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INTRODUCTION

This paper is an attempt to refine the theological insights of the author. It is an attempt to set the theological perspectives so that a ready address to practice can be made; for it is the author's conviction that theology is not merely a set of ideas but a way of life. The first part of the paper is devoted to an elucidation of the meaning of faith. The second and third parts attempt to relate the content of faith to practice by an application of the principles of faith to real life situations: the second part seeks to clarify the role of faith in the world as the church faces ethical dilemmas, and diverse cultures, values, and perspectives; the third part deals with the concrete functions of the community of faith as it seeks to carry out its commitment in the world.

PROLEGOMENA

BOUNDARY REMARKS

Faith is the relationship between God and the self; a relationship which can be described partially in propositions. Although we may be made aware of the main characteristics of God (such as love), not every aspect of God's character is etched out for us in detail; just as our knowledge of a person cannot be stated explicitly in propositions. However, the "personality" of God overwhelms us if we exist in relationship to him. In this sense, we know the essence or heart of God; or as some have put it, we know God in God's self because God's own person is being given to us in this relationship. This self-disclosure of God is far removed from a purely intellectual knowledge of propositions; it is a living encounter which touches every fiber of our being.

When we say that the faith relationship can be described propositionally, we mean that we draw out of our experiences inferences and implications that are consistent with, and corollaries of, the character that has been revealed to us. This process of "drawing out" is what we term the theological enterprise.

However, a few cautionary remarks are in order. Firstly, our experience of God, in revelation and as continuing presence, does not occur in a vacuum. We draw upon past experiences, frames of reference, world-views, and various other marks of culture as reflected in our historical setting. We draw upon these aspects of experience when we encounter God's self; for God mediates the revelation of himself to us through the medium of our understanding, without a loss of the essential definition or character of faith. The character of faith is preserved in part by the primary media God uses to communicate himself: Scripture, tradition, and the community of the Word. The reason that God uses these media is that they embody an authentic representation of God's own self.

Secondly, the fact that these media are in part the product of human experience and interpretation

by no means implies that Scripture or tradition is merely the projection of the human psyche upon a divine ground of being; full of life but devoid of content. God is self-conscious and self-consistent. Self-consciousness implies limits and boundaries; a differentiation between self and other. In revelation, the divine self-image is communicated. This self-image or self-definition is the content of revelation. The self-defining character of God's revelation is not relative or modalistic, adapting itself to various human perspectives, but it remains everywhere consistent to God's own nature. Thus revelation is experienced as a claim upon our lives, for it undermines human speculation about the divine nature as the truth of God's own understanding is impressed upon our minds and hearts.

However, since human beings are finite and limited in understanding, we cannot take in the whole of God's truth. Therefore we must establish a means of being open to God's leading which will not close us to a more complete and perfect knowledge of the truth. There must be room for growth. And since we are subject to sin, we must account for the reality of self-deception and unintentional error. Because of our own incompleteness we must be open to correction, leaving room for disagreement on matters not essential to the call and conviction of faith.

METHODOLOGY

As we said earlier, we may "draw out" from our experiences of faith implications already present in the encounter with God which are not yet fully refined. However, in the process of drawing out our thoughts, we need a method of testing our hypotheses, inferences, and formulations. This process is called a method. Our "boundary remarks" are a part of the presuppositions of our methodology. They are, in a very real sense, unprovable, but they are expressions of the center of our faith, without which a method cannot proceed. They are our "givens." But before we can begin to analyze the authorities of our faith, which are the media of revelation, a short statement of epistemology is in order:

Reason and experience are involved in every step of our knowledge of God. Experience is the intuited or immediate awareness that arises from participation in life and in God. Reason is the process by which we structure our experience (for example, by finding relationships between the data of experience and by making judgments about the accuracy of these relationships). Said simply, experience is how we know; reason is how we know that we know. Our method seeks to relate our understanding of faith, as formed in experience and reason, to a corresponding reality, as represented by revelation. This process is necessary since every experience requires an interpretation, which may or may not be accurate.

We shall now examine the means through which revelation is communicated: experience, Scripture, and tradition.

EXPERIENCE

There are two types of experience. There is the experience of our physical senses as they interact with the outside world. These normal, everyday experiences are common to everyone. They provide a sense of continuity of ourselves with the world, for our flesh is made up of the same substance which makes up the material universe. In fact, our bodies and the material world are the media of expression of higher realities.

The second type of experience is the experience of trans-dimensional realities, which are communicated to us immediately by God. This realm is the realm of divine disclosure, which unites our spirits with God's Spirit. In this encounter, the Spirit speaks to us with words the unaided flesh cannot hear, though it longs so to do. It is the speech of the angels which sings in whispers to our hearts. It is the joy and evidence of God not available to finite minds or human reason, but which places in our hearts a deeper conviction than intellectual knowledge can give. In this encounter, we go beyond the propositions which attempt to describe this reality, and we participate in the fullness of life--even in the divine nature itself!

In asserting that the second type of experience is categorically different from the first, we do not mean to set up a dualism. But we feel compelled to draw a clear distinction between the sphere of operation of the finite senses and the realm of the spirit, which is not limited to the four dimensions of the material universe. In this sense, our union with God is mystical, for it is not subject to verification through the scientific method, which operates through the senses in the material world.

Yet, because human beings are both "nature and spirit,"¹ we must affirm that everyone has some knowledge or intimations of divine realities, however repressed. Yet, for those who are not united in God, their spirits also being finite, their knowledge of God is not of God in God's self but is an uneasy awareness of the chasm that exists between their spirits and God. Out of this anxiety, all manner of human speculations and projections arise; they arise in order to disguise or deny the separation from God and the susceptibility to a death which threatens both body and spirit.

All that we have said draws attention to our inability to reach God through human striving. But our knowledge of God is not wholly or only mystical. In a very real way, it is communicated to us through the media of the finite world: we must draw upon our experience of earthly things before we can begin to understand divine realities. Everything we have learned since birth, even our whole way of thinking and understanding, is formed in association with this world. And this world is also the object of God's love and concern. Nothing in the world is opposed to God in its created nature. And God uses the physical world to communicate himself. (No better illustration of this truth exists than Jesus Christ, who is the Word Incarnate.) And in that moment when our spirits are united to God, the Word of God is the instrument of our conversion and the medium of communication of the divine self-image. Scripture provides us with the content of revelation. And the propositional truths of God's character are confirmed to our hearts in a coincident union of Word and event: the breathing of the Spirit upon our minds and in our hearts convicts us that this is the truth of God and not simply some human speculation. This conviction is not available to us through a study of Scripture by the power of reason alone, but is

dependent upon the divine initiative in coming to us.

So our union with God is not world denying, but world affirming. And we may only stand in awe and wonder that God condescends to use the humble and inadequate human utterances as the very medium of the divine disclosure.

SCRIPTURE

How can God use Scripture in this way? Precisely because it is not merely human projection, but the record of divine self-disclosure given to others in the past. Scripture also contains our reflections upon these encounters as it is seen through the lens of our history and traditions. Now, as a written record, it becomes a medium of encounter for us. And even though it uses the medium of human understanding--with all its historical limitations and cultural peculiarities--it still communicates the divine self-understanding; thus, it is a valuable instrument for God's use.

Scripture, apart from the Spirit, however, is a dead instrument. Many humans seek to capture its meaning through the intellect alone. They may "know" the content, but fail to grasp its full meaning. (Many saw the Word of Life, but not everyone believed.) But when the Spirit reaches out through the letters on the page, the Scriptures become a living document with a present application. For God is alive in and through them.

Because Scripture is the particular medium of God's revelation and the primary medium of divine disclosure, its authority for us is second to none. Even our experience of God must be weighed against the authority of Scripture; for Scripture is the long tradition of the community of faith, carried down through the ages, distilled in contemplation, hammered out in controversy, and affirmed by the Body as the authority of our faith because it is faithful as a witness to the reality of God.

In this sense, Scripture is an objective authority, for it is the objective record of God's encounter with his people. It puts a constraint upon the relativities of our experience and is a guard against sin, error, and distortion. Reason, then, is the tool whereby we check our experience against that of others, especially of that revealed in Scripture. In this way, God uses our sense experience to communicate a spiritual knowledge of him.

Reason is also the tool with which we interpret Scripture, just as we use it to understand ourselves. Reason must submit to the authority of Scripture, since it is not merely human voices, but the Word of God. However, we must know how to submit. We gain that knowledge through the use of reason, by our seeking to discover the meaning and intent of the Word. In this way, we know how we know God.

TRADITIONS

The traditions and creeds have also been formed in controversy. They are the authoritative statements of the community of faith as it has sought to faithfully protect the meaning of Scripture from misinterpretation. They are boundary limits that have been set to combat heresy. The traditions also represent the attempts of the community of faith to carry out the intent of Scripture when no clear guidelines have been given. So traditions are not only a matter of interpretation, but of practice. Both the traditions and the creeds have attempted to translate the Word anew for a different age, so that the Word of God will remain alive in the present.

These authoritative interpretations of faith represent the continuing reality of God in the Church as he inspires us in every age. For this reason, the Body of Christ represents the living authority of God.

But all these forms of authority are ultimately dependent upon the authentic application and interpretation of Scripture. Their authority is derivative, as they themselves proclaim; for the guide of tradition and the guide of the creedal statements is Scripture. But both of these authorities must be weighed heavily in any evaluation of experience or reason. For we are not perfect, but we are born into a community of faith,

with brothers and sisters in Christ in whom we must rely. But if there is conflict between tradition, creed and Scripture, Scripture must be our norm, for the Church affirms that God is most authentically revealed in this deposit of our faith.

SUMMARY

Faith is the relationship established in us by God, upon which we are dependent for any accurate insight into the nature of ultimate reality. This relationship is resident in the Being of God, and, as a transcendent reality, it is not available to us through the exercise of reason alone. Once established in relationship, however, reason becomes a natural ally for interpretation and understanding of God.

Because our experience of God does not occur apart from our living in the world, but through it, the objective validation of our encounter occurs when we compare our experience with that of others in the community of faith, now and in history. Thus, God's activity becomes an objective constraint for us through the consensus of others.

The sources of authority for faith are represented in Scripture, tradition, and the community of faith. Scripture is paramount for us as it is the norm for our other sources and the chief instrument of God's self-disclosure. Implicit in our method is a cognizance of reason as a special faculty for interpreting and elucidating our experience of faith. While reason is not autonomous, it is our tool for defining the authority of Scripture. We have carefully set a balance between reason, experience, Scripture, and tradition, for we are not to be tyrannized by any one since all are subject to God as media of our faith. And it is only in relationship to God that any of these sources gain their authority; for in relationship they become vehicles of the proclamation--the embodiment of God's Holy Word. And in God their authority rests.

PART I: THE FAITH OF THE CHURCH

A DOCTRINE OF GOD

JESUS CHRIST AS GOD'S REVELATION

When we define Jesus Christ as the Word Incarnate, we state that Jesus Christ is the essence and presence of God revealed to us in human flesh.² Jesus Christ then, as God's self-giving, is the Revelation of God, which is confirmed to us in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, who is God in us. Therefore, Jesus Christ becomes for us the hermeneutical key with which we interpret our corporate history and our private experience.³ And while we affirm that both the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God, inspired by the Spirit, we assert that the Old cannot be interpreted without the New, because the Incarnate Word makes all the prophecies and partial revelations of the Old intelligible to us in their fullness.

We affirm that the Incarnation was an historical event, and that history is the arena of God's revelation. But we also affirm that history is unintelligible apart from revelation of encounter, because unless we encounter God's self-giving love in that history, its meaning for us remains obscure.⁴

THE REVELATION OF PURPOSE

There is only one reason by which we may understand the purpose of God in history and in our own lives. This reason is love. Love makes intelligible all other aspects of God's character, purpose, power and will. Without love, God's character may appear cold and distant; God's purpose for creation may remain obscure; God's power may appear threatening and heteronomous; and God's **will** may appear capricious, arbitrary, and perhaps even cruel.

Love, however, is a reason intelligible to the heart that can never be exhausted by the mind's

seeking to understand. In as much as we investigate the purpose of love, we are forever astounded by the infinite character of its selflessness and self-givingness. Love is its own reason and motivation for being. It is free, unrestrained, and spontaneous. Through love, the purposes of creation and the desire of God for our lives are revealed.

How do we know that God is one with the purposes of love? By the revelation of God in Christ. Two quotes from scripture are adequate to determine that God is love and to determine the character of that divine love.

The statement, "God is love " (I Jn. 4:16), clearly signifies that the character of God may best be described as love. Nothing that exists in God can be at cross-purposes with this divine love. And all aspects of God's nature may be viewed with the divine love in mind, revealing to us God's being, purpose, and end. So, whether we view God's power, purpose, or holiness, we know that God is not capricious, willful, vindictive, or blind to evil. And although we may draw attention to our inability to understand God's purposes on earth by God's acts in history, we affirm in faith that the purposes of God are of love. And the appearance of evil in history, under the sovereignty of God, cannot alter this prescriptive definition: "God is love."

In order that we do not confuse God's love with the imperfect character of love revealed in human beings, we draw attention to the revelation of the character of divine love: "By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us" (I Jn. 3:16; cf. Jn. 15:13).⁵ The character of divine love is revealed in the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ for us. This totally self-giving love has no restraint or imperfect motivation. The motivation of this love is compassionate self-surrender for the sake of the beloved.

When viewed from this perspective of love, the wrath and judgment of God exist in order to serve the character of love. Love cannot be inauthentic to itself, and therefore, it must stand in judgment

against all that is not love, finally passing sentence upon sin in death.⁶ In this way, the consequences of evil are fully revealed. Therefore, wrath, as the consequence of sin, is the view of divine love from outside the vantage point of love. In wrath, God makes us "aware of our alienation in order to induce us to surrender to his love."⁷ So, when viewed from the perspective of love, the purpose of God's wrath is redemptive, so that the character of love may remain inviolable.

The cross is the final revelation of God's attitude towards sin. The redemptive purpose of love succumbs to the wrath and judgment of God against sin. The power of sin in death is overcome in the resurrection. The resurrection is testimony to the unfathomable and infinite power of God's love, which overcomes the wrath and judgment, while assuring that all that is opposed to that love of God will eventually be destroyed.

ATTRIBUTES

There are aspects of God's character, when viewed from the perspective of the finite, that are not totally exhausted by love. If we take as our analogy "personality," we see how we may look into the heart of God and understand God's character and purpose by that divine love. But merely to understand the nature and motivation of that love is not to exhaust all the aspects of God's being. Even the character of love we do not exhaust by our participation in it.

Although we participate in the infinite love of God by being made one with God, God's infinite, inexhaustible love, when viewed from the perspective of the finite, has as its distinguishing character the quality of holiness. God's holiness is God's inexhaustible love; it is wholly Other because it is not contained within or confined by our finite selves. When that Holy Love meets us, it meets us as Divine Freedom, because it will not, indeed it cannot, be constrained within our attempts to grasp and control it. But this Holy Love meets us everywhere as Divine Freedom, meeting our needs from outside ourselves, as Infinite Subject to our finite selves.

When we see God's wisdom, we properly define it as omniscience. God's perception into the nature of reality and into our conscious selves is not marked by any limitation (cf. Mt. 10:30; Rms. 2:15-16; Is. 47:10; Jer. 17:9-10). And, as it is inconceivable that the Author of time would be subject to the limitations of time, God also knows what is to come (Is. 37:26; I Peter 1:19-20; Rms. 8:29).

God's power we properly term omnipotence. For God is not only the Creator and Sustainer of all that is (Gen. 1; Col. 1:17), but God also exercises providence in guiding the course of history, using even the occasion and occurrence of evil within the sovereign direction of love (Mt. 10:29; Jn. 17:12; Rms. 8:28).

Finally, God as being "Changeable Faithfulness"⁸ is an adequate designation of the faithful character of God's love when viewed within the context of Divine Freedom. God's purpose in creation is never determined by necessity or law or circumstance, but is always of the creative center of divine liberty. That God can act in accordance with a purpose or a plan laid out long ago merely attests to the faithful intent of love working itself out through history and time. But God is always free to respond out of that freedom in the present, to whatever need may arise, while remaining faithful to the character of divine love.

TRINITY

The distinction in the Triune God is an ontological distinction that has existed and which will continue to exist throughout eternity. The consequences of a purely economic designation of the Trinity are such that God only appears to us as threefold without any inherent distinction in God's being. This viewpoint would allow for a purely modalistic view of Christology, ignoring the Word's pre-existence as hypostasis. It would also allow for any new revelation of God to transcend the Incarnate Word in meaning and significance: God addressing the divine economy to changing situations and needs.

The character of this distinction is impossible to elucidate without engaging in speculative philosophy and metaphysics. Although the revelation of this differentiation within God has only been available to us with the Advent of Jesus, we can affirm in Jesus a differentiation of minds and wills in God (Luke 22:42; Heb. 5:8), and we can affirm the same distinction in the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:11). At the same time, we can affirm their essential unity of being and substance as persona of the One God. Beyond these lines of demarcation we dare not go to secure a definition.

In terms of God's economic relationship to us we may say that God with us, as Christ, as Word Incarnate/as Revelation; God in us, as Holy Spirit/as Revealedness; and God over us, as Father/as Revealer, is an adequate expression of the threefold nature of the Triune God.

A DOCTRINE OF THE SON

THE HISTORIC AND TRANSCENDENT

When we speak of the Revelation of God in Jesus Christ, we speak of an irreducible event, which is the intrusion of the transcendent into history.

Since the time of his birth, many people have attempted to interpret the reality of Jesus Christ totally in terms of history. This investigation into the historic dimension has sought to discover the meaning and being of Jesus entirely within the context of the finite and conditioned. This investigation endeavors to find the true human nature of the man Jesus and, in so doing, discovers partial truths about the humanity of Jesus. Yet, when this legitimate enterprise seeks to determine who Jesus was entirely within the finite and conditioned, a distorted picture of the total person, Jesus Christ, emerges. Yes, there is an aspect of the Revelation of God, which is historic. That is the realm of the humanity of Jesus. Yes, there are aspects of his time and character and expectation that were conditioned by his environment. But

that is not all. Even human beings cannot be reduced to understanding by describing them entirely as products of their environment, although some have attempted to do so. There is within the human the element of intersection wherein the divine freedom, as expressive of the image of God, is reflected. In this juncture of "nature and spirit,"⁹ we, as human beings, engage our environment. In some respects we are determined, but in others we respond creatively and in freedom to our circumstance. In this intersection is constituted our historic actuality.

How much more can this divine freedom be posited of One who "knew no sin," but who engaged in the divine--human adventure within a relationship that knew of no alienation? If sin is the fracturing and defaming of the divine image, and therefore of the dynamic freedom which only exists in relationship to God, we are wrong to posit the character of Jesus entirely upon what we know of ourselves. What potentially exists in the divine-human encounter when it is not abrogated by our alienation we can only begin to surmise. But here, in Jesus, we have the image of original intention fully restored. And in Jesus we glimpse our final consummation. For we see not only what God is for us, but also what we are to become (I Jn. 3:2). This image is one of unbroken fellowship, enabled by the Holy Spirit, which breathes in and out the divine freedom so that the creature is no longer determined by its estrangement but by the dynamic fellowship of freedom. This freedom is only possible when human spirit is engaged in and "determined" by its proximity and unity with the divine freedom. Outside of this relationship, of human being to God, no possibility of freedom exists.

Therefore, we cannot speak of Jesus as the product entirely of the historic and conditioned, but we affirm that the historic was transformed and created anew in the presence of this One who was completely open to the transcendent.¹⁰ But of the historic we can and do affirm the witness and testimony of the Scriptures: Jesus was promised by the prophets of Israel, born of a woman of the shoot of Jesse, proclaimed the kingdom explicitly in his deeds and implicitly by the authority of his person; he was crucified under Pontius Pilate for our Sins, buried, and on the third day he rose from the dead in fulfillment of the Scriptures.

Just as people have attempted to interpret Jesus in terms of the historic alone, so have people attempted to interpret Jesus Christ entirely and only within the transcendent, thus obscuring and distorting his true humanity. For in Jesus Christ, God surely dwells, but God dwells in Jesus Christ, not as the destroyer of human nature, but as Redeemer, Restorer, and Perfecter. God's intent is not to obliterate the human and make it merely the reflection of the Divine Will, but God intends to bring human nature to fulfillment and perfection by making it a participant in the divine freedom, causing us to respond creatively and in freedom to the divine initiative. This purpose can only be achieved if we are not "caused" to respond but are invited to respond. If we do so, the divine image of creative freedom is indeed restored and purified in us.

THE ONTOLOGICAL AND ETERNAL

Because God dwells in the man **Jesus Christ**, we cannot assume that we can uncover the meaning and being of the humanity of Christ either from the perspective of the historic or of the transcendent alone. But in the intersection of the historic and transcendent we see revealed the true character of God in him who was and is "truly man and truly God." To view the reality of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ from either perspective alone is to distort the true image of the One who was and is God's presence with us.

When we assert that Jesus Christ was and is both God and man, we assert more than if he was only either God or man. We assert that in Jesus Christ there was an essential unity of natures that is definitive for us: only he who is truly God could have been perfect humanity. No one who did not share in the intimacy of God's being could have been perfect humanity. For we, as participants in alienation, and its anxiety, could never have overcome the gap and restored what we had lost. The Divine Freedom is not our possession but part of the Being of God. We, as creatures, have no ontological grounding that would allow us to overcome our alienation. But only God, in whom there is no alienation and in whom there is

perfect unity, could have overcome our alienation by participating in it with us as one of us. Only Jesus, as truly God in human flesh, could have overcome our disobedience through his obedient love. Only one who was of the being of Love could reach out to us in our despair and overcome our estrangement from him.

So in our confession of faith we affirm the One who is eternal. This One, who was and is both God and man, is the One who is eternally grounded in being as God who was manifested to us in the flesh as the historic creature. This One who was from before, who is both Alpha and Omega, is the eternal Son, the Logos. And in the Son, we see the eternal relationship within the Triune God which was made manifest to us and for us in the fullness of time.

How this mystery came to pass is beyond human fathoming, and yet the mystery is that it did. And our redemption and salvation is in this transformation; God becoming one with us in our humanity. And this transformation denotes a transformation within the character and being of God, who, in going out, unites with that which is not God, but outside the divine Being, and so, by becoming one, draws that being into God's self.¹¹ In this way, our alienation and alienation is overcome because God becomes one with us, even while we are estranged.

A DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Spirit of God is eternally present as creative and ordering power. As the Holy Spirit, God exercises sovereignty over creation, bringing order out of chaos and sustaining the creation with every breath; for it is certain that if the Spirit were withdrawn, we would devour one another in our depravity. But restraint is not the only function of the Spirit in the world. The Spirit is also preparing the hearts of humanity for the Good News of Jesus Christ. And finally, the Spirit brings people to faith.

Within the Church, the Spirit is at work bringing the children of God into obedience, so that we

may bear witness with our lives as with our words. Being sanctified by the indwelling Spirit, the Spirit brings us to maturity, gradually bearing the fruit of salvation in us. Through this fruit God is able to bear witness to himself.

But our witness is imperfect, and if it were not for the Spirit working through us, our witness would be ineffectual. For this reason, the Spirit empowers the Church from on high, enabling our mission and proclamation. As we have said, it is not by human wisdom that faith is established, but by God working through the foolishness of our message to convict and convert. Although we are easily seen as the most ignorant and gullible of persons, God's purposes are accomplished through our weakness because he uses the occasion of our proclamation to manifest signs and wonders so that the world may realize that the power of God for salvation is at work in us. Through prophecy, healings, miracles, generosity, love, and tongues, among other gifts, the Spirit confirms that our witness is God's witness and not merely human speculation. And the signs and wonders preclude human pride, for when they are in evidence we know that we cannot take credit for them, because they are not of human origin. But we become subject to God through his presence among us as we view with wonder his great feats of love.

So the Spirit is God's presence in us and among us in power and with love. And through the witness of the Spirit within us we see ourselves as God sees us, and we acknowledge God's testimony to himself. For in the Holy Spirit, God has become our Paraclete.

A DOCTRINE OF SIN AND SALVATION

SIN AS THE MISUSE OF FREEDOM

Sin is the turning away in freedom from the fellowship of divine love. Sin, as act, has certain inherent consequences: the perversion of the goodness of creation and the subjection of the creation to the reality of death. The consequence of sin then becomes the condition of our existence wherein we

experience alienation from God.

While sin was not intended in creation, the possibility of sin existed as necessary to the freedom of fellowship for which we were formed. We were created for a fellowship of love, which is a relationship that only arises in the context of freedom. And, as bearers of the image of God, we carried with us the possibility of turning from fellowship with God; hence, sin.

While sin is a possibility, it is not a necessary consequence of our freedom: for who, in their right mind, would turn away from the fellowship of love? But we did. And so, we now exist as heirs to the historical reality of sin. And as heirs, we have been fully incorporated into the reality of sin at our birth. Since the whole world is subject to sin and death, the world exercises its powers of destruction and disease against us: and thus, we become unwilling participants in the reality of sin and death. But we also become willing participants in the rebellion against God's sovereign rule: we seek to take life into ourselves and so escape our dependence upon God. Thus, we each recommit the sin of Adam (Gen. 3:5).

While sin was for us originally an act which led to a condition, it is now a condition out of which concrete acts of disobedience arise. Therefore our "sins" are but symptoms of our deeper disease. Now out of fellowship with God, we are no longer grounded in life. And we cannot return to our former fellowship, because sin, which was occasioned by our freedom, creates in us a condition which perverts and distorts the very freedom which gave rise to sin in the first place. Thus sin brings the human heart, mind, and will under bondage so that we are no longer able to leave sin (or quit sinning) and return to God under our own power (Luke 13:10-16).

Now, in being separated from God, who is both freedom and life, we are dependent upon God to rescue us and return us to the life of freely chosen fellowship which we once had before our fall.

AT-ONE-MENT

God, in "reconciling the world to himself," must take into account the reality of human freedom. And so, in re-establishing God's righteous and sovereign rule over us and over creation, God must enlist our willful participation in this righteous service. For only in the preservation of our freedom can the intent of creation be fulfilled in its restoration. So, God's purposes for us include the restoration of our freedom in obedience, so that we might once again enjoy the fellowship of Holy Love.

This reconciliation did occur in the One who is both man and God. It was necessary for One who was both man and God to become one with us in our alienation and, by participating in it with us, overcome the consequences of our disobedience. Only by being willing to become one with the pain and suffering of our alienation could God become one with us. And so God did in Jesus Christ. If God had remained compassionate but aloof, we could not have been made one with God, for the wall of alienation would have remained. But God sacrificed himself in the person of the Son, and so God came to experience all the humiliation, hatred, and fear of our alienation. God, in God's being, even became subject to death. And, in Jesus Christ, God took into his own person all the wrath and fury which existed as a consequence of sin

Yet, in suffering all the consequences of sin, God did not retreat in fear, but overcame in love. All the fury of hell spent itself in the body of Jesus Christ, and, by exhausting itself in him, it was broken. Hatred and fear could not overcome, for God, in Christ, continued to love even while suffering the consequences of hatred and fear. So God's love broke the chains of hatred and fear which held us in alienation. Death also was overcome, for the power of death was met in the being of God, and death could not conquer God's being but was itself overcome. And in the resurrection, God's triumph was turned into our joy, for through it our will to self-destruction and the reality of death were overcome. Having received the Holy Spirit as the fruit of God's self-sacrifice, we are made participants in the divine nature, and through fellowship with God we are restored to life, liberty, and love.

THE PROCESS OF SANCTIFICATION

In Jesus' death upon the cross, he died once for the "sins of the whole world," and in his resurrection the power of death has been destroyed so that God is, even now, bringing all of creation under the righteous rule of divine love. Even we are declared forgiven in Christ's atoning act. So in our regeneration, we are at once justified and sanctified. And through our rebirth we receive the reality of Christ's objective sacrifice as God becomes one with us.

Although in rebirth we have received new being, and thus are sanctified, the nature of this new birth is the restoration to the intent of original creation. Thus, we receive in Jesus Christ, not the denial of our freedom, but the power of it with all its inherent and frightful possibilities. So, we are being brought into obedience, not through force, but through choice. And we often choose disobedience over love, and if it were possible, we would choose to leave the divine fellowship of Holy Love. But it has pleased God to utilize our freedom in establishing the righteousness of God in us. And in uniting with us in the Holy Spirit, God is at once transforming us and conforming us, through the desires of our hearts, to the image and righteousness of God.

But many of the anxieties and hostilities of our old nature remain with us after this restoration to Holy Love. And the pain and hurt we feel as the consequence of being subject to death and to the hatred of others causes us to rebel. And the frustration of our selfish desires causes us to sin in willful acts of disobedience. We are not perfect, and the working out of God's Holy Love in our lives takes time and patience and forgiveness--if we are ever to be incorporated into the fellowship of freely chosen love. For the sake of God's hurt and suffering children, God freely bears the consequences of our willful disobedience. And this love is exemplified in the mangled body of Jesus, who took into himself all the hurt, hatred, frustration, and fear of a fallen and lost world.

ELECTION - HUMAN FREEDOM AND DIVINE DECISION

"God's knowledge must surely involve ordination, since men and things must be and become what he knows them to be."³

In our doctrine of election, we must be careful to preserve the dynamic of divine judgment manifested through human freedom. But we must also be aware that the desire for self-preservation is not the same for thing as the desire for Holy Love. And we must preserve God the right to discern the difference between the two.

On the one hand, God is sovereign. And God judges human beings as being "worthy" of salvation or not. God sees clearly into the human heart and examines its motives and designs. Those whose motives are impure, God prevents from perceiving the mystery of salvation, for profound love cannot be grasped as an object of sinister desire. And love cannot acquiesce to sin or pervert itself in order to redeem, but love must remain forever authentic to itself. The basis upon which God elects some to salvation and not others must remain the prerogative of God, but we can know that the judgment issues forth from the context of love respecting human freedom. Judgment is the corollary of love. Love, in remaining faithful to itself, must allow wrath and alienation to continue as the judgment of evil desire. The perpetual judgment of persons is the result of their alignment with evil as their free choice throughout eternity.

Because God foreknows, God also foresees the end of every creature. God not only foresees freedom but the judgment manifested within the context of freedom. So God knows from the beginning who is elect and who must suffer judgment as the consequence of misspent freedom. But this foreknowledge never compromises the present reality of freedom within the individual. For in this freedom, God is fulfilling the secret wishes and desires of the heart. And the basis upon which God elects some and condemns others is whether they desire Evil or Holy Love.

It is often asked by those who are distrustful of God's election whether people who have not known Christ in this life, but who have "tried to live up to the light they had," will be saved. If by this description it is meant that the inmost desire of the heart has been for God's good and holy love, then this question

presupposes election (cf. Jer. 17:10; Acts 10:34-35). But if by this description it is implied that somehow someone might be saved by right choices or decisions they have made, then we must disagree. Our election is not so tremulous as to rest upon the uncertainties of our deeds and decisions. As we have said, we cannot even quit sinning by the power of our corrupted will, but we are dependent upon God to restore us to righteous living. If we are so dependent, how could we then be saved by right choices and decisions, since by nature we choose sin? We may indeed choose and do the right, but it is God at work in us that enables us to do so. And if we do make right decisions, it is because God is working through the course of our life to reveal his election of us. So while our actions may reflect our destiny, they do not determine it; and though our deeds may reveal our election, they do not establish it, because God is the well-spring of our character. And if someone is elect, whether they know Christ by name or not, then their lives will reveal the goodness of God; not necessarily in Outward acts, but in the inward being, which is known only to God.

The Good News is that if we have failed in our endeavors to live righteously, so that we even despair and lose heart, God still loves and forgives us; more so than if we were only outwardly "righteous." It is not now well we behave in this life that determines whether we will be accepted or rejected, otherwise the Pharisees and scribes would have been saved. But it is the fallen, the miserable, the despised and dejected that are invited into the banquet hall. Therefore, there can be no security in doing the best we can with the light we have, for God redeems us, not based upon our performance, but upon the basis of Christ's sacrifice for our sins.

God asks us to acknowledge the full measure of our sinfulness, not to trust our "worthiness." Only the knowledge of God's faithfulness in spite of our faithlessness will give us trust, for then we see that our lives are held in surer knowledge than our own. And so we look to God instead of to ourselves for the assurance of our salvation.

Lastly, only God is fit to judge the human heart, and his judgment reveals his election. God's free election is not based upon our works, but upon the purposes of love, hidden from our eyes but visible to the eyes of God.

A DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

A DEFINITION OF THE CHURCH

The Church is the Body of all those who are called into relationship with God in Christ. The Church is founded in Christ and realized in us by the Holy Spirit. The Church is founded in Christ, for in him God accomplished the objective act of reconciliation in becoming one with an estranged creation. The calling is realized in us by the Spirit, who manifests the will of God in us through our hearts. Therefore, to be in Christ is to participate in that objective act of reconciliation by being reconciled to God.

To be in Christ is to participate in the already established rule of God, which is even now being brought to pass, although it is not yet fulfilled. We are first fruits of the promised harvest, already entering into fellowship with the Holy God. Thus, the Church is the eschatological community of faith, already seated "in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Ep. 2:6). We are the community which participates in the rule of God, not only by being drawn into obedience ourselves, but by calling the rest of creation into the obedience of faith and by working to make evident the rule of God on earth through concrete acts of redemptive love.

Since it is the whole earth that is to be reconciled to God with us, we are to participate in its redemption by exercising responsible stewardship over creation. But our primary task is not just to be reconciled to creation, although it too is properly the object of God's love, but to be reconciled with the common family of humankind, which is the first yearning of God for fellowship. Therefore, to be in Christ is not then to be merely an individual among other individuals, but it is to be brought into fellowship with one another. In fact it is impossible to be one, in isolation from Christ, for we are at once made one with God while being made one with all those who are already one with God. So, in Christ, we are not alone: but many sharing in a communion of love.

DIMENSIONS OF THE CALL

The call of God always exists in a state of dynamic tension. To be in the Body of Christ is to participate in the inward call of relationship and in the outward call of responsibility. If the inward call is pursued to the neglect of the outward, we hinder the realization of God's purposes for creation by failing to carry out the reconciling work of God's Holy Love. If the outward call is pursued to the neglect of the inward, the foundation for our genuine selflessness is undermined as we act to justify ourselves and not out of love for one another.

The inward call is experienced as the call to be engaged with God; to worship, to praise, and to assume the ministries of service to the Body. The outward call is experienced as the call to bring others into engagement with God and as the call to witness to what has already taken place in our lives by manifesting the love of God in word and deed.¹⁴

Just as work without faith is dead, so is faith without works. For this reason, the Church without mission is dead, because the call of God never exists apart from the call to be for God in a fallen world. And if we surrender the ministry of reconciliation, either in word or in deed, then it is an indication that the message we have been given either has not been received, perceived, or fully understood. So, to be actualized in one's salvation is to be made a participant in this Holy redemption, looking out of ourselves towards others; then only is the gospel realized in our lives. When we are called to God, and out of ourselves in self-sacrifice, the reality of Holy Love is made effective in our lives.

THE STRUCTURES OF THE CHURCH

As the eschatological community of faith in a fallen and dependent world, the Church participates in the fallen structures of sin in its individual members and in its corporate whole. Therefore, the Church exists in a state of dynamic tension between its call to perfect obedience and its actual practice.

CHURCH AS ORGANISM

If we compare the Church to the human body, we find many parallels. Just as the human body, without the disciplining structures of bones and muscles, would be an amorphous mass of protoplasm, so the Church would be aimless without the organizational structures of the institution. As a living, breathing entity, the Body of Christ needs definitive shape. And for these purposes God has provided the various ministries of leadership and service.

While the authority for these ministries rests ultimately in Christ, God has vested in the Body the authority for discipline and discernment. Thus, in the absence of any halos or lights and voices from heaven, the Body appoints from among its members ministers to serve in various tasks. In order to preserve the authenticity of the Word and sacrament, the Body often appoints specific persons to this task. However, as all are called to be priests and all to be witnesses, these offices are for the sake of discipline, the preservation of the authenticity of our faith, and not for greater honor.

When people wish to rely only on the gifts and wish to reject structures, the power of the Spirit is blunted, defused and denied; for the result is the chaos of self-will. And chaos is the enemy of the Spirit for the Spirit empowers life within form, and not in spite of it (Gen. 1).

But just as the human body can become flabby and fat without sound teaching and the discipline of service, so the institutional structures of the Body can become arthritic if the power of the Spirit is quenched in human self-rule. So, if a particular church relies too heavily upon the authorities of structure and institution, while it represses or neglects the gifts and power of the Spirit, a particular church body, in refusing to bend, may become old, withered, and die. For the Spirit breathes into the Church its life and vitality, and it should no more be prevented from this task than should life-giving blood be prevented from bringing oxygen to all the organs of the body.

If, because of human sinfulness, a particular church attempts to institutionalize the Spirit so that it may reduce the Spirit to an object of control, then the Spirit is forced to throw off this institution as a means of grace; for the Spirit, who comes by promise, can never be made a prisoner to the law. Even then, the Body of Christ can never die, for the Spirit breaks through in new and dynamic, unique and creative ways to establish the will of God.

Yet, in every authentic new birth, the Spirit never operates without order and direction and structure, for that would be chaos. But the Spirit creates life and order out of chaos (Gen 1). Therefore, the enemy of the Spirit is not form, but sin attempting to reduce the Divine Freedom to an object of control. Likewise, freedom is not the enemy of the Spirit, but sin attempting to throw off the discipline of order in God. Therefore, both power and form are necessary to the Spirit, for the Divine Freedom is not manifested in chaos but through the beauty of order and form.

THE SACRAMENTS

The elements of the sacraments--water, bread, and wine--signify our solidarity with creation; that we are not to be redeemed without the redemption of the material universe, but we are to be included with it in God's reconciling act. The material universe is good, and it was created so by God. Thus, we are prevented from any spiritualizing of our salvation, but we look forward to the redemption of our bodies as well as to the redemption of creation as a whole.

BAPTISM

Baptism is the outward sign, signifying Christ's redemptive act of suffering and death. It is the promise by which we are sealed into that objective act in which God reconciled the creation to himself. Therefore, it is not what one believes which is the foundation for one's entrance into the Kingdom, but the reconciling work of God, which he has already accomplished for us. And in this way, God's call

precedes our reception of the promise into our hearts.

Baptism is the invitation to continue in the covenant of reconciliation, and it elicits our response. However, the mystery of election is preserved by God, for the Spirit cannot be constrained by the law of sacrament but fulfills through promise. Therefore it is necessary that one be "born of water and the Spirit" (Jn. 3:5) to enter the Kingdom of God. And the Spirit is given by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

EUCCHARIST

The Eucharist is the sacrament of participation in the ongoing life of the whole Church: it is remembrance of the passion of Christ, and it is participation in his present forgiveness; it is the partaking of the present promises of salvation, given as the new covenant of faith by the Spirit; it is the celebration of the eschatological Kingdom, promised and already present among us in Spirit; and it is the worship of God in communion with one another. In this communion we are made open to and aware of the presence of God.

A POSTSCRIPT ON THE WORD

Obviously, the Word is the most essential aspect of our faith, for it is by the Word and through the Word and in the Word that God communicates to us the mystery of salvation. But the Word, while implicit in everything we have said so far, is so much more than the communication of ideas; it is the communication of Being to being. It is the concretizing of Holy Love as being-in-act, and it can never be separated from this actuality if it is to remain authentic to itself. So, while implicit in act, it must be made explicit in proclamation, and that too is the calling of the Church: to make evident what it has received from God in Word and deed.

A DOCTRINE OF ESCHATOLOGY

A doctrine of eschatology is dependent upon our understanding of what has taken place in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ; for what is to come can only be understood in the light of what has already come. Eschatology could properly be called "resurrection theology" for in the resurrection of Jesus Christ the future fulfillment has already broken into our present. So in our eschatology, we proclaim what has already taken place and we look forward for the revelation of its fullness. It is now, in part; it is yet hidden from our eyes.

We, who proclaim the Lordship of Christ, see with the eyes of faith a reality which is not yet visible to the world. In fact, we are confronted with the uncomfortable truth that this present age neither serves nor acknowledges the One whom we proclaim to be King. How are we to account for this contradiction? Our answer very much depends upon our cosmology: who and what are the powers that govern this age, and what are the forces that resist God's rule? Do these powers in fact serve God in spite of their obvious corruption? And how do we say that Christ has already defeated his enemies when they so obviously rebel against him?

THE POWERS OF THE PRESENT AGE

... in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities--all things were created through him and for him ...For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross (Col. 1:16, 19-20).

It is the testament of our faith that God created all space, time, angelic beings, governments, institutions, and cultures for good. The purpose of these structures was to govern our existence so that life could continue under God in an orderly way.¹⁵ Of the orders of creation there are three types: (1) those that govern the physical universe, such as space, time, and the law of cause and effect; (2) those that reflect the character of humans as social creatures, such as governments and nations; and (3) angelic

beings, who work through the first two orders to establish their will, for good or ill. Of the third category, those angels that have fallen represent the sphere of the demonic, which is outside the realm of God's redemptive intent (II Peter 2:4).

Although the first two types of structures were created in goodness, they have fallen from their original intent in two ways: they have become servants of wrath, preserving order in this present age through violence, whereas before they had been ministers of peace; and the orders have actually become perverted from their function through demonic influences and human sinfulness. In the first instance, they still serve as ministers of God in this age of wrath, but in the second, they have become enslaved to a purpose not their own.

How can we say that time and governments are reconciled to Christ and that the demons are defeated when the battle is clearly still raging and when governments, for example, often serve evil rather than good?

JESUS: THE LOCUS OF GOD'S VICTORY

Jesus became the locus of God's victory in creation when he submitted to the structures of wrath and to the abuse of human institutions. The demonic powers, with sinful human consent, found an opportunity to destroy him through his weakness. Imposing upon him the ultimate penalty in their power, they used the structures of wrath to condemn him to death, nailing his body to the cross. But their victory was their defeat, because the powers that reign through this age, having killed him, could do no more. Raised from the dead, he is no longer subject to the vicissitudes of time, the demonic powers, or to the human institutions that rule this age. Their stranglehold over his life has ended. He has already entered an eschatological reality and is now present with us as the first fruits of what is to come.

In Jesus, the Kingdom of God has already come upon us and has broken into our reality even while

the creation is still subject to death. We are witnesses to his resurrected glory. He has defied the laws of physics and the rule of conditioned existence, making a mockery of their pretended immutability by his resurrected power.

So where is Christ's victory? He has not changed the character of this age, nor has he yet redeemed time and history. The demonic powers still rage against Christ and the Church, opposing God's rule with all their strength. The victory is for all those who are "in Christ." In Christ we have received the Holy Spirit, who is the present power of God in us. Just as the Spirit is not subject to the power of death or to the conditioned rule of this age, neither are we who are in Christ.¹⁶ Because God's Spirit cannot be destroyed, neither can we be destroyed; "for as he is, so are we in this world" (I Jn. 4:17). While our bodies are still subject to the rule of this age, our spirits are alive in him as we participate in his eschatological being. In him, we are neither defined nor determined by this present age of wrath.

Yet the evidence of the "not yet" is everywhere present, manifested in death, decay, and in the continued rebellion of the demonic and human powers. While the rule of wrath is not ultimate for us, it serves as an ultimate for all those who are not in Christ. For if one's life is limited to one's physical existence, then death does become a threat to one's entire being, and the rule of the authorities, for good or ill, is a genuine reason for fear, because death becomes the final sentence of the court from which we have no appeal. Even the orders created for good begin to threaten us if we see in them the arbitrators of our destiny.¹⁷ The demonic illusion of an independent and chaotic reality becomes for the children of wrath a deception in which their destiny is formed. Their lives are ruled by fear and by the belief that life has no meaning.

Yet for those who are in Christ, Satan's demonic seduction is shown for what it is: an illusion of power, which gains its strength by creating guilt and fear. But for those who see with Christ's eyes, Satan's agents are unmasked and their power of illusion dispelled. The orders of God are revealed for what they truly are: ministers of good in a good creation. It is revealed for us that time and history, laws

and governments, really do serve God in spite of their coercive power in this age. They are structures ordained by God, which only become evil in as much as they are perverted and made to serve a demonic end. And even if they should slay us through their disobedience, we know that they do not hold our destiny in their hands. So we are free from them even while we submit ourselves to them.

And in as much as these structures and authorities and their human emissaries are wrested from the power of sin, they are restored to their proper function, serving good again and not evil. So we do not rebel, but minister to them so that through the insight of the Gospel the orders and their agents may be redeemed and restored to their proper service, to be ministers of justice and righteousness in an age of wrath. And we look forward to their total redemption together with us in the already age that is yet to come, knowing that their disobedience will be undone and the whole creation will once again live under the rule of God in Christ.

DEATH, RESURRECTION AND JUDGMENT

It is clear that the present age is characterized by its mortality. Together with the creation, we live dependent upon the material universe for sustenance. All things fight against their dissolution, and order is maintained only with effort. It is clear that all must undergo physical death, as did Christ, before we can shed our mortal dependency and dwell in the richness of his eschatological glory (unless we are alive at his coming). So we wait with hopeful expectancy for the coming again when this age will be transformed and when the creation's covenant with death will be annulled.

We harbor no illusion that the victory is already complete or that the powers of deceit are vanquished, for evil continues to work its wiles upon the earth in order to deceive those who are destined for destruction and to hinder those who would serve righteousness. And we recall that the time of the end will be associated with persecutions and wars and pestilence, as the powers strive to maintain their rule over a dissolving reality. Denying their limits, they will lash out at those who witness to the truth of

Christ and to the pretentiousness of their claims.

At Christ's revelatory coming, the final unmasking will deprive the demons of their remaining strength. They rule now through deceit and fear, but deceit will be abolished in the light of the revelation of Christ. All will see that the orders of this age do indeed serve God and not the powers of evil. It is then that every rule and authority will be made to serve its proper end. Time will no longer be a minister of death but will be a measure in eternal life. History will be revealed as the stage upon which God's plans and purposes for creation are fulfilled and not as the inhuman record of mere survival. Governments will all serve God directly under the rule of Christ, with no distortion or disease. And everywhere will be God's uncreated light. Even our mortal bodies will be redeemed and our flesh will manifest God's ineffable glory, for the Word will dwell in us through a fellowship of love. And the blessing of God will cause us to rejoice as we celebrate our indescribable joy in him.

Yet also at this resurrection, the powers, which represent the rule of darkness, will be judged together with those who have consented to their rule. For God will make known the secret of every heart and will divide the tares from the wheat. Those who have fallen will receive condemnation as the secret object of their desire. For it is said of them who dwell in hell, "they yearn for what they fear" (Dante).

Let us pray that we are not among their number, for we are saved only by God's mercy and grace.

PART II: THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD

OVERVIEW

The character of the Church in the present age is one which shares in the fallenness of creation, in all its particularity and sin. As an historical agency, it participates in the structures of the age of wrath,

and it is faced with the challenge of carrying out its mission to the world through imperfect means. The Church experiences tension as it sees that its transcendent goal cannot be readily achieved through the earthly means available to it. For example, if the Church is called upon to secure justice through the authority of government, the Church finds itself advocating the use of force and violence to bring about this concrete, but relative, good. The problem is that the Church is asked not only to secure justice, but also to further the cause of love, which is God's ultimate end. However, the very use of violence thwarts this transcendent purpose because love cannot be enforced; it must be a free and willing response.

So the Church is called upon to fulfill its historical missions and to achieve a transcendent end at the same time, while the means it may use are often in conflict with one another. This dilemma is one which the Church attempts to resolve through its ministries of reconciliation. The primary responsibility of the Church is the ministry of the Word, which brings about the fundamental reconciliation of the creation to God. As we are reconciled to God, we are called back to engagement with the temporal order because the world is the medium in which the divine-human encounter takes place. This mission is right for its own sake, and it is right because this visible demonstration of God's love furthers the cause of reconciliation. Therefore, our reconciliation to God is the foundation of our social involvement, and our social involvement is the implicit consequence of our reconciliation.

While we endeavor to carry out our ministry of reconciliation, we remain ever under the judgment of God's transcendent desire, which reveals the fallenness and partiality of our accomplishments. It is important that we remain under the scrutiny of this transcendent vision lest we confuse our relative accomplishments and sinful complacency with the perfect will of God.

THE MINISTRIES OF RECONCILIATION

How the Church carries out its responsibilities in, to, and for the world is the subject of this part of the paper. In this first section, we view the Church as a social agent and institution. The second section deals with the evangelistic mission of the Church.

THE SOCIAL MISSION OF THE CHURCH

The Church has various paradigms for its relationship to society: prophet, agent of change, and suffering servant. Throughout history, the Church has existed in all three of these modalities. As the Church encounters society, we are given the task of determining which of these modalities will do most to further the cause of reconciliation. Usually the Church is called upon to live in all three of its modalities at once, but there are times when one of the various responses is more appropriate than another. It is not our task to determine which response is the Christian response, but to show which situations might elicit which response.

THE CHURCH AS PROPHETIC JUDGE

Because of the Church's commitment to perfect justice, the Church finds a home with the poor. Through its identification with the marginal and the oppressed, the Church calls attention to God's perfect love. This love calls us to care for one another and to work against social structures that oppress the needy. Whenever we fail in our social responsibility or in our dedication to God, the Church acts as a prophetic judge by calling our attention to this inadequacy. For example, the Church acts as a prophet when it damns our idolatrous trust in military might, when it condemns economic or political oppression, and when it demands an end to racial and sexual discrimination. The Church openly declares our faults so that we may see how we have failed to live out a true worship of God and so that we may repent and do what is required of us as a people and a nation and as the Church of God.

The prophetic Word has a dual function. It is heard as a Word of comfort by those who suffer, because through that Word God's love for all people is evident: if God cares for the poor and the outcasts, whom society does not value, that means he cares equally for everyone. But the prophetic Word is also heard as a word of judgment by those who are vested with privilege and power because it calls them to

sacrifice, which is the very thing they are not willing to do. Then the Word is a judge of selfishness and a warning of the destruction to come for those who do not heed it. Through one Word, God brings both salvation and judgment to the earth.

While the prophetic Word calls attention to moral delinquency and defines the just remedy, it does not necessarily give us the program to achieve our goal. The prophetic Word really calls for a change of heart which is to be reflected in our social policy. How we achieve this change is the business of the social transformationist.

THE CHURCH AS TRANSFORMING POWER

While the prophetic witness is essential to our awareness of the transcendent demand of God, the Church must also advise and guide those in power, whether converted or unconverted. As the governments and institutions are redeemed through our witness, they are called to be obedient to the standard of Holy Love. Yet those who are in authority are faced with the dilemma of practicality: how can the greatest good be accomplished in a sinful world? As our means are imperfect, we participate in the reality of sin and evil whether we wish to or not. So, we are forced to choose between one course of imperfect action and another. And since we make these decisions from the perspective of imperfect knowledge, we must leave room for disagreement over the means of how best to accomplish our goals. Two questions must guide our striving: (1) how far can we compromise our transcendent ideals without selling out; and (2) will the means we have chosen have the net effect of increasing or decreasing the amount of love?

As the Church hammers out its response in policy and program, law and institution, it acts as transforming power. Even protest and disobedience may be considered acts designed to bring about a transformation. In any case, the Church attempts to transform the laws of nations so that they conform to Christian principles of justice and morality. For example, when the Church acts to preserve freedom of

religion, to end poverty, to establish equal rights, to guarantee adequate housing, to save the environment, or to guard the lives of the elderly, the disabled, and the unborn, it acts as a transforming power.

The question of revolution as an action of the Church is one that cannot be readily answered. The Christian responsibility is to redeem the powers, if possible. Whether it is possible or not is a question that must be heavily weighed by any who assume the use of violence, since the potential for evil is great on any side. There is also little guarantee that what follows will be any better than what has gone before. In fact, it may be much worse. The evils we face are complex and no government is perfect, so we must not see an excuse for revolution in every injustice. If we compare ourselves to the first century church, we see that they chose to receive evil into themselves rather than advocate it. Violence begets violence; and our means greatly affects the character of our accomplishments. On the other hand, we have a precedent for revolution in Joshua's incursions into Canaan: Joshua enlisted the aid of the oppressed population in his drive to take the promised land.¹⁸ This dilemma of conscience we leave to the individual and to the judgment of God.

THE CHURCH AS SUFFERING SERVANT

The transformationist response is only possible when the Church and its values are not singled out for persecution; i.e., when the social environment is amenable to Christian persuasion. There are times, however, when the culture reacts to the witness of the Church with disdain. This situation exists in the U.S.S.R., in many Muslim countries, and in India today. Christians, as a minority, could not possibly hope to take or hold the reins of power--nor would they want to without a general conversion of the populace. When such a situation exists, the authentic Christian response is not violence, because it cannot succeed or transform, but suffering service.

As God's ultimate purpose is to bring all people and nations into relationship, we rejoice that God is able to use our weakness as a source of strength and power. Governments cannot stand before the divine might even when God's only instruments are those being slain. And we may even let ourselves be killed, confident that God is able to conquer all dominions and powers through the Word of Truth alone.

THE CHURCH AS A SOCIAL INSTITUTION

The Church has only one authentic center--Jesus Christ--but it has many institutional forms. There can be unity in the Church without institutional uniformity as long as the Spirit of God is present in our worship.

As we have said, the Word of God is at home in the community of the oppressed. When the Church exists as a prophetic witness or as a suffering servant, its sociological designation is a "sect."¹⁹ The primary function of the sect community is to provide an island of meaning in a sea of relativity. The sect community is an exclusive one which one enters through dissatisfaction with the status quo. The sect, which has little stake in the values, traditions, and structures of the existing culture, is willing to challenge the society and to witness against its inequities.

Unless it remains a persecuted minority, a sect usually establishes itself within a society by the second generation.²⁰ As the sect evolves into a "church-type" institution, the prophetic or charismatic vision becomes canonized as a means of instruction, and ritual becomes a vehicle of communication for the sacred meaning of the faith.²¹ The established "church" provides a necessary service of continuity. It conserves the traditions and reinforces a consensus of moral values and expectations; and so, it provides "an anchorage for the social order."²² Just as a child needs the security of love before it will have the courage to explore, so we need the security of definitions and limits to maintain an orderly and meaningful existence.

As a conserving agent, the institutional "church" seeks to preserve the society in which it lives and thrives because its interests have become identified with the interests of the dominant culture. The "church" accommodates itself to society by "baptizing" cultural values that are not in conflict with the faith. Often, the problem for the institutional "church" is that it has made peace too easily with values

that are in conflict with its own. It has often compromised its dedication to the poor and has aligned itself with vested interest, privilege and selfish passion.²³

While the institution is necessary, we must continue to fan the sacred fire lest our witness grows cold and our institutions die on the vine.

THE EVANGELISTIC MISSION OF THE CHURCH

To neglect our evangelistic mission for the sake of social goals would be to seriously misjudge God's intent. While it is true that a privatistic faith without a concrete response is not authentic faith, it is also true that social action without a devotional center is an exercise of hubris. God first attempts to establish the reality of unconditional love, which then enables us to respond in loving obedience. Any other foundation is idolatrous.

While Christians must be engaged in the enterprise of liberation, we must be cognizant of the inherent limitations of our temporal remedies. Even structural remedies carry within them the seeds of corruption. And as those who enforce the laws are subject to sin, the just application of the law is dependent upon a consensus of moral persons whose behavior is informed by common values and formed by a common set of beliefs. Without this moral consensus, the regulation of society is impossible. Then no amount of Christian advocacy will accomplish anything because the whole social order is being destroyed.

Therefore, evangelism is a mission of survival for a nation as well as for individuals. While striving for social justice through structural remedies, we cannot and must not neglect the heart of the individual as the primary center of transformation. Only in the individual do we have a guarantee that moral reforms will be administered correctly and followed from the heart by those who are governed by them.

PROCLAMATION IN A PLURALISTIC AGE

In spite of all our yearning and desire for those not in the Church, we know that **there is no vitality or life** apart from Jesus Christ. The ultimate destiny of others is not ours to judge; we are simply given the task of proclaiming the Good News. So let us stop trying to make the best of another's fallen situation and proclaim, not with shame, but with joy, hope, and love.

We are entering a stage in history when the drama of our salvation is unfolding anew in a manner similar to that of the first century church. Our world is vast and invaded by diverse faiths and cultures. There is no consensus because we see no absolute. But, if we compare our society to the first century world, we see that they also suffered from a rending of the "sacred canopy." In the Roman Empire there were a plurality of truths, of which the Christian Truth was but a minority opinion. What was the apostolic response? Not apologetics but proclamation. What should be our response? Should we submit to the Demon of Relativity and to the god of this age, Tolerance? No! We should take hearts and minds captive to the Word of God. When we are faced with the diverse faiths and cultures of this day, we must simply proclaim this truth: God is revealed in one man, Jesus Christ, who has become the center of creation.

But in our proclamation, we must be careful not to deny the intimations of the truth that exist in other cultures nor despise the good that they do. Our proclamation is an invitation to wholeness that people of all times and places have yearned to receive. So in preaching the name of Jesus, we may discover that many know him in everything but name. Let them be gracious to us in our simplicity and tolerant of us in our error and presumption. We are called to share our experiences among equals, to proclaim with the measure of faith given to us, and to demonstrate the love of God, not only with our words but also in our lives.

We must also always be on guard against a cultural imperialism which confuses the values of our

society with the values of the Gospel itself. Empiricism, capitalism, and denominationalism are ideas and values we have wedded to the Gospel and implanted in our witness. We must remember that our witness is to Jesus Christ; let those who are now in Christ determine how this new life best accommodates to their cultural life. What is more, we must leave room for being instructed by those we have taught in the past. We have a limited perspective of God, and we should be willing to sit at the feet of those whom we have instructed, to listen, and to learn.

THE AUTHENTIC PROCLAMATION

As it once was said, "God is cursed among the gentiles because of you" (Rms. 2:24), the same could now be said of us; for the evil of Christian history is sufficient for many to have an excuse for cursing the name of Jesus. And his name is often proclaimed in a distorted and manipulative manner, a manner which defies the very character of love which he represents. And if Christ is confused with our misdeeds and our distortion, many may have an excuse for rejecting him.

We call attention to this failing only so that we do not presume to limit God's salvation to those who have confessed Jesus Christ in this life. Not only have many been persecuted for "his sake," but we are also aware of the countless millions before and after him who never had the opportunity to hear his name. It is therefore presumptuous of us to limit God's love to our earthly understanding and vision.

All these cautions are not to suggest that there is a salvation outside of Jesus, for it is written, "No one comes to the Father but by me." We only suggest that God may open the door of salvation to those who have died and who subsequently come to him (Rms. 2:15-16).

But there is no doubt that where the Gospel is authentically preached, when past confusions do not inhibit and when all hidden meanings are revealed--so that God confronts the human heart in the Word--then the response of the heart reflects the character and seals the destiny of the human being. It was so

for those who met Jesus and for those who heard the apostles; it is so for those who meet God in the Word today. That is why an awful weight for correct exposition is laid upon our shoulders when we undertake the preaching and teaching of the Gospel. If we misuse it, we may be damned by others' blood. If we serve it, then the hearts of others are confronted by the living God, and those who turn away do so to their peril.

PART III: THE CHURCH AND ITS MINISTRIES

Every theology must eventually deal with the nuts and bolts of government, program₁ and administration. This section of the paper attempts to outline the practical and concrete functions of the Church as it carries out its commission.

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH

THE AUTHORITY OF GOVERNMENT

The word "presbyterian" does not denote a body of doctrine, but a form of government. By this designation, a Presbyterian church identifies itself as one locus of the Universal Church. It is a form of government which recognizes the authentic functions of the local and connectional aspects of the Church.

The presbyterian system of government is modeled on that of the first century Jewish synagogue, which is the primary form of organization in the New Testament. In this model, a council of elders governs the local congregation, with one elder in particular functioning as a hired preacher, teacher, pastor, and administrator;²⁴ a position very similar to the role of pastor today.

The benefit of the presbyterian system is that it allows for the greatest diversity in the Church because it recognizes that the True Church can be established wherever "two or more are gathered" in his name. If some group of believers is isolated by choice or by circumstance, the group might elect from its members elders, deacons, and pastors, through the laying on of hands and prayer, and still carry the

authority of the True Church. While we confirm the authority of the connectional church, we nevertheless recognize the authenticity of the congregational structure.

We affirm that the authority of government is resident in the Body of Christ, because Christ, who is our head, has made us equals in him (Matt. 23:8-12). When led by the Spirit, we are given the authority by God to structure our organizations, to oversee them, and to secure the authentic tradition through them. To this end it is incumbent upon a church to establish its form of government through a constitution and to instate an orderly means of administration.

THE CONNECTIONAL CHURCH

Even in the early days of the New Testament Church, with the congregations spread abroad and largely autonomous, the local congregations were in constant commerce with one another and were bound together by interest and fellowship. Major questions confronting the Church were brought before the Council in Jerusalem because the churches realized that they were bound together by doctrine and practice, however imperfectly this union was carried out. The reason that the connectional church is necessary is that we are all one in Christ, and our union in him makes it impossible for division to be an authentic representation of the Church.

However, it is impossible for us to overlook certain breaches of doctrine and Spirit in some institutional forms of the Church and to pretend that complete unity can be maintained at the price of disobedience. There are times when a respect for the Truth requires us to separate from an institution so that the Gospel, rather than the human will, may rule.

The Presbyterian Church functions with a corporate bishop, making every attempt to secure unity without voiding its scriptural warrant. In this system, representative assemblies of the elders and pastors form the judicatories of the church. The larger councils are given the authority for overseeing the smaller

ones in matters of doctrine, program, and discipline. The larger bodies also help guide the policies and programs of the whole church.

The corporate character of our government does not allow the larger judicatory to run the smaller's affairs, for that would be infringement. It allows only the larger to protect the smaller from error and from excess. In this hope we have committed ourselves to one another, knowing that at times even the larger body can be wrong.

THE LOCAL CONGREGATION

As it is appropriate for the local congregation to have its own representative form of government, the local body appoints elders and deacons from its membership and calls pastors to serve. The elders are elected so that they will be responsive to the will of the people, and they are chosen on the basis of character so that they will be responsive to the will of God. Their responsibility is a dynamic one, which is guided by the Spirit. Upon the elders rests the authority for policy, planning, and judgment. The pastor functions only as one among equals: as moderator, administrator, and executive of the council. However, the pastor has the biblical responsibility to give direction and moral guidance.

The deacons serve by planning and administering the various programmed responsibilities given to it by the council. Although the laity are to participate in every step of government and service, deacons, elders, and pastors are the only three ordained offices of the church, as this practice conforms to Scripture.

MINISTRIES OF THE CHURCH

OF THE CONNECTIONAL CHURCH

The necessity of the connectional church is nowhere more evident than in its missionary responsibilities. The problems that confront the world are so vast that it is beyond the ability of the local

church to give direction. It is for this reason that the ministries of service and proclamation are carried out by the connectional church when the need is great. When the church addresses regional, national, or international needs, the organizational structure of the connectional church enables an effective and programmatic ministry.

As most of these services and responsibilities are carried out on the local level, we shall discuss local ministries in detail and let the reader supply the macrocosmic application.

OF THE LOCAL CONGREGATION

As God's witness of fellowship is personal, the primary center for our worship and association is to be the local congregation. There our needs can be met as we minister to one another and as we minister to the world.

It is possible to say that the Church exists to worship God and that that is its primary function. But included in this duty is a responsibility to carry out the meaning of worship in practice. In order to secure the true worship of God, the Church has various ministries which aid the people in their approach to God and in their consequent obedience to him.

WORD AND SACRAMENT

The foundation of all consequent functions of the Church is the authentic proclamation of the Word, which challenges our defenses, confronts us in our disobedience, comforts us in our sorrow, and convinces us of the necessity of faith in Jesus Christ. As we hear the Good News of God's forgiveness, we are enabled to respond in worship and obedience. Because the Word is the foundation, it is necessary for the Church to secure the authentic proclamation. So, the Church trains and ordains its pastors in the Word of God, making sure that they are well grounded in the tradition of faith and not errant in doctrine

or practice. Through its teachers and pastors, the Church trains the rest of the Body in authentic living in Christ. Coincident with the ministry of the Word is the ministry of the Sacraments, which is the tangible expression of our worship and communion. Because the sacraments are a medium of encounter, it is necessary that the Church see that they are rightly administered. They should reflect the character of our fellowship and not be abused in any way. Therefore, the Church ordains its elders and pastors to this duty, training them in the meaning and proper use of the sacraments.

MINISTRY TO THE BODY

As a church cannot worship if it is divided,²⁵ we are called to bind up wounds and to look after one another. A church appoints elders and deacons and calls pastors to fulfill these responsibilities. Specifically, the elders and pastors are charged with the oversight of the membership. They are called to heal dissension, to gently reprove, admonish, and exhort; and if need be, to judge, so that our fellowship may not be blemished by unrepentant sin. The pastor is especially called to counsel the distressed and troubled and to lead the congregation into deeper fellowship of love.

As our care is to be material as well as spiritual, the deacons are appointed to see that no one in the congregation goes without the necessities of life and to meet extraordinary needs that arise within the congregation.

MINISTRY TO THE WORLD

As the consequence **of worship is a changed life, it is essential for the Body to reconcile the outside community through the witness of word and deed.** When we are converted from selfish preoccupations, we are converted to God and to service to others. Therefore, the local congregation fulfills its duty by meeting the needs of those around it.

The Spirit empowers all the members of the Body for an evangelistic outreach, and through

fellowship we are encouraged to tell others what Jesus has done in our lives. Through exhortation and program, a church impels its members to give of their time, talents, and resources to missions and charities. This witness may be carried out through soup kitchens, battered women's shelters, prison ministries, housing projects, job banks, job training, and by working with local governments to secure these objectives in legislation.

A church calls all its members to sacrifice and to service. It is clear that without this concrete manifestation of faith, the meaning of salvation has not been realized in the human heart, and our witness of words will make no sense.

THE CHARACTER OF WORSHIP

The true worship of God must be reflected in all its consequents, and we hope that through these ministries described above God will reach us and the world. The way true worship is established is not easy to define. Ultimately, it depends upon God drawing near to us before we can draw near to God. Our worship is one of response, usually of praise and thanksgiving, filled with psalms, hymns, and prayers. Only in the context of devotion can true worship take place.

Therefore, it is essential that a congregation do everything possible to secure an environment conducive to worship. This responsibility is evident in everything from the ordering of the service to the use of art, music and ritual. It is paramount that every opportunity be made for the participation of the people, especially in prayers, during worship. For worship is not a passive event, but one which involves the entire being.

Because we are so diverse in nature, our worship of God may have various styles and settings. From stained glass to blue grass, creative dance to High Mass--we must be careful not to judge the various means which God has elected for our enjoyment of him.

But it is also essential that the life of the congregation reflects in its expression an authentic worship of God. Through this worship, we are given the vision of a transformed society that conforms to the image of God. When slave and free, Jew and Gentile, rich and poor, male and female worship together as equals, it would be wrong of us to accept any other standard for society. This vision motivates our call for justice in the world. It is a vision that disrupts and comforts all at once, for we see in it that God has no favorites but that we are all one in Christ Jesus. If God so values us, how are we to value one another?

SPECIFIC ISSUES

There are issues which face the world today that the Church cannot leave unaddressed. They demand our attention and call for a decision. To remain silent is to acquiesce to present wickedness; to do nothing is to give tacit consent to its continuance. Among these issues are military spending and nuclear might; poverty and economic justice; and racial and sexual discrimination.

The first two issues are intertwined and must be considered together: The world is so concerned with nuclear might that its trust in power has become idolatrous. We stand on the brink of annihilation, and yet our arms race is fueled by the fear of the people that total destruction is not enough and by the illusion that peace and security can be had through power and not through justice. God warned Israel and Judah that peace and security would not be gained through alliances or through mighty implements of war (Is. 31:1-3), but that peace could be found only in the Lord and that the Lord requires justice for his people to have peace.

We cannot overcome our insecurity by the accumulation of many weapons. Our trust must be in the Lord, and we must find peace in him in spite of worldly insecurities. If chariots would not save Israel, neither will we be saved by many warheads. But the Lord has promised to protect the nation that pursues justice in spite of the risk. Our nation wavers on the fence: will we spend money on poverty and economic development or will we fuel the fires of our fears and neglect the poor? Our survival is in the balance.

Already we are reaping the consequences of our idolatry: our budget deficits threaten to destroy our nation economically, while we go blithely on building weapons of war.

There is a just remedy built on the secure foundation of trust in God: it is to do right in spite of risk. If we spent half as much on economic development of the Third World as we do on weapons, we might erase the cause of our uneasiness and increase our stability and security in the world. We might even convince the Russians of our good will and dedication to the poor; and by our overtures of peace invite them to join with us in this struggle for the common good. An idolatrous trust in military might is ironic in that it diminishes our security rather than increases it. Unless we realign our loyalties, we will certainly be destroyed as Israel and Judah were destroyed for their unrighteousness. Our trust must be in the Lord and not in arms of flesh.

The injustices of racial and sexual prejudice are spiritually akin. While the laws exist to end discrimination, they are not enforced; so justice does not go forth. The government needs to be pressured by the Church to assume its responsibility so that justice prevails in the land. We have in this situation of indifference clear evidence that the existence of a law is not enough to ensure equality. What is lacking is the conviction to live by its spirit and intent. Therefore, the Church must be in the forefront of the action, evidencing its conviction in proclamation, not only in the just remedy but in the necessity of conversion. It is this relationship to God, in Jesus Christ, which provides the foundation for subsequent transformation of spiritual and moral values. We have in our present example a clear indication that when law is followed to the exclusion of its spiritual intent, justice has a hollow ring. Therefore, the Church must condemn the evils of racial and sexual prejudice, calling people into account for their sinful attitudes of superiority and disdain. It must be clearly said that God's love cannot abide with our hatreds, nor can we devalue those whom God loves. But we call to repentance all who are infested with selfish fears, and we proclaim a God who forgives and who changes our corrupt hearts from hatred to love. And finally the Church provides the converted with direction, to show how we should now live this newly found friendship with God in our dealings with others.

Lastly, we must continually confess our constant conflict with culture. We are at war with widely held and disseminated values that subconsciously infect and subliminally encourage the devaluation of

human worth. We are daily assaulted by pornography in advertising and in theater of all forms, and these popular media of "entertainment" espouse values that are foreign to Christ. We are taught to see men and women as the objects of sexual passion and desire, and not as human beings in their own right.

The manipulation of our sexual identity and the encouragement of all forms of greed and lust have a profound but subtle influence upon our culture. How can sexual discrimination end, when we are taught to see men and women as tools to be manipulated to fulfill our designs? How can we give up materialism when daily we are assaulted and tantalized with visions of MORE! We are encouraged in selfishness and self-indigence on every score. These "servants" of culture stimulate our baser instincts and do not frame for us worthy values. These satanic influences accelerate the decay of our society, and if these values become the standard of our existence, our culture shall surely be destroyed. Against all immorality and depravity, we must take a stand! Through legislation and advocacy, we must work to remove such inhumanness from our Shores; and by the proclamation of Christ, implant in human hearts and minds the vision of perfect excellence which is the measure of God's righteous and holy love.

To this task we dedicate ourselves: our beings, hearts, and minds.

EPILOGUE

This paper has attempted to communicate the essential meanings of the author's faith and its implications for life. I hope it has resonated with its readers. Much has been left unsaid that is longing to be said because brevity has been the commission. Thus, a few brush strokes must create the impression of a whole, as in a Zen painting. I hope they have not been too sparsely placed.

NOTES

¹Reinhold Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, 2 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons,

1964), 1:17.

²Hendrikus Berkhof, Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Study of the Faith, trans. Sierd Woudstra (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1973), pp. 105-6.

³H. Richard Niebuhr, The Meaning of Revelation (London: The Macmillan & Co., 1941), p. 69.

⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 40-41.

⁵Gustaf Aulen, The Faith of the Christian Church (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1960), p. 37.

⁶Berkhof, p. 125.

⁷*Ibid.*

⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 140-47.

⁹R. Niebuhr, 1:17.

¹⁰Karl Rahner, Theological Investigations, vol. 5: Later Writings (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1966), p. 205.

¹¹Wolfhart Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977), pp. 320-21.

¹²Emil Brunner, Dogmatics, vol. 3: The Christian Doctrine of the Church, Faith, and the Consummation, trans. David Cairns (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), p. 12.

¹³C.K. Barrett, The Epistle to the Romans, Harper's New Testament Commentaries (New York: Harper and Row, 1957), p. 170.

¹⁴Gabriel Fackre, Word in Deed: Theological Themes in Evangelism (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1975), p. 77.

¹⁵Hendrikus Berkhof, Christ and the Powers, trans. John Yoder (Scottsdale, Penn.: Herald Press, 1962), pp. 22-23.

¹⁶Clinton Morrison, The Powers that Be: Earthly Rulers and Demonic Powers in Romans 13:1-7 (Naperville, Ill.: Alec R. Allenson, Inc., 1960), p. 45.

¹⁷Berkhof, Christ and the Powers, pp. 30-31.

¹⁸John Bright, A History of Israel, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972),

¹⁹David O. Moberg, The Church as a Social Institution: The Sociology of American Religion (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1962), pp. 379-80.

²⁰Ibid., pp. 100-101.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid., p. 52.

²³Ibid., pp. 179-81.

²⁴Martin Dibelius and Hans Conzelmann, The Pastoral Epistles, Hermeneia--a critical and historical commentary on the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), pp. 54-56.

²⁵Paul W. Hoon, The Integrity of Worship: Ecumenical and Pastoral Studies in Liturgical Theology (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971), p. 103.

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