

## RAMONA SIMUṬ

### CREATION AND SALVATION IN EDWARD SCHILLEBEECKX. WELL-BEING AS MORE ABOUT JESUS' DEATH AND LESS ABOUT RESURRECTION

**Ramona SimuṬ**

University of Pretoria, Faculty of Theology, Pretoria, South Africa.

**Email:** r.simut@gmail.com

**Abstract:** This paper is not merely an attempt to come to terms with Edward Schillebeeckx's theology and his philosophical mindset. Such attempts have already been made years back, when his ties with phenomenology, and also with postmodern hermeneutics and culture were pivotal for us in order to better understand his influence on mid-20th century Continental philosophy. This present study partially remains on those premises, but also brings Schillebeeckx's thought closer to the 21st century, since nowadays concepts like salvation and resurrection tend to embed particular meanings, such as well-being and ancestrality, which until recently were considered halfway synonyms of the previous images, and thus were looked upon with less persuasion. This study follows their interchangeable use in Schillebeeckx's doctrine of creation, where the purpose of the Christian creedal formula is to appease in a tribal sense, rather than to function as a confession of faith. On the other hand, Schillebeeckx's take on the resurrection as a means to reconnect humanity to its ancestral faith will further be inspected as the starting point of his rehabilitated anthropology or the humanum. The initial discussion on the relationship between God and Jesus in the history of salvation finalized with Jesus' death receives a new turn in Schillebeeckx's thought when in this same context he talks about the resurrection. Jesus' status after the resurrection is analyzed here considering the tribal flavors it receives in Schillebeeckx's work with an accent on its outcome for the new humanity and its well-being.

**Key Words:** Schillebeeckx, creation, well-being, death, resurrection, salvation, ancestral faith, communion with God, philosophical mindset.

## 1. Introduction

As it is clearly noticeable in the first chapter of his *Jesus in Our Western Culture*, Schillebeeckx organizes in a special manner the basis of his future discussions about the relationship between the work of God and the ministry of Jesus as the Christ.<sup>1</sup> References to God's work and the ministry of Jesus in creation contain the idea of a rupture or disconnection between the two works. First of all, Schillebeeckx infers that at the heart of God's work is something "completely new" which was accomplished in nature through creation. Secondly, the purpose of Jesus' ministry is established as the healing and the realization of a "new creation". Schillebeeckx vastly wrote on this concept especially in his 1977 book *Christ. The Christian Experience*, where he related it to the idea of suffering for others as a humble act of humanism which ensures the future of humanity (C. Simuț 2010, 82; Schillebeeckx 2014a). It was meant to secure the proper realization or proper image of the created order. Schillebeeckx concludes that, though humble and obedient to God, the objective of Jesus' ministry to bring to perfection something that was created perfect already was "set against the background of the faith in God as Creator of heaven and earth" (Schillebeeckx 2014b, 121). For Schillebeeckx this is a means to stress the need to be specific about the belief in Jesus Christ on which every Christian creed stands.

This study will align Schillebeeckx's arguments on the resurrection with the traditional dogma which states that the Bible's teaching on the end-times competes with Jesus' teaching on the resurrection. This parallel came to our attention especially in connection with Schillebeeckx's idea that the resurrection established some grounds for rebuilding humanity's trust in their ancestral faith in God. These presuppositions about the relationship between resurrection and Schillebeeckx's concept of *humanum* or humanity in its state of well-being will help to further inspect the reliability of Schillebeeckx's ethical system for our present society.

## 2. Christian creeds about creation as ancestral formulas in Schillebeeckx's thought

### 2.1. *The unity between God and Christ in human salvation*

Schillebeeckx makes his way into the wide subject of creation as it springs from the Christian tradition by asserting that its creeds offer the most clear distinction between the work of God and the ministry of Jesus as the salvation of creation. One may find as a great dilemma the fact that Schillebeeckx does not confer the Apostles' Creed the importance it originally had as a "baptismal confession" (P. Schaff 1996, 16). He rather follows

the already familiar motive of creation as a mythical and universal story, a design already used as a hermeneutical motive in nowadays “provincial” African theologies (J. Gathogo 2015, 1-8). The main contrast though between these “small scale” theologies and Schillebeeckx’s attempt is that the latter is not interested in the ritualistic and barbaric sort of reconnecting and reconstructing man-God relationships. Schillebeeckx’s point of view is that the nature of God is best illustrated in the act of creation as disclosure of God’s infinite love towards humanity. The love of God makes creation perfect, and the created order is in Schillebeeckx’s words “a motion of trust in humanity and our history..., a blank cheque to which only God himself stands guarantor” (Schillebeeckx 1987, 18). It should be stated, however (McManus 1999, 476-491) that this blank cheque by which God entrusts humanity with the administration of the created order was never related to reason in Schillebeeckx, but to suffering.

Although this is an extensive attempt to reconnect creation back to its Creator, the line Schillebeeckx follows here is considered by many Church historians inappropriate as a means to explain the reasons for the appearance and development of the Christian creeds (Schaff 1996: 16). The creeds were first meant as the confession of a new church regarding doctrinal truths. The latter functions of the creeds for the church life preserved these characteristics. They were not a “word of gods to men, but a word of men to God, in response to his revelation” (Schaff 1996, 16) that is, in response to the sending of the Son for the remission of sins. Moreover, it is thought that in its first shape the Apostolic creed was simpler than his present form which bears the marks of the passage of time and many ecclesiastical controversies.

On the other hand, the reason for the existence of creeds was to secure the “rules of faith” both in Western and Eastern churches. If they were to explain the stress on God as Creator of heaven and earth, the theologians in the first centuries would infer that the churches needed to defend the Christian faith against Gnostic philosophy. The latter is well known for developing the concept of a sole God (*pleroma*, or the whole spiritual world) and a distinct concept of the Demiurge (creative power from which the material bodies emerge). The accent on “fulness”, which *pleroma* would involve with reference to the totality of spiritual bodies and powers, is much diluted in Schillebeeckx, who seems to be more interested in the capacity of a divine power to disclose or to empty itself in creation, as the Greek understanding of the Demiurge would suggest, thus making the *pleroma*/fulness a perfect counterpart of the *kenoma*/emptiness (J. B. Lounibos 2000, 49).

Therefore, the church’s stress on the “only” God, which also created the heaven and earth was not thought exclusively as a doctrinal teaching regarding the relationship between God and the created order or between the only God and Jesus as a possible Demiurge. On the contrary, the phrase was meant to secure the proper understanding of the essence and the

work of God as being consistent with each other while understandably supporting the Christian doctrine of Trinity (Schaff 1996, 21). A more detailed doctrinal teaching concerning the relationship between God and Jesus Christ was the subject of later creeds in their own philosophical and theological contexts. Apparently no creed insisted on the inner goodness of human beings capable to change the world radically on the model offered by Jesus. Christian churches were more concerned with the truth of their teachings, which specified the profound decadence of creation and the constant need for the salvation of the soul. Thus, given the repetitive character of the creeds, the work of God and the ministry of Jesus were rather a continual process of saving people from sin and death than an aspect of human salvation.

## 2.2. God and salvation through Jesus

Schillebeeckx' s interpretation of the opening line of the Christian creeds is in itself an opportunity to describe not only the relationship between God the Creator and Jesus Christ, but also through him the relationship between God and men or the "vulnerable" (Schillebeeckx 1987, 18). The point Schillebeeckx is making here is that free access to God is mediated in love through Jesus's life. Thus the outcome is that this extraordinary and "liberating" love "fulfills and transcends all human, personal, social, and political expectations" (Schillebeeckx 1987, 18). Nevertheless, God's relation to man comes as a consequence, due to the character of the freedom it releases. The guarantee of human freedom is the liberating love of God, because God is the only guarantor to his creation. Man, in this context, is best understood in relation with the created order, however also in his separation from all the other creatures through faith. Creation is "a vote of confidence which gives the person who believes in the Creator God the courage to believe in word and deed that the kingdom of God, *i.e.* truly human salvation, well-being and happiness, despite many experiences of disaster, is in fact in the making for humanity, in the power of God's creation which summons men and women to realize it" (Schillebeeckx 1987, 18).

For Schillebeeckx human faithfulness in God involves a motion of trust in the everlasting of nature or the created order. This is firstly because the creation is resistant to disaster and, secondly, because creation is the milieu of the kingdom of God. On the one hand, it is a theological paradigm to see that in Schillebeeckx what humanity accomplished through the God-man mutual work in the Sinai experience affects the concept of salvation; on the other hand, the present status of creation being resistant to disaster is a "change" in the said paradigm, as it stresses the cosmic dependency on the natural order. Schillebeeckx expands this idea to cover the power of sacraments to influence the Universe in favor of all humanity (Galeano 2011, 235-268). Schillebeeckx states that the

kingdom of God is a pledge or a warrant for human society, known as the “society of God” (Schillebeeckx 1987, 19). As the realm of the kingdom of God, our present society benefits of the best model to secure its well-being. Schillebeeckx infers that the most appropriate way for men and women to reach their perfect happiness lies first in the reconstruction of the *humanum*, the genuine ethical human life. Secondly, human society will truly be the kingdom of God only after the reconstruction of its ecological milieu, which preserves its well-being. Schillebeeckx asserts that the Kingdom of God is best illustrated in history in the career of Jesus of Nazareth, and God’s love is best disclosed in Jesus’ life. Jesus’ life was a portrait of how the kingdom of God should look like, precisely because he was the prophet of the kingdom and his message unfold God’s words of love and salvation spoken to humanity. Moreover, Jesus did not bring a message by being simply the voice of God. He was the kind of prophet who “matched” (Schillebeeckx 1987, 19) his message because he brought about the kingdom to the “lost and vulnerable” in God’s place and at his will. Thus Jesus’ career is seen from three major perspectives: his life, his death by crucifixion, his resurrection witnessed by the apostles, and the eschatological future.

### 2.3. *The death of Jesus and the beginning of (well-)being*

For Schillebeeckx, the death of Jesus influenced both humanity and divinity. This is because, as Schillebeeckx prefers to call Jesus throughout his *Christ* book, he was the “parable of God” and the “paradigm of man”. In his death humanity redefined as “men and women” is getting prepared for the realization of God’s kingdom:

The redefinition of both God and humanity that Jesus gave in and through his proclamation and way of behaving takes on its supreme and ultimate significance in his crucifixion: God is even present in human life where to human eyes he is absent... Here (in the cross) ultimately and definitively is revealed the humanity of God, the heart of Jesus’ message of the Kingdom of God. (Schillebeeckx 1987, 24-25)

Schillebeeckx speaks of the death of Jesus as the first logical and necessary step toward the realization of the Kingdom of God – which he equals with humanity’s state of well-being – after the consummation of his social life and ministry. On the one hand, Schillebeeckx says, his death came as a result of his everyday challenge of political order. It was the ultimate sign of people’s rejection towards him. The episode of his death was enclosed in the Old Testament’s prophecy about his redemptive death and the Kingdom of God which was to be settled in power, “despite human

rejection” (Schillebeeckx 1987, 23). The purpose of relating the death of Jesus to the biblical prophecy on Jesus’ career, life and message is to secure its real significance for the whole Christian tradition rooted in history. The Messiah title ascribed to Jesus is itself grounded in the historical reality of his humble and martyrical death by crucifixion. Consequently, its nature is genuine and is a prerogative against the mythical interpretation of Jesus’ death.

At this point, some of Schillebeeckx’s critics notice a change of tone in his depiction of death. While implying that Jesus’ death by crucifixion is the strongest evidence of death realism, thus his death cannot be viewed as mythical, Schillebeeckx is not concerned with the possibility that the cross could be viewed as merely symbolic: on the contrary, his whole discussion about Jesus’ death takes place in this context of symbolism or representation. As the symbolic nature of the cross permeates all talk about the reality of salvation, it was sensed that a certain tension appeared in this respect because of what this infers (McManus 2005, 638-650). Schillebeeckx mentions that Jesus’ message and actions are surprising insofar they rearrange human ideas, concepts and terms according to their real significance. This would mean that they are a vector according to which men and women today may establish their life’s proper target, thus Jesus’ death goes way beyond a mere ethical example, and deals with human essence/existence. For instance, despite people’s expectation that God would save his son from death with great power, God acted in accordance with his word and disclosed the greatness of his Kingdom in the simplicity of Jesus’ death: “Jesus points out that salvation can also be achieved in suffering and resistance can be offered in an unjust execution... I therefore no longer see a place for the classical distinction between “God in himself” and “God for us” (Schillebeeckx 1987, 24).

It is interesting that Schillebeeckx changes the modern perspective on the significance of Jesus’ death, which stands as a major turning point in human history as far as human perspective on life and language are concerned. Precisely as Jesus identified true human beings with the image of a little child, he identified the advancement of the Kingdom of God with the growing of a mustard seed. Though the concepts Jesus used were impressive due to the contrast involved, they were still comparative and figurative and in no way confirmed a possible identification between God’s being and human being. Schillebeeckx’s motion from figurative to concrete is idle as it happens in a blink of an eye, see the quote above. When Schillebeeckx’s thought is divided according to his works written as a Jesuit in the first years of his theological formation and as a Dominican in his later years, one may see a difference in accent and method: as a Jesuit he stood close to the Catholic dogma, whereas as a Dominican he exerted a pro-active dialogue with the outer Church or modernity (Young 2009, 116-119). This particular work belongs to his latter affiliation and reflects his

strive to redefine in a contemporary note the concept of death and salvation previously dealt with in the Creeds.

In the way Jesus spoke there was a break between the language used in parables and his direct/non-figurative talk. When he referred to his death he was done talking in figurative terms. It was his death that confirmed the need for the above mentioned distinction between ontology and economy (*i.e.*, between God in himself and the emulation of godhood in the created order/history). Schillebeeckx is among a number of theologians writing in the aftermath of the Second Vatican Council who promote this new perspective on theology as diffused in human history and life. It seems that at this point Schillebeeckx comes close to a natural take on his theological quest, precisely because of its material nature. In trying to connect ontology and economy through this perspective on Jesus' death, Schillebeeckx and also Küng reiterate De Lubac's perception on humanity as the "image of God" (De Lubac 1988, 340). De Lubac presents his reflections about what the image of God is both as a social paradigm because of its relational functions: "That image of God, the image of the Word, which the incarnate Word restores and gives back to its glory, is 'I myself'; it is also the other, every other" (about the social image of God in Küng, Schillebeeckx, Von Balthasar, and Gutiérrez, see Sullins and Blasi 2009, 4-11). The novelty added by Schillebeeckx is that such image is reversible, meaning that a God representing the human image could also be conceived. Notice, however, that Schillebeeckx denies Feuerbach's idea that God is a human projection. This is because, as Van A. Harvey explains (1995, 32), although Feuerbach rarely used the term *Projektion* in German (which was afterwards rendered in the English translation as "projection", with all its technical difficulties), but rather a complex blend of concepts amassed in the expression *vergegenständlichen* (which means "to objectify", leading to the idea of "alienation"), he still employed a sum of "human predicates" about God, thus the idea of separation between God and creation, of alienation is suffocating in Feuerbach as is the case with Hegel's followers. It is more likely to think that Schillebeeckx's many lines on human suffering confront us with the portrait of a God who, in his sympathy towards people, almost gave up his divine nature in order to best disclose his love and compassion towards humanity. Schillebeeckx remarks that "God...identifies himself by preference with the unholy (and the identification is radical)" (Schillebeeckx 1987, 24). This conclusion also raises the question as to how much are the Christians ready to talk about the God of Scriptures from metaphysical and anthropological grounds. It thus tackles the issue of Jesus' resurrection.

### 3. The resurrection of Jesus as a means to reconnect with the ancestral faith

The resurrection of Jesus is the second most controversial aspect in Schillebeeckx's work after the doctrine of the Trinity, where human redemption is at stake. For Schillebeeckx the resurrection raises many questions because of the way the post-Easter events are lined up. Seeing how Schillebeeckx arranges his ideas, it seems that the resurrection has rather a spiritual rather than historical nature. Since it can be stated that in Schillebeeckx's later works salvation happened "despite the death of Jesus", then Jesus' resurrection is as far from a historical event as it can be. Thus, Schillebeeckx idea of salvation through suffering and his eschatological views are embedded in a theology with mnemotechnic and empirical functions. For the diverse meanings attributed to the death of Jesus through the Christian tradition and its misuses detected in Schillebeeckx's later works (Mosely 2008).

Schillebeeckx infers that the only aspect related to Jesus' personality which has been preserved after his crucifixion was the recollection/consciousness of him. It was in his remembrance that God decided to act for the last time within human history in an eschatological manner. God has finally proved to the world that the evaluation of Jesus' entire life, work, and death was complete and that his career matched perfectly the Messiah portrait of the Hebrew prophecies. Thus, after the Easter events, Schillebeeckx implies, faith in Jesus meant that one identified with the irresistible experience with God made possible by one's relationship with Jesus in his earthly life. It could be said that the important achievement of the Easter events is not so much the resurrection itself, but the inner faith in Jesus as the Christ ensuing the Easter event:

Only a new action by God can connect Jesus' historical life, over the break of his death, with the "Christ of faith", with the confession "he is truly risen"... In the resurrection from the dead God's own judgement on, and also his relationship to, Jesus and his message... become clear to the believer. (Schillebeeckx 1985, 33)

Thus from the event of Jesus' death on, men and women were confronted with the alternative to his death: the resurrection. The striking thing that Schillebeeckx makes clear at this point is how it was not the person of Jesus that had to be resurrected, but peoples' faith in him, insofar as he was the only one that has been found perfect by God. In other words, the need for resurrection was a priority because it kept Christian hope vigilant. Faith in the resurrection is strongly connected with the eschatological hope of Christian believers. Consequently the evaluation or

judgement of Jesus' life and ministry was the only eschatological act in the course of human history and for the sake of Christian faith.

It could be stated at this particular point that Schillebeeckx did not detach from the existential view on Jesus as the man of God who lives in our souls due to the great significance of his life. An important observation in addition to this would be that what the resurrection brought into the disciples' lives was just another experience of faith in Jesus: "Through and in this Christian belief in the resurrection of Jesus the crucified but risen Jesus remains at work in our history" (Schillebeeckx 1987, 26). In other words, Schillebeeckx maintains that the church is built on the foundation of Jesus' resurrection. This is as encouraging as the fact that Schillebeeckx relates resurrection to the three aspects of Jesus' earthly existence. The three aspects form the core of the Christian faith in Jesus as Christ. First of all, the whole of Jesus' existence until his death was a sign for the disciples that Jesus was the messenger of the Kingdom of God. Secondly, even when he was ready to die on the cross, Jesus expressed a strong communion with God. Through this communion he entered into the "eternal life" of the divine grace, where death cannot reach. Thirdly, this is an important proclamation of the Christian creeds, namely that right after his death Jesus was glorified to God. On this belief, the foundation of God's Kingdom has been settled on earth.

These three aspects are also the object of a strong Catholic faith in Jesus' resurrection. As one can clearly notice when Catholic narratives about creation and the communion with God as a resting day are put together, traditional Catholic beliefs about the end-times go hand in hand with beliefs about primordial times, when creation first came into existence. That is, Jesus's resurrection is thought of in these physical terms, and it is far from a "resuscitation..., a fiction, or merely spiritual" act (Buckley et al. 2011, 372-374). After Albert Schweitzer's 1906 critique of the historical method (1910, esp. the first three chapters), Schillebeeckx and other scholars' renewed attempt to deconstruct Christology in the 1970s-1990s is understood as a sequel of Bultmann's second quest for the historicity of Jesus and the Gospel in his *Jesus and the World* (Bultmann 1934) and also an apology of humanity in the context of new "liberation" theologies. This third attempt speaks for the need to reinvigorate theological discourse as to permeate the nowadays political spectrum. Its representatives borrow the early Church fathers Irenaeus and Athanasius' concept of *humanum* (living within human history and attaining the perfect human state), which involves the swing between deification and humanization. This concept is further debated on by Schillebeeckx, Küng, Rahner, and Casanova (see Küng 1976; Küng in A. Mong 2010, 23-41; Casanova 1992, 22), and liberation theologians such as Gustavo Gutierrez (1988), Harvey J. Sindima (2008), John Cavadini (quoted in Paffenroth and Kennedy 2003), who write extensively on the re-historicization of the

Church by bringing it down to the people in order to reinstate their “political holiness” (Sison 2006, 199).

Therefore, while the Catholic faith in the resurrection of Jesus gives full credit to the Gospel’s testimony about the post-Easter appearances of Jesus alive to his disciples, Schillebeeckx approaches this information differently. He claims that there is a break between the appearances of Jesus after his death and the faith in Jesus’ resurrection. The church in itself is a living testimony of the real presence of Jesus who was crucified but now is confessed by the church as being alive. In the same way, the church authenticates Jesus’ message about God and his Kingdom as true due to the power that God disclosed in the act of Jesus’ resurrection. Finally, Jesus’ resurrection in itself is connected directly with the role of Jesus as proclaimer of the Kingdom of God; it is eschatological. In Schillebeeckx the resurrection is but a shred of the vast history of creation, and for this particular reason we are looking into his doctrine of the resurrection in the context of the creation creeds. Schillebeeckx often times refers to the faith in resurrection, but not to the reality of the resurrection, as one would expect him to. Schillebeeckx’s phenomenology surpasses any talk about supernatural activity precisely because creation is repetitive with every new human being, while the *noumenal* world is otherwise unchangeable without its human counterpart (Kennedy 1993, 135).

Faith in the resurrection, on the other hand, is described more appropriately in soteriological terms. Or, in Schillebeeckx, in his many types of soteriology. The faith that Schillebeeckx stresses is more concerned with the suffering of the oppressed and “dehumanized” people of the Third World, and we referred many times in this study to the idea of suffering as presented in Schillebeeckx’s thought. The proclamation of this faith to the poor and the oppressed, Schillebeeckx thinks, is Jesus’ intended outcome for his entire career and death, and has a greater significance than the attempts of defining God for nowadays Western society. For Schillebeeckx, the difference between the proclamation of the resurrection and the faith in the resurrection amounts to the difference between a social situation and political involvement:

In the church community “assembled” in faith is present the crucified but risen Jesus... In the West we address modern secularized men and women in order to make this faith in Jesus Christ acceptable; theologians in the Third World address dehumanized people, non-persons, who ask how one can believe in a good, liberating God in a world of suffering and oppression. I think that this last approach is closer to Jesus’ concern than the first. (Schillebeeckx 1987, 28)

Schillebeeckx's practically infers that the ethical message in Jesus' career has great implications in the Christian faith in resurrection. But Jesus' ethical message was not only socially orientated, he adds; it was strongly ecological, too, and it appears that soteriology, politics, and aesthetics are interconnected in Schillebeeckx' mind. As already shown, Jesus addressed his message from a social and supernatural perspective when it had to do with men and women. He was the Messiah who was to bring about peace and freedom in human history. This part of Jesus' message is thus ontological and it envisages human sin and rehabilitation. Schillebeeckx, however, emphasizes that Jesus was greatly concerned with men exploitation by men, which sometimes turns into slavery. Jesus' concern for making people equal is thus the other face of the *humanum* or the new man in a new society, *i.e.*, the Kingdom of God, a state where the well-being of men and women is secured. A "socialist" model of the *humanum* which Schillebeeckx equals with the Kingdom of God is offered here as alternative to the hierarchic/"high" church or the sacramental model of the church, considered as coercitive and anti-ecumenical. Notice that Schillebeeckx came up with this model in a leftist political Europe, proposing an ecclesiology more consonant with the social frame of mind (see Thompson 1998, 33). It appears that for Schillebeeckx this kingdom which is from above should always be mirrored in the *humanum*, which stands for the the new men and women and their society from below, yet this is another attempt at deconstructing the abstract language about God in order to make it relevant to nowadays political talk. Schillebeeckx is not wrong to assume that the proclamation of the message was the central point of Jesus' earthly career; however, a greater credit is given to the audience to whom the message is addressed, while the sender is inferred. Schillebeeckx makes an optical change and defines the meaning of sin through the lenses of slavery, which in itself is indeed far from a noble act of conduct. His motion leads to fine nuances of the actual intention and scope of Jesus' work summed up in John 17: 19, which was to renew people's status before God rather than before other people.

#### 4. Conclusions

Schillebeeckx's understanding of the relationship between the work of God and the ministry of Jesus has profound influences over such concepts as church and history.

Human faith in God encountered in creation, *i.e.* in history, is first mediated by the definition of creation as the "milieu of the kingdom of God". Secondly, human faith in God encounters the experience of Jesus Christ as salvation from suffering. The example of Jesus' earthly life is the pattern of all future human action on behalf of social and political justice. However, the salvation offered by God through Jesus is not politically

grounded; on the contrary, it is rooted in God's being the "totally other". The outcome of Jesus' historicity for today's men and women is the realization of the *humanum* or the perfect human existence/state. Thus the performing of miracles, Jesus' teaching and his parables were meant to change human perspective on the significance of man as "the image of God".

The outcome of Jesus' death was on the one hand the redemption of our sinful humanity. On the other hand, it was a declaration by which Jesus' humanity resists mythical interpretations that fail to pay heed at the importance of history in defining Christology. The outcome of Jesus' resurrection was the foundation of the church and the raise of the Christian faith in Jesus from Nazareth. Nevertheless, Schillebeeckx stresses the fact that Jesus' communion with God is the most important aspect of the resurrection as an event that made possible our free access to God as "eternal life" in his kingdom. Even though he was crucified, Jesus was exalted and glorified at the right hand of the Father. Thus his resurrection and exaltation secure our eschatological hope, which nevertheless is practical in purpose as it is a promise for the liberation of people from de-humanization, and not necessarily a promise that mankind would be rehabilitated before God.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> *Acknowledgements*: This paper is part of a two-year postdoctoral research program (2015-2017) at the Faculty of Theology, the Department of Practical Theology within the University of Pretoria, South Africa, under the supervision of Professor Johann Meylahn.

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