiality). God graciously ‘commandeers’ our human thinking and language to analogically reveal His true being, yet our thoughts and words never become identical to the incomprehensibility and plenitude that is His being. And that is precisely the point. For these reasons, I have not attempted to codify Barth’s language, but have chosen to use ‘space’ and ‘place’ fairly interchangeably.

As noted, revelation speaks directly to the issue of spatiality. Since only God can reveal God, He must do so in such a way that His divinity is not compromised, yet in a form that we, as creatures and sinners, can grasp. In the very act of unveiling Himself, He is nonetheless veiled in creaturely media. This is His dialectical movement in revelation which corresponds to His being. In the indirect identity of God with the form of His revelation, God reveals His true being. There is no hidden God behind the One revealed, nor does He leave ‘part’ of Himself behind. He is wholly, indivisibly present. We cannot grasp His full presence, however, since our understanding only partially corresponds to His being; He is free, sovereign and incomprehensible, and we are creatures and sinners. He truly encounters us in His Word and Spirit, making Himself present to us and turning us to Himself. The divine act of God’s Self-revelation demonstrates His spatiality, the goal of which is covenant fellowship.

God’s own triune being reveals His spatiality, from which all creaturely spatiality derives. Freely positing Himself as Father, Son and Spirit in the primal decision in which He first determined Himself to be our God and then determined us to be His people, He already affirmed the ‘distance’ necessary for ‘togetherness’. The Electing and Elected Son was already leaning toward fulfilling the covenant of grace in His own being, anticipating becoming united with human nature in the actualization of His incarnation in creation. Distinct from all other acts, Jesus Christ is the pure and singular act of God’s Self-revelation. In Him alone can God be known as the covenant Lord, revealing His name which is identical to His will: Immanuel, God with us. The election of the covenant of grace is the beginning of all the ways and works of God, so all God is and does, all God demands of His creation and covenant partners is determined and directed to this goal.

As the One whose being is in His act and *is* His decision, God loves in freedom. He is free to be present in a myriad of ways, all aiming toward the fulfillment of His will, in loving fellowship with us. God’s spatiality does not entail identity or a synthesis with the other. In Jesus Christ’s own being, His divine and human natures are never fused or synthesized into becoming a third thing. Further, in His relationship with us, we do not become divine, but

remain creatures. In covenant relationship with God and others we fulfill our election, being together with God yet at the proper distance for genuine, ordered fellowship.

God's 'inward' 'distance' or distinction is the fellowship of the Father and the Son in the communion of the Spirit. In God there is identity but there is also distinction. God's presence takes form in a variety of differentiated ways. God has, and is, His own space in distinction from all other spaces, often identified as the place of His throne. And yet, since the Son is already the God-man in His divine-human unity, human beings do have a place in God's space. Having eternally united Himself to humanity in Jesus Christ, our place in proximity to God is secure, even though we disrupt the fellowship and distort our spatiality. Because the human does not fuse with or become the divine, the distance is maintained and the spatiality of both is realized. Yet in this distance there is no solitary being, no isolation. God's Self-determination to be a spatial being is, in fact, the basis of the relationship.

God's 'outward' distance, determined in His election of grace, is His turning to His creation in love. He is present in many varied forms, unveiled or veiled, in judgment or mercy, intimately present or apparently distant. While God is particularly present in Israel and the Church in His revealing and reconciling presence, Jesus Christ is God's unique and proper presence. As the Subject and Object of election, He is the meaning of all other places, and His presence and spatiality determines that of all human creatures. He is the one will of God, revealing God's movement toward His creation and His own spatiality, already in His election of grace.

God the Father is present to His human creatures in three ways. First, He is the Creator who has spoken creation into existence as the space and theatre for the historical unfolding of His covenant. By His creative presence the Creator set apart all that was good, making a space suitable to fulfill His will to be with His human creatures. This space is limited, abundant and sanctified, for He is the source of every blessing. Second, the Father is the Lord of the covenant of grace. So completely has the Creator bound Himself to His creature, because it takes place in His own being, that nothing, not even our opposition to God can annul His covenant with us. His eternal presence with us is guaranteed. Third, He is present as the Providential Father. He preserves us as His creatures, He accompanies us on our way in fulfillment of His covenant, and He rules over all creation in the constancy of His gracious presence. God's presence enables a corresponding human response to His own action, coordinating and cooperating creaturely will and activity with His own, in a genuinely free

human response. God is both with us and over us, His presence completely enveloping and protecting us.

The spatiality given to the human creature is a function of the creature's creation in God's image. It is a condition of the creature's readiness to be encountered by God, and, enabled by the Spirit, to obediently and gratefully respond as His faithful creatures and covenant partners. The Sabbath rest God enjoyed together with His human creatures is a foretaste of what He intends in His gracious covenant in Jesus Christ by His Spirit, being personally present with us in all spaces. Responding to Him as Creator, Lord and Father in our vocation as stewards and witnesses of His beneficent provisions we fulfill our election in worship and thanksgiving. In that rightly ordered relationship, actualized and revealed only in the true human, Jesus Christ, we are present with God as fully spatial human creatures.

Creation is the space for the covenant to be fulfilled in Jesus Christ as the salvation history between God and humans. Jesus Christ is creation's ontological ground, the center and determination of its order and purpose. In Him God enters into genuine unity with human beings. The distance between them is maintained for the purpose of true togetherness. Thus, the Creator's space remains distinct even though encompassing creation's space, and even as the Creator Himself enters into created space as a creature. God is free to do this, according to His election of grace. Since this space is created for the covenant history, the entire realm is imbued with the presence of God's grace, determining all creaturely reality. There is no escaping His gracious and sovereign presence. From its origin in God's election of grace, this place is determined for a specific direction and goal, the outworking of God's love and grace for covenant fellowship. Creation does not have its origin, preservation or goal in itself, nor does the creature have an innate divine openness, thus disavowing natural theologies. Creaturely spatiality is actualized only by the Spirit's spatiality or empowering presence, for the sole purpose of covenant fellowship with God and people.

The creature and covenant partner is the object of the Creator's loving, steadfast and ruling presence. There is no place for solitary existence in this space determined for covenant fellowship; only the delight of feasting at the Lord's bountiful table with Him and others in Sabbath rest. The human creature is created to exist solely by the grace of the Creator, to live in His presence, and to respond to God's gracious 'Yes' with its own affirmation. This spatiality, actualized in the 'very good' space of the sanctuary prepared by God for full communion, corresponds to God's own spatiality.

However, human creatures are not content to enjoy this relationship in its divinely determined order, direction and goal. We deny our 'good' spatiality, to be present in free, obedient and grateful humility under the lordship and care of our Creator, Lord and Father. Choosing, instead, to isolate ourselves from God and others, we attempt to live a-spatially. We try to escape God's graciously determined space for us by becoming our own lord in an independent space. Attempting to take His place, we judge ourselves to be in the right, thus falling under God's accusation, judgment and wrath. Encountered by God whom we attempt to abandon, He will not let His creatures abandon themselves to chaos, darkness and nothingness, nor His partners to abandon the covenant of spatial fellowship. So He takes our fleshly place to do there what we have not, to respond to His gracious spatiality in our own humble spatiality.

In Jesus Christ, God has determined the salvation of the world. The goal of the Son's election is found in this determination for the covenant of grace. Salvation means to participate in God's life; not to become divinized but to be present with God, united to Christ in righteous and ordered relationship. Jesus Christ fully exercises His spatiality, both with God and with human beings. The event of justification has three aspects: first, the incarnation actualizes and reveals God's own place as the Justifier; second, Jesus Christ's death actualizes and reveals the fallen creature's unjustified place that is under divine judgment; and third, His resurrection actualizes and reveals the human being's new justified place.

Jesus Christ is the Son of God as the Son of Man. He comes to the place where we dwell, far from His Father's home. He descends into the limitations of creaturely existence and inhabits our place, the place of sin and rebellion against God. His twofold humiliation in created space reveals an ontic correspondence in His own place with the Father. Since God is the content of His Self-revelation, His being in His own space is materially identical to His revealed being in ours. He is the humble, obedient Son, even, and thus originally, in the Father's space. Otherwise a change in God's being would occur at the incarnation, thus rendering an unknown God who is hidden in His own space, disconnected from the Son revealed in ours, and jeopardizing our salvation. Instead, by His Self-determined reality freely chosen in the eternal election, He can be present in humility. So also, the spatiality God exercises and reveals in becoming human, and more, in becoming sinful flesh, is inconceivably proper to Him because He was elected for this event in this place. This singular and particular place of condescension is the secret of His divinity. The Lord is present in lowly servant form.

Because the Son's free obedience to the Father's will involves His presence in the place of human fallenness, the Son's incarnation is actualized as suffering. His movement to our place reveals its utter corruption, and also the enormity of His humiliation, characteristic of His spatiality. Passionate to justify us, He removes all obstacles hindering our proximity with God. This alien, far place to which God's Word condescendingly journeys is the place of 'flesh'. There, God's own creatures brazenly rebel against Him as their Creator and categorically oppose the eternal will of their Covenant Lord. Being present in this evil and sinful place, assuming there all that is rightfully ours under God's judgment, He reveals Himself as God. However, in taking our sinful place by assuming our flesh into unity with His divine nature He does not sin, and death gains no ultimate control over Him. The Son's perfect spatiality is demonstrated most vividly in the ultimate place of humiliation. Revealing both the ordered relationship between the superior Father and the subordinate Son, and thus the humility and obedience proper to the spatiality of God's children. Freely He takes His place as suffering servant, in overflowing love for His Father and us, to fulfill the covenant of His gracious presence with us and ours with Him. His obedience to the Father's will for spatial fellowship is our atonement.

He judges our unjustified place for we attempted to usurp His place, becoming our own creator and lord, judging between good and evil, and isolating ourselves from Him and all others. We attempted to be a-spatial. He, the true Judge reclaims His rightful place. But there, He bears the consequences of our false judgment and pride. He lets Himself be judged in our place. Taking our place, He destroyed it and put the occupant to death. There in our place, the Judge is judged for us. In dying passionately for us, He puts us in a new place of life. His passion is our judgment that He bears in our place. Having accomplished our atonement in our place, His sacrifice is accepted by God as our justice. He is the Judge, the judged, the judgment and the justice in our place. His spatiality has the character of passionate love. He is present as the One who will take our place to die in it to give us His life.

His passion was death in God-abandonment, the cry of dereliction that expresses the reality of our old sinful place, the self-imposed isolation in contradiction to our created goodness and election as God's covenant partners. Abandoning Himself to His Father's care, nevertheless, He felt the full force of God-abandonment, distance without proximity. He bore the brunt of God's 'No' to our sinful place, but that is not His last word.

God's movement in the atonement continues with His 'Yes', His creation of our new justified place. The Father's verdict is pronounced in raising Jesus Christ from the dead to

new life. He first justifies Himself as the Creator who recreates a good creaturely space, ordered, illumined and suited for life in proximity with God. He also justifies the sinner, placing her in drawing the sinner once more into the proximity of His own being. The Judge neither ignores the place of sin nor the sinner; He destroys them. He puts them to death. He thereby justifies His election of the covenant of grace, His own Self-determined space that He shares in proximity with the creature. The Father executes His judgment against His own Son, elected and Self-elected to occupy this place of wrath, to reestablishing covenant fellowship. Thus, the new justified place is revealed in the Son's resurrection. His covenant partners are given their new justified and exalted place as children of God.

The Crucified and Risen returns home to His Father's place, the exalted Son of Man. He returns to His own place, having completed the exchange: taking our place of humiliation, He gives us His own exalted place, in the Father's presence. In the movement, first, from the Father's place to our place of death and then, raised to return to new life in proximity to the Father, the Son fulfills the gracious covenant. By His particular existence, Jesus Christ eternally unites God and human beings in His own being. Taking flesh to Himself, He reveals His unique spatiality; two natures held in the proximity of His being and at the proper distance between divinity and humanity. He reveals the free and sovereign love of God toward His elect covenant partners who are no longer isolated in their abandonment of God because of the atonement accomplished in Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ's resurrection is the commencement of the new creation by the Spirit's power and presence. All creation is given His place of reconciled participation in God's eternal life. Although what is already complete in Jesus Christ is not yet fulfilled in our in-between place, creation has been freed by God's Spirit to move toward its fulfillment. That many human creatures do not acknowledge or conform to this determination and movement is due not to any lack or defect in Jesus Christ's accomplished reconciliation, but to their persistence in their old sinful place and to the hiddenness of the atoning event.

Who and what the Son is in His work are made present to and take effect in creation through the revelatory presence of His Spirit. In revelation, the Spirit not only speaks to us the Word that is Jesus Christ in His reconciliation, but He also receives that Word in us, enabling us to hear and respond to Jesus Christ. In that divine act which also empowers our own responsive human act, our reconciliation with God accomplished in Jesus Christ, is being effected in us. In proximity to but distinct from us, the Spirit's spatiality effects our proximity to and fellowship with God, thus redeeming our own spatiality. By the Spirit's empowering

presence, we are moving from our origin in Jesus Christ's accomplished reconciliation and its partial revelation in His resurrection, toward our completion and the universal revelation of that reconciliation in His final return. The Spirit's presence is the enactment of Christ's promise that the place of consummation will actually be reached.

Within the general in-between place of this new creation, Jesus Christ's reconciling presence is in and among people who are gathered, built up and sent in the Spirit's presence. This place of fellowship between God and people is the Church. It is the earthly-historical form of Jesus Christ's body that corresponds to His earthly-heavenly form in the Father's space. By the Spirit's presence, people are awakened to faith and knowledge of Jesus Christ and His finished work of justification. Gathered into this new place, they are empowered to live as justified people in correspondence to Jesus Christ. Where this takes place, the community becomes the provisional representation of the justification of the whole world in Jesus Christ. The Spirit's mediating presence unites the Head in heaven with His body on earth. In this communion of the Spirit, Jesus Christ is truly present to those gathered. This is the secret reality of the church's visible existence. As event, the Church *is*, wherever the Spirit's divine action and corresponding human action enabled by the Spirit take place. The Church can only *be*, where it is empowered by the Spirit to hear God's Word and follow its Head to its eschatological goal, in obedience to the Father's will. Where it no longer continues from its place of commencement to its place of consummation, it is not the Church. By the uniting and empowering presence of the Spirit, the Church is one, holy, catholic and apostolic.

The quickening presence of the Spirit builds up the community, empowering it to respond in love to the direction given by Jesus Christ to those who are being sanctified. Responding in loving obedience and gratitude, truly, if provisionally, being present to God and to people, it also demonstrates the promised goal of its movement for full spatial fellowship as determined by the One who has already gone this way. As the place of Christ's sanctifying presence, the community becomes the provisional representation of the sanctification of the entire world in Jesus Christ by the Spirit's presence working among and in it. The uniting presence of the Spirit integrates the community of disparate individuals into a loving 'communion of saints', most fully achieved in worship. This holy fellowship, where God is present with His people and they are present with Him, reveals the spatiality of the Spirit who enables God's people to be fully spatial as well. In the Spirit's presence, Jesus Christ is transcendentally present to His body from heaven, giving vital growth and life as the

first to be raised from death to eternal life in the Father's presence. He is also immanently present within the community as the life-giving power of the Spirit. Both forms of His presence in the Spirit are proper to Jesus Christ.

The Spirit is also the enlightening presence of the community by which the community is sent into the world to proclaim the reconciliation of the world with God in Jesus Christ. The community is the provisional representation of God's calling of all of creation, attesting that creation's purpose and goal is God's covenant of grace in Jesus Christ, so also its present hope. By His presence in the community and in the world, the Spirit unites His people with those in the world as they participate in Jesus Christ's prophetic work. Called out of the world in order to be called into it, the community stands in solidarity with the world by the Spirit. It confesses Jesus Christ, attesting the reality that its old place has been destroyed in His death, its final place is revealed in His resurrection, and its present place is the movement from one to the other in faith, love and hope in the Spirit's presence.

The consummation of all things by the powerful presence of the Spirit includes the universal and definitive revelation of Jesus Christ in His final Easter presence. By His life-giving presence the Spirit will raise the dead. As the effective presence of God's judgment against evil, darkness, chaos and death, He will remove all opposition to God's eternal covenant of grace. He will establish the Kingdom of God where peace will reign on earth. All enmity will be set aside as He unites His people with God in the communion of His presence. The goodness of creation will be restored as the space for the eternal covenant between God and humans. With the completion of the covenant God's work in the in-between place and its time will end. God's children will come home to live in the Father's home. God's honor will be magnified in the passionate adoration, praise and worship of the whole creation. God enters Sabbath rest, enjoying the perfect communion of His children. All this will take place in the powerful presence of the Holy Spirit who will effect God's perfect reconciliation between God and His covenant people as it took place in Jesus Christ. As the loving and free communion between God and human beings, the Spirit will effect the perfect spatiality of His people in correspondence to God's own spatiality. The elect will see Jesus Christ face to face, bound to His bodily presence by the communion of the Spirit. In Christ, the Spirit will enable the children of God to live eternally in proximity at a distance with the Father.

Elected in God's primal decision, fulfilled in Jesus Christ, made effective and consummated by the Holy Spirit, the covenant of grace reveals God's true spatiality, so also our own. God has determined Himself to be spatial, to live in intimate fellowship with us.

And He determined our spatiality to correspond to His own. Such togetherness with the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit in the distinction of Creator to creature, Covenant Lord to covenant partner, Parent to child, God to human and Head to body, reveals the spatiality proper to God and to us: He is Immanuel, God is graciously present with us and we may be obediently and gratefully present with God.

“For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And you are complete in Him.”

Colossians 2:12

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