

**THE HEAVENLY GOOD OF EARTHLY WORK:
THE NATURE OF WORK IN ITS
INSTRUMENTAL, RELATIONAL AND
ONTOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS**

Darrell T. Cosden

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
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UNIVERSITY OF ST. ANDREWS

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DIMENSIONS**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF DIVINITY
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**



DARRELL T. COSDEN

**ST. ANDREWS, SCOTLAND, UNITED KINGDOM
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DEDICATION

This thesis is especially dedicated to the Christian believers in the countries of the Former Soviet Union; without whom I never would have thought to write it.

DECLARATIONS

I, Darrell Thomas Cosden, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately 99,000 words in length, has been written by me, that it is the record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

Date 9 March 1998 Signature of Candidate _____

I was admitted as a research student in June, 1995 and as a candidate of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in January, 1996; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St. Andrews between 1995 and 1998.

Date 9 March 1998 Signature of Candidate _____

I hereby certify that the candidate has fulfilled the conditions of the Resolution and Regulations appropriate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of St. Andrews and that the candidate is qualified to submit this thesis in application for that degree.

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PREFACE

My love for the Church of Jesus Christ and particularly for the study of theology began when I was but a lad of thirteen. During weekly youth group meetings and Sunday School classes, while searching for the eschatological “signs of the times” with the Bible in one hand and a newspaper in the other, I cut my theological eye-teeth. My interest more specifically in theological ethics began later in 1988, when as a third year seminary student I became disillusioned with “theology” and began to ask myself, my faculty and friends at Denver Seminary and Grace Church of Aurora, and God, what all of this had to do with real life. While seeking an answer to this question I again fell in love with theology, and this time also with ethics.

My interest in a theology of work began while I was living in Moscow, in what was then the Soviet Union. There I daily experienced life in a society where work was by and large meaningless for the lives of the workers, where the structures for carrying out work were broken almost beyond hope, and where compensation for work was mostly non-existent. Likewise I found that the Church there had little idea of whether or how daily work was related to one’s individual or corporate spiritual life, to one’s fellow humans, to creation, to God, or to eternity. These experiences then, in both the Soviet Church and the broader Soviet society drove me to an exploration of work in its broader theological context.

In highlighting the importance of these few life experiences however, I would not want to under-value the contributions of others to my life and to this project. I want to begin by thanking my teachers at Bryan College who believed in me and were the first to give me the courage to truly become a student. Likewise I want to thank my teachers at Denver Seminary for giving me the foundational theological tools with which to work. Further, I would like to thank the Donetsk Christian University (Ukraine) and the students there for allowing me in the classroom to try out many of the ideas which have gone into this thesis. Your passionate interactions and challenges have proven invaluable to me. Next, I want to thank the faculty of St. Mary’s College / University of St. Andrews for your interaction and encouragement. I am particularly thankful for the invitation to participate with several of you in discussions with Jürgen Moltmann on his eschatology. (Following from this I would like to thank Professor Moltmann for allowing me to discuss with him some of my ideas about both his theology and work.)

I would also like to give a special thanks to my doctoral supervisor at the University of St. Andrews, Michael Keeling, who has mentored me academically and been a true friend to me and my family. Thank you for being a model of what a Christian and academic supervisor should be. Thank you for your constant help and encouragement academically, personally and spiritually.

Next, I would like to thank those who have made it logistically and financially possible for me to write this thesis. Thanks to the leadership of International Teams for

allowing me and my family to have this study assignment. Thanks to our support team for your monthly financial gifts and regular prayer for us and our work. Thanks to the folks at C.A.R.E. (and E.D.I.) for contributing a grant toward our tuition costs. But especially, I would like to thank God for Grandpa Harter whose foresight and disciplined saving provided the trust fund from which we have paid most of our university fees. (One day in eternity we will thank Grandpa Harter personally.)

Of course, I would not have been able to write this thesis without the ongoing support of my family. Thanks Mom and Dad for always encouraging me to go for my dreams, and thanks Dad for being a great example in our family of the balance between work and play. Thanks Kristy (my wife) for your constant support and enthusiasm for this project. Thanks for putting up with me over the last few years. Likewise, thanks Brenton and Kayleigh for never allowing me to lose sight of the real stuff of day to day living.

Finally, I would like to thank God for giving me this opportunity to live and study at St. Andrews. As a child dedicating my life to the Lord Jesus Christ, I could never in my wildest dreams have imagined that he would so lead me and allow me such a privilege as this. For all of the possibilities both realized and yet to come, I thank you my God and my Savior.

ABSTRACT

Darrell T. Cosden

University of St. Andrews

Thesis: "The Heavenly Good of Earthly Work: The Nature of Work in its
Instrumental, Relational, and Ontological Dimensions"

The thesis argues that human work is a transformative activity which essentially consists of three dynamically interrelated dimensions: the instrumental, relational, and ontological dimensions. By these, along with work being an end in itself, the worker's and others' needs are providentially met; believers' sanctification is occasioned; and workers express, explore and develop their humanness while building up their natural, social and cultural environments to both protect and produce the order of this world and of the one to come.

The first part shows that past and present theological evaluations of work are best understood according to this threefold description. Work's threefold nature is shown to correspond with Scripture (although here the instrumental is mainly discussed); the Patristic understanding opens up reflection toward work's ontology; and the Reformation particularly develops further the relational and ontological dimensions. In the modern Roman Catholic understanding, work's threefold nature does appear, although as seen in *Laborem Exercens*, the relational is given hierarchical priority over the instrumental. As modern Protestants revise old and explore new approaches, work's threefold understanding also emerges. However, the dimensions need further interrelated development, and the ontological needs to be more adequately expounded.

The second part of the thesis develops work's ontology. A teleological framework is first established in dialogue with Alasdair MacIntyre and Oliver O'Donovan showing that eschatological and protological purposes and ends are essential for understanding a thing's nature (constitutionally and ethically). This builds toward a theological anthropology where an interpretive survey and interaction with Colin Gunton's anthropology highlights the necessity of relational and functional concepts. The ontology of work is further developed in dialogue with Jürgen Moltmann's anthropology. Work is shown to be a fundamental facet of created human existence, initially a part of God's creation, and in the resurrection a fundamental part of God's coming new creation. Finally, the overall proposal, a definition of work, redraws the boundaries for a theology of work, and functions as a dynamic model for ethically evaluating work.

INTRODUCTION

According to Pope John Paul II the “key, probably the essential key, to the whole social question” is to be found in the phenomenon that we call human work.¹ He means that while the solution to humanity’s social ethical problems will be sought through our gradually “making life more human”, this humanization process itself will be accomplished primarily through our human work. Thus, not surprisingly human work “acquires fundamental and decisive importance.”²

For Pope John Paul II this high estimation of the significance of work stems not only from its practical consequences. It also derives from work’s nature as “a perennial and fundamental” aspect of human existence on earth. Likewise, since it is so grounded in human existence, the activity which we call work becomes central to the life and mission of the Church. Work, through its connection to man, becomes a part of “the primary and fundamental way for the Church”. This means that work is “always relevant and constantly demands renewed attention and decisive witness.”³

The conviction that the phenomenon of human work must occupy at least part of the center stage in current social ethics is likewise argued for by the American sociologist Robert Bellah. In his ground-breaking book *Habits of Heart*, (1985) after extensively evaluating the social ills in American life stemming from modernist individualistic attitudes, Bellah in his conclusion suggests that “work that is intrinsically interesting and valuable is one of the central requirements for a revitalized social ecology.” (p.288.) Bellah further argues that for American society to be positively transformed (and we would suggest any society shaped by the values of

¹ Laborem Exercens, (1981), 3.

² Ibid., 3.

³ Ibid., 1.

modernity) there must be a deeply rooted change in the way that the culture understands the meaning of work. Simply fine-tuning our essentially modern economic institutions alone will not be enough. (p.289.) What is needed more fundamentally is a reevaluation of what we understand human work to be.

Of course, one might want to challenge any or all of these claims. However, generally speaking they do suggest the appropriateness and importance of efforts focused on probing the deeper nature and meaning of work. Clearly for Christian theology these observations mean that both a continued and a deeper theological reflection on the nature of work and on an ethics of work is always in order. In as much as human work (with human life in general) is constantly changing, so too will we need to constantly press ourselves for more nuanced and insightful theological understandings of work's nature and ultimate meaning.

TOWARD A CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY OF WORK

A Deepening Theological Understanding of Work

In this thesis we are accepting the challenge that both the broader Christian Church and the societies which today are part of what we call the "global village" need to change the way that we understand the nature and meaning of work. We suggest and will be demonstrating in this thesis, that the resources needed for this change can be found in Christian theology. This does not mean that our task is simply to draw together and then restate what has already been said theologically about work, as helpful as that in itself might be. Rather, what is needed is a further probing, and where necessary, addition to the available resources. This thesis then, is intended to be an exploration of and contribution to a deeper theological understanding of work.

Specifically, rather than offering a narrower work ethics or simply random theological insights for work, we are working within and toward a more comprehensive theological construct called a "theology of work." What however, is a theology of work and how is it different from other theological reflection on work or a work ethics?

The Concept of a 'Theology of Work: A Genitive Theology

Although theological reflection on work is as old as Christian theology itself, the concept of a 'theology of work' is a quite recent development. Lothar Roos comments in his article *On a Theology and Ethics of Work*, that "French [Catholic] theologians after World War II were the first to ask whether there was a 'theology of secular realities' and thus also a 'theology of work.'"⁴ Catholic theologian M.-D. Chenu, in one of the first attempts at a theology of work, pointed out that the phrase itself had only been "recently-coined".⁵ In 1955 he claimed that it had only been around for five or six years.⁶

The creation of this new phrase, a theology of work, by Catholic theologians as a new way toward a theological understanding of the nature and meaning of work, introduced, according to Miroslav Volf, "an important shift in the theological approach to the problem of work."⁷ This shift is what points to the difference between a theology of work and other theological reflection on work, or an ethics of work. Basically, unlike other approaches, a theology of work attempts to be a comprehensive theological study, dogmatically reflecting on the nature and place of the phenomenon of work in God's universe; that is, in both human life and in the non-human creation. It is a theological exploration of work itself undertaken by exploring work with reference to a multitude of doctrines within a systematic theology. A theology of work thus defined is a genitive theology which methodologically means that it is a theology "of *something*", or, a comprehensive theological explanation of something.⁸

⁴ Roos, (1984), p.102. Here Roos is referring to G Thils, M.-D. Chenu, and H. Rondet.

⁵ Chenu, (1963), p.2.

⁶ Ibid., p.3.

⁷ Volf, (1991), p.71.

⁸ For additional discussion of the concept and possibility of a 'genitive theology' compare Juros, (1984), pp.138-139 with the discussion by Volf, (1991), pp. 75-76.

We have adopted Volf's perspective that a 'genitive theology' (particularly of work) is different from, for instance, a theology of liberation. The difference lies in its nature and methodology. In the latter, the object 'liberation' becomes elevated to the level of *the* methodological principle for the whole of theological reflection. (Volf p.75.) In this case

A theology of work then, is not simply a discussion of how one should carry out work, or a discussion of how to resolve specific difficulties and problems faced in the working world. This would essentially be an ethics of work. Nor is a theology of work satisfied with simply making theological comments about work as they arise within a discussion of some other broader point of doctrine. This would constitute a theological reflection on work but not a theology of work which is a much broader concept. Rather, a theology of work is a recent theological methodology developed for comprehensively exploring the phenomenon of work itself as a part of created reality.

Focusing our Theology of Work Explorations

Interestingly, since the advent of the theology of work model / genre in the 1950's there have been relatively few explicit attempts to produce one. Articles calling for a new theology of work abound and these most often suggest particulars which the author wants included in the new construct. However, one is hard pressed to find but a few substantial systematic examples in the genre.

In our view Miroslav Volf in *Work in the Spirit* has produced the most comprehensive, systematic, and the most theologically developed "theology of work" thus far. (This is interesting since Volf is himself a Protestant borrowing a Catholic category.⁹) Its scope and depth, systematically developed, surpass anything yet attempted within the genre. Volf has thus firmly established that the very methodology

Volf states (p.75.), building on his analysis in "Doing and Interpreting", (1983) that a "Theology of liberation is not a theological reflection on a particular aspect of human life (a genitive theology), but a new way of doing theology as a whole." A theology of work is best understood as a genitive theology rather than a 'contextual' theology in that "it does not seek to make work the governing theological theme, but to treat it from a dogmatic perspective." (Volf, 1991, p.75.)

⁹ Volf, both a Pentecostal and Presbyterian, has taught theology at Fuller Theological Seminary in California and theology and ethics at the Evangelical Theological Faculty in Osijek in his native former Yugoslavia. Volf undertook his doctoral work under Jürgen Moltmann at Tübingen where his project was to theologically examine Karl Marx's understanding of work. *Work in the Spirit* is the result of roughly ten years of research and teaching on the question of human work.

of a theology of work is useful and appropriate; rather than simply promising (Chenu). Therefore, we propose that any further explorations toward a “theology of work”, while not needing to agree with Volf, must nevertheless take into account what he has argued.

These judgements, combined with the fact that his theological orientation is quite similar to our own, means that Volf’s theology of work functions both as a kind of orientation point and point of departure for our thesis. Here we want to explain what this means, and to make more explicit the relationship between Volf’s book and our thesis.

From time to time in our thesis we will be referring to Volf’s theology of work. However, by way of introduction there are basically four areas that we want to highlight which have helped us to focus our own research into a theology of work.

Work and the New Creation. The overall intention of Volf’s theology of work is twofold. He wants to move away from the traditionally Protestant “vocational understanding of work developed within the framework of the doctrine of creation to a pneumatological one developed within the framework of the doctrine of the last things.” (p. ix.) Thus, Volf wants to reconceive work first by swapping the older static concept of calling (vocation) for the more dynamic concept of *charisma* (gifts), and second he wants to shift the focus of the discussion of work from the doctrine of creation (protology) (where it has been discussed almost exclusively) toward the doctrine of the last things (eschatology).

For our exploration in this thesis we have specifically taken up the second rather than first of these called for shifts. Of course, whether the category of gift better serves the world of work than vocation is an interesting question. Volf is convinced that it does, but his argumentation and preliminary reflections on the subject throughout the book suggest that he, or someone else, needs to do further theological work in this area. In addition to whether or not the vocational understanding of work is really a “dead hand”, (p.vii.) a more fundamental question is whether the gifts and talents used by

everyone in ordinary work are really the same in kind as the specifically “spiritual” gifts in the New Testament?¹⁰ Although Volf may have pointed us in a potentially fruitful direction, more theological evaluation will be needed for working out the particulars.

Our concern however, lies not with this question, but rather with his call for a theology of work based on the concept of new creation. (p.79.) In his preface Volf admits that his reflection on eschatology in the book is “rather terse.” (p.ix.) He does later reveal that the “eschatological realism” that he is operating with basically follows Moltmann’s eschatology. (pp. ix, 79.) Yet, Volf does not provide a detailed justification for his adopting this eschatology, nor does he intend to provide a detailed unfolding (beyond pp. 89-102.) of its implications for understanding human work. (p.79.) Since he also states that developing a full-scale eschatology (something which he is not intending to do) may help people to understand him better, and, since he has likewise suggested that his book is a rough draft and that others are free to build their own structures upon its foundation, we have chosen in our thesis specifically to provide a more detailed unfolding of the implications of this eschatological realism for a theology of work. (pp. ix, viii, x.) The second half of our thesis works toward this goal.

Work and Theological Anthropology. Another important section in the book for our purposes is Volf’s discussion of work in relation to human beings (within nature). (Ch. 5.) Earlier in the book when discussing the inadequacy of only considering work ethically in terms of spiritual sanctification, Volf states

Ethical reflection on work traditionally done in the framework of the doctrine of sanctification also needs to be supplemented with reflection from the perspective of anthropology. (p.74.)

In chapter 5 Volf takes up this challenge but also admits that a more comprehensive theology of work “would need to discuss these issues much more exhaustively than I am able to do here.” (p.123.) Herein lies another point of departure for our thesis. While essentially agreeing with Volf’s conclusions in this chapter, we want to

¹⁰ For some initial thoughts in this area see: Hardy, (1993), pp.191-196.

specifically explore and further develop the theology upon which these types of conclusions are built. Again, the second half of our thesis, while exploring and further developing an understanding of work with respect to the new creation, is likewise devoted to probing and developing work more deeply within a theological anthropology.

The Criteria for our Christian Theology of Work. In chapter 3, when discussing the “crafting” of a theology of work, Volf outlines what he calls the “formal features” of his own theology of work based on the concept of new creation. (p.79.) Here we present a summary of these “formal features” for we have adopted them as the generic criteria for guiding and evaluating our own project of a Christian theology of work. We mean that we are using these features firstly, as a way to define and focus more precisely what we mean methodologically by the phrase “a theology of work”, and secondly, we will constantly be working in our thesis toward the definitive standards established by each of these criteria.

The first feature which Volf outlines is that the theology of work which he, and we, are espousing is to be Christian. This means “that it is developed on the basis of a specifically Christian soteriology and eschatology, essential to which is the anticipatory experience of God’s new creation and a hope of its future consummation.” (p.79.) What we want to do in broad terms then, is to build our theology of work from within a Christian metaphysics. Specifically, we (like Volf) want to take the theology of the new creation as the goal toward which our theology of work is oriented.

The second feature suggested is that a “theology of work based on the concept of new creation purports to be a *normative* understanding of work.” (p.81.) Here Volf argues that we are concerned with what all “human beings *should* desire their work to be.” (p.81.)

New creation is the end of all God’s purposes with the universe, and as such, either explicitly or implicitly is the necessary criterion of all human action that can be considered good. For this reason, normative principles are implied in the concept of new creation, which should

guide Christians in structuring the reality of human work. (p.81.)

Thus, normative means that the prescriptions involved in our theology of work are to be universal in scope, growing out of God's ultimate purposes with the universe.

The next feature which Volf suggests is that a theology of work should be transformative. It should be able to lead and move the experience of work towards its normative ethical implications. Here, "its task is not merely to interpret the world of work in a particular way, but to lead the present world of work 'towards the promised and hoped-for transformation' in the new creation." (p.83.) As such, the practical consequences (either positive or negative) of our theologizing on work must be constantly and carefully considered.

Volf's fourth feature is that a "theology of work based on the concept of new creation needs to be *comprehensive*." (p.84.) Here it needs to be able to answer "how human work is related to all of reality: to God, human beings, and their nonhuman environment." (p.84-85.) Hence, it needs to be "a *global* theology... reflecting on work in a global context which is "cross-cultural," "cross-historical" and "pan-human". (p.85, 86.)

Finally, Volf argues that a theology of work must be able to take seriously any society's historical changes and development. It must allow for the particulars present within "*individual cultural units*." (p.86.) Hence, the "variety of cultural forms and their partial preservation in the new creation implies that a diversity of valid theologies of work conditioned partly by the character and the understanding of work in a given culture could exist." (p.86.) This leads him to the position that his (and here our) theology of work should be contextualized for industrializing and industrialized societies (while nevertheless having a "universalizing tendency"). (p.87.)

What is Work? Our final point of departure with reference to Volf's theology of work is related to what we mean by work. Work is a notoriously difficult concept to define. Most of us tacitly sense the meaning of work but when we are asked to define it we begin to stumble. Volf's definition suggests that,

Work is honest, purposeful, and methodologically specified social activity whose primary goal is the creation of products or states of affairs that can satisfy the needs of working individuals or their co-creatures, or (if primarily an end in itself) activity that is necessary in order for acting individuals to satisfy their needs apart from the need for the activity itself. (pp.10-11.)

While sympathetic to and finding merit with this definition, we have concluded that it is less than adequate. Our main criticism is that here work is finally only an instrumental activity (even though it is also called an end in itself). Why we find this to be unsatisfactory will be more clearly seen shortly when we lay out our threefold hypothesis for this thesis. Here however, our point is that work is defined as always undertaken to satisfy some need. While not denying that work necessarily does always satisfy some need, we suggest that there is more to the very nature (and thus definition) of work than its instrumentality however depicted.

When Volf discusses work as “an end in itself” he has captured an important and necessary insight. However, how he tries to make this concept meaningful we find slightly less satisfying. Volf states that,

an activity cannot lose its instrumental character and still be considered work. But one can still choose things for their own sake under the condition of their instrumentality. (p.196.)

We find this idea both helpful and true. However, when he further tries to clarify what this means we find a problem. Volf argues of work that “while it cannot objectively be done as an end in itself, subjectively it can be experienced as such.” (p.196.) We however, want to suggest (and will in our hypothesis) that work “is” both an instrumental activity and an end in itself. It is not simply that work “is” an instrumental activity which we can somehow experience “as if it were” really an end in itself. Again, Volf’s basis for this experience of work as an end in itself, that “work is a fundamental dimension of human existence”, we accept and will demonstrate in our thesis to be true. (p.197.) However, precisely because we accept this we do not believe

that Volf has to relegate work “as an end in itself” solely to the category of subjective experience. Of course we can have this experience, but we suggest that this is possible precisely because work really “is” also an end in itself.

We will return to and defend this idea later in the thesis. Here however, our concern is with how this conception skews Volf’s definition of work. Ultimately we believe that a definition (or conception) of work is needed, and is available, which can meaningfully preserve both work’s instrumentality and its non-instrumentality in a creative way without subordinating either aspect to the other. How then to find this definition without falling into self-contradiction is another important task of this thesis.

THE QUEST FOR A THEOLOGICAL DEFINITION OF WORK

Here in our introduction we are purposely not, as such, going to offer a definition of work. Strictly speaking, for this thesis that would be begging the question. Rather, here we offer a hypothesis concerning what might for Christian theology be a way to describe work’s essential nature and meaning. Now, we believe that in the body of this thesis we have demonstrated the truth and usefulness of this hypothesis. This however, should not diminish the fact that at this point in the process we are simply presenting the hypothesis as an idea to be tested.

The Threefold Nature of Work: Instrumental, Relational, and Ontological

The hypothesis which we will be exploring and testing in this thesis is that the normative theological understanding of work is best construed threefold as a dynamic inter-relationship of instrumental, relational, and ontological aspects. Actually, as we have conceived it we are here presenting a double hypothesis. The first part says that truly human work, work as it ought to be, is constituted by each of these three aspects (instrumental, relational, and ontological) existing together in a mutual and interdependent relationship. To test this idea we will look at and evaluate how theology past and present has attempted to understand work. We will examine, from the

Church's vast theological resources and especially from its theological reflections on work, whether something like each of these aspects appear and how they are related, or, whether the things which do arise call for a summarization according to these three dynamically related categories. This task forms the first half of our thesis.

The second part of our hypothesis, the part which will especially need further exploration and testing theologically is that work is, and must be, construed as ontological. Of course, if this part of the hypothesis fails so too will the first part. Therefore, this part of our hypothesis must be taken up, and shall be specifically in the second half of our thesis.

Why however, in opposition to Volf's and other definitions, are we so concerned that work in its very essence be construed as something more than only an instrumental activity? We have two answers to this question. First, we grant that work always serves some end, it is always an instrumental activity in that it will necessarily always have some effect outside of itself (be that on the worker, others or nature, be that spiritual or mundane, be that personal or social in nature). If however, work by definition is only a means through which we achieve some subsequent end or effect which lies beyond the activity of work itself, then much, if not most, of our human life takes on only a secondary value. When this is the case, when work by definition is understood to be and is experienced as only a means to some other end, (economic, spiritual, social, or existential) then much of life loses its immediate and intrinsic value and thus its broader "existence" meaning. When this happens, human life with its activity ceases to be gift (a gift from God). Here, life itself becomes an object to be achieved and in the process of working to achieve it persons become cut off from themselves and their lives. One primary result of life and work experienced as only a means to an end is the frantic and panicked form of existence which so characterizes our contemporary world.¹¹

¹¹ This critique of work as only a means-to-some-end is similar to Karl Marx's conclusions concerning "work as a means" which will be considered shortly.

We further suggest that this dehumanization will happen even if we may to some degree be able to subjectively experience our productive activity or work "as if it were" an end in itself. If work is not also by definition something more than an instrumental activity, (an end in itself), then any basis for experiencing it as such is sacrificed. The concept "as if it were" cannot help us, for to be ultimately authentic (real) and thus truly meaningful our experience of reality must correspond in some way and to a significant degree to that which really is. Thus, we are suggesting that work both is and needs to be something other than only an instrumental activity, and experienced as such, if it is to be truly human in the fullest sense and truly Christian.

Our second answer to the question of why we are so concerned that work be construed as more than only an instrumental activity is that the theological evidence from our research has suggested to us that it is. Of course this is not a proof, but it does answer the question. As we have studied theology and the Church's theological reflections on work it has become clear to us, whether or not it was clear to those offering the reflections, that there is more to work by definition than only its results, however this might be conceived.

What however, do we mean by each of our three categories; instrumental, relational and ontological? First we shall consider what we mean by work's instrumental and relational aspects for these are the easiest to grasp.

The instrumental aspect of work is the most readily perceived, and it has been suggested that it is the aspect of work emphasized by John Locke, Adam Smith, Max Weber and almost all Americans.¹² Instrumentally, work is seen as a means to some end whether that be mundane, or, as is often the case in theology, spiritual. Instrumental in the mundane sense refers to work as a means to continued survival; that is, the provision of sustenance for ourselves, our dependants or other co-creatures. It also refers to work as a means for further economic expansion and growth. Here it is not the work itself which is in focus, but rather its product either used directly or indirectly as a way of securing more of life's necessities or wants.

¹² Raines, (1993), p.624.

Instrumentality in the spiritual sense refers to work as useful for some end in the maturing spiritual life. For example, the discipline which comes through working can be character building and thus a part of one's spiritual development. Further, by working one meets the needs of his or her fellow creatures and / or acquires the means necessary for acts of charity, the performance of which lessens the suffering of others and also contributes to one's own spiritual growth. Also, work as instrumental in the spiritual life becomes important as a platform and means for spreading the message of the Gospel, the message of faith. In as much as we grow spiritually through our obedient witness, work becomes a means to this spiritual end. In these respects work instrumentally involves more than mundane sustenance or raw economic growth. It becomes also a means for one's process of religious discipleship.

As distinguished from the instrumental, the relational aspect of work refers to work's aim toward appropriate social relationships and / or to some form of human existential realization and fulfillment. By social relationships we are referring to the way we humans structure work and its effect on our social order or structures. Here work is viewed as critical for the establishing right relationships in society. Right relationships could refer to equality or justice (however these are conceived) on a broad level, or it may have in view the interpersonal interaction between workers.

The existential realization and fulfillment of persons refers to that aspect of work which allows the worker to creatively explore and express herself. It relates to her being productive and making a contribution to the world. It relates to the realization of her potential as a human. This humanization involves her sense of satisfaction in and through work, and is necessarily linked with her very process of becoming. Herein lies the existential aspect of work; a person finds, or contributes to who they are and will be (as well as what the world is and will be) in the process of working.¹³

Of course the relational aspect of work thus explained might be considered merely

¹³ See Piper, (1957), p.178. Here Piper argues that Hegel introduced (as distinct from work's general usefulness) the idea that through work a person becomes truly human.

a sub-category of the instrumental. However, in contemporary reflections the relational aspect has received special attention and emphasis. It has of late been elevated to “a” if not “the” primary aspect of work. Therefore, since it has come to be treated separately and does highlight distinct aspects of work particularly needing attention in a theology and ethics of work, we will treat it in our thesis as separate but not dissimilar to the category of instrumentality.¹⁴

The ontological aspect of work, on the other hand, requires a section to itself, since it exists only by implication in most theological treatments of work.

The Ontology of Work

Admittedly, the ontological aspect of work which we are going to develop in this thesis is rather more difficult to envision than the other two aspects. Strictly speaking however, we have invented neither the term “ontological” to describe the nature of work, nor the ontology of work concept itself.¹⁵ Indeed, part of our argument is that something akin to our description of an ontology of work can be perceived in most theological (and philosophical) construals of work. The unique contribution of this thesis then, is not in the wider suggestion or even naming of the concept (although we have contributed here), but rather, it is that in this thesis we undertake a more sustained examination, and consequently that we offer a more comprehensive and coherent development of the idea (from systematic theology) than has yet been provided.

However, before suggesting the contours of our own theological understanding of the ontology of work it will be helpful to pause, and for the purpose of comparison and

¹⁴ For an example of the contemporary importance of the relational aspect of work see: Nash, (1986), pp.23-27.

¹⁵ For example, John C. Raines uses the term to describe how Karl Marx understood work. “Marx saw human work not as an instrument to gain something else –wealth or social status (as John Locke, Adam Smith, Max Weber and almost all Americans view work) – but as ontological. Specifically, for Marx, work is our species’ specific way of establishing and transforming ourselves, not just biologically and socially but also in terms of our self-understanding. For most Americans such a view of work is dangerous... Work it seems to us, is about productivity, wealth, and self-interest, not about the continuing evolution of the species.” Raines, (1993), p.624.

contrast, to briefly consider another's somewhat similar construal of an ontology of work. Here it is Karl Marx's conception of work which we will be considering for it in some ways is similar to the construct which we will be developing.

Karl Marx on Work. Beyond question, on issues dealing with political economy Karl Marx has been one of the most important figures in the contemporary world. Equally important however, have been his related reflections, developed within his anthropology, on the nature and essence of the phenomenon of human work. One does not need to look long in most contemporary philosophical or theological reflections on work to find either a negative or positive interaction with ideas which are essentially his.

So how it is that Marx's understanding of work might be termed ontological? To begin with, an important observation is that Marx saw work as more than simply a means to an economic end. He does not deny this instrumental aspect of work, but throughout his writings he argues and seeks to demonstrate that work is also and more profoundly about human social development and our self-realization as individuals and as a species.¹⁶ For Marx, work's ultimate significance lies in its being a specifically human and thus creative activity through which we realize ourselves and contribute to our own evolution, and related to this, through which we create a human world. For Marx (and many who have since followed his reasoning) what we are calling the relational aspect points to work's greater meaning and significance.

Yet, even with these deeper ethical concerns Marx is not yet presenting a view of work as ontological. Here, work is still only an instrument, a means to an end. (Albeit, it is an instrument which has far more significance than simply economic usefulness.) In

¹⁶ Central to Marx's concern are issues of a just social order which he argues will be achieved through work when labor is properly ordered to capital. His discussions of "alienation" in both the earlier Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, (Karl Marx, Frederick Engels: Collected Works, Vol. 3. pp.270-282.) as well as his later discussion of alienation in Grundrisse (McLellan, Marx's Grundrisse, (1971) pp.96-102.) illustrate this well.

Marx also believes that humanity's self-creation and self-realization will be achieved through work. In his earlier Third Manuscript, within his general critique of Hegel, Marx cites Hegel approvingly with reference to man's "self-creation" through work. (Marx, and Engels Works, Vol. 3. pp.332-333.) Also in Grundrisse a later work, he discusses labor's role in man's self-realization. (Marx, Grundrisse, (1973), pp.610-616.)

what way then can we say that Marx understood work to be ontological? To build our case we must look to Marx's anthropology.¹⁷ There is of course a debate about the degree to which Marx offers a unified and / or normative view of man and human nature. This important broader discussion notwithstanding, Marx nonetheless offers specific anthropological observations, and therein lies his conception of work which we have labeled as ontological. How so?

First, we return briefly to the idea of work as a means-to-an-end. We have already stated that for Marx work should not be understood as only a means to an economic end. This is because such work, (a feature of capitalist societies) will necessarily lead to alienation and will destroy the human. Interestingly however, according to Marx's logic such a critique would apply any time work is construed as only a means to an end. His observations and critiques of work-as-a-means, even though offered in the context of his broader discussions of alienation and work / forced labor and the division of labor in a capitalist economic system, would apply in any economic system and whether the end to which work is directed is economic or something else. (If work were simply a means to spiritual ends, or to relational ends it would likewise lead to destructive alienation).

On Marx's view, to avoid alienation work itself must be more than only a means to an end. When it is only a means (whatever the end), man, the species-being who is characterized by work, becomes alienated from "his own body", "nature outside him", his "spiritual / human being" and other men.¹⁸ Marx's argumentation demonstrating these points might seem strange to us, yet once grasped it becomes quite persuasive. Work construed or experienced only as a means (a belief and experience which he believes to be bound up with "political economies") is in direct opposition to our species-being; that is, to our very humanness.

Labor, life activity and productive life, indeed, first appear to man only

¹⁷ For good studies of Marx's anthropology see: Fromm, (1961), Ollman, (1971), and Plamenatz, (1975). See also: Bottomore, (1983), pp.214-217.

¹⁸ Kamenka, (1983), p.140. From Economico-Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844, First Manuscript - 'Alienated Labour'.

as a *means* to satisfy a need, the need of maintaining physical existence. Productive life, however, is species-life. It is life-begetting life. The whole character of a species – its species-character – is contained in the character of its life activity; and free conscious activity is the species-character of man. Life itself appears only as a *means* to life.

The animal is immediately one with its life activity. It does not distinguish itself from it. The animal is *its life activity*. Man makes his life activity itself into an object of his will and of his consciousness. He has conscious life activity. It is not a determination with which he merges directly. Conscious life activity distinguishes man directly from the life activity of the animal. It is only thereby that he is a species-being. Or rather he is only a conscious being – that is, his own life is an object for him – precisely because he is a species-being. Only for that reason is his activity free activity. Alienated labor reverses this relationship in such a way that man, just because he is a conscious being, makes his life activity, his *essence*, a mere means for his *existence*.¹⁹

Thus, for Marx, whenever work is only a means to an end and not also something more, it becomes alienating and thus something less than human.

We now move to our second related point with reference to Marx's anthropology which indicates that he understood work to be in some way "ontological". It has been observed that for Marx work constitutes our human essence.²⁰ The idea is that man is a species-being and it is work, man's "productive, creative activity" (as a combination of his physical and mental capacities) applied to nature which distinguishes him from animals and thus specifically makes him human.²¹ As Marx's later writing illustrates,

We presuppose labour in a form that stamps it as exclusively human. A spider conducts operations that resemble those of a weaver, and a bee puts to shame many an architect in the construction of her cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in

¹⁹ Ibid., pp.138-139.

²⁰ Volf, (1991), p.59.

²¹ Marx., *Grundrisse* (1973.) p.614. For a general discussion of work as that which distinguishes man from animals see: *Karl Marx, Frederick Engels: Collected Works*, Vol. 3. pp.275-277.

reality. At the end of every labour process, we get a result that already existed in the imagination of the labourer at its commencement.²²

Work is for humans a species-specific activity and is bound up with and provides the necessary basis for what it means for us to live as humans. That is, work is essentially our way of being humans rather than simply animals in the world. It is a useful activity but it also is more than this precisely because it is our starting point for a human rather than animal existence. It is a way of being which constitutes our humanness. Hence, it is the ontological condition and not simply the result of our humanness.

Marx clearly expresses this idea in yet another context when discussing the “simple” nature of work as a “human action with a view to the production of use value”. Here he assumes the instrumental value of work, (use value) but suggests that more fundamentally the labor process,

is the everlasting Nature-imposed condition of human existence, and therefore is independent of every social phase of that existence, or rather, is common to every such phase.²³

It could not be stated more succinctly. The concept “Nature-imposed” (with an upper case “N”) is the significant idea to notice here. A Christian might argue that prior to our historically developing existence God created us as, and to be, workers in nature. Marx however, in a move reminiscent of this idea suggests that “in the beginning”, prior to our socially and historically specific working experience, “Nature” created us to be workers, or has built into man the condition of work.²⁴ Work is thus understood as an a-priori and thus universal ground of man. It is a “thing” which contributes to man’s very constitution as man. Work is not simply an activity undertaken by man out of necessity. Rather, it is an activity without which he could not be human. Here we find Marx’s concept of work as ontological. It is the “Nature-imposed condition of human

²² Capital vol. 1 (Karl Marx, Frederick Engels: Collected Works. Vol. 35.), p.188.

²³ Ibid., p.194.

²⁴ Ibid., pp.193-194.

existence.”

It is not surprising then, because of these anthropological commitments, that Marx was able to identify and sustain discussions on what we have called work’s relational aspect. If work is ontological in the way that he has suggested, if it is the natural condition of human existence, it follows that its significance and meaning must ultimately lie in its relationship to human social and existential existence and not simply be bound up with its economic usefulness. Ultimately for Marx, work is conceived of practically as a hierarchical construct. The ontology of work (derived solely from natural or evolutionary anthropology) forms the basis for work’s relationality, and its economic nature, while not denied, is interpreted more restrictively in the light of its relationality. Here a descending hierarchical construct is established which carries with it many ethical implications.

Now, we are not here adopting Marx’s particulars with respect to an ontology of work. Nor however, are we totally rejecting them out of hand. Of course our own construct will differ from Marx’s since we are building it specifically within and upon a Christian theology and anthropology. However, this does not mean that we will necessarily oppose Marx’s, or anyone else’s, similar observations. If our theological ontology of work is true as we are suggesting, one would expect others to have observed the reality to which our construct points (even if their own formulations of it vary because of their different worldviews). Although we believe that our own position will better account for reality, and thus, will prove more true than Marx’s, we do not deny that there will be similarities between our unfolding construct and his.

For example, we recognize the logic of Marx’s hierarchical construal of work – ontological to relational to economic. However, we also do not ultimately find it satisfying as he has left it. We suggest, similar to Marx, that the ontology of work does initially provide the basis for work’s relational aspect, which in turn determines its instrumental aspect. Yet we suggest that it does so without then necessitating a hierarchy. We argue that the nature of the ontology of work is such that it places both

the relational and instrumental aspects on an equal, mutually restricting, plane while it also places itself on that same level. Thus, we might begin similarly to Marx, but rather than ending with a hierarchy, we suggest with our hypothesis that the three aspects of work must ultimately be seen as mutually interdependent. This is so even if the ontological aspect has a specific role which is logically prior to the others.

The Ontology of Work in this Thesis. Having thus here begun to explain our own understanding of the ontology of work, we now return to what we mean specifically with our theological formulation of an ontology of work. We will not give an exhaustive description of it here for indeed that is what remains to be done throughout the thesis. What we do offer at this point however, are the contours of a theological ontology of work as we shall be developing it.

Our use of the term “ontological” with reference to work is meant to suggest that work in its broadest richness is considered to be more than, or its fuller meaning is understood to incorporate but to transcend, both its instrumental and relational functions. As ontological, we speak of work as a thing in itself with its own intrinsic value apart from (but of course related to) these functions. More than simply seeing work’s combined practical uses as constituent of its essence, we understand work’s essential nature to be derived ontologically from its having been built into the fabric of creation by God. The person is a worker, not as an accident of nature but because God first is a worker and persons are created in his image. Humanity’s work however, is not identical to God’s but is specific to our created existence. Thus, to best understand humanity’s work it is essential to look specifically at theological anthropology and not just to God’s work.

In summary, it is this ontological dimension of work, not independently but along with its instrumental and relational functions, which ultimately gives work its definition and meaningful role in human life. Here we are suggesting that work includes but is more than the sum total of its functional parts. Thus, work is not simply to be defined descriptively from within a given culture, nor is its value simply to be determined by its

practical functions therein. Rather, work is understood to be more fundamental to created existence, an ontological reality, built by God into the very structures of human nature and thus, the natural order. Work, in as much as it is fundamental to humanness, “is” an end in itself. It is ontological.

Having here outlined the beginnings of what we mean by work’s instrumental, relational and ontological aspects we conclude our introduction. We are now ready to move into the first section of the thesis. Our main question in this section is how has the Church in its diversity of traditions come to understand work, and is our threefold understanding of it an acceptable way to describe what needs to be said?

Part 1

**WORK IN CHRISTIAN
THEOLOGY:
THE THREEFOLD NATURE OF WORK**

CHAPTER 1

WORK:

SCRIPTURE TO THE REFORMATION

SCRIPTURE ON THE NATURE AND MEANING OF WORK

To understand both what the Church has come to believe about the nature and meaning of work and how it has structured these thoughts, we must begin by briefly considering what the Bible says, directly and indirectly, about work. However, any serious inquiry into Scripture on these matters is immediately faced with several challenging methodological questions. How can one interrelate the view, or views, of work found in both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible? Is the information about work therein sufficient, or do the various traditions in the Bible sufficiently complement each other so that we may conclude from it anything normative about work's nature and meaning? Is a 'biblical theology' of work even possible, and if so, given our distance from the Biblical world, would it contribute anything to a contemporary theological understanding of work?

Miroslav Volf, speaking of the nature of the biblical materials specifically dealing with work (which he wants to keep as the building blocks for his theology of work) is concerned about the "scarcity of biblical materials, their limited relevance to the modern world of work, and their ambiguous nature."¹ Helmut Juros, in an attempt to safeguard a theology of work from ideological misuse, concludes that one's methodology should remain independent of biblical presumptions.² In addition to his

¹ Volf, (1991), p.78. For a similar perspective see: Nelson, (1954), p.35.

² Juros, (1984), pp.141-142.

methodological concerns, his reason for concluding this is that he sees within Christian history and tradition (including the Bible) too much contradiction and ambivalence in the interpretation of work and its value.³

These concerns and challenges are valid. Yet, even if they do undermine a “concordance” methodology, they do not ultimately render a biblical theology of work meaningless. As we shall see, the Bible both has had, and does have, something to so say to the Church and world about work.

There are several studies offering a biblical analysis, or, a ‘biblical theology’ of work.⁴ For our summarization of and interaction with the Bible’s teaching on work, we shall be limiting our analysis and only interacting with Agrell’s 1976 study *Work, Toil and Sustenance*. We have chosen to examine this for it is at once the most recent of the substantial studies, and the most methodologically careful and thus comprehensive of the ‘biblical theologies’ of work available.⁵

The uniqueness and ultimate benefit of the analysis in Agrell’s biblical theology of work stems from its methodology. To begin with, in his study Agrell is conscious to take “into consideration modern results in the methods of source and redaction criticism.” (p.3.) In a postmodern age, one may or may not ultimately be sympathetic with this particularly modern quest. However, even assuming a general suspicion of critical methodology, we suggest that this approach can be useful for a biblical theology of work.

³ Ibid., p.142.

⁴ See: Agrell, (1976), p.2-3. Here in his own biblical theology of work Agrell lists the most important examinations of work produced by Biblical theology. He cites Walter Bienert Die Arbeit nach der Lehre der Bibel (1954), F. Hauck Die Stellung des Urchristentums zur Arbeit und Geld (1921), H. Preisker Das Ethos der Arbeit im Neuen Testament (1936) as well as Preisker’s Das Ethos des Urchristentums (1949), A.T. Geoghegan The Attitude towards Labor in Early Christianity and Ancient Culture (1945), and A. Richardson The Biblical Doctrine of Work. (1952).

For additional biblical analysis on work see also: Nelson, (1954), (the chapter by Paul Minear on Work and Vocation in Scripture), and Forrester, (1951), pp.127-145. For a discussion specifically on the Old Testament view of work see: Wittenberg, Gunther “Old Testament Perspectives on Labour” in Cochrane, (1991), pp.91-108

⁵ In this section we will not be providing an exegetical analysis of the Biblical texts relating to work. Rather we refer the reader to the studies listed in note 4.

On our view, the contribution here of a critical methodology is that it makes it possible to actually undertake the constructive project of a 'biblical theology' of work. Of course, while using critical methodology one could conclude that given the diversity of the biblical teachings on work, no general unified (and normative) statement of the Bible's view of work is possible. However, this conclusion need not follow. It is equally possible to adopt a critical methodology and to conclude that a broader biblical theology of work is possible, even necessary. In this case the Bible is seen as presenting a diversity of teachings on several aspects of work; in a variety of genres and from a host of writers in a number of diverse contexts. Here then, a rich and complex picture of work begins to emerge, the depth and nuance of which only becomes evident given a critical methodology as a starting point. For example, by adopting a critical approach Agrell is constrained to remain both systematic and comprehensive in both his study and presentation. He is concerned with each of the biblical writers' or editor's views on work and is careful to differentiate between the contributions of each. Although this differentiation could be overdone, it does allow the actual writers of the biblical materials to speak for themselves concerning what their view or views on work are. Then, once these individual contributions are perceived, we begin to observe the beginnings of a multifaceted and quite sophisticated theological understanding of work emerging from Scripture itself.

Further, in addition to this modern critical approach, Agrell also employs methodologically a helpful threefold heuristic key through and with which to summarize the findings on work found in the various biblical texts. This key appears in the form of three questions:

1. What is the relation between "Man works" and "Man serves God"?
2. What is the relation between "Man works" and "Man receives his sustenance"?
3. What is the relation between "Man works" and "Man toils / suffers"? (p.4.)

Agrell argues not unfairly that "these questions are chosen because a preliminary

analysis of the NT [New Testament] texts shows that these questions are those which there make up the main problems in the view of work for the ones addressed in the NT writings." (p.4.) The contribution of these questions to Agrell's study is twofold. Firstly, they allow us to see the contextual concerns which the biblical writers themselves have in their various settings. Secondly, they help us to grasp the relevance of a biblical theology of work for a larger theology of work project. These are questions which any theological reflection on work would somewhere want to address.

Having offered these comments on Agrell's methodology, we now want to consider his research concerning what the Bible teaches about work. We cannot go into detail here on specific biblical texts and their interpretations. This would be repetitive and would take us too far afield. Here we shall simply look at Agrell's conclusions (and some of his analysis) and consider how this relates to our hypothesis of the threefold theological nature of work.

After extensive exegetical work on the texts of the Bible and intertestamental period, and after making specific summaries at the end of each section according to the three heuristic questions, Agrell himself makes the following summary conclusions about the picture of work which emerges from the Bible.

As in the Jewish writings we have examined, so also in the NT, the range of variation includes work both as divinely commissioned, and as liable to lead to idolatry and pride; as existing without having maintenance as its goal, and as done under pressure to secure one's sustenance; as full of joy, and as causing strain and suffering. (p.150.)

These sets of paradoxes are informative for they show us that the Bible does finally present us with a multidimensional view of work. Work according to Scripture cannot be reductionistically construed as simply a command, blessing or curse. Work cannot be construed simply in terms of economics, nor can it be understood solely as a means for human fulfillment. Rather, the Bible in its diversity recognizes the nature and meaning of work in its diversity.

Considering that the Bible recognizes work to be multidimensional, it is not

inappropriate to enquire whether its picture of work (as Agrell presents it) might also support our own multidimensional understanding of work as found in our threefold hypothesis where work is construed as instrumental, relational and ontological. Clearly, the direct teaching in the Bible construes work primarily in instrumental terms. Nevertheless, it also gives indications that there is more to work than mere instrumentality. Let us here explore this idea.

That the Bible understands work as essentially instrumental is quite clearly seen from Agrell's analysis. Most basically, as instrumental work is understood as a contributing factor to our continual survival. Although humanity is not solely dependant upon its work for its continued existence (it is dependant upon God) it does nevertheless exist in a situation where its work must be done "under pressure to secure one's sustenance". This reality, which is common to humanity and also clearly seen by Scripture to be normative, suggests that any theological construal of work ignoring this "economic" or sustenance value of work will simply be inadequate and reductionistic.

In the Bible however, work is not simply seen as instrumental with respect to sustenance. It is likewise a means to an end in our spiritual lives and with reference to our sanctification. Consider Agrell's conclusion from Scripture that work is "divinely commissioned" as a creation ordinance. Here work is important in the sense that it is to be undertaken and performed as a matter of obedience to God, which is a foundational aspect of the sanctifying process. Agrell summarizes this point with reference to the view of work found in the Old Testament.

According to the OT, [Old Testament] man's main task is to serve God. When this task is put in relation to man's work, it can be said that 'Man serves God' sets limits on 'Man works', for a part of man's service to God is his accepting of God's sovereignty over work's time, place and material (land), as well as its results... In general, work is something taken for granted, and the vital thing is that man receive God's gifts and 'serve him', for then his work will be blessed. (p.22.)

Also, Agrell concludes similarly from the New Testament that, "according to the

Pastorals, one is to serve God primarily in everyday life in which work for a living forms a part.” (p.147.)

Furthermore, from Agrell’s Scriptural conclusion we see that work can be understood to be instrumental in the spiritual life in that it is “liable to lead to idolatry and pride”. Here however, the emphasis is on the negative possibilities of work’s keeping one from obedience and holiness. Work for example, can draw one away from God and be an exercise of disobedience. This is particularly true of the work involved in the production of idols, which is forbidden. (p.19.)

Another example where work is construed as a means to a spiritual end is found in Paul’s understanding of his work in relation to his evangelistic-apostolic ministry. For Paul, his work was a concrete demonstration of his pure intentions. Through work he was an example and kept himself from being a burden on those to whom he was preaching. This was important for he did not want his lifestyle to distract from the gospel message. (p.104.)

Finally, concerning work’s instrumentality in the spiritual life as seen in Scripture, a few additional observations can be made. In the Bible, work is seen as providing us with an opportunity for spiritual growth because it grants us the opportunity for serving others. Its material results provide the conditions with which we can help our neighbor who is in need. (pp.132,138.) Also, for a believer, work is part of a “new man’s offering of himself for others, like Christ’s self sacrifice for believers”. (p.132.) Then, following from Eph. 4:22, work is seen as aiding people spiritually by helping them through the discipline therein to avoid evil “exhorting that the devil be given no opportunity”. (p.132.)

In the biblical witness then, it is clear that work is treated as a means to an end. It is instrumental to survival, but is also more profoundly instrumentally linked quite closely with various aspects of a believer’s sanctification. Does this however, mean that the relational or ontological aspects of work are missing from the biblical materials?

Concerning work’s relational dimension (social-structural and existential) it must

be recognized that in general this aspect of work is less developed by the biblical writers than the instrumental (particularly the instrumental with respect to sanctification). Nevertheless, there are in the Old Testament the Prophets who preached against the structural sin which resulted from the way that wealth (the fruits of work) was exploitatively used. Likewise in the New Testament there is the concern for the social function of work. As one commentator states it,

New however, is the evaluation of the social function of work. The loafer is a person who makes other people work for him (Thes. 4:12.) and he is tempted to steal, while one who works thereby earns the means to support others who are in need (Eph 4:28).⁶

Of course, we recognize that this relational aspect of work is addressed in the biblical records often more implicitly than explicitly. From Agrell's analysis we find that structurally work is simply assumed to be an ordinary part of life and necessary for societies to function well. (p.22.) Likewise, the existential, or human fulfillment, aspect of the relational dimension is simply implied by the biblical view (summarized by Agrell) when work is understood characteristically as "full of joy". We are simply suggesting here then, that the relational aspect of work is recognized or assumed by Scripture (although it is not fully explored or developed therein). It is not wrong to claim therefore, that the Biblical witness validates or points to the relational dimension of work as we have construed it.

Does the Bible, however, understand work to be in any way ontological? Of course, we do not want to have unrealistic expectations in this area. In the New Testament for instance, the majority of the discussions on work occur in letters designed as theologically informed pastoral advice not as developed theological treatises on work. We would expect here any ontological elements to be primarily inferred rather than explicitly discussed. In the Old Testament however, particularly in the creation accounts, we may be less surprised to find texts which lead to ontological pronouncements on work.

⁶ Piper, (1957), p.174.

Again, Agrell's summaries of the biblical teaching offer us a key. Here we find that although the Bible does not (in contemporary terms) explicitly develop the ontological nature of work, it implies an ontology of work, or it at least leaves open possibilities of developing work ontologically from within its own witness.

Summarizing the Old Testament, both the creation accounts and other teachings, Agrell argues that work is "the commission to carry out a task in creation, to administer God's gifts and rule over the environment and animals". It is "something given in creation and good." (p.13.) The important concept here indicating that work in Scripture can be seen as ontological is the idea that the task (work) is something "given in" creation. That is, "work is an element in God's order of creation". (p.22.) It is built into creation, and specifically "is seen as belonging to human existence". (p.10.)

Similarly in the New Testament, (taken from II Thes. 3:6-15.) the practical advice on work is presented and developed, according to Agrell, within the framework of "this natural order and eschatology". (p.124.) This itself does not claim that work is to be construed ontologically. It does however, show the close connection between work and ultimate questions concerning the nature of creation and its *telos*. It is, we will later argue, this natural element together with the nature of human existence (considered teleologically) that provides the theological building blocks for an ontological understanding of work.

Here however, it is not overstated to take the Biblical conclusions on work as "divinely commissioned", "existing without having maintenance as its goal", and "full of joy", as indicators that there is an aspect of work which goes beyond mere instrumentality. Scripturally, work is closely identified with the constitution and *telos* of created reality. It is not unfair then, to suggest that an ontological aspect of work is implied by Scripture.

Furthermore, these evaluations are consistent with Agrell's own broader conclusions on work. In his final summary, in giving the implications of his biblical

study, Agrell shows that the biblical materials lead one toward a broader theological evaluation of work. He shows that work as divinely commissioned is linked with humanity being made in the image of God. (p.151.) This clearly relates an ontological statement about humanity's nature with work. If humans are by nature workers, then work, which is intrinsic to their nature, shows itself to be ontologically built into the Creator's design for creation. Further, Agrell concludes that "the theological evaluation we make today of work must be tied to our views of creation and eschatology." (p.152.)

Looked at theologically, all these [biblical] variations in the view of work are related to different ways of looking at eschatology. One's view of eschatology governs what one assigns to the period before and after the fall, what one regards as positive and negative in work." (p.151.)

If Agrell's conclusions are correct, then we suggest that it is essential to ask questions about the normative nature of work in relation to humanity's and the world's eschatological purposes and ends (teleology). By doing this our theology will naturally develop beyond (but may be built upon without contradicting) that which the biblical writers themselves developed concerning work. It is not inconsistent however, to argue that the direct biblical teaching on work (while not often developing work's non instrumental nature) leads one toward further theological reflection on work which posits something like what we are calling the ontological aspect of work.

The immediate issue though, with respect to our survey of the place of work in the history of the Church, is how long it took this view of the possibility of broader theological reflection on work (including its relational and ontological aspects) to develop within the Church. What the next section on the Patristic and Medieval periods will demonstrate is that such a conviction was long in coming. In what follows we will show that the Church, following mostly the direct teaching of the Bible on work and influenced by its surrounding culture, essentially restricted its own theological reflection on work to a discussion of work as instrumental, and here, primarily

instrumental to sanctification.

WORK DURING THE PATRISTIC AND MEDIEVAL PERIODS

The picture of work which we find in the Church Fathers is somewhat ambivalent. Arguing that no simple understanding of work emerges in early Christian thought, Robert Markus suggests,

In the works of the earliest Christian writers there are occasional remarks about work. We should not expect to be able to construct anything like a 'theology of work' from these. They furnish us rather with hints of attitudes and valuations, sometimes scarcely conscious. Their unanimity can in any case not be taken for granted in advance.⁷

This is not entirely surprising. During this period we would not expect to find vast amounts of focused theological reflection devoted to work.

For the Fathers 'work' was not, on the whole, a theological problem. The reason for this is not that they failed to relate work to a context of revelation, or that they failed to see it as lying within the scope of God's redemptive activity. The reason is far simpler: 'work' was simply not a problem, and therefore could not have been a theological problem... 'Work' as a problem - and therefore a theological problem - is something quite new. At the earliest, I suppose, we could not have become self-conscious about work until well into the industrial revolution.⁸

We might want to challenge this assertion since, for example, the Reformers well before the industrial revolution considered work to be a practical and theological problem. Nonetheless, the general thrust of this assertion is acknowledged. We should not be over critical of the Fathers for not developing detailed solutions to problems which they did not face.

This however, does not mean that the pre-Reformation Church (both West and

⁷ Markus in Todd, (1960), p.13.

See also: Calhoun "Work and Vocation in Christian History" in Nelson, (1954), p.89. "Among the early Fathers of the Church ... comparatively little attention was paid to the details of the Christian's working life."

⁸ Todd, (1960), p.13.

East) was silent on work. There is general agreement that the direction given in the biblical materials (work as instrumental to both survival and sanctification) was continued during both the Patristic and Medieval periods. This biblical direction however, was further developed and expanded. "Through the centuries that followed the apostolic age, the Biblical vision both matured and changed."⁹ As one scholar summarizes,

The three-fold purpose of work recorded in Scripture [self-reliance, charity, and the sanctification of time] is also found in the Church Fathers. But fused with it is a new dimension - the idea of expiating one's sins... The next major development in the history of work comes with the introduction of monasticism,... The three ends of work are retained as well, but now they are infused with asceticism, a more rigorous form of expiation.¹⁰

Nevertheless, despite such general agreement, interpreting the specifics concerning work in these periods is not easy. There is important disagreement concerning both what was specifically believed about work during the Patristic and Medieval periods and whether these were positive or negative developments. Some, particularly those standing within the Reformed tradition, argue that the biblical worldview which led to the biblical views on work was essentially lost. It is argued that the biblical view of reality was supplanted by dualistic Greek philosophy which posited the primacy of spirit over matter, and that Greek cultural values were incorporated into the Church so that ultimately the Bible's high evaluation of ordinary work was undermined. W. Forrester, in discussing the early Church, argues that this Greek influence led to a "two-standard" doctrine of Christian morality.¹¹ Given this doctrine, work is said to have lost its meaning and proper place in life and to have been necessarily, if not consciously, relegated to the level of an inferior activity. Further, Forrester argues that this two-standard doctrine "deprived daily life of the sense of vocation we see in the

⁹ Nelson, (1954), p.89.

¹⁰ Scotchmer, (1980), p.15.

¹¹ Forrester, (1951), pp.37-56.

New Testament and the earliest documents, and sterilized the religious earnestness within the monasteries.”¹²

Similarly to Forrester, Lee Hardy focusing on the Medieval church criticizes:

The basic Greek attitude toward work and its place in human life was largely preserved in both the thought and practice of the Christian church during the Middle Ages. Not until the Reformation were some of the basic Greek assumptions about human nature, the purpose of human life, and the meaning of work effectively overthrown.¹³

Hardy develops this line of argument not so much by quoting Medieval reflections on work directly, but rather by highlighting (in Augustine, Aquinas and St Gregory the Great) the emphasis and development of the doctrine of the contemplative over and against the active life.¹⁴ He argues that this is what undermined the possibility of an adequate Medieval Christian view of work.

It should be pointed out that despite these criticisms of the Church’s underlying presuppositions, both Hardy and Forrester allow that the picture of work during these periods was not wholly negative.¹⁵ The overall picture which they present however, is negative.

Others are more positive in their assessment of the Patristic and Medieval views and practices related to work.¹⁶ They argue that the biblical affirmation of ordinary work (as opposed to the dualistic Greek view) was preserved during these periods, and positively that work came to be located firmly within the religious life. They view the monastic developments as that which saved Christianity and the Christian view of work rather than that which destroyed it. Calhoun concludes for example that:

In the centuries between the New Testament age and the Protestant Reformation, the most distinctive and influential movement in the Church was monasticism. During these centuries the basic doctrine of

¹² Ibid., p.137.

¹³ Hardy, (1990), pp.16-17.

¹⁴ Ibid., pp.15-25.

¹⁵ Hardy, (1990), pp.23-26., Forrester, (1951), pp.142-143.

¹⁶ See for example: Nelson,(1954), pp.82-106., Gavin, (1930), pp.19-38., and Roos, (1984), pp.108-110.

vocation was kept alive under one name or another, and given special significance for the monastic life, long considered the most intense, heroic, exemplary form of Christian living. At the same time, thanks mainly to the influence of the monastic discipline, the Church's theory and practice with respect to daily *work* became at once more systematic and more complex than it had ever been in Biblical times.¹⁷

It should further be noted however, that Calhoun allows that this positive assessment of the Patristic and Medieval view of work "was understood very unevenly by the leaders of Christian thought, and almost not at all, one may suppose, by the rank and file."¹⁸ This notwithstanding, his overall conclusions on the view of work during these periods was positive.

For our purposes, it is not necessary to attempt to resolve these debates. Doubtless both sides are correct to a degree. We need only highlight the issues and the contours of the debate. This is sufficient for suggesting how and why the Church continued to see work almost exclusively as an instrumental activity.¹⁹ It is understandable, since the Bible places such a high view on work as instrumental to sanctification, that the Church would continue to do the same and to expand this view further with reference to the developing doctrine of salvation. Further, given the broader cultural emphasis on the contemplative over the active life as humanity's teleological goal, it is not surprising that ordinary work (which is mostly dealing with the active and physical world) should be considered in a subordinate relationship to the doctrine of perfection based on contemplation.

The question which we want to focus upon however, is whether the instrumental aspect of work was held exclusively during these periods? Are there any indications of the relational or, particularly of interest to us, the ontological aspects?

¹⁷ Calhoun, in Nelson, (1954), p.83.

¹⁸ Ibid., p.83.

¹⁹ The authors mentioned in this section quote both the Fathers and Medieval theologians at length on their views of life and work. A simple survey of the quotes from these works is enough to demonstrate that in both periods work was primarily viewed instrumentally both to survival and sanctification (or salvation).

There is reason to believe that during these periods work's relational aspect was to some degree perceived. Specific references to this however, are in relatively short supply. Rather than developed arguments on this issue, we are usually left to make inferences from related discussions. For example, it has been argued that Aquinas elaborated on the biblical view of work by adding to it the concept of a person's right to work.²⁰ This however, simply implies that the social / relational aspect of work was acknowledged. To what degree it was emphasized either in Aquinas or more widely during these periods is questionable.

Other inferences to the relational aspect of work can be drawn from the discussions during these periods on the questions of wealth, possessions and property ownership. Referring to early Christian attitudes, it has not been unfairly argued that persons were valued over property and that therefore property rights were relative.²¹ Here the discussion relates to work only indirectly through the consideration of work's fruit. The focus was on what work produces and how these should be used. Nevertheless, this implies that work was understood to have significant effect on Christian ethical living in the social sphere. Indirectly then, work's relational aspect was under consideration.

These examples however, simply indicate the direction one might take for exploring further the relational dimension of work during these periods. Our point here is simply to suggest that even though work's relational aspect was not substantially developed during these periods, neither was it totally ignored. Patristic and Medieval theology at least hints toward the concept that work has important social, and not simply personal spiritual, value and function.

Now, in addition to the relational aspect of work, do we have any reason to believe that work was understood during these periods to have an ontological aspect? We do have at least one example which suggests that work was reflected upon as in someway

²⁰ Quoted by Piper, (1957), p.175.

²¹ Gavin, (1930), p.21.

more than simply an instrumental activity; that is, as ontological stemming from both human and natural order constitution. This type of reasoning is seen most strikingly in the Eastern Church particularly in the writings of St. Maximus the Confessor (688 A.D.). Several scholars have argued that St. Maximus could be especially helpful in developing a theology of work.²² Initially, one might be surprised by this suggestion. The Eastern Christian tradition is commonly viewed, not without good reason, as too mystical and prone toward withdrawal from normal mundane activities such as work. Simply stated, "Eastern Monasticism, by putting a premium on meditation and asceticism, led to a depreciation of practical work in the East."²³

Strangely enough however, it is within this tradition and growing out of its emphasis on mystical reflection that we find, in addition to work as a disciplinary instrument for personal perfection, the suggestion that there is a greater essence and meaning to work, that work has, as it were, an ontological aspect in that it is a fundamental dimension of the world's makeup. How so?

Chenu while probing toward a theology of work suggests that such a project should be based on a correct conception of the relationship between man and nature.²⁴ Focusing on this task, when arguing that the Greek rather than Latin philosophical tradition is more adequate, he turns to St. Maximus. Chenu summarizes St. Maximus' reflection on the Cappadocian Fathers of the fourth century, particularly Gregory Nazianzen (391 A.D.) and Gregory of Nyssa (396 A.D.), with the following:

Reviving one of the great anthropological themes of antiquity, they defined man as a 'microcosm.' Man epitomises in himself the elements and the values of the cosmos, statically, at the highest point of creation, and dynamically, owing to his physical and moral duality in a hierarchic ascent towards the supreme Unity. If this physical system is seen as the realisation of God's design, it takes on a religious meaning which does not conflict with the internal laws of each of the natures, since these laws are the expression of the divine plan. If this system is also redeemed, after a preliminary failure, by Christ as God made man, the

²² Chenu, (1963), pp.77-82., Williamson, (1976), pp.304-306. and Chmielewski, (1993), pp.713-714.

²³ Piper, (1957), p.175.

²⁴ Chenu, (1963), p.77.

divine undertaking shows a human realism which is even more appreciable in a sacred doctrine. The truth of the full human nature of God incarnate (dogma of the two natures in Christ, Council of Chalcedon, 451 A.D.) defends the faith against the Monophysite mystique of the deification, which would nullify, together with the human nature of Christ, the fact of created nature (against Origenist tendencies).²⁵

Chenu further explores St. Maximus' reflections stating:

Maximus... bases his theology on (metaphysical) unity... Unification is consequently the fundamental law both of the perfection of beings in the likeness of God and of the government of God itself... The Christian system realises the unity of God and of the world by and in Christ... Man is a being set in cosmic nature. More than this, as a "microcosm" this nature is innate in him. The unity of the cosmos is consequently accomplished by and in man. In the likeness of, and according to the example of God the creator, man by his nature is the *fabricator* of the universe, re-unifying it in a new ascent towards that unity from which it was created... The key-word in the interpretation of this text and that which defines the physical, metaphysical, moral and religious encounter of man and nature is the Greek word *ergasterion*. This word, (is) derived from *ergon* meaning "work,"... It describes the action by which man confronts, takes hold of, transforms and conquers nature, "realizing" it by a unification which to the Greeks was the final perfecting object.²⁶

Chenu acknowledges the dilemmas and difficulties inherent in this reasoning. However, he finds it fruitful to follow St. Maximus and concludes from such reasoning that "work is an intrinsic function of the incarnate spirit."²⁷ He further claims that the universe is the sphere of man's activity and self-fulfilment thus "giving human work its full stature in man's realisation of his nature in the unity of the world and of history."²⁸

Throughout Chenu's discussion of St. Maximus what surfaces is a view of work

25 Ibid., pp.77-78.

26 Ibid., pp.78-80.

27 Ibid., p.82.

28 Ibid., p.82.

which is tied up with the nature and destiny of both man and the created order. Work is developed with respect to the *imago Dei* (which clearly has ontological overtones) and further with respect to humanity by essentially being a co-operative effort with God. Thus, according to this view, work can be understood to be ontological in that it appears fundamental to the very structures of human and non-human existence.

How widespread and influential however was this type of ontological valuation of work, or how widespread did it become? Chenu argues that this Eastern evaluation of human and natural order teleology did not have much influence in the Latin Church.²⁹ One reason for this is probably that the Western Church put more emphasis on the fallenness of humanity than its possibilities. As Gavin states, "On the whole, the Eastern programme was built on too great an optimism with regard to human nature: and that of the West - strongly influenced by St. Augustine - more sophisticated and pragmatic, showed a deep suspicion, if not pessimism, with regard to the propensities of man."³⁰

We can also question however, how much influence this view had on the Eastern church. Orthodoxy as a whole does not seem to have closely followed or developed further the Cappadocian Fathers and St. Maximus in its reflections on work. This observation would coincide with the views of Paulos Gregorios who comments on recent eastern Christian reflection on the human role in God's creation (by inference here is the dimension of work). Gregorios asserts that "since Maximus the Confessor, only a little progress has been made in the eastern tradition."³¹

Indeed, we do not find anywhere in the literature a suggestion that in the East St. Maximus' theological reflection relating to work ever reached the proportions or sophistication which the reflection on work did in the West during the Reformation

²⁹ Ibid., 78.

³⁰ Gavin, p.27.

³¹ Gregorios, (1978.), p.78. Gregorios suggests Solovoyev to be the most important contemporary figure following St. Maximus' tradition. (pp.78-81) We would suggest that Solovoyev may be a helpful resource for theological reflection on work from an Eastern perspective.

with Luther and Calvin. Further, Orthodox reflection on work does not appear to have produced any parallel in either theological reflection or concrete social reality to compare with what has been in the West called the protestant work ethic. Indeed, only now are we beginning to see calls for Orthodoxy to return to its old belief and Patristic roots with regard to work.³²

This brief survey suggests that there was, during the Patristic and Medieval periods, some theological reflection on work. This theological process mostly followed the direction set by the biblical writers; that work was practically speaking instrumental to sanctification. Work's instrumental nature however, was taken a step further by suggesting that human work could serve as a means for the expiation of sins (salvation). Thus, theological reflection on work for the most part dealt with work as instrumental to humanity's ultimate goal (teleology) which was then understood as perfection in the contemplation of the Divine. As such, we suggest that work as a part of the human and the natural orders was unintentionally undermined and its essence and intrinsic value was diminished. Had work's ontological aspect, or something similar to the reflections of St. Maximus, been seized upon and further expounded, the subsequent theological reflection on work and its practical outworkings in cultural development could have evolved quite differently. However, having developed as it did, the stage was set for subsequent reaction by those rethinking theological anthropology, soteriology, biblical exegesis, and theological method. As we will see, this reaction reached its height in the West with the Protestant Reformation where the theological doctrines of the priesthood of all believers and a strong view of the Divine decrees became the doctrinal keys for understanding the nature and role of work as a person's vocation.

³² Roschin, (1995), pp. 263-267.

THE REFORMATION: WORK AS VOCATION / CALLING

It is broadly accepted that with the Reformation theological reflection on ordinary work was transformed and the understanding which eventually emerged was quite different from the dominant view of work found in the Medieval period. With the Reformation, ordinary 'secular' work (contrasted with monastic activities) came to be relocated within the context of the each Christian's *vocatio* (vocation) or "calling" from God.

In the following discussion, the Reformation idea of ordinary work as a calling or vocation will be considered with respect to the period's two principle figures; Luther and Calvin. We shall initially consider Luther, the pivotal figure in the transformation of the Church's view of work as vocation. Then we will turn to Calvin and consider where his views are similar to and differ from Luther's, and then, how he further develops the Reformation doctrine of vocation.

Luther on Work, Calling, and Vocation

The theological model which considers work in relationship to and as a part of God's call (vocation) was largely a product of the reformer Martin Luther. What we find with Luther is a new and unique understanding of the concept of God's calling (vocation). Luther derived his doctrine of vocation from 1 Cor. 7:20 where he concluded that Paul in this verse was using *klesis* comprehensively to cover all of one's life and not just one's call to salvation. Thus, he began to render the Greek concept *klesis* with the German *Beruf*.³³ Following this understanding Luther then came to use the word *Beruf* to refer to a person's job.

Luther understood one's calling or vocation to include one's ordinary work. However, we must be careful not to misconstrue Luther's doctrine of vocation by supposing that with the concept of calling he was only or primarily referring to one's work. Luther primarily understood a person's calling from God in the traditional sense,

³³ See: Wingren, p.1-3., and Hart, "1. Martin Luther" pp.43-45.

as initially the calling to be a child of God.³⁴ Nor was he with the doctrine of vocation only or primarily referring to a person's job.

More precisely, a vocation is that specific call to love one's neighbor which comes to us through the duties which attach to our social place or 'station' within the earthly kingdom. A station in this life need not be a matter of paid employment, although it may be. As conceived by Luther, our stations include all the typical ways in which we are related to people. Being a husband or a wife is a station in life, as well as being a parent or a child, a magistrate or a subject, a master or a servant, as well as a baker, a cobbler, or a farmer.³⁵

Vocation to Luther then, obviously includes one's ordinary work or job. However, Luther's concept of vocation includes more than simply paid employment. It first includes the entire person becoming a child of God and then it includes our loving our neighbor or serving our fellowman in all that we do. Only following from this does it also include our work generically and then, a paid job.

So that we may grasp the logic and implications of this more nuanced vision of vocation, we begin by outlining the influences upon Luther which contributed to the making of his theology. Contextually, Luther was to employ his concept of vocation in reaction to a medieval system which emphasized, among other things, the contemplative life and the view that only religious vocations were callings from God. "Luther's concept of vocation was formulated largely in reaction to the medieval monastic ideal and its religious devaluation of all earthly occupations."³⁶ "In opposition to the medieval church's narrowing of 'vocation' (the Latin form of the word for 'calling') to the work of the religious (monks, nuns, and priests), Martin Luther took the same word, 'vocation' and applied it to the daily activity of all Christians."³⁷ Of course, Luther was not the first to raise objections to the theology and practice of the Medieval Church. There was a tradition here in which he stood. "Luther's bold attack on the

³⁴ Wingren, (1957), p.2.

³⁵ Hardy, (1990), p.46.

³⁶ Ibid., p.46.

³⁷ Kolden, (1994), p.266.

abuses of the sacramental system began by following what seemed to be well-established lines, ... In many details he had indeed been anticipated by Ockham, Wyclif, and Hus. His doctrine of the sufficient authority of Scripture, the common priesthood of believers, and the need for drastic reform in the organization and practice of the Church had already found voice in his predecessors.”³⁸

Nor with respect to work was Luther completely original. Although not uncritically, Luther learned quite a lot from the later mystical tradition of the Church. “Luther adopts and develops much further the insights of the later mystics, that any sort of serviceable status in society, through which one may serve his neighbors, deserves to be regarded as a divinely ordained calling (*Beruf, vocatio*).”³⁹ Further, with the Renaissance a shift in attitudes toward work had begun which would later find fuller expression in Luther’s thought. “The dominant attitude toward work [low view] and thought underwent a complete reversal at the hands of several leading philosophers of the Renaissance.”⁴⁰ “In the Renaissance a new attitude toward work emerged from its regard of God as the all powerful creator of the universe... [and] ... human beings were not to become like God through mere thinking, but through productive activity.”⁴¹ Likewise, with reference to Saint Thomas More, Thomas Lupset and Thomas Starkey, “they too altered conceptions of the rather fruitless duality of the *vita activa* and the *vita contemplativa*.”⁴²

How much direct influence these and other Renaissance ideas had on Luther is uncertain. It is helpful nonetheless to note that in Luther’s day many of these ideas would have been circulating. At least what can be said is that Luther was in step with the developing contemporary attitudes toward the Christian life in general and work in particular.

38 Calhoun in Nelson, (1954), p.107.

39 Ibid., p.108.

40 Hardy, (1990), pp.26-27. Here Hardy refers to Giovanni Pico Della Mirandola, Giordano Bruno, and Marsilio Ficino.

41 Ibid., p.27.

42 Marshall, Paul, (1980), Labour of Love pp.10-11.

Other factors also appear to have come to bear on the development of Luther's theology of vocation. Luther probably would have been directly influenced by Johann Tauler (1300-1361). Tauler was a Dominican who preached the value of ordinary work and argued that skills like shoemaking were gifts of the Spirit.⁴³ Further, Luther was also probably influenced by the *Devotio Moderna* Movement (Brethren of the Common Life). In the writings of this lay order (which was committed to the search for holiness within the life of their daily work) Luther would have found further encouragement for his own ideas.⁴⁴

The starting point for understanding Luther's theology of vocation which views the whole of the Christian's life as a divine calling, is to consider his "rediscovery" of divine grace. Luther's defence of ordinary work as vocation as well as his entire ethics grows out of his views of salvation and particularly his understanding of justification. Paul Althaus states,

Luther's ethics is determined in its entirety, in its starting point and all its main features, by the heart and center of his theology, namely, by the justification of the sinner through the grace that is shown in Jesus Christ and received through faith alone. Justification by faith determines Christian ethics because, for the Christian, justification is both the presupposition and the source of the ethical life.⁴⁵

This suggests that Luther would not have been interested in the concept of work or labor in itself as divorced from the spiritual dimensions of a Christian's life: that is, as distinct from one's calling to be a child of God through the Gospel. Rather, Luther's concern is with work as a part of the believer's life, as a part of one's obedient response to God's saving grace (sanctification). Our work does not bring us to salvation in any way. It is simply an expression of gratitude to God for the salvation he has freely given. Hence, as Wingren argues, Luther does not (nor could he) use the vocation concept with reference to the work of a non-Christian.⁴⁶

⁴³ Hart, (1995), "1. Martin Luther" pp.40-41. See also: Wingren, p.x.

⁴⁴ Hart, (1995), "1. Martin Luther" p.41.

⁴⁵ Althaus, (1972), p.3.

Justification is Luther's starting point. However, in relationship to and stemming from this doctrine, grow two other doctrines which orient and determine Luther's agenda for his developing understanding of Christian vocation. These doctrines are the priesthood of all believers, and a strong view of the divine decrees, or, Divine Providence. With the spiritual priesthood of all believers, each Christian (not just a monk, nun, or priest) is called and enabled by God to live a life wholly pleasing to God regardless of one's circumstances in life or occupation. It is not just the religious professional who is called by God to certain tasks. Each believer, as a member of the body of Christ, has a place in that body and is thus called to use his or her skills and opportunities to meet the various needs of others both in the body (and even the needs of one's neighbor who may be outside of the body).

Likewise, with the doctrine of Divine Providence each believer by God's providential decree has particular stations or "stands" in life. Here, God's election, predestination or providence determines not just people's salvation, but also their place in life and the opportunities therein afforded to them. It is too simplistic to argue, as some have attempted, that Luther's understanding of vocation is primarily a product of his "static", or pre-capitalistic view of society and economics. Doubtless he did have such a view. However, Luther's understanding of vocation, together with his hesitancy to allow persons to change vocations is rooted in his fear that by so doing they would be rebelling against God's perfect and sovereign plan for them as individuals. This concern stems directly from his theology of Providence and is not simply a product of his social theory (although the two do fit well together and doubtlessly one would have affected the other). It is therefore, Luther's concern for God's will and a person's best interest which leads him to such a "conservative" position with regard to work and work structures. For Luther, all of life not just one's salvation must be viewed in light of God's providential decrees. Thus, one's callings or stations are a matter of concern to God and equally subject to his careful planning and determination.

⁴⁶ Wingren,(1957), p.2.

If we fail to keep these two doctrines in mind, (the priesthood of all believers, and Divine Providence) we will not readily perceive the internal logic of Luther's doctrine of vocation nor will one understand his analogous use of the biblical terminology of "calling" in the vocational model of work. As Forrester argues, "Indeed, the doctrine of secular vocation is the necessary counterpart of the doctrine of the spiritual priesthood of all believers, as it is also of the doctrine of election itself."⁴⁷

In addition to the doctrines here discussed, two others deserve mention with respect to Luther's understanding of vocation and work. These are the doctrine of the two kingdoms, and the doctrine of creation. "According to Luther, human work needs to be thought of primarily in relation to God the Creator, who establishes the whole of the created order."⁴⁸ The doctrine of creation is important for Luther for it is from the established orders of creation that the vocations or stations of an individual are established.⁴⁹ These orders are both good and necessary for the preservation of human life.

Through the human pursuit of vocations across the array of earthly station the hungry are fed, the naked are clothed, the sick are healed, the ignorant are enlightened and the weak are protected... According to Luther then, the religious significance of human work is first apprehended in the light of the doctrine of creation.⁵⁰

Equally important to Luther's doctrine of vocation is his doctrine of the two kingdoms. What is significant here to notice is in which kingdom Luther locates vocation and how this affects his view of work.

Luther's ethics are developed around the idea that there are two kingdoms in which the believer participates, the earthly kingdom and the kingdom of heaven. Vocation, to Luther, is a matter dealing exclusively with the earthly kingdom. It has value in relation

⁴⁷ Forrester, (1951), p.154. See also, Hart, (1995), "1. Martin Luther." p.44. and Hart, (1995), "2. John Calvin." p.124.

⁴⁸ Kolden, (1994), p.263.

⁴⁹ See: Althaus, pp.36-42

⁵⁰ Hardy, (1990), pp.47-48.

to the kingdom of heaven, but only a penultimate, not ultimate value. Vocation falls within the kingdom of the law and thus naturally within the earthly kingdom rather than the kingdom of heaven.⁵¹ “In heaven, before God, vocation has as little to contribute as do good works.”⁵² Rather, “Good works and vocation (love) exist for the earth and one’s neighbor, not for eternity and God. God does not need our good works, but our neighbor does.”⁵³

Work then, as one aspect of human vocation, is seen to have eternal significance but is not finally viewed as a part of the eternal economy. Work does not ultimately contribute anything to heaven or to the eschaton. Wingren writes of Luther’s views, “Man lives on earth for a short time, in his vocation and with his neighbor, till death comes. Everything is transitory. What is enduring and eternal is the kingdom after death, heaven.”⁵⁴ Piper, after explaining that to Luther what matters concerning work is “the faithfulness with which a person employs his natural gifts and resources for the benefit of his fellowmen”, concludes that “beyond this however, Luther does not see any positive value in work. It is a burden placed upon our shoulders in consequence of the Fall ... and is contrary to nature.”⁵⁵

Having explored Luther concerning vocation and having shown that work must be considered therein, the task is now to evaluate Luther’s view of work in light of our hypothesis that work should be construed threefold as instrumental, relational and ontological. It must be remembered however, that Luther’s overall theology and his doctrine of vocation determines how he is able to construe work’s nature, meaning and value. Basically, he seldom, if ever, discusses the nature of work abstractly. He most often considers work concretely within his interpretation of related Bible passages.⁵⁶ Also, Luther appears mostly interested in work’s function in relationship to his primary

51 Wingren (1957), p.26.

52 Ibid., p.10.

53 Ibid., p.10.

54 Ibid., p.162.

55 Piper, (1957), p.176.

56 Althaus, (1972), p.101.

polemical concerns: namely, how human activity (including work) relates to the doctrine of salvation (justification), and how ordinary rather than “religious” or monastic work is spiritually valuable.⁵⁷

This lack of specifically focused attention on work itself shows us that for Luther work is, as it were, of subordinate or secondary importance. We should not be surprised then if, although present in some form, our three aspects of work appear in Luther somewhat unbalanced. For Luther, it was not work itself which he was considering, but rather, work in relationship to the spiritual life.

Primarily and essentially, Luther viewed work instrumentally, as a means to an end. Luther perceived the function of work to be twofold. Firstly, work (as an ordained creation order) is the obedient response of the believer to God’s command in gratitude for the salvation which He has freely given. Therefore, its end primarily related to a believer’s sanctification. Secondly, work is the primary means by which one loves one’s neighbor. This results in human work being God’s primary way of providing sustenance for both the individual and for the community. Notice here that according to this twofold construal, our instrumental and relational aspects are combined as part of the same aspect of work. To do justice therefore to Luther’s doctrine of vocation, we will illustrate his teaching on the instrumentality of work by using his own categories. That is, we will primarily be considering together our two distinct aspects of work; the instrumental and the relational.

Work essentially is a means to an end. It is foremost an obedient response to God’s command. Luther in his commentary on Genesis 1:26 expresses his view of work before the fall,

He (Adam) was so created that as long as he lived in this physical life, he would till the ground, not as if it were doing an irksome task and exhausting his body by toil but with supreme pleasure, not as a pastime but in obedience to God and submission to His will.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ See: *Luther's Works*, ed. Pelikan, Vol. 44., “Estate of Marriage”, pp.3-14 and “Treatise on Good Works”, pp.15-114.

⁵⁸ *Luther's Works*, Vol. 1. “Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 1-5.”, p.65. (underline added for emphasis)

Also, in the same context Luther writes, "But this dominion is given to them (Adam and Eve) not only by way of advice but also by express command."⁵⁹ Further, in considering Luther's view of work as found in his interpretation of Psalms 127-128, Paul Althaus summarizes Luther, "God has commanded work... Work is part of God's created order... he has... commanded work as a means by which he blesses us."⁶⁰ Thus, "it is probably true to say that in Luther's theology obedient service in one's calling is the first duty of a Christian."⁶¹

It should be emphasized here that free obedience as a response to God's complete salvation, and not the desire for one's own sanctification, is the primary motivation for a person to conform to God's command and to "work". Nonetheless, a person will want to grow "in faith" struggling against the flesh, and in order to do so will exercise "faith" in his or her good works.⁶² Thus, even indirectly, a person's work is a part of their process of sanctification; that is, their overcoming evil and becoming more like Christ. Luther writes,

Each one should do the works of his profession and station, not that by them he may strive after righteousness, but that through them he may keep his body under control, be an example to others who also need to keep their bodies under control and finally that by such works he may submit his will to that of others in the freedom of love.⁶³

The second way that Luther construes work instrumentally is by presenting it as the primary means by which we love and serve our fellow humans. The initial result here of course is that human work becomes God's primary way of providing sustenance and stability for the individual and community. However, here we see the focus turn from the narrower issues of sustenance to a focus upon work's effects on broader human relationships. For Luther, as Althaus suggests, "our love of God and our love of

⁵⁹ Ibid., p.66.

⁶⁰ Althaus, (1972), p.101.

⁶¹ Hart, (1995), "1. Martin Luther" p.38.

⁶² Althaus, (1972), pp.16-24.

⁶³ Luther's Works, Vol. 31. "The Freedom of the Christian", p.369.

neighbor cannot be separated.”⁶⁴ Thus, the motivation of obedience to God and the relational dimension of loving and caring for others through work becomes one.

Luther does not suggest here any sense that work’s relational aspect includes one’s existential self-fulfilment through it. Rather, he emphasizes the importance of our work in relation to others. His concern is primarily with neighbor love. “In fact in Luther’s theology service of one’s fellowmen was given unprecedented importance.”⁶⁵ Likewise, Althaus reasons that for Luther, human actions (parallel to being done in obedience to God) are understood teleologically as done not for God but for our neighbor and for him alone.⁶⁶

In his exposition of 1 Peter 4:8-11 Luther presents various prescriptions concerning our work related to the use of our gifts and vocation. He writes that a person “should use his gift in the service of his neighbor”.⁶⁷ Additionally he writes:

that we should serve one another. With what? With the gifts of God which everyone has received. The Gospel wants everyone to be the other person’s servant and , in addition, to see that he remains in the gift which he has received, which God has given him, that is, in the position to which he has been called. God does not want a master to serve his servant, the maid to be a lady, a prince to serve the begger. For He does not want to destroy the government. But the apostle means that one person should serve the other person spiritually from the heart. Even if you are in a high position and a great lord, yet you should employ your power for the purpose of serving your neighbor with it.... The same thing applies to other stations in life.⁶⁸

Thus, “the life of the home, the relation between parents and children, is vocation, even as is life in the field of labor, the relation between employer and employee. In anything that involves action, anything that concerns the world or my relationship with my neighbor, there is nothing, Luther holds, that falls in a private sphere lying outside

⁶⁴ Althaus, (1972), p.14.

⁶⁵ Hart, (1995), “1. Martin Luther” p.41.

⁶⁶ Althaus, (1972), p.5.

⁶⁷ Luther's Works, Vol. 30. “Sermons on the First Epistle of St. Peter”, p.124.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.123-124.

of station, office, or vocation.”⁶⁹ “Our only care ought to be what we should do with all the good that God has made, so that it may benefit our neighbor.”⁷⁰

The function of work (or vocation) then, is the service of others while here on earth. Work is fundamentally characterized by its relationality. For Luther, the fact that vocation falls within the sphere of law (which is to provide social order and stability) indicates that work serves a social function. Wingren summarizes, “man’s deeds and work have a real function to fill in civil and social relationships, despite the fact that works done by man cannot lift from man the condemnation that rests on him before God.”⁷¹

So far, when evaluating Luther’s view of work as instrumental and relational, a similar (although not completely identical) picture emerges to that seen in the Bible. Work for Luther is instrumental. It is to be undertaken in obedience (thus in relation to sanctification), it is useful as a means to serve others and meet basic sustenance needs, and is also ascetically useful as a disciplinary restraint from evil. Work also has the relational dimension in that it is useful as a means for establishing social order and harmony.

Does, however, Luther identify and or develop, in addition to work’s instrumental aspect, something like our ontological aspect of work? Basically the answer is no. There are however, a few places where Luther leaves open this possibility.

The most telling indications that Luther might or, could have, perceived something like an ontological aspect of work stem from his conception of human nature and the created orders. Concerning human nature, in his exposition of Genesis 2:15 Luther writes, “but it is appropriate here to point out that man was created not for leisure but for work, even in the state of innocence.”⁷² We see here that Luther somewhat

⁶⁹ Wingren, (1957), p.5.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p.8.

⁷¹ Ibid., p.124.

⁷² Cf. *Luther's Works*, Vol. 1. “Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 1-5.”, p.103. It should also be noted however that Luther makes other pronouncements which seem to contradict his assertion here. See p.56 in his discussion of Genesis 1:26, “Moses, therefore, indicates to those who are spiritually minded that we were created for a better life in the future than

accepted the idea that work was built into, or fundamental to human nature. As such, work does begin to be conceptualized not just according to its function, but as also in some way more fundamental to reality, as a distinct part of human constitution.

Similarly, vocations (thus work) are located within the orders of creation (as validated by scripture).⁷³ Work is thus part of and built into God's created order. It is not a result of sin. Work was already established before the fall. Here then, work could be understood as having its own essence. Since it is a part of God's created design, it does seem possible to view work as in some way ontological.

Having cited these examples, however, we still maintain that Luther essentially bypassed the evaluation of work as ontological. The references given simply allow that within Luther's theology the possibility existed for developing the ontological dimension of work. We are not claiming here, however, that he specifically had an ontological understanding of work.

What can we conclude concerning Luther's particular contributions to theological reflection on work? Luther in many respects returned the Church to the biblical teaching concerning work. He did this by repudiating the idea that work was at all involved in the expiation of sins (a direction taken by the fathers) and relocating its value religiously from monastic to ordinary life. Further, he took the instrumental nature of work as found in the Bible and developed it with respect to the doctrines of the priesthood of believers (including justification by faith) and Divine Providence. In doing this he introduced a unique twist on the understanding of "calling", within which work was revalued. Whether Luther finally advanced beyond the medieval view of subordinating the material world to the spiritual, and thus whether he successfully eliminated its two-tiered spirituality is questionable.⁷⁴ He did however, value

this physical life would have been, even if our nature had remained unimpaired. Therefore the scholars put it well: 'Even if Adam had not fallen through his sin, still, after the appointed number of saints had been attained, God would have translated them from this animal life to the spiritual life.'

⁷³ Althaus, (1972), pp.25-35., and 36-42.

⁷⁴ See: Hardy, (1990), p.51. and Luther's Works, Vol. 1. "Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 1-

(instrumentally of course) the active ordinary working life and give it a higher value than the Church previously had done.

Calvin on Work and Vocation

It is not surprising, given Calvin's "conversion" to Reformation principles, that his teachings on work show many similarities to Luther's. Indeed Calvin, following Luther, also construed work in terms of vocation. Their similarity however, is not simply their reaction to a common opponent. Calvin's views paralleled Luther's in that everyday work is a calling, that Providence or Divine decree determine a person's calling, that one should generally remain in one's calling, that the purpose of a calling is the service of others, that ordinary work has spiritual significance, that all kinds of work are of equal value, and that success in work depends on God's blessing.⁷⁵

Given such similarities, and in order to avoid unnecessary repetition, we will not undertake a full exposition of Calvin's doctrine of vocation. Nonetheless, it is necessary to consider certain of its aspects, particularly those which differ from Luther's. This is especially so given that Calvin's doctrine (rather than Luther's) is considered to have had more widespread influence geographically (Northern Europe, The British Isles, and North America) and thus, more influence historically.⁷⁶

Although the similarities between Luther and Calvin on work and vocation are striking, there are also several significant differences which merit attention. It is with these differences that Calvin's unique contribution to the topic of work and vocation emerges.

One difference is that Calvin was less "conservative" and more open than Luther to people changing their work.⁷⁷ Indeed Calvin like Luther generally suggested that people should remain in their established callings. Calvin however, recognized that

5.", pp.56-57.

⁷⁵ Hart., (1995), "2. John Calvin", pp.123-131.

⁷⁶ See: Hardy, (1990), p.54., Tawney, (1937 ed.), p.111. and Weber (1930), pp.87.95,98.

⁷⁷ Marshall, (1980), Labour of Love p.12., Hart, (1995), "2. John Calvin" p.125., and Wallace, (1959), p.154.

circumstances could allow or require people to change and adapt their work.

Another of Calvin's unique features is his locating vocation and work (as part of the Christian life) under the heading of self-denial.⁷⁸ Importantly however, Calvin's strong emphasis on self-denial, "had nothing to do with ascetic contempt for the created world, or with an otherworldliness which seeks a heaven because it despairs of this world."⁷⁹

Further, Calvin's theology on vocation (as indeed all of Calvin's theology) emphasizes not just creation and fall (as does Luther's) but additionally develops vocation in relationship to the redemptive restoration of vocation in Christ.⁸⁰ Redemption for Calvin is viewed cosmically and it necessarily applies to all of reality. In light of this it is understandable that in Calvin legitimate daily work is "the expression in humanity of the restlessness of the entire creation."⁸¹

Also, Calvin's views of society and the place of work therein were different than Luther's. Calvin realized the effects which sin can have on the orders and stations and therefore that Luther's doctrine of vocation required modification. It is argued that Calvin anticipated, and that his followers later developed, the idea that "the institutional shape of our earthly occupations is also a product of human culture."⁸² This observation is illustrated in Calvin's sermon on Ephesians 6:5-9 where, taking the implications of Paul's views rather than simply his direct statements, Calvin argues against slavery (since it is a human institution and not essentially a station in the Lutheran sense) as "totally against the order of nature".⁸³ The difference therefore between Calvin and Luther is that for Luther, we serve God *within* our vocations whatever they happen to be. For Calvin however, we serve God *by* our vocations which may involve a restructuring of life's vocations.⁸⁴ Vocations and work then are seen by

78 Hart, (1995), "2. John Calvin" p.121.

79 Ibid., pp.134-135.

80 Ibid., p.123.

81 Nicol, (1980), p.361.

82 Hardy, (1990), pp.63-64.

83 Calvin, (1973), p.634.

Calvin as in some respects relative and products of human culture. They are created orders, but they themselves must be subject to modification with respect to Christ's redemption.

A final difference to mention is Calvin's further development of the use of "gifts" language in relation to vocation and work. We have seen that Luther at times also used the language of spiritual gifts in relation to vocation and work. However, with Calvin, stemming from his philosophy of the nature of society, this emphasis is further developed and becomes foundational. For Calvinism, the "concept of the proper order for human society has its parallel in the New Testament picture of the principle of Church organization."⁸⁵ Therefore, although all "were created with the same basic needs, we were not created with the same talents and abilities... Possessing different gifts, each person is to occupy that particular station in life where those gifts can be exercised for the common good."⁸⁶ Thus, "Calvin taught that whatever manual skill a man had, it was given to him by the Holy Spirit."⁸⁷

In relation to their views of gifts and society, difference between the Reformers can be summarized as,

Luther focused on the 'need of the neighbor' in assessing whether any specific activity could be adjudged a divine calling... Beyond this, Calvin called attention to the gifts God had bestowed on a person... By itself, Luther's emphasis, despite its salutary focus on the need of the neighbor, could lead to a neglect of the development of one's talents or a failure to confront alienating or dehumanizing work. By the same token, Calvin's emphasis could lead one to focus so much on personal gifts (talents, interests) that the notion of rendering service evaporates, especially in a secular society.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ Hardy, (1990), pp.66-67. See also: Forrester (1951), p.151. "It may be true that the difference that soon developed between Lutheranism and Calvinism was that between serving God *in vocatione*, interpreted in a more or less quietist sense in Lutheranism, or *per vocationem*, a much more thorough and activist attitude as in Calvinism."

⁸⁵ Hardy, (1990), p.62.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p.60.

⁸⁷ Hart, (1995), "2. John Calvin" pp.126-127.

⁸⁸ Kolden, (1994), pp.267-268.

Having begun to grasp Calvin's view of work and vocation as distinct from Luther's, we now turn to examine Calvin's distinctive contributions to the theological reflection on work with respect to our hypothesis. Calvin's main contributions include the further development of work's relational aspect, and the further indication of work's ontological dimension.

Calvin surpassed Luther's contribution to the understanding of work's relational aspect in two respects. First, Calvin's theology proposes a concept of work which corresponds to what we have described as its relational / existential dimension. To perceive how he suggests the idea of personal development through work we need to consider two points of Calvin's doctrine.

Consider first Calvin's understanding of spiritual and natural gifts (including the concept that society should also be structured so as to reflect the New Testament Church ordering). Concerning a person's natural gifts, Calvin believed that any useful skill that a person has is a gift from God. Calvin writes,

Even the artisan with the humblest trade is good at it only because the Spirit of God works in him. For though these gifts are diverse, they all come from the one Spirit; it pleased God to distribute them to each one (1 Cor. 12:4) This does not refer only to spiritual gifts, which follow regeneration, but to all the sciences which concern our use of the common life.⁸⁹

Further, Calvin did not limit these God given gifts only to believers. He writes, "and today we see the glorious gifts of the Spirit spread throughout the whole human race. For the liberal and industrial arts and the sciences have come to us from profane men. Astronomy and the other branches of philosophy, medicine, political science".⁹⁰

Next, consider Calvin's understanding of cosmic redemption. The idea that Christ's redemption has effects on all of creation and not simply on humans came to embrace, (especially in later Calvinism) the idea that the fallen structures of society stand under Christ's Lordship and that they therefore can to a significant degree be

⁸⁹ Calvin, translated by Hart, (1995), "2. John Calvin" pp.126-127.

⁹⁰ Calvin, quoted by Hart, (1995), "2. John Calvin" p.127.

transformed or reformed.

These doctrines, when considered in relation to each other, present a picture suggesting that as a person works using his or her gifts (knowingly or unknowingly in accord with God's providential purposes), the objective result is that society is constructively reordered. At the same time however, this work (as an exercise of personal gifts) subjectively "fulfills" the person who is working with respect to who they were providentially created and gifted by God to be. Thus, as any person works using the gifts God has given, he or she will naturally find a degree of fulfillment in their work. Further, in as much as the person is "fulfilled" and is continually using and thus developing those God given gifts, they will experience joy and peace, a growing sense of well being. They will also know that through their work they are serving others and thus living so as to glorify God.

Thus, when a person works, one develops one's self with respect to one's gifts and callings. Combined with redemption and brought within the community of believers, this self-development can be termed as the person's becoming who they were created by God to be in Christ. Work then, (the use of one's gifts for others) "fulfills" and existentially develops us, and locates us within our community.

The second of Calvin's developments concerning the relational aspect of work refers further to its social character. Through work, not only do people relate to one another or meet each other's generic needs, through work, as Calvin understands it, our actual vocations themselves are changed. Thus, if the very structures of society are constantly open to change, a society could in theory come to function better (or worse) as a direct result of its member's work. On the positive side, work done well thus serves (under common grace) the common good. The vision is that the structures of work and human society are in some ways a result of human culture and subject to sin's corrupting influence. Life's structures therefore, where necessary, should be transformed or re-formed in light of Christ's redemption. Thus, "the emphasis on the

connection between work and social justice was clearly sounded by Calvin, and continued to reverberate in the subsequent works of English and American theologians in the Calvinist tradition.”⁹¹

We see then, with respect to work’s relational functions, that Calvin’s theology takes us beyond the basic ideas found in Luther. What however, does Calvin suggest concerning work ontologically? Of course Calvin did not address this subject directly. Nonetheless, his theology does suggest that work involves more, in its essence, than simply its instrumental and relational functions. To Calvin, work is more profoundly bound up with God’s creation, especially of humans. Here we will offer deductions from Calvin’s theology which suggest that he at least grasped (if not articulated or fully fathomed) the concept of work as ontologically perceived.

Calvin believed that humanity was created to work. Commenting on Genesis 2:15 Calvin writes that, “here Moses adds that the earth was leased to man, on this condition, that he busies himself cultivating it. It follows from this that men were made to employ themselves doing something and not to be lazy and idle.”⁹² Further, Calvin in his discussion of Mary and Martha in Luke 10:38-42 writes,

we know that men were created for the express purpose of being employed in labour of various kinds, and that no sacrifice is more pleasing to God than when every man applies himself diligently to his own calling...⁹³

This understanding that work is a fundamental dimension of human purpose surfaces in the context of humanity’s call in creation, and then in its restoration in Christ, to have dominion over this world. Calvin writes,

That is why it is said that what is contained in the Eighth Psalm is accomplished in the person of our Saviour Jesus Christ; that is, God gave him to possess the earth, the animals of the fields, the birds of the air, the fish in the sea. Why? Because by sin we lost all things, we are not worthy to touch a piece of bread or a drop of water; but the possession of these things has been restored to us by means of our

⁹¹ Hardy, (1990), p.60.

⁹² Calvin, translated by Hart, (1995), “2. John Calvin” pp.121-122.

⁹³ Calvin, quoted by Hart, (1995), “2. John Calvin” p.127.

Lord Jesus Christ and by his grace.⁹⁴

In light of this we, conclude with Hardy that, "it follows on Calvin's view that we express the image of God within us, that we become most Godlike not when we turn away from action (including work) but when we engage in it."⁹⁵ Work then, is a pre-condition of being human, and not simply a necessary result of it. Work then, appears to be ontologically built into created reality.

Calvin's discussion of human dominion and activity however, goes beyond the fact that humanity was created to work. Indeed, work as a "thing" in itself is given a special status since it has been ordained by God; that is, work itself is considered one of God's ordinances. Calvin, when arguing that marriage is an ordinance rather than a sacrament, illustrates by referring to human works. He states, "farming, building, cobbling, and barbering are lawful ordinances of God".⁹⁶ Hart writes of Calvin's view of work as an ordinance that this fact in some way makes the idea of work perfect.⁹⁷ We would add to this that it further makes work appear ontological.

If this point is granted, it then appears reasonable to suggest that Calvin could be construed as having the view (implicitly if not explicitly) that work is ontologically more than a mere means (although it obviously is this). Work is a constitutional part of God's order for creation, it is built into the design of the creation. This is encouraging for our thesis in that Calvin, more so than Luther, has notions beginning to approach an ontology of work.

We suggest that all of these directions (work as ordained by God, as fundamental to human nature and foundational to the order of nature) indicate that Calvin envisions work as embracing but also transcending its usefulness and necessary function. Work, to Calvin, was intrinsically appropriate to created reality and thus may be considered in

⁹⁴ Calvin, translated by Hart, "2. John Calvin" p.123. Here Hart is quoting from Calvin's Sermon on 1 Tim. 4:1-5 as cited by Wallace, (1959), pp.131-132.

⁹⁵ Hardy, (1990), p.75.

⁹⁶ Calvin, (1960), 4. XIX. 34. p.1481.

⁹⁷ Hart, (1995), "2. John Calvin" p.126.

Calvin's theology to be ontological.

Now what do we make of the Reformation understanding of work construed as vocation? Certainly it is a sophisticated attempt by the Church to uncover the meaning of work. It is one of the most thoroughly developed theological models and practical understandings of work found anywhere in the Church past or present. Further, it gives meaning to ordinary life and work in a way that theology before (and since) has often failed to do.

The vocational model of work however, is not without its critics. A common critique is leveled against it linguistically on exegetical grounds.⁹⁸ It is argued that Luther's (and thus Calvin's) use of vocation or calling with reference to one's work is a misunderstanding of the New Testament teaching on calling in general, and the view of calling found in 1 Cor. 7:20 in particular. This criticism is valid if one judges the Reformers according to strict exegetical standards. If however, one allows that Luther has extrapolated from the Biblical texts and produced something which is essentially a theological model rather than a Biblical exegesis, then the criticism as offered loses its force. Of course, Luther himself seemed to think that he was simply summarizing the Bible rather than offering a speculative theological construct. However, Luther's self-understanding is less important than the actual model which he produced. Even if Luther himself was wrong concerning what he was doing, his model stands as a theological construct and must be judged according to its merits as such, and not judged as if it were a technical piece of Biblical theology.

Another criticism offered by Volf is that the entire program of considering work in relation to the concept of "calling" is "inapplicable to modern societies and theologically inadequate."⁹⁹ His argument is that this model is a piece of contextual theology built in and for a "static" society where social and work structures were basically determined (rather than "open" as they now are). This later point may be

⁹⁸ See: Richardson, (1952), pp.35-39., Marshall, (1980), pp.12-14., and Barth, (1961), "Vocation." in *Church Dogmatics* III, 4, 52. pp.600-607.

⁹⁹ Volf, (1991), p.vii., also pp.105-110.

true, however, as we shall see shortly, there have been many reformulations of the vocational model which take contemporary social realities into consideration. The criticism then, that the vocational model is inapplicable in modern societies, seems to be illconceived.

Our basic concern with the Reformation's vocational model of work is somewhat similar to Volf's other more theological critique. Our concern is that, given all of its strengths, it nevertheless still misconstrues the nature of work in a reductionistic manner. Even though there are resources found within the model for understanding work's nature to include both relational and ontological aspects, basically it still pictures work (even with these dimensions) as a subcategory of sanctification (as first and foremost instrumental in the spiritual life). Now, we do not want to deny the positive contribution of securely locating work within the spiritual life. However, we suggest that such a hierarchical ordering of work's internal aspects (placing its instrumental role in sanctification as primary) is not necessary, and indeed as we will later show, is not accurate. This hierarchical ordering of work by the Reformers is understandable given that their concern in reflecting on work was not work itself, but rather was how and where work fits into the Christian (and in the case of Calvin, non-Christian) life. However, their very strength is also their weakness. Had they thought more about work *qua* work rather than simply about work as a means in the spiritual life, they may have come to more balanced conclusions. Indeed, we are suggesting that as we do focus on work itself, the hierarchical ordering of its aspects is undermined.

In conclusion, although the Reformation doctrine of work as vocation can be criticized in a number of areas, the directions and agenda which the Reformation established concerning how to construe work theologically have persisted and dominated almost all Protestant theological reflection on work. Also, as will be shown, into the twentieth century and until quite recently, the protestant vocational approach to work has been the primary model in the Church for theologically reflecting on work.

CHAPTER 2

MODERN ROMAN CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING AND WORK

DEVELOPMENTS IN OFFICIAL CATHOLIC TEACHING ON WORK: 1891-1981

Having concluded our overview of how the Church historically has understood the nature and meaning of work, we are now able to consider this same question with respect to the contemporary Church. We begin our analysis with modern Catholicism.

Until the nineteenth century Roman Catholic teaching on work was mostly a continuation of the tradition established by the Medieval Church. Then, during the 1800's Catholic social thought in general and its view of work in particular began to change significantly. A. R. Vidler in his classic study *A Century of Social Catholicism 1820-1920* demonstrates that in Europe throughout the nineteenth century Catholicism was starting to develop what by modern standards could be called a social awareness. Gradually surfacing in Catholicism during this century was a belief that "it was possible and a matter of moral obligation to improve the social structures as well as bring charitable relief to the victims of industrialism". (Vidler, p.xii.) According to Vidler, toward the end of the century, and as a specific result of both the Industrial Revolution and the liberal doctrine of *laissez faire* economics, the expression "social Catholicism" came into use. (Vidler, pp.ix-xii.)

The culmination of this growing awareness and concern for broader social-structural problems was the publication in 1891 of Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (the worker's charter). It is generally agreed that with this document a new era in Catholic social thought had officially begun.

Rerum Novarum is primarily a response by the Church critiquing the social and political liberalism which had spread throughout Europe during the 1800's. Generally, it is an economically and politically conservative document the main thrust of which is to examine the plight of the working class poor in the light of expanding technology, urbanization and industrialization. Its primary concerns include the affirmation of the right of persons to private property (against socialism) and the limiting of state intervention in working and economic life.

Vidler underscores the fact that part of Leo XIII's motivation with *Rerum Novarum* was "to change the inward-looking, citadel mentality that Pius IX had fostered in the Church." (Vidler, p.127.) After the Reformation, the Catholic Church had become preoccupied both with its own survival and with reasserting its power and influence in Europe. With *Rerum Novarum* however, Leo XIII opened the door and redirected Catholic concern in such a way that broader social-ethical questions (which transcend those more preservationist concerns) could emerge.

Further, by broadening Catholics' horizons to include social questions (which by definition address more than simply the eternal condition of an individual's "soul"), Catholicism's overemphasis on the contemplative life (over and against the active) was subtly challenged, even if not completely overcome. The Church's historic preoccupation with the "soul" (narrowly conceived) was recast so that the problems faced by the person in his or her active social relationships could likewise become important.

This shift is particularly important for the emerging Catholic understanding of work. Work, a central theme in *Rerum Novarum*, is no longer discussed only as instrumental to personal sustenance and spiritual achievement. Throughout the encyclical, work's instrumental nature is taken for granted, and its functions in providing sustenance, and in individual spiritual development are simply not the focus. Rather, the advancement this encyclical makes in Catholic social teaching on work is found in the direction and impetus it gives for exploring work's relational dimensions

and potentialities. (*RN*, n.27, 34.) The issues addressed in *Rerum Novarum* examine what the structures of work do to the workers as individuals and to the societies in which they live.

This, it must be emphasized, was a new direction for Catholics. Although *Rerum Novarum's* suggestions may seem obvious to those of us living at the dawn of the twenty-first century, for Catholics in the late 1800's it was a radical departure from the norm. With this encyclical then, work was coming to be more fully understood as an important component in the overall structuring of human social life. Further, work was beginning to be seen as an indispensable factor in shaping a person's broader social and individual identity.

By implication then, the encyclical may be read as the Catholic Church's official affirmation of the legitimacy of ordinary life and work. In this respect we see tendencies developing in the Catholic Church which correspond to the relational dimensions of work presented by both Luther and Calvin.¹

The next significant development in the Catholic social teaching generally came with the encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* (The Social Order) which was published in 1931 by Pope Pius XI. This encyclical was written to trace the results and benefits of *Rerum Novarum* and to further vindicate and explain its teachings. It commented on the economic realities of its day and addressed the problem of translating *Rerum Novarum's* teachings into social policy. Interestingly, in this document one detects what appears to be a conscious shift politically and economically. Its tone is decidedly both more radical and "liberal" than the first encyclical's.² In the section on the "Emancipation of the Proletariat" for example, it uses explicitly Marxist terminology,

¹ Compare for example *Rerum Novarum* 19 with Luther's emphasis on work as primarily for the benefit of others, and 45 with Luther's views on the stations. Also compare 14 with Calvin's views on inequality and differentiation based on the application of the New Testament "body" concept to the broader society.

² The social vision in this encyclical is similar to the version of corporatism which was exemplified by Mussolini's idea in Italy to organise people in blocks similar to the Mediaeval guilds.

concepts and analysis. (QA, 59-62.) Further, it calls for significantly more state intervention than did *Rerum Novarum*.

With regard to work specifically, this encyclical does not take us much beyond the teachings of *Rerum Novarum*. This is understandable considering that its emphasis is on economics rather than on work itself. However, one should not fail to see the continued emphasis on the relational aspects of work. The social use of work's fruits or products remains the central concern of this encyclical. *Quadragesimo Anno* then, although not a commentary on work itself, is nonetheless an attempt to suggest how the view of work offered in *Rerum Novarum* should be implemented in society.

Next, toward the end of the Second World War, we find a flourishing of creative explorations in Catholic social theory. We are not here concerned with an encyclical or Papal pronouncement, but rather with certain undercurrents or movements which were taking place elsewhere within the Catholic Church.

Among these movements were the developments in theological reflection which led to the emergence of genitive theologies. "Theologies of secular realities" and hence "theologies of work" were being explored by several continental Catholic thinkers. Particularly important was M.-D. Chenu. Chenu's reapplication of the Thomist tradition to the problem of work's nature and meaning introduced into Catholicism a new paradigm for thinking theologically about work. Although by late twentieth century standards his conclusions are probably both too optimistic concerning what we can expect humans to achieve through their work, and too environmentally unfriendly, Chenu's new model, a theology of work, was nevertheless ground-breaking and its significance and value therefore should not be underrated.

Those working on theologies of work however, were not the only ones in Catholicism in the middle of the century exploring the meaning and role of work in the life of the individual and society. Other initiatives also shaped Catholicism's emerging understanding of work. There were for example, the Worker Priest movement in France (Mission de France), the Little Sisters / Little Brothers of Jesus movement, Jeunesse

Ouvriere Chretienne and Opus Dei.³

Importantly, Catholics not directly a part of either the developments in genitive theologies or these experimental lifestyle movements began to consider the contributions from these trends. By 1960 in Great Britain a symposium specifically on work had been held which involved several prominent English Catholic scholars and “working” persons. Several participants produced essays which were published in a book edited by John Todd called *Work: Christian Thought and Practice*. The content of the book suggests how influential each of the above mentioned developments had become. The English participants had come to discuss work using the very language and categories which these initiatives had established. For example, the closing section of the book (which functions as a summary and call for further reflection) adopts the genitive “theology of work” motif. It uses this motif rather than the “vocation” model standardized by the Reformers and still in use by most Protestants. Also, the suggestions in this section, particularly in the chapter by Herbert McCabe O.P., in many ways reflect those presented first by Chenu. McCabe uses similar categories and terminology, and indicates that he is working with a Thomist framework (similar to that used by Chenu).⁴

The important observation from these trends is that the Catholic Church finally had come up with a motif, or model, with which to develop its own reflections specifically on the nature and meaning of work. Further, the broader impact of this model can be seen from the fact that its influence has now spread even beyond its originally Catholic context. As a methodology it has recently been adopted for Protestant theological reflections on work. Volf for example, chooses the theology of work motif rather than the vocational model.

The currents and trends to which we have been referring were certainly among those which lead to, and heavily influenced the Catholic Church as it moved into Vatican II. This series of meetings was to make official a host of developments in

³ Todd, pp.113-119., and Illanes, *On the Theology of Work*. (1967).

⁴ Todd, pp.211-221.

theology, ecclesiology and social thought which were already underway within the Church. The topic of work, as we have seen, was integral and closely tied to these broader developments. Based on work's prominence in previous encyclicals and due particularly to the post war emphasis it received, it can be argued that the theological reflection on work was one of the underlying (if not initially expressed) concerns leading to Vatican II's re-shaping of modern Catholicism.

For our purposes, when referring to the Vatican II period we will look only at the 1961 encyclical *Mater et Magistra* by Pope John XXIII and the Vatican II document *Gaudium et Spes*. These are not the only Vatican II period documents central to the continued story of developing Catholic social thought, but they are the particularly relevant ones with reference to work.⁵

Mater et Magistra aims at being a further explication of *Rerum Novarum* as it attempts to reevaluate the "social problem" in the light of Christian teaching. "Justice", closely linked with "equity", between the different branches in the economy is the new aspect of the social question it introduces. The need for just relationships between such branches as agriculture, public services, and taxation are highlighted. Interestingly, agriculture becomes a key issue throughout the document.⁶

Although in the tradition of *Rerum Novarum*, *Mater et Magistra* moves even further away in its social and political outlook from *Rerum Novarum*. Pope John XXIII argues specifically for state intervention in economic planning and positively affirms our evolution to a welfare state. (*MM*, 20.)

We also find introduced in this encyclical however, a new area for consideration. In line with the ethos of Vatican II, we find more prominence placed on the need for Christian education, and a higher priority given to lay persons and lay ministry in the

⁵ Another important encyclical of this period, but not one which contributes significantly beyond those we are considering to the question of work is Pope Paul VI's encyclical of 1967, *Populorum Progressio*.

⁶ Agriculture became important because the massive pressure placed on Vatican II by third-world Bishops from Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Church. Therefore, it is not surprising that the specific topic of work (the universal activity of the laity) would become prominent in the document. Noteworthy, is that the understanding of work presented in *Mater et Magistra* closely corresponds with the idea of the priority of the human (labor) over the material (capital) which later becomes the foundation for the theology of work found in *Laborem Exercens*. Two quotes suffice to illustrate this emerging understanding of the nature of work.

First, work “must be regarded not merely as a commodity, but as a specifically human activity. In the majority of cases a man’s work is his sole means of livelihood. Its remuneration, therefore, cannot be made to depend on the state of the market.”(*MM*, 18.) Second, it is suggested that “work, which is the immediate expression of a human personality, must always be rated higher than the possession of external goods which of their very nature are merely instrumental.” (*MM*, 107.) Notice here the defining characteristics of work. It is a “specifically human activity”, and it is an “immediate expression of a human personality”. Other aspects which might contribute to work’s essential nature are minimized. Its nature as a commodity is so depicted that it is in effect denied or at best presented to be a negative. Further, the work act is argued to have priority over that which work produces. The implication is that the act of working is what is important rather than its product.

Four years after *Mater et Magistra* another document reflecting further developments in Catholic social thought was published; this was *Gaudium et Spes*. It was the product of Vatican II’s far ranging attempts to reform the Church and reflects an unprecedented openness to non-Catholics, even more emphasis on lay activity, and a marked return to Biblical theology as the basis for Church practice. Its themes include an emphasis on human dignity as the theological basis for social ethics, and an emphasis on humanity’s general purpose to advance the works of God in creation.

Not surprisingly, the topic of work also surfaces several times in this document. Two points demonstrate its continuity with the developing Catholic social thought with respect to work. First, as with Chenu, McCabe and the revised Thomist tradition which

they represent (with the focus on teleology), the discussions of human purpose in *Gaudium et Spes* securely place work constitutionally (or ontologically) within God's desired plans for humanity. Here work's importance goes far beyond its instrumental function for survival or spiritual advancement. (GS, 20, 40.) Strategically, by highlighting that human labor was intended by God as part of humanity's purpose, work was endowed with its own value and worth.

Our second point however, is that by so emphasizing work's relational aspects (both social-structural and existential), the specifically "human" dimensions of work begin to overshadow its other instrumental and ontological aspects. (GS, 9, 33, 34, 35.) This results in further embedding into Catholic social tradition the concept of the priority of the acts of labor over its products or its material consequences or benefits. A quote toward the end of the document is telling on this point. "Human labour, employed in the production and exchange of goods and in supplying economic services, is the chief element in economic life - all else is instrumental." (GS, 67.)

LABOREM EXERCENS

The next and final development in Catholic social thought which concerns us is the 1981 publication by Pope John Paul II of the encyclical *Laborem Exercens* (On Human Work).⁷ With this document official Catholic social teaching reaches its culmination with respect to work. Thus, we here turn our attention to a more careful evaluation of it.⁸

⁷ *Laborem Exercens* (1981), in Baum, *The Priority of Labor*, pp.95-152. (1982.) We should mention here that in this text Baum offers a quite interesting socialist reading of this encyclical. However, as our argument below will show, such a reading is not ultimately sustainable.

Also, between the early period in theology of work development (represented by Chenu and then McCabe), and the publication of *Laborem Exercens*, there was in Catholicism outside of the Vatican additional probing for possibilities and further exploration into the theological basis for understandings of work. Part of this search, focusing on the questions of work's relation to eternal salvation and the relationship between nature and grace can be traced in: Reck, (1964), pp.228-39. See also for a more developed alternative approach at a Catholic theology of work: Davies, (1968), pp.93-116.

⁸ Of course, Pope John Paul II has published several social encyclicals subsequent to

Simply described, *Laborem Exercens* is another in the line of papal encyclicals outlining the social teaching of the Catholic Church, or, addressing the “social question”. It was occasioned by the ninetieth anniversary of Pope Leo XIII’s publication of the first social encyclical *Rerum Novarum*.

Laborem exercens however, is quite unique compared to other encyclicals. It is both a highly theological document, yet it also has a quite narrow focus. While other encyclicals range broadly over a host of social issues, *Laborem Exercens* focuses primarily on one aspect of the social question, that of human work. As Pope John Paul II explains, “I wish to devote this document to human work, and even more, to man in the vast context of the reality of work.” (*LE*, 1.) For Pope John Paul II it is important to focus this letter, “perhaps more than has been done before”, on human work when dealing with the social question, for human work is the “key, probably the essential key, to the whole social question”. (*LE*, 3.) Why so?

And if the solution – or rather the gradual solution – of the social question, which keeps coming up and becomes ever more complex, must be sought in the direction of ‘making life more human,’ then the key, namely human work, acquires fundamental and decisive importance. (*LE*, 3.)

Now this peculiar elevation of one aspect of the social question, (work) to the level of prime importance is not intended to be seen as incongruous with the developing trajectory of the tradition as found in the previous encyclicals. Pope John Paul II is clear that this encyclical is “not intended to follow a different line, but rather to be in organic connection with the whole tradition of this teaching and activity.” (*LE*, 2.) Indeed, he points out, similar to what we have already shown in our survey, that throughout the

Church’s teaching in the sphere of the complex and many-sided social question – the question of human work naturally appears many times.

Laborem Exercens and the importance of these documents to the developing tradition of Catholic social thought in general is beyond question. However, given that our concern in this thesis is with Catholic social teaching on work, we will not comment on these encyclicals. This is because on the question of work, these subsequent encyclicals stand in continuity with Laborem Exercens and do not make further contributions to it.

This issue is, in a way, a constant factor both of social life and of the Church's teaching." (*LE*, 3.)

This emphasis on continuity with the tradition however, does not mean that the Pope's specific conclusions on work in *Laborem Exercens* are simply restatements of what has been said previously in the Catholic tradition (or elsewhere in the Christian Church). On the contrary, although it is thoroughly Catholic theologically and ethically, and even though there are important points where its teachings converge with wider ecumenical understandings of work, in this document we nevertheless find a creative and original theological and ethical reflection on work; the uniqueness of which largely stems from the sources which have gone into producing it. Specifically, we shall be highlighting three primary sources which the Pope has drawn upon (consciously or unconsciously) to formulate both the character and content of this letter. One of these sources is Scripture itself. Another is a corporatist social tradition associated with Catholic Europe. The other, more idiosyncratic source, is Pope John Paul II's own personalist philosophical tradition.

Having made these general introductory points however, and before entering into our discussion of the letter's content, we want to comment briefly on what exactly we understand this encyclical's theological genre to be. This is necessary for our conclusions here will affect the kind (directions and limits) of analysis which we shall offer.

Firstly, this letter is written as a papal social encyclical and as such it is by design a succinct theological statement on work and an application of this statement to specific social conditions. It is not primarily a detailed thesis or abstract argument about the nature of work (even if it implies one). Hence, we will need to be cautious not demanding from the letter the amount or type of detail that we might expect find in other types of writings.

Secondly, and related to this, *Laborem Exercens* has been called a "theology of

work”.⁹ Undeniably the letter is a theological reflection devoted specifically to human work. However, we do not believe that it is appropriate to classify the letter, an encyclical, as a theology of work. It simply is not structured as a comprehensive theological reflection on work. Rather, given its form and the concrete issues which it covers, it is better to read the document more restrictively as a theological ethics of work and not as a theology of work proper. This means that we will not be evaluating the content of the encyclical or its methodology according to our outlined criteria for a more fully developed theology of work. Such criticism would not be entirely fair to the nature of the document we have and would serve no broader purpose.

What kind of analysis then shall we be offering? In what follows our purpose is twofold. Initially, without going into a lot of detail, we shall outline how work in *Laborem Exercens* can be perceived as instrumental, relational, and, in some ways, ontological. (This will further demonstrate the appropriateness of our overall hypothesis.) More critically however, we will then demonstrate how in this encyclical these three aspects function hierarchically in relationship to each other, and in so doing we shall argue that this ordering, (which we believe to be flawed) is largely based upon an under-developed and thus inadequate ontological aspect of work.

The Instrumental Aspect of Work

Throughout this encyclical we find what we have labeled the instrumental aspect of work appearing quite prominently. Both in relation to basic human sustenance and economics, and in relation to the developing spiritual life, work in *Laborem Exercens* is depicted as a means to an end.

The instrumentality of work for human sustenance is highlighted throughout the letter. The opening words of the preface indicate that work is initially about man earning his daily bread. (*LE*, preface.) Later, Pope John Paul II talks about the importance of this sustenance aspect of work in relation to family formation. Work, he says, “is a condition for making it possible to found a family, since the family requires

⁹ West, (1986), “Cruciform Labour” pp.9-15.

the means of subsistence which man normally gains through work.” (LE, 10.) Again, near the end of the encyclical we are reminded that work necessarily involves humans “providing the substance of life for themselves and their families”. (LE, 25.)

Likewise as a result of this concern for subsistence, the instrumental importance of human work in the sphere of economics is given prominence. Section IV, which addresses various issues concerning the rights of workers, is essentially an ethical discussion of specific work related issues imbedded in and affected by economic considerations. The discussions of the direct and indirect employer (17.), the employment issue (18.), and then wages (19.) all deal with work as a means to an end in the economic arena.

Work in *Laborem Exercens* is also construed as instrumental in the developing spiritual life. It is commanded by God, is God’s will for man, and is a part of “the salvation process” (understood here with reference to sanctification rather than justification). (LE, 16, 25, 24) Indeed, the importance of work for human spiritual development is most importantly highlighted by the fact that Pope John Paul II devotes the entire concluding section (V) to the elements of a spirituality of work.

Instrumentally then, work is not simply concerned with sustenance or economics. It is also about helping people “come closer... to God, the Creator and Redeemer”, and participating in “his salvific plan for man and the world”, and deepening our “friendship with Christ”. (LE, 24.)

The Relational Aspect of Work

When considering work as a means to an end however, *Laborem Exercens* does not limit its focus to what we have described as the instrumental aspects of work. Indeed, prominent throughout the letter, and of more social ethical significance, is the concern for what we have called the relational aspect of work. Again, what we have described as the social and existential dimensions of the relational aspect surface repeatedly throughout the document.

When we return again to the preface and to the opening sentence of the encyclical we find emphasized, beside the concern for earning one's daily bread, the relational / social aspect of work. Here work is understood to be centrally important to the continual advancement of humanity as a whole, including our corporate scientific and technological, and cultural and moral advancement. (*LE*, preface.) This idea is expressed repeatedly through the letter and as Pope John Paul II summarizes,

It is characteristic of work that it first and foremost unites people. In this consists its social power: the power to build a community. (*LE*, 20.)

We find then, that work is primarily characterized by its interpersonal / relational (higher human) dimension. As important as its economic (or even basic subsistence) value is, its greater ethical significance lies in its ability to create community.

However, this emphasis on the relational / social dimension of work should not be understood as essentially different than, or as minimizing, work's related ethical importance in the relational / existential realm. As the basis for social development, man has a "tendency to self-realization" and work must "serve to realize his humanity, to fulfill the calling to be a person that is his by reason of his very humanity." (*LE*, 6.) What though, does self-realization through work mean? It means that man "achieves that 'domination' which is proper to him over the visible world". (*LE*, 9.) It means that man "not only transforms nature, adapting it to his own needs, but he also achieves fulfillment as a human being and indeed in a sense becomes 'more a human being'" through work. (*LE*, 9.) Man therefore, needs work so that his own humanity (corporately and individually) may be both "maintained and developed". (*LE*, 16.) "For when a man works he not only alters things and society, he develops himself as well." (*LE*, 26.)

The Ontological Aspect of Work

Pope John Paul II however, does not conceive of, nor does he develop work's instrumental and relational aspects independent of a theological foundation for work, or, what may rightly be understood to be an ontology of work. Work, for him, is more fundamental to created existence than simply its usefulness.

Again we begin in the preface with the initial lines of the encyclical. Here we find that man is "predisposed by his very nature, by virtue of humanity itself" to work. Work is "one of the characteristics that distinguish man from the rest of creatures". Work, subduing the earth, is thus very closely linked with what it means to be created in the image and likeness of God. (*LE*, preface.) It is a "basic dimension of human existence." (*LE*, 1.) It is a "fundamental dimension of man's existence on earth" as taught by the "first pages of the Book of Genesis". (*LE*, 4.)

In fact, work is so fundamental to man's existence that not surprisingly, it also "enters into the salvation process". (*LE*, 25.) In the first place, when humans work "they are unfolding the Creator's work", that is, they are as image bearers sharing in the activity of the creator. (*LE*, 25.) However, work is even more closely tied to the salvation process than this. It is a participation in the cross and resurrection of Christ. In this sense, work has an eschatological thrust. It provides "an announcement of 'the new heavens and the new earth' in which man and the world participate precisely through the toil that goes with work." (*LE*, 27.)

Do these points however, indicate that Pope John Paul II understands work to be in any way "ontological"? Whether consciously or not, when he talks about work as being fundamental to human existence (and not only an instrument to it), when he talks about work as a given in creation, when he speaks of work as part of the salvation process; when Pope John Paul II offers these ideas as the theological and ethical foundations for the working life, he is suggesting an ontology of work. This does not mean that he has fully developed an ontology of work but it does mean that he sees the

need for one and has made significant strides toward offering one.

Having established however, that *Laborem Exercens* offers a vision of work as instrumental, relational and ontological, the more interesting question becomes, In what way are these three aspects understood to be related to each other? How does one aspect effect the other, and what kind of an ethical picture of work do all three together produce?

In as much as they are, or can be said to be interrelated, the picture of work which emerges in *Laborem Exercens* is one of a strict hierarchical-subordinational ordering of our three aspects of work (rather than a mutual interdependent and “egalitarian” relationship existing between the three). All three aspects of work are understood as necessary and important and none can be subordinated to the other so as to make any redundant. However, the instrumental aspect of work (here primarily referring to economic function) is subordinated (metaphysically and ethically) to the relational or “human” aspect, while the relational, although ethically primary in the broadest sense, is nonetheless metaphysically subordinate to the ontological (in the sense that it has its source solely in the ontological).

What this means practically is that to resolve the ethical dilemmas when there is conflict in the area of work, the relational (because of the nature of the ontological) is granted priority over and allowed to limit and dictate parameters to the instrumental (and this must never happen in reverse order - instrumental to relational). The ontological here, does not bring the instrumental and relational together into a mutually defining and equally valuing give-and-take relationship, (nor does it allow itself to be further defined, “located”, or balanced by the other two). Rather, the ontological aspect guarantees the complete subordination of the former to the latter while itself remaining “on the sidelines” and thus staying hierarchically prior to, and in reality unaffected by the other aspects. Thus, because of the ontological (as it is here depicted) the relational must have the priority. Because of the ontological the relational effects and results of work are given a strict priority over the objective products of work. The relational,

human / spiritual are given priority over the instrumental / material elements of work.

In the analysis which follows we will substantiate these conclusions from *Laborem Exercens*, and will further develop them where necessary. We will likewise offer therein a critique of this hierarchical understanding of work and suggest, foreshadowing the second half of this thesis, that a more adequately developed ontology of work would present a quite different non-hierarchical picture of work.

After an introductory section, Pope John Paul II begins developing his understanding of work, a fundamental dimension of human existence, by using Scripture. That is, he begins his discussion of work in the Book of Genesis. This, combined with a discussion of the spirituality of work at the end of the encyclical (similarly appealing primarily to Scripture) reveals that the foundations for an adequate understanding of work are perceived to be primarily theological. Structurally, it is interesting to note that the theological, here properly expressed as ontological, understanding of the nature of work becomes the beginning and concluding concern for that which must be said about work. The theological / ontological provides therefore, the foundational parameters for an understanding of what work should be both theoretically and practically. Thus, with this structure, the primary element (the ontological) in work's hierarchical structure has been laid down; if not fully developed. That is, as a result of creation and salvation, work becomes a fundamental part of *man's* existence on earth.

It should be noticed however, that while affirming that man's work must be seen as a reflection of God's work, ultimately work is ethically and theologically defined mostly with reference to the human. (Work's ontology stems from man's reality.) The bulk of the theological argumentation in the encyclical is intended to demonstrate that work is "transitive", an "activity beginning in the human subject and directed toward an external object". (*LE*, 4.) As such, anthropology (theological anthropology) becomes the dominant and determining source discipline for construing work's essential nature, rather than the doctrines of God or eschatology. The latter are affirmed

in section V but appear as additions rather than as essential to the developed argument. Therefore, they are not, like anthropology, of the same determinative value.

Further, the development of work almost exclusively from anthropology leads Pope John Paul II to the eventual conclusion that work cannot be seen as something existing beside humanity in any way (as if it were a thing in itself, intrinsically ordered also to itself). Rather, given its source in humanity it ultimately needs always to be subordinated to humanity if it is to be theologically and ethically viable. "In the first place work is 'for man' and not man 'for work'". (LE, 6.)

It is instructive to probe how and why Pope John Paul II reaches such a hierarchical conclusion. Concerning the why, we begin to see another source for his thought emerge (in addition to the Bible); namely, his personalist philosophy.¹⁰ Concerning the how, Pope John Paul II finds it necessary to propose two senses of work. He develops the idea that there is both the objective and subjective sense of work.

By objective, he means that sense of work which focuses upon what humans produce through their work. This is most often talked about in economic terms as a material or technological product of working. (LE, 5.) When referring to the subjective sense of work, he is asserting that man is always the subject of work. (LE, 6.)

When Pope John Paul II speaks of these two senses of work together, it is a person who is doing the work, the subject, which must be seen as primary. "The sources of the dignity of work are to be sought primarily in the subjective dimension, not in the objective one." (LE, 6.) Thus, the "primary basis of the value of work is man himself, who is its subject," and not the product or object of work. (LE, 6.) Further, "through

¹⁰ We will not be providing a detailed account of Pope John Paul II's personalist philosophy. For our purposes, the important effects of it emerge naturally in Laborem Exercens and it will be sufficient to simply point out some of these connections as they arise. Our point here is simply to draw our attention to another of the important sources for the ideas in Laborem Exercens.

For a detailed understanding of Pope John Paul II's personalism, particularly as it deals with the nature of society, one should see: Emmanuel Mounier, and Jacques Maritain (specifically Maritain's The Person and the Common Good and True Humanism). Additionally, to understand more specifically Pope John Paul II's action (work) oriented anthropology one should see his book, The Acting Person. (1979) (published as Karol Wojtyla). This book grew out of his interaction with Max Scheler.

this conclusion one rightly comes to recognize the preeminence of the subjective meaning of work over the objective one.” (*LE*, 6.)

With this section, Pope John Paul II is laying the foundations for his later argument and ethical principle which will assert the priority of labor over capital, or the subordination of that which work produces to the needs of labor. (We will return to this point shortly.) Here however, in personalist fashion, he is simply arguing that the person is more important than what he produces. As he will later state, the subjective dimension, or “the concrete reality of the worker, takes precedence over the objective dimension.” (*LE*, 10.)

This point is so central to his argument that Pope John Paul II adds a section (7) to make sure that these values are kept in proper hierarchical order. His fear is that we regularly undermine human / spiritual values and replace them with materialistic or economic ones. We do this by giving the “prime importance to the objective dimension of work, while the subjective dimension – every thing in direct or indirect relationship with the subject of work – remains on a secondary level.” (*LE*, 7.) He argues however, that this hierarchical relationship (objective over subjective) is the reversal of the order laid down in Genesis and that it is precisely this reversal of order which has led to the error of capitalism.

Lest we get to far ahead of ourselves, we shall momentarily look ahead in the text for this same argument is later taken up and more fully developed in section III, 13. There Pope John Paul II focuses his attention on the fundamental error, as he sees it, of the economic perspective. (We can see here the emergence of his commitment to an economic middle way somewhere between capitalism and socialism; a personalist vision grounded in corporatist thinking.) According to Pope John Paul II, the error is

that of considering human labor solely according to its economic purpose. This fundamental error of thought can and must be called an error of materialism, in that economism directly or indirectly includes a conviction of the primacy and superiority of the material, and directly or indirectly places the spiritual and the personal (man’s activity, moral

values and such matters) in a position of subordination to material reality. (*LE*, 13.)

We do not here want go into great detail critiquing this challenge to both capitalism and communism. It is interesting however, to notice briefly the options given and the “either-or” way that they are presented. Hierarchy here has been assumed. It is a given, and as such one, either the personal / spiritual or the material, will need to be on top. Given these options as ordered, Pope John Paul II’s conclusions do follow. However, our contention (which we will be developing in the second part of this thesis) is that there does not need to be a hierarchy at all. The personal and material are, and thus can be, related and valued in a non-hierarchical manner so that neither must be subordinated to the other.

Such a suggestion however would not satisfy Pope John Paul II. His concern is not simply the subordination of the subjective to the objective. For him it would be equally problematic to value the material on the same or similar level as the human. He is clear, returning to section II, 7 that “the error of early capitalism can be repeated whenever man is in a way treated on the same level as the whole complex of the material means of production”. (*LE*, 7.) Stated simply, whenever man as the subject is treated equally with the material which is necessarily object, (specifically here the material object which he produces) one is in error.

However, is this not simply a new version of an old Catholic (and Platonic) hierarchy where the soul, or “spirit” is seen as superior to, or valued over, matter? According to his construct, matter, either in its raw God created form or as further shaped by humans, can never be valued equally to spirit (or person / souls). Pope John Paul II clearly states this in his first encyclical *Redemptor Hominis* (1979). Here, explaining the Second Vatican Council’s understanding of man’s kingship he states,

The essential meaning of this ‘kingship’ and ‘dominion’ of man over the visible world, which the Creator himself gave man for his task, consists in the priority of ethics over technology, in the primacy of the person over things, and in the superiority of spirit over matter. (*RH*, 16.)

What is essential here to see is that not only can work's subjective sense never be subordinated to its objective sense. More fundamentally, these two senses cannot be treated or valued equally. We never have two "subjects" which can make equally limiting demands upon the other when it might seem necessary. A hierarchy must always be maintained, and the order of this must be the subordination of the objective sense of work to the subjective sense of work, the material to the human, matter to spirit. The principle, which will be later stated, is "the primacy of the person over things". (LE, 13.) Ultimately then, as we shall now see this principle leads to the further principle of the subordination of capital to labor.

Returning to the flow of the encyclical, that which follows in Pope John Paul II's reasoning is largely an outworking and further defining of the principles which he has so far presented. Beginning with section III paragraph 11, he builds his defense and application of these principles in a context of conflict between the subject and object of work, between labor and capital. His point throughout this section however, is that there is no conflict, or does not need to be a conflict, *as long as* the subject and object, labor and capital, the human and things, spirit and matter, are kept in a proper hierarchical relationship to each other. "The principle", he argues, the one which the Church has always taught, is "of the priority of labor over capital", the "substantial and real priority of labor". (LE, 12, 13.) Expressed similarly, the commitment is to the "primacy of man over things." (LE, 12.) Things, the objects and products of work, are simply a "collection of instruments" and "are only a mere instrument subordinate to human labor." (LE, 12.) Things can never also be "an impersonal 'subject' putting man and man's work into a position of dependence." (LE, 13.) Here we find again that things, nature either in its raw form or its further-shaped-by-human form, can never be in a subject to subject relationship with man. Man is always the dominating subject and nature the responsive object. Importantly, this principle of hierarchy and subordination is paradigmatic for the whole of Pope John Paul II's, and thus *Laborem*

Exercens' social ethics. "The principle of the priority of labor over capital is a postulate of the order of social morality." (*LE*, 15.)

Thus, we arrive where we began. Because of the ontological commitment that the objective aspect of work must always be subordinate to work's subject, it necessarily follows that work's instrumental aspect (here its economic and material value) must be hierarchically subordinated to its relational aspect (its social and existential function). It could be no other way. What this demonstrates is that our earlier conclusion was valid. In *Laborem Exercens* work is strictly a hierarchical construct.

Now, pointing ahead to what will follow in the second half of the thesis, we want to briefly sketch why we find this approach to work's threefold nature inadequate. We find the hierarchical-subordination understanding work as offered in *Laborem Exercens*, where the instrumental is always subordinated to the relational because of the ontological, unacceptable for several reasons. Practically, we find that ultimately it would be impossible to consistently live with such an approach. In the real world, and for the ethical sake of whole communities, there are times when broader economic considerations (markets) must be placed before, for example, the commitment to total employment. Rather than always trying to subordinate the former to the latter in a moralist fashion, it is actually both more realistic and ethically superior to judge each situation independently and determine ways forward at a given time and place. Here both the object and the subject of work will be allowed to make their respective legitimate demands. This will only be possible however, according to moral theory if the instrumental and relational aspects of work are related to each other metaphysically in some kind of reciprocal rather than hierarchical manner. In some way, both need to become subjects.

This practical critique however, is simply an indication that there is something wrong with the theory itself. It is then, to this theoretical evaluation of work in *Laborem Exercens* that we now turn our attention.

To begin with, we do not want to deny the appropriateness of seeking to derive the

essential nature of work from theological anthropology. Indeed, we ourselves shall be taking an approach similar to this in the second part of our thesis. However, unlike *Laborem Exercens*, which for all practical purposes when discussing work appends the doctrines of God and eschatology to the end of an already developed anthropology (under the heading of a spirituality of work), our approach will be to integrate these, and other doctrines as necessary, into our theological anthropology.

This will result in what we believe to be a more adequately developed ontology of work, one superior to that which is offered in *Laborem Exercens*. This then, becomes our main criticism of the hierarchical-subordinationist understanding of work presented in the encyclical. It has an underdeveloped and thus inadequate ontology of work at its foundation. By not integrating other doctrines more explicitly and directly into its anthropology, the ontology of work offered here suffers as an unfinished and out of balance foundation.

We suggest that a more adequately developed ontology of work will need to pay more attention, for example, to the theology of nature; even if this is offered (as we shall do) within a discussion of anthropology. What nature's eschatological *telos* proves to be, becomes important for if nature is seen as having its own *telos* and ordering to God, related to but also distinct from its ordering to humanity, then the exclusive hierarchical ordering of the subject of work to the object of work, man to material, labor to capital proves to be inadequate. If nature too has its own ordering to God, then it too becomes in some respects a subject. Thus, the instrumental and the relational aspects of work can be seen to be mutually related to each other, subject to subject. The former need not necessarily and always be subordinated to the latter.

Likewise, if man proves first to be a part of nature and only then is secondarily distinguished from it, then his dominion of nature, while not necessarily denied, will necessarily be of a different kind than if he were first distinct from and set over and opposed to nature. If it is affirmed that man is firstly a unity in nature, then again our hierarchy dissipates. Matter cannot be subordinate to man for it is essential to man that

he is matter. Here it would make little sense to speak of man (material) subordinated to man (person). Such a dualism would be redundant.

Related to these types of enquiries, to develop an adequate ontology of work it will also be essential to consider more specifically what eschatology, or the resurrection of Jesus, and then nature's and our resurrection at the end of time, mean to work in the context of a natural humanity. If the material products or objects of work are included in nature and thus in the resurrection in any way, (and therefore are included in the new heavens and new earth) then again work objectively develops a value unique to itself. It ceases to be simply "for man" in the way described in *Laborem Exercens*. Here, objective work (matter) ceases to be an object in the sense that Pope John Paul II describes it. It becomes also and equally a subject. In this scenario, humans and things can be placed beside each other and theoretically both can be valued equally and non-hierarchically. There may be times when one or the other must take the practical priority (when either ecology or human development becomes the primary problem). This however, can be decided upon the merits of each case and it will not necessitate a predetermined subordination of the one to the other. Thus, both work's instrumental and relational aspects will be allowed to mutually balance and even define each other.

Likewise, when the ontology of work is fully developed along the lines outlined above, it too forfeits its insularity. It will still be initially foundational in the overall work construct (instrumental, relational and ontological). However, when it is developed as suggested above, it will, as it were, enter into the game. No longer will it simply be on the sidelines dictating what the relational, or instrumental, aspects must be. Rather, it too will allow both the instrumental and relational aspects a type of subjective role in defining and locating it. That is, it will cease to be the only subject in the construct. The ontological aspect of work will become a part of work in such a way that it will allow itself to be shaped by what is objectively both its instrumental and relational function.

With all of this we are suggesting that what *Laborem Exercens* needs is a more

adequately developed ontology of work. Once this is provided, a hierarchical-subordinational understanding of the three aspects of work will be undermined and there will emerge both a more theoretically sound and a more practical vision of work. Providing this better developed ontology of work then, becomes the task in the second part of our thesis.

CHAPTER 3

MODERN PROTESTANT UNDERSTANDINGS OF WORK

As we have explored, during the Reformation those Christians who identified with the Protestant movement came to conceive of their ordinary daily work as a calling or vocation from God. The doctrine of vocation, or the vocational model of work as we are calling it, with its primary emphases on personal obedience to God and outward service to others through one's work, has continued into and throughout the twentieth century to influence most Protestant theological reflection on work. Despite various critiques and attempts by some Protestants to leave it behind, the doctrine of vocation has continued to provide the foundation and superstructure for most Protestants seeking to understand the nature and meaning of human work.

However, this does not mean that there is or has been only one Protestant understanding of work set forth during the twentieth century (or that the vocational model is the only one appropriate to Protestantism). On the contrary, Protestant theological understandings of work have become as diversified as Protestantism itself. Our challenge therefore, is to present a meaningful overview of twentieth century Protestant construals of work which both reflects the enduring influence of the vocational model, and yet at the same time emphasizes the substantial differences which have developed.

CLASSIFYING THE LITERARY SOURCES

The initial difficulty which we face is identifying and classifying the variety of source materials which we find in the various twentieth century Protestant traditions.

Basically, there are three different types of literature available, each offering a distinctive approach to thinking theologically about work. We have reflections on work which are offered secondarily within more general systematic theologies, studies which are narrowly focused on exploring work itself, and we have ethical or contextual literature which deals with work indirectly while primarily offering ethical reflection on some other issue.

Systematic Theology

It is not uncommon to find in a systematic theology, or in substantial wide-ranging theological explorations, specific reflections on the nature and meaning of human work. Theologians like Barth, Brunner, Bonhoeffer and Moltmann for example, each offer reflections on work within their more comprehensive theological treatises. However, they do so in the context of and while discussing another major doctrine or other points of doctrine. Here work is addressed from a theological perspective, yet work is not being explored primarily, (in and for itself) nor is it being addressed comprehensively. Rather, a particular doctrinal point is being explored and work is discussed as it relates to this doctrine.

This method of theologically reflecting on work has both advantages and disadvantages of which we should be aware. On the positive side, when construed within an overall systematic theology, work does find its own "place". This means that we perceive work as a proper object for theological reflection and that work can be located or understood in relationship to a broader theological truth. One advantage of this is that the temptation to overestimate work's importance is kept in check. Here work is understood as an implication or application of some more foundational doctrine and not as the be all and end all of our existence. On the negative side however, in a systematic theology it is not work which is primarily being explored. Therefore, it is unavoidable that some important considerations and angles will be overlooked in the discussion.

Focused Studies

Another type of literature providing theological reflections on work are those books or articles which are devoted primarily to analyzing work itself. These may focus more on theological, Biblical, or sociological analysis, but most are an attempt to combine each of these toward a comprehensive theological picture of work. There are strengths and weaknesses to this approach also. Negatively, it is easy when focusing primarily on work to lose perspective and to fail to recognize that work is only a part (albeit a fundamental part) of our life as humans. The danger when attempting to consider work from all angles is that it becomes easy to see everything else in life as a sub-category of work. Positively however, this approach allows for a more comprehensive reflection on work and a deeper exploration into themes which often greatly enhance our understanding of both work and theology.

Ethical / Contextual Studies

A third type of theological literature reflecting on work can be termed ethical or contextual. This is a body of literature which although reflecting on work, does so only indirectly as it attempts to explore or resolve other pressing ethical issues. The fundamental concerns in this literature may be things like unemployment, the exploitation of the poor, racial and sexual discrimination at work, basic human rights, or to redress the problems of power and authority relationships in the workplace. In as much as work itself is related to these ethical concerns, it is explored theologically.

Like the other two types of literature, ethical or contextual writings also have their strengths and weaknesses. On the positive side, these approaches are usually grounded in concrete reality and are often based on thorough social analysis with genuine human, and even non-human, need at the forefront. As such, their conclusions tend to be quite practical and often avoid the at times abstract and detached theoretical pronouncements

sometimes associated with research narrowly focused on work itself. Negatively however, there are some limitations to this approach. The most significant is that when trying to make a related ethical point, it becomes easy to distort work's nature and meaning by over emphasizing one or another of its important aspects. Here the final vision of work, directly or indirectly offered, often becomes less than comprehensive and thus inadequate.

There are then, basically three types of contemporary Protestant theological literature which explore work. Each approach carries with it both strengths and weakness. What our discussion leads us to conclude is that each approach is important in that each in its own way can reveal certain aspects or questions related to work which need to be seriously considered. In attempting a theology or ethics of work then, we need be able to identify these different types of literature, and then interpreting them accordingly, we must take from them what each uniquely offers.

DIRECTIONS OLD AND NEW: METHODOLOGIES CONSIDERED

In the twentieth century there have emerged several, often diverse, Protestant ways to think theologically about work. Yet, most Protestant constructs bear some family resemblance. The heritage of vocational theology has left certain marks on most of these constructs regardless of whether they are re-appropriations of the vocational model or attempts to move beyond it. Our concern here is twofold. On the one hand, we shall identify both contemporary reformulations of the vocational model and new models (or directions) which Protestants have found to be promising. On the other hand however, we shall highlight where the continuing influence of vocational theology can be seen even in those approaches which have set the model aside.

Re-appropriations of the Vocational Model

Vocation as the Paradigm. It is almost instinctive for Protestants to construe work in terms of one's calling or vocation. Even among those who have chosen to

understand work according to alternative models, vocation is still the backdrop to which they are reacting or the dialogue partner with which they are arguing.

Now not all Protestants in the twentieth century have found it necessary to abandon the vocation tradition. Indeed, most have not. Many have either simply assumed that the model is the starting point, or have believed that there is still mileage left in it provided that it is further developed to fit with modern social realities, and provided that is rooted more satisfactorily in biblical / theological thinking. Indeed, most Protestants (excluding possibly Jacques Ellul) have continued to affirm (similarly to Luther and Calvin) that the active working life is a positive aspect of their spiritual lives. Obedience to God in one's daily activities (or to God's "call" to work), and a motivation to meet the needs of others through work are ideas which most Protestants have wanted to retain in some form. It is therefore not surprising that when work has become toilsome or unfulfilling, many Protestants have drawn on these motivations to provide them with the encouragement and meaning their lives have needed.

Following World War II, many European Protestants turned their attention to a theological problem of work. While Catholics were exploring "theologies of work", most of these Protestants were reinterpreting and reapplying their own vocation motif.¹ By the middle of the century, Protestants had come to believe that the doctrine of vocation needed to be revitalized and reinterpreted. With the end of the war tremendous changes had taken place in the world in general and, in the world of work in particular. Given the effects of industrialization and the global economic depression earlier in the century, the influence of expanding markets with the unstable workforce and unemployment which this brings, the growing influence of socialism, the appeal of the welfare state, and the realizations of both the negative as well as positive effects of technology, many Protestants felt compelled to reexamine their own theological understandings of work and to bring them more into line with contemporary realities.

¹ One notable exception here is A. Richardson, a prominent figure in the World Council of Churches' attempt to consider afresh the nature and meaning of work. In The Biblical Doctrine of Work (1952) Richardson criticizes and sets aside the vocational understanding of work. See: pp.35-39.

Additionally, common critiques of the traditional understanding of vocation were: that it was too inwardly oriented and individualistic, that there was not enough concern about social / structural questions related to work, that it was too closely aligned with the spirit of capitalism, and, that it was dependant on, and encouraged, a far too static form of society.

These critiques may or may not be judged as substantial at the dawn of the twenty first century, especially given a more careful reading of what the Reformers actually taught concerning vocation. Doubtless, the concerns behind the critiques are legitimate and were appropriate at that time. The point however, is that by the middle of the century these perceived needs led many Protestants to look afresh, and to reformulate, their theological understanding of work. Examples of those attempting to re-appropriate the vocational model include O. Nelson *Work and Vocation*, (1954), and W. R. Forrester *Christian Vocation*, (1951).

Toward the end of the century Protestants again took up the discussion about the vocational model. Some have been critical, calling Protestants to move further away from the tradition. Others have at least called for a serious recasting of it.² Still others however, (mostly from Reformed / evangelical traditions) have appealed for a more direct and only slightly refined return to and rediscovery of the Reformation and Puritan doctrines of vocation. Three articles by Ian Hart (1995), and the books by Lee Hardy *The Fabric of This World*, (1990), and Lyland Ryken *Work and Leisure in Christian Perspective*. (1987), are fine examples of this.

This sampling shows us that during the twentieth century a vocational understanding of work remained influential in Protestant theology. Although no longer the only voice, it is nonetheless an enduring one. Since the model has received such ongoing support, since it has shown its ability to be reformed, and since many can demonstrate that it is still able to offer important contributions to our understanding of work's nature and meaning, any contemporary theological reflection on work should

² See for example Shriver's call to rework the whole tradition: Shriver, (1995), pp.538-545.

take it seriously and be careful not to write it off too quickly. In terms of our hypothesis, the vocational model reminds us particularly of the importance of work's instrumental aspect (especially with respect to human obedience / sanctification) and its relational aspect (concerning how our work can contribute toward meeting the needs of others and the broader society).

A Focus on the Initial Creation. When theologically exploring work, a common feature among Protestants generally, and also among those particularly viewing work as vocation, is a strong appeal to and dependance on the various doctrines surrounding the initial creation, or as we might call it, protology. During the twentieth century the doctrines of creation ordinances, mandates, the image of God in humanity, and the fall have been given considerable attention both in biblical and systematic theology. Often, the topic of human work has emerged as integral to these themes.

The idea that the initial creation is the theological and ethical starting point for reflection on work has persisted in all but a few of the most recent writers. Emil Brunner for example, construed work as commanded in the initial creation, as an "ordinance".³ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, uncomfortable with the concept of "ordinance" due in part to its ideological abuse by the Nazis, nonetheless considers work primarily as a creation "mandate".⁴ Likewise, many in the Evangelical tradition, following closely Dutch Calvinism, are also keen to construe work as first and foremost a creation mandate issued directly by God.⁵ Even Karl Barth, with his distrust of natural theology as seen in his argument with Brunner concerning "creation ordinances", with his critique of the vocational approach to work and his replacement of it with a "sabbath" model, - even Barth finally theologizes on work at the end of his doctrine of the initial creation; and, while not referring to it as a creation ordinance or mandate, he

³ Brunner, (1937), pp.384-394.

⁴ Bonhoeffer, (1955), pp179-184.

⁵ See for example the writings of Paul Marshall: "Work and Vocation", (1980)., "Calling, Work, and Rest", (1988), Thine is the Kingdom: A Biblical Perspective on the Nature of Government and Politics Today, (1984). See also: Scanzoni, (1974)., and Scotchmer, (1980).

does consider it to be a necessary "relationship of creation".⁶

One thing that this focus on protology when considering work suggests is that modern Protestant theology, explicitly or not, has been probing for and moving in the direction of developing an ontological dimension of work. The desire to locate and secure work's nature and meaning in the very structure of the created world suggests that work has been perceived to be more than simply an instrumental activity. This possibility of developing an ontology of work, which is a central concern of our hypothesis, we believe will not be fully possible until christological / eschatological doctrines are also considered in relationship to the doctrines of the initial creation. Nevertheless, the explorations in protology provide necessary resources for a good part of this task.

Departures from the Vocation Tradition

We have stated that the vocational model (with its close dependence on protology) has not been the only Protestant "work" model operating in the twentieth century. As we shall now outline, some have been searching for other models and ways to theologially understand work which get beyond the weaknesses and potentially oppressive misuses of the vocational motif. What is apparent however, is that very few of these Protestant writers completely skirt the themes common in vocational thinking. The majority indeed seem, in some modified form, to have reappropriated many of its contributions. This should not be surprising given that many of its themes are quite biblical. What we are suggesting is that these Protestants have come "through" vocational thinking even if they have not retained it as a model.

This suggestion of continuity however, should not distract our attention from the genuine innovations which some Protestants have put forth. Of those critical of the vocational model, some have moved to more "contextual" methodologies. Others have

⁶ Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, III 4. (1961). Whether Barth would have returned to a discussion of work with reference to the new creation, had he lived long enough to produce his volume on eschatology, is simply a matter for speculation.

borrowed the "theology of work" motif from Catholic thinking, and still others have let their own system of theology guide their construals of work. We will now classify several of these writers and will pay special attention to how these developments have pushed forward the entire enterprise of theologically construing work.

Contextual Methodologies. The first alternative models which we will mention can broadly be called contextual. Here, certain concrete ethical concerns have determined the agenda within which work will be considered, the materials which will be selected to inform the discussion on work, and the particular slant given to the arguments about work. We have in mind for instance, the attempts by politically, economically, or racially oppressed peoples to suggest theological understandings of work which are particularly directed toward their points of conflict. With these types of writings, the emphasis with reference to work usually has to do with liberation and economic equality. Good examples of this contextual approach are found in Cochrane and West's *The Three-Fold Cord: Theology, Work and Labour* (1991). Here we find among other offerings a specifically black theology of work and also a theology of work for "workers".⁷

Not surprisingly, feminist theological models for depicting work have also emerged. Dorothee Soelle's *To Work and to Love* (1984) is one example, Elizabeth J. Nash's article "A New Model for a Theology of Work." (1986) is another. Yet another, which combines both feminist and black perspectives is offered by Nondyebo Taki.⁸ A common thread in most feminist models is both the achievement of the human being's personal self-end through work, and a sustained focus on the interpersonal / relational dimension of work.

Feminists however, are not the only ones to be concerned with the existential ideas of fulfillment, personal development, and interpersonal relationality in and through work. As we have argued elsewhere, others, (often also combining these personal and relational concerns with additional explorations related to broader social relationships,

⁷ Cochrane, (1991), pp.142-154, and 160-168.

⁸ Cochrane. (1991), pp.169-176.

politics and economics,) have also recently taken this approach. Jürgen Moltmann, Douglas Meeks, Timothy Gorringer, and John Scanzoni are only a few examples here.⁹ Similarly, Jacques Ellul also shares these concerns although his reflections are critical, warning that work and its technological products are actually damaging to human development and human relationships.¹⁰

Also, on the other end of the ideological spectrum, several have written theological enquiries relating to work which are meant to undergird their own particularly conservative theories of politics and economics. Michael Novak's writings and several articles in Richard Chewning's "Christians in the Marketplace Series" are examples of this.¹¹ Here work's instrumental value in providing one's basic needs is in focus, and work is construed as if it were mostly a sub-division of economics.

Still others, including Jürgen Moltmann and Rosemary Radford Ruether have discussed work with particular attention to how it relates, usually negatively, to the current ecological crisis.¹² These primarily negative pronouncements on work do nonetheless offer valuable resources which are important for any positive evaluation of work theologically.

What these contextual approaches demonstrate is that any contemporary theological construal of work which hopes to be comprehensive, must broaden the range of its theological reflection beyond simply doctrinal explorations so as to guarantee that concrete concerns are adequately addressed. In terms of our own hypothesis, this

⁹ See: Moltmann, On Human Dignity, (1984), Meeks, "God and Work." in God the Economist (1989), Gorringer, "Work Leisure and Human Fulfillment." in Capital and the Kingdom: (1994), and Scanzoni, "The Christian View of Work." (1974).

¹⁰ Ellul, (1972).

¹¹ See Novak's articles in Co-Creation and Capitalism: John Paul II's "Laborum Exercens", eds. Houck and Williams. (1983), Novak, The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism, (1982). Also see: Chewning, ed. Biblical Principles & Business. Vol. 1. (1989), and Biblical Principles & Economics. Vol. 2. (1989).

¹² See, Moltmann, On Human Dignity, (1984), God in Creation, (1985), and Ruether, Liberation Theology: Human Hope Confronts Christian History and American Power, (1972), To Change the World: Christology and Cultural Criticism, (1981), and Sexism and God Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology, (1983).

means that any contemporary theology of work must include considerations of: work's instrumentality concerning economic survival, its role relationally in personal existential and interpersonal development, its relational role in social reorganisation and social service in light of the effects of technology on individuals and society, and work's relationship to and effect on the environment. This means that the instrumental and relational aspects of work as we have called them, must be reckoned with in concrete terms.

Sabbath not Vocation. During the twentieth century, prominent Protestant theologians like Karl Barth began to criticize the adequacy of the vocational model of work on Biblical / theological, and not simply on ethical grounds. Barth, critical of natural theology and of Luther's exegesis concerning "klesis," offered Protestants a new model and a new theological place for work beginning with the principle of "sabbath" rather than vocation. Barth still addressed work within protology, but, rather than starting with a calling to human activity, he took the sabbath to be the logical and conceptual theological starting point. This approach to work retained many of the traditional emphases of the vocational model; such as, the importance of human obedience to the call of God, and the importance of work as a service to God and others. However, at the same time it challenged and relativised the modern, almost "deified" understanding of human work in a way that the traditional Reformation model presumably could not.

Of course, the Reformers and Puritans took seriously and emphasized the sabbath. However, in their teachings, the sabbath relativised human work simply by being a complementary command beside it; that is, a type of additional duty to be observed. In Barth however, sabbath becomes paradigmatic and is meant to be a principle which permeates and transforms the entire nature and structure of work, and thus its meaning. It is not simply meant to keep work in balance or in check in a person's life.

The particulars of Barth's innovative teaching on work have largely been neglected in subsequent theological reflections on work.¹³ However, broadly speaking his

influence can be seen in more recent theological construals of work which attempt to integrate the sabbath and related concepts into the understanding of work itself (rather than to have it function simply as a parallel idea and limitation to it). Although Jürgen Moltmann himself does not draw specifically on Barth's view of sabbath when commenting on human action and work, one can nevertheless detect Barth's influence in his writings. Moltmann's view that our human *telos* involves a participation in God's sabbath (or the divine shekinah as he eventually calls its eschatological fulfillment) does bear striking similarities to Barth's view.

Also, Douglas Meeks' chapter "God and Work" in *God the Economist* reflects elements of Barth's sabbath principle, (although it is questionable whether this emphasis is drawn more directly from Moltmann rather than Barth).¹⁴ In either case, Barth's lasting influence on theological understandings of work is his idea that work is not the opposite of sabbath, but rather, that sabbath rest should be a characteristic of all human activity and thus also of work.

Eschatology not Protology. A recent trend in Protestant theology has led to the reinterpretation of work, and to the reconstruction of theological models of work based upon eschatological rather than strictly protological foundations. Both Jürgen Moltmann (as we shall shortly examine) and Miroslav Volf (in *Work in the Spirit*, (1991)) are the primary theologians leading in this direction. Here again, we find a departure from the vocational motif. More significant however, is that for the first time some within Protestantism have made a decided move away from protology as work's theological orientation point. This is not to say that these theologians have ignored protology. Rather, their eschatological orientation means that the teleological directions are aimed forward toward the future new creation rather than backward toward the restoration of the initial creation. It would not be inappropriate to claim therefore, that

¹³ However, for examples of attempts to probe and build upon Barth see: Atkinson, (1994), pp.104-11., and West, "Karl Barth's Theology of Work: A Resource for the Late 1980s", (1988).

¹⁴ Meeks, (1989), pp.127-155.

with this “new creation” orientation, work becomes a type of eschatological mandate rather than simply a creation mandate. Herein lies a significant shift in ethics.

What we have seen from this interpretive survey of twentieth century Protestant theological understandings of work is that the vocational model is still both influential and helpful, even if it is no longer the only possible or fruitful model available to Protestants. With the reappropriation of this model we find preserved in some form the Reformation’s accent on personal obedience to God in work, and meeting the needs of others through work. In terms of our own hypothesis, this suggests that the instrumental and relational / social aspects of work continue to be important.

Further, the variety of contextual and new approaches we have mentioned have suggested that work plays an important role in human development and fulfillment. Also, these approaches have further highlighted the importance of social, structural, and even ecological concerns associated with human work and its economic (and technological) products. In terms of our hypothesis, this further suggests that the relational aspect of work, (both existential and social), must not be neglected. Any attempt at a comprehensive theology of work will need to carefully explore the personal, social and environmental issues related to work.

Finally, the doctrinal foundations for the vocational model, as well as the theological probing undertaken by the new models of work suggest that there is more to work than simply its instrumental or relational value. The various construals of work, whether protological or eschatological, suggest that work is in some way fundamental to divine, human and the broader created reality. In terms of our hypothesis, this means that there is, whether consciously or not, a groping for an ontology of work which will carry it beyond its purely instrumental functioning.

What remains to be done in Protestant theology is to articulate consistently and coherently this theological ontology of work. The recent eschatological models for understanding work suggest that this ontology will need to appropriate “new creation” insights as well as those gleaned from protology. In order to see what this might look

like we now turn to consider in more detail one of these approaches, the one offered by Jürgen Moltmann.

JÜRGEN MOLTSMANN ON WORK

Jürgen Moltmann is one of the more influential theologians writing in the latter half of the twentieth century to have made an important contribution to a Protestant theological understanding of work. His reflections on work's nature and meaning are primarily found in two essays. The first, "The First Liberated Men in Creation" was published as a book entitled *Theology of Play* (1972).¹⁵ The second, "The Right to Meaningful Work" appears in the volume of essays on political theology and ethics titled *On Human Dignity* (1984).¹⁶ Here we offer an analysis and critique of these essays and consider whether Moltmann's theological understanding of work might provide the basis for a further, more comprehensive attempt at a theology of work.

Work Begins with Play

We shall begin our analysis of Moltmann's conception of work by looking at his discussion of play. We do this primarily because in his later essay "The Right to Meaningful Work" Moltmann, referring the reader back to his earlier publication *Theology of Play*, shows that his basic understanding of work's nature and meaning is developed in those earlier more detailed discussions of play / work. (*HD*, p.41. note 7.)

A central concern in "The Right to Meaningful Work" is that joy, freedom, and playfulness be a fundamental part of work's nature and meaning. (*HD*, p.41.) However, Moltmann first explored these concepts in depth in "The First Liberated

¹⁵ Here after referred to as *TP*.

The English translation of this essay was first published in America in: *Theology of Play*, (1972). This same essay later appeared in the United Kingdom published as *Theology and Joy*, (1973). The essay itself, entitled "The First Liberated Men in Creation" ("Die Ersten Freigelassenen Der Schopfung"), was first published in German in 1971 by Chr. Kaiser Verlag, Muchen.

¹⁶ Here after referred to as *HD*.

Men in Creation” and it is in this essay that their meaning and relationship to each other is made clear.

At the beginning of this earlier essay Moltmann suggests that fundamentally people are oriented toward happiness and enjoyment. To be happy however, we must above all be free. When we are free the result in our daily lives is that “we gain distance from ourselves and our plans move forward in a natural, unforced way.” (*TP*, p.1.) These plans referred to here include our projects in life, or our work. Moltmann’s vision is that when our activities, our work, are characterized by freedom, rejoicing, and laughing, then we can “find it easy cope with other men and circumstances.” (*TP*, p.1.) Then we can be happy.

To explore this understanding of freedom which results in happiness, Moltmann begins to discuss the aesthetic category of play. He begins an inquiry into critical game theory and starts the discussion arguing that play has been degraded in modern industrial society. Again, the concept of work (here understood as labor which is “forced” and necessary for basic survival) is lurking at the corners. Play has become a “theoretical problem” only as a result of rationalized, industrial labor which has banned playfulness as mere foolishness. (*TP*, p.4.) Forced labor, at least in an industrialized society, is the culprit. It undermines play and thus happiness.

What however does game theory itself suggest about play? Moltmann states, “All theories about play make the point that a game is meaningful within itself but that it must appear useless and purposeless from an outside point of view.” (*TP*, p.5.) On this view, we cannot therefore enquire about the purpose of a game or we become spoilsports. Moltmann suggests that rather than asking what the purpose of a game is, we should be asking whom does it serve? “Of course this may sound like the miserable mood of a spoilsport, but the question really serves only to unmask those who cheat at the game.” (*TP*, p.6.) Who are these cheaters? They are those who try to construe play in relationship to work. They consider play essentially to be a useful diversion which is necessary so that work can be resumed more effectively or

productively. Moltmann argues, however, that this “common view” is the ideological abuse of play which is used by the culture of work as a tool for oppressing the masses of workers.

Rather than serve the oppressors, who are those supporting the culture of work, play should be construed so as to support the oppressed. Play, not work, should have conceptual priority. Work should be understood in the light of play and not vice versa. In this way, play then becomes linked with liberation. Games become meaningful, and even useful in a non-ideological way, as games of liberation. (*TP*, pp.10-14.) A game, or play, is meaningful when it is a game of freedom which prepares men for a more liberated society. (*TP*, p.12.) Play should be an anticipation of, and an experiment in, liberation. This liberation or freedom is characterized by a lack of fear; that is, by a lack of necessity or compulsion. Play, not labor, is where human activity becomes meaningful.¹⁷

So how does Moltmann’s modified version of game theory relate to theology? He begins his section on “Theological Play of the Good Will of God” arguing that currently theology has little use for aesthetic categories. Faith is no longer interested in play but only in utility. Everything must be useful and used, ethics is everything.

This emphasis on utility naturally leads to the question; why did God create the world? Moltmann however, is critical of this question for the very reason that it is bound to utility. To Moltmann it is a wrong or misdirected question. If forced to answer, he simply replies with a type of non-answer, that “the wisdom of theology ends with the liberty of the children of God.” (*TP*, p.16.) Here there is no utilitarian reason, no “purposive rationale” that answers why God created. The world is not necessary to God. God is free, (but not capricious). The ground of creation is God’s good will or pleasure. (*TP*, p.17.) This line of reasoning leads Moltmann to a climactic conclusion. “Hence the creation is God’s play, a play of his groundless and

¹⁷ Interestingly this seems to conflict with his view in *On Human Dignity*. There he argues that hard and laborious human work is also meaningful precisely because it corresponds to the hard and laborious work of Christ in redemption.

inscrutable wisdom. It is the realm in which God displays his glory.” (TP, p.17.)

Whatever can Moltmann mean in claiming that creation is God’s play? Here he is speaking symbolically. He quotes Hugo Rahner suggesting that “when we are saying that the creative God plays, we are expressing with this image the metaphysical insight that, although the creation of the world and of man constitutes meaningful divine action, this action is in no way a necessary one.” (TP, p.17.) “Meaningful but not necessary” then describes God’s actions. This is likewise the best description of human play, and it finally provides the distinction between play and “productive and gainful labor.” (TP, p.17.) Play not labor, meaningful activity but not productive toilsome work which involves compensation, characterizes God’s creating. God’s creation is God’s play.

Here however, Moltmann does offer a theological qualification. He refers to the Hebrew word to create, *bahrah*, and points out that in the Old Testament it is only used to describe God’s activity and never the “works of men.” Therefore,

when we say that the creative God is playing, we are talking about a playing that differs from that of man. The creative God plays with his own possibilities and creates out of nothing that which pleases him. When man is playing he is himself at stake in the game and he is also being played with. (TP, pp.17-18.)

We should notice here a creative, imaginative, playful turn of meaning. The word *bahrah* is most often translated as create. Usually this creating is construed in terms of God’s work, not play. Indeed as we shall see, Moltmann himself follows this normal reading in the essay on work in *On Human Dignity*. What has happened then? Has Moltmann contradicted himself? Possibly, but not necessarily. It may be better to view this move as a “play on words”. This would mean that he is offering a qualification, not only to the nature of the concept play, but also to the nature of the concept that we call work. God’s creative “play” can still be called his work. However, this work must not be understood in categories of necessity or utility, that is, as labor. Rather, God’s work is a free playful expression of joy.

Do, or should, these characteristics of freedom, joy and play also apply to human work, as opposed to human labor (which by definition cannot be play for labor is not free but utilitarian and gainful)? Yes, seems to be the answer. Human activity, work, should correspond to God's (even though *bahrah* cannot apply directly to humans). Here however, instead of being explicitly construed as work, human correspondence to *bahrah* is construed as play. Moltmann, in the paragraph discussing *bahrah*, and after qualifying man's play as necessarily different than God's states:

Still there are points of contact. Like the creation, man's games are an expression of freedom and not of caprice, for playing relates to the joy of the creator with his creation and the pleasure of the player with his game. Like creation, games combine sincerity and mirth, suspense and relaxation. (*TP*, p.18.)

Given Moltmann's play on the word *bahrah* in this essay, we could as easily substitute the word "work" for play and game in this quote and find no substantial contradiction. Work and play, if work is properly understood, are the same thing on this view. Work and play are meaningful, expressive, serious activities. Neither however, include the extreme seriousness that comes with burden and utility. Only toilsome work, that is labor, involves this utility and would therefore be excluded from the work / play concept.

Moltmann then moves from the general question of why did God create, to the more specifically utilitarian question; for what purpose did God create the world? He finds this an even more threatening and horrifying question than the first, for God did not have to create something to realize himself. God did not create for a purpose, but rather he created for sheer joy. In this answer the very question itself is abolished. The purpose of my existence is a non-question. The answer, for sheer joy, "does not indicate ethical goals and ideal purposes but justifies created existence as such." (*TP*, p.19.) We should not confuse the enjoyment of God and existence with goals or purposes. The questions themselves, for what purpose am I here and am I useful, are inappropriate.

As the discussion progresses, Moltmann elaborates on this concept that God created for joy and not for goals or purposes. Self-representation, liberty and freedom, the “demonstrative value of being”, relate to God’s joy. Man’s “free self-representation has to be the human echo to the pleasure of God in his creation. The glorification of God lies in the demonstrative joy of existence.” (TP, p.21.) It follows on this that no person needs to justify his or her existence in doing. Utility, or goals simply do not apply.

Our existence is justified and made beautiful before we are able to do or fail to do anything. If we are working at something, we have started out from leisure... When labor is successful, joy has already been there at its beginning. Leisure earned by working and self-created joys do not satisfy. (TP, p.21.)

Further,

The human element in labor and the production of food, in social patterns and cultural expressions, always involves self-representation. All things men use always contain in their respective processes an expression of the *demonstrative value of being*. Whenever man produces something, he demonstrates himself as well, even if only by a small individualistic departure from the work rules. He presents and represents himself, and in a manner of speaking, answers a call with his presence. This self representation is not identical with self-realisation by labor, for the creative play of expression does not depend on successes and accomplishments, although it does not preclude these. (TP, p.22.)

Moltmann ultimately argues that free activity is called play. Our activity is able to be play because we correspond to God. This play is not oriented toward any goal or utility precisely because joy, not utility, is the characteristic of creation. Existence in joy, not purposeful activity, is the answer to the question; why / for what purpose / did God create? Play not work (at least not labor) is foundational.

Play as world symbol goes beyond the categories of doing, having, and achieving and leads us into the categories of being, of authentic human existence and demonstrative rejoicing in it. It emphasizes the creative against the productive and the aesthetic against the ethical. Earthbound

labor finds its relief in rejoicing, dancing singing and playing. This also does labor a lot of good. (*TP*, pp.23-24.)

Even concerning the eschaton, Moltmann argues that our imagery is from the realm of play and not labor. "Christian eschatology has never painted the joy of existing in the new, redeemed, and liberated creation in colors of this life damaged by... labor... Christian eschatology has painted the end of history in the colors of aesthetic categories." (*TP*, p.34.) Further, "the images for the coming world do not come from the world of... work and achievement". (*TP*, p.35.)

Given comparisons like these between work and play we are lead to inquire whether this section is primarily a discussion of play or whether it is actually a negative appraisal of work? For our purposes what we are beginning to detect throughout this section on the "The Theological Play of the Good Will of God", is not simply the development of a theology of play. More significantly we also see emerging at the same time the basics (negatively construed) of a theology of work.

One more important discussion in *Theology of Play*, which relates to our current purposes, is found in the section "The Human Play of Liberated Mankind." In this section the question with which we are ultimately concerned is; can labor become creative play?

Earlier, Moltmann had reaffirmed that the final purpose of history is no purpose at all, but is rather the liberation of life. (*TP*, p.36.) In his comments on the liberation of man, Moltmann argues that "if a man is what he makes of himself, then his *being human* depends on what he *does*." (*TP*, p.46.) Further, "so if man is what he makes of himself, he is precisely not free when it come to his own actions but dependent on them and subject to them." (*TP*, p.46.) There is no way to get from doing to being. The quest for self-realisation then, is opposed to liberty, because it depends upon the categories of utility, goals, necessity and compulsion. Man does not have to make himself. (*TP*, p.47.)

When we come then to labor (which in Marxist terms is supposed to create history

and lead to humanization and self-realization) the question is whether it can become creative play? (*TP*, pp.53ff.) The answer is not surprising. It is no. Remember, Moltmann is talking here about labor; that is, instrumental and toilsome work. He is not talking about creative work which in corresponding to God's *bahrah* has come to be understood as play.

Moltmann begins his exploration into the question considering the Marxist vision that labor will cease and will be replaced with self-induced activity when exploitation is overcome. He cites the Czech Marxist Vitezlav Gardavsky who believed that love will transform labor into creativity and that creativity will be the means of human self-realisation. He then cites Marx's belief in his later writing that labor cannot become a form of play, but that it can lead to leisure where there are better opportunities for self-realisation. Moltmann then briefly considers the neo-marxist Herbert Marcuse who sees the possibility of finding freedom in labor rather than beyond it. Ultimately, Moltmann finds each of these proposals unsatisfactory. They do not break the compulsion of work. They do not lead to freedom which is where one finds happiness.

Work as a Right

An important part of interpreting Moltmann's specific reflections on work is to determine contextually his overall purpose for discussing it. Is his concern to explore work itself, or is it primarily to make a related ethical point? If it is the latter, then we will need to be careful to interpret his text accordingly.

Moltmann's specific discussion of work is found in his essay "The Right to Meaningful Work." This however, is located in the volume *On Human Dignity* which is a collection of essays, not about work, but rather about the issues of human dignity and human rights.¹⁸ Here, a reflection on work's nature and meaning is offered, but is

¹⁸ Douglas Meeks in his introduction to the volume suggests that: "By proposing a Christian perspective on human dignity Moltmann intends in these essays a contribution to the wider debate on human rights... Human rights spring from human dignity and not vice versa. Human dignity however, requires human rights for its embodiment, protection and full flowering. Human rights are the concrete, indefeasible claim of human dignity. (*HD*, pp.x-

designed to be understood as a continuation (the implications and applications) of the discussion on human rights. Therefore, to understand what Moltmann will suggest concerning work we must first grasp his broader understanding of human rights.

Moltmann, following in the tradition of the United Nations *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, argues that human rights refers to the right to life in general. (*HD*, p.4.) This right to life however, is not one single right, but rather, is an umbrella under which a number of rights must be considered together. "All human rights be they social, economic, religious, or political are interrelated. They must be taken as a whole." (*HD*, p.8.) The right to life in general then is logically prior to any specific claims to other rights.

The right to life and to the means which make continued living possible stands in the forefront. The St. Polten Report, therefore, just like the Roman Synod of Bishops, [*Message Concerning Human Rights and Reconciliation*] places the right to life, to nourishment, and to work at the beginning of the catalog of human rights. (*HD*, p.6.)

Interestingly, here we find the first indication that work is a human right. The right to life has the priority, but since work contributes to life, it too becomes a right.

In theologically grounding this concept of human rights, Moltmann employs a contextual / political methodology. The starting point is to be "out from one's own life experience." (*HD*, p.14.) The inhumanity of a dictatorship, economic exploitation, racism, or the destruction of nature should be our starting points rather than abstract speculations.

We have learned from liberation theology to begin where we ourselves really exist in our own people. Experience in the praxis of liberation from inhumanity is for Christians and churches the concrete starting point for the commitment to human rights. (*HD*, p.14.)

For Moltmann, the concrete concerns with reference to human rights leads him directly into a reflection on the doctrine of the image of God in human beings.¹⁹ This

xi.)

¹⁹ See the second essay in the volume: "Christian Faith and Human Rights". pp.19-35.

doctrine becomes the theological point of orientation for understanding human rights. The image of God in persons, which interpreted means God's claim upon human beings, is the basis for all human rights.

Moltmann then goes on to list and describe four "fundamental" human rights which, on his view, follow directly from the dignity of being created to be the image of God. (*HD*, pp.23-28.) These are the four rights which essentially belong to being truly human. Without using the phrase himself in this essay, they seem to be four rights which are foundational to the "right to life" referred to in the first essay. The first fundamental right involves the freedom to be responsible before God in all areas of life; that is, the freedom of conscience. The second involves the right of humanity to live in community. The third involves the right of human beings to rule over the earth and be in community with the non-human creation. The fourth involves a right to our future; that is, to self-determination and to taking responsibility for our future and the future of those still to come.

Interestingly, although he does not say so until half way through his discussion, the third right includes the right to work, for the human activities of ruling and preserving creation are work. Why and how work has come to be considered a "fundamental right," as well as the implications of making it a right, are important for they indicate (at least for this essay) what Moltmann understands work's nature to be.

In considering work to be a fundamental right, Moltmann appeals to Genesis 1:28ff. Here "the creation of human beings as the image of God is followed by the blessing of God and the human calling to be fruitful and rule over the non-human creation." (*HD*, pp.26-27.) This blessing and calling to work stems from being created to be the image of God. The image of God (God's claim upon us) is the basis for human dignity. Human dignity requires the rights necessary for its flourishing and this flourishing requires both the production and consumption appropriate to it. Work therefore, is not only a necessity, but a right.

This right construed negatively would mean that work and its resultant fruits cannot

be denied someone because of their race, gender or the like. People cannot be denied the opportunity to work or to work's fruits. Moltmann however, does not appear to stop with this negative orientation. He seems to assume the positive corollary that work (or employment) for all, and nourishment, and housing and material possessions must be guaranteed.

If the right to the earth is given to human beings, it follows that each and every human being has the basic economic right to a just share in life, nourishment, work, shelter, and personal possessions. The concentration of the basic necessities of life and the means of production in the hands of a few should be seen as a distortion and perversion of the image of God in human beings. It is unworthy of human beings and contradicts God's claim upon them. (*HD*, p.27.)

It does not seem that Moltmann understands the right to work generally to be a right to freedom which allows opportunities or choices for work. Rather, employment or the economic fruits of employment appear to be the right.

The result of making employment itself, rather than simply the opportunity to work, a fundamental right has consequence. Although it preserves human dignity as the starting point rather than the result of work, it also has ramifications for work's relationship to politics and economics. It actually necessitates the assumption of some type of welfare state. Total or near total employment is the foundation, and economic and political functioning must accommodate itself to this reality. Indeed this would have been the underlying social assumption behind the thinking of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, and of social assumptions in Europe and particularly in Germany during the post-war period. It is certainly the thinking behind Moltmann's two essays.

When we come to the essay, "The Right to Meaningful Work" Moltmann continues his explorations on human rights. Here, however, it is not simply work, but "meaningful" work which is construed as a basic human right. It is the subjective dimension of work, its human meaning, which is to be guaranteed as a right. While Moltmann's subsequent analysis of work may have implications beyond this limited

concern, his primary emphasis is on work's subjective aspect, both its potentialities and its limitations for human life. His guiding questions early in the chapter show us these concerns.

Does it make sense, however, to seek the meaning of life in work? Can work have such power? Does such an expectation not lead to excessive demands on work and to torment for human beings?... How does the right to work relate to the *meaning of life*, and how is the meaning of life connected with the right to work? (*HD*, p.38.)

Further, from the structure of his own arguments on the nature of work, we see where these questions lead Moltmann.

Here we will look at the concept of meaning broadly and develop it in three dimensions: (1) What is the significance of work for the working person? (2) What is the significance of work for the human community? (3) What is the significance of work for life in general, for the meaning of the whole? (*HD*, p.38.)

Thus we see from Moltmann's contextual or ethical concerns how work is ultimately going to be construed. Not only does work's nature demand that meaningful work be a fundamental human right. It further demands that it be primarily depicted in subjective terms in relationship to human meaning.

Here then the questions become: How does Moltmann proceed theologically to construe work? Which doctrines does he look to, or not look to, for his construal of work? Which model for construing work does he adopt? Which models does he reject?

We begin by mentioning the three theological or philosophical models for understanding work which Moltmann finds to be inadequate. The first model which Moltmann considers is Luther's understanding of work as vocation. Generally, he is sympathetic to Luther's view. He recognizes how work as vocation infuses meaning into people's common life and work. He sees how the doctrine of vocation, the divine call which fills the whole world with the charismata of the new creation, could be understood as the beginning of the eschatological reformation of the world. (*HD*,

p.45.) Yet ultimately, he finds the model inadequate both theologically and socially.²⁰ Theologically it is too close to natural law. Socially, it is too static and conservative.

Next, Moltmann considers the motif of work as enterprise. In his analysis here he follows Max Weber's thesis and identifies this as the understanding of work associated with Calvinist Christians and the groups on the so-called left wing of the Reformation. (*HD*, p.48.) Moltmann is quite critical of this model of work which he understands to be proposing the view that success alone justifies work. (*HD*, p.48.) Theologically he seems to distrust this economics-centered view of work as undermining human dignity. Socially he finds the "spirit of capitalism" which it produces to be a cause of human self-destruction and environmental disaster.

Moltmann finally considers the motif of work as achievement. This view he associates with the philosophies of Hegel and Marx. The idea here is that all work should be truly humanized if it is to have meaning for people; that is, all work should be creative activity leading to self-realisation. Ultimately, Moltmann finds this view to be theologically inadequate for it expects work to provide too much meaning for human life. It tends to suggest that people can "realise" or save themselves through their work.

Moltmann does not address these three models simply to reject them. Rather, he uses them to highlight important social and theological considerations related to the function and meaning of work. The question that we must now consider is, what doctrine or doctrines does he appeal to for his understanding of work? We will then be able to consider what type of model he offers as an alternative.

According to Moltmann "a person's conception of work always stands in close relationship to his or her understanding of the gods or of the meaning of his or her life. (*HD*, p.40.) Thus, he begins his theologizing on work by focusing on the doctrine of God, and specifically on the idea that God is a worker. His main premise concerning human work is that it should "correspond" to God's work. The argument follows that

²⁰ He does not however completely reject the possibility of using this model. He suggests that today the vocational ethos is still possible, but only in a very limited way. (p.47.)

from creation it is known that God is a worker. Human work however, can never be exactly the same as God's (for God's work is distinguished from ours exegetically by the verb *barah*). Nonetheless human work can and should "correspond" to the creative activity of God. Moltmann cites the command to work and to keep the sabbath found in Exodus 20:9-11 as the Biblical support for this idea. (*HD*, p.40.) He then turns to the doctrine of the initial creation to suggest that human work was part of God's good created purpose for humanity. The point is that when human work truly corresponds to God's, that is when it is actively creative but also seasoned with Sabbath, it becomes truly meaningful. (*HD*, p.41.)

From these initial creation and Sabbath doctrines, Moltmann then moves elsewhere, to the "work of redemption", to suggest that the human work should correspond to God's. This doctrine expresses Moltmann's main theological point in the essay. The idea is that God is not simply the effortless creator (initial creation) but that he also is engaged in hard and painful work. Such work is the "work of redemption." Moltmann appeals to Isa. 43:24ff, and 53 to suggest that the redemption brought by the "servant of God" is wearisome work. (*HD*, p.42.) The implication is that this servant is a worker. Jesus is a worker then, not because he was a carpenter, but because he was this servant. Moltmann then suggests that Phil. 2, in calling for the imitation of Christ's servanthood, should be the theological basis for work.

The point here is God's action in his suffering, in his renunciation, in his voluntary servanthood and self-surrender. God creates salvation by suffering the torment of prisoners. He frees them by his renunciation. He wins them by his servanthood.

In the designation of this redemption as the "pain and work of God," the word *work* gains a new meaning. It is filled to the highest degree with theological content. *Work* becomes the embodiment of the doctrine of salvation. (*HD*, p.42.)

Further, Moltmann states that "the transference of the human concept of work to God and especially to his redeeming activity, then the redirection of the concept to human beings who are supposed to correspond to God, has had an enormous effect" on what

we understand work's nature and meaning to be. (*HD*, p.43.)

From this consideration of God's toilsome work, Moltmann turns to Paul and suggests that he understood his apostolic activity as work. It was not that Paul understood his general work for survival (tentmaking) as anything more than a necessity. Rather, in considering his ministry as work and placing it in the service of Christ's lordship and thus in the service of the Kingdom of God, Paul was extending and ultimately transforming the very meaning of work. All work would then be placed on the level of Phil. 2. (*HD*, p.44.)

Moltmann suggests here that work then ultimately finds its messianic and eschatological meaning.

What happens in work is nothing less than co-renunciation with Christ and co-regency with him. In this way work "for the sake of the Lord" receives a meaning that reaches beyond every success of work. (*HD*, p.44.)

In summary then, we can see that the key concept for Moltmann in relation to human work is that it should correspond to God's work. Although correspondence appears to presuppose some kind of doctrine of the image of God, Moltmann rather develops the idea by appealing to the concept of the work of redemption, the theology of the cross. God is a worker, but this is not seen primarily in the fact that God created the universe. More prominently it is seen in redemption. As we identify with Christ our work corresponds to his work. In our work then we both suffer as a servant, and anticipate his lordship and our rule with him. This dual identification of servanthood and lordship, (suffering and success) built on the doctrine of redemption, is the ultimate theological basis which Moltmann gives to work.

So what model does Moltmann offer for understanding work? What does he ultimately understand the nature of work to be based on this theology of redemption? Moltmann wants to be careful to avoid making a claim to a "comprehensive, generally binding understanding of work." (*HD*, p.53.) Nonetheless, he does see "common threads concerning the meaning and humanity of work." (*HD*, p.53.) Combining the

understanding of "work as correspondence" with the doctrine of the cross leads to Moltmann's ultimate construal of "Work as Participation in God's History." (HD, p.53.)

To demonstrate what this means Moltmann returns to the three dimensions of work offered at the beginning of the essay: (1) What is the significance of work for the working person? (2) What is the significance of work for the human community? (3) What is the significance of work for the meaning of life?

What is the significance of work for the working person? Moltmann's main purpose here is to suggest that it is consistent with work's nature that a person can affirm and develop him or herself through their work. He says that "work is experienced as humane when it provides latitude for individual formation and thereby allows possibilities for self-expression." (HD, p.54.) Here, a relational-existential dimension of work is affirmed as making work significant for the working person. This concept has its limits however.

No one has to justify himself through work. No one has to demonstrate her right to existence through work! No one has to realize himself through work. Were that true, then the unemployed would have no rights and the handicapped no reality. (HD, p.54.)

This makes a good point, and it is apparent that Moltmann is drawing here on his earlier view that dignity leads to rights and not rights to dignity. However, there is also another concern influencing such a statement. This is Moltmann's general suspicion of the instrumental, or, necessity / economic utility of work in relation to human meaning.

From early in the essay Moltmann has made it clear that "humane work cannot consist only in acting for purpose and usefulness." (HD, p.41.) Later, his primary critique of work as enterprise rests in denying that success alone justifies work. In the section on the significance of work for the working person, Moltmann argues that if one experiences either an inward (existential) or outward (economic or political force?) compulsion to work, it has become dehumanized. (HD, p.54.)

Of course Moltmann is not totally against work's utilitarian aspect. He assumes that some utility is necessary as we see by his use of the words "only" and "alone" as qualifiers. He even suggests that one concept of work (the relational) cannot be set against another (the instrumental). "On the contrary they can compliment each other and provide mutual protection against one-sidedness." (*HD*, p.56.) Nonetheless, statements like the following suggest Moltmann's bias and his suspicion of letting the instrumental or economic utility of work impinge too closely on work's ultimate human nature and meaning.

But work is too narrowly defined if one speaks only of vocation, hired labor, enterprising and thus productive work, and the like... Work is wrongly defined if one means only productive work and forgets reproductive work... For a long time, work was understood only as a means to an end... [This] robs work of its human significance. (*HD*, p.55.)²¹

In this section on the meaning of work for the working person, Moltmann wants work's essence to include more than its instrumental economic function. Similarly to what we saw in his essay "The First Liberated Men in Creation" he wants to affirm a non-utilitarian vision of work which becomes meaningful to the person precisely because it is not concerned, (or is not primarily concerned) with the necessity to work. In terms of our hypothesis, Moltmann is concerned that work's relational-existential dimension be given priority over its instrumental-sustenance aspect.

What is the significance of work for the human community? In this section Moltmann's main purpose is to suggest that it is work's nature to aid in human socialization. (*HD*, p.55.) This is, Moltmann argues, the human significance of work. In fact, he suggests that this becomes the comprehensive sense of work. "We recommend, therefore, that work be understood in a comprehensive sense as active participation in the social process." (*HD*, p.56.) In terms of our hypothesis, this means that the relational-social / structural side of work is not only affirmed, but that it

²¹ Here, productive work is work undertaken for economic production / utility. Reproductive work is work which is intended as the self-expression of the worker.

is also taken as work's highest functional value. Again, this suggests that the relational aspect of work has the priority over the instrumental.

What is the significance of work for the meaning of life? In this final section Moltmann summarizes and comments on his theological understanding of the nature of work. As he sees it, what we have classified as the relational-existential and relational-social aspects of work, which have been shown to be its highest human functions, must also have a transcendent meaning related to all of life.

It is not inconsequential whether or not the work of people and the working process of society have meaning for the whole. Statements on the theology of work in antiquity, in the biblical traditions, and in modern Protestantism have shown that. (*HD*, p.56.)

From this statement, Moltmann then briefly summarizes the basic theological concepts surrounding work.

In his or her work a person corresponds to the creating God. In his or her work a person participates in God's self-emptying for the purpose of liberating humanity. In his or her work, even if not in it alone, a person realizes his or her call to freedom. In his or her work and through it, a person is on the promised road to the kingdom of freedom and human worth. (*HD*, p.56.)

How do these ideas give a "meaning for the whole"? We suggest that they do so because they offer us something like what we are calling an ontology of work. They suggest that Moltmann himself, knowing or unknowingly, is probing for some sort of ontological understanding of work by which he can both describe work itself, and provide the coordinates for its transcendent meaning. It seems clear that Moltmann is probing toward a theological / ontological basis for work's relational aspects. Where however, does he ultimately find this basis and how do these theological points fit together to form something like our ontology of work?

Instructively, it is after offering his list that Moltmann begins considering work's meaning eschatologically. Herein lie the resources in Moltmann's thought for understanding work ontologically.

If one seeks a concept that includes the significance of work for the person and for society, then the expression 'work in the kingdom of God' is near at hand... it is also able to show the eschatological meaning of all work and of society itself in its historical dealings with the natural world. (*HD*, p.56.)

Moltmann goes on to paint an eschatological-teleological picture of creation which involves work.

The world is not finished. Through their work people take part in the destruction or the preservation of the world. They serve not only with the creating God; they also work together with the redeeming God...

In the promise of the kingdom of God which renews heaven and earth, there comes against the growing destructive potential of human societies an urgent call for resistance against death, passion for life, and community within history. It seems sensible to me to consider this perspective in dealing with the questions of vocation, work, wages and the like. For in the end this is "the one thing that is necessary": "Seek first the kingdom of God, and all these things will be added unto you." (*HD*, pp.56-57.)

The various theological points concerning work come together and provide its transcendent meaning in God's coming kingdom. Work is not simply about human development, social or existential. It involves more than this. Ultimately, work is about God and God's eschatological renewal of heaven and earth. If work were only about existential or social development, the work as achievement model would suffice. Since however, there is a transcendent aspect of work, the relational is caught up in the eschatological. Work is more than its function, relational or instrumental. Work is ontological. Work is participation in God's history.

There is still one other important aspect of Moltmann's discussion on the nature of work which deserves special attention. We have already seen how Moltmann has a tendency to be suspicious of the instrumental-economic/utility aspect of work. We also have seen his concern that work be free, unforced, non-compulsory, and "reproductive" so as to allow room for human self-representation. To understand why

such concepts of work stand at the heart of his overall understanding of work, it is helpful to recall Moltmann's discussion of work in relation to play. Then, in this latter essay the key concepts to consider which relate to play are rest, joy and Sabbath.

Within his argument that human work should correspond to God's actions in creation, Moltmann develops the idea that in theology meaningful human work, like God's, must be construed so as to include rest or the Sabbath. In its essence work is not simply a productive activity. Moltmann's view here is similar to Barth's understanding of the Sabbath and the active life.²² Moltmann argues:

Work is thus meaningful not because it alone provides the meaning of life, but precisely because it is limited by the goal of rest and joy in existence. The Sabbath does not simply interrupt work. Rather, work is understood and defined through the Sabbath... they also overflow into each other and affect each other. (*HD*, p.41.)

This results in a picture of work seasoned with the Sabbath; that is, a dynamic combination of the producing and presenting aspects of work. By the producing aspect of work, Moltmann is referring to that aspect which consists of acting for purpose and usefulness. By the presenting aspect he means that through our work we present ourselves before God, in the joy of our existence, as we are and as we understand ourselves. (*HD*, p.41.) This does not mean that we make or realise ourselves through our work, (this would be justification by works) but we do express ourselves in and through it.

Moltmann sees "producing" as humanly meaningful only when it is caught up into work's corresponding presenting aspect. In production we present ourselves and our understanding of ourselves. Ultimately then, beyond its usefulness, humane work must also "encompass freedom for self-presentation and thus playfulness." (*HD*, p.41.) Freedom and play become essential characteristics of true work. These must ultimately qualify or transform our understanding of production in work (subordinating the productive to the presenting aspect hierarchically). Of course, work has a serious side. Through it we plan, and in some ways, produce history. However, "in the

²² Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, III 4., (1961).

seriousness of work also belongs, in a human sense, the relaxed joy of existence: 'Let it be!'" (*HD*, p.41.)

So what have our discussions of Moltmann's understandings of work and play ultimately revealed? What picture of work finally emerges and how do we evaluate it?

A CRITIQUE OF MOLTSMANN'S UNDERSTANDING OF WORK

General Contributions

The strength of Moltmann's approach to and understanding of work is his practical focus on the concrete experience of work. We mean that Moltmann gives the problems which many workers currently face center stage: this involves, finding joyful meaning in their work, knowing that their work contributes positively to broader social development, and retaining dignity while working in less than perfect jobs. Here, Moltmann's political / contextual methodology is an asset for it fosters a more detailed exploration into these themes than might be possible when using other methodologies.²³

Moltmann's originality however, does not lie in his identifying these concerns. Rather, it lies in how he embeds these ethical concerns into a broader theology. Although he begins with narrower ethical issues, he then broadens the discussion so that work might be further explored in the light of both Christology and eschatology. What this produces then is not simply a work ethics, but rather a particular understanding of work which is implied by a wider systematic theology. What Moltmann offers specifically are new possibilities for understanding work based on eschatological Christology.

Beyond this, Moltmann also offers a theological grounding for and legitimation of the idea that some of our work is toilsome. Of course we have seen that he is critical of "labor" which is toilsome due to an overemphasis on success; that is, an overemphasis

²³ Moltmann does not find a "concordance method" for arriving at an understanding of work to be adequate, (an example being Alan Richardson's *The Biblical Doctrine of Work*.) Nor is he satisfied with the theology of work offered by M-D Chenu. (*HD*, p.43. note 8.)

on purpose or utility. Nor does he want to justify oppressive forced labor. However, by joining human work to Christ-the-suffering-servant's "work of redemption," Moltmann has allowed that some work, (or even all work to some degree) will involve difficulty and suffering. Often, contemporary theological explorations of work suggest that any justification of suffering in work amounts to an ideological abuse of work (an attempt to keep workers in oppressive situations).²⁴ The strength of Moltmann's point however, is that it is for theological and not simply pragmatic reasons, realistic. It avoids unduly optimistic expectations about what can be experienced in work. Moltmann's theological point here corresponds to common experience that not much work, if any, in this initial creation can be completely and totally released from every possible difficulty.

These strengths notwithstanding, we now offer some cautions about, and suggest that there are limitations in Moltmann's project.

Cautions and Limitations

Here we do not want to criticize, but rather to simply point out that Moltmann's project, as it stands, has several inherent limitations. These primarily stem from the fact that the project is not a theology of work as such. This is not to criticize Moltmann for not producing what we wish he might have. Rather, it is simply to recognize that his political / contextual approach to work has weaknesses in addition to the strengths which we have just mentioned.

Its main weaknesses stem from its not being sufficiently focused on the phenomenon of work itself. Since this project is not a theology of work, it cannot be expected to function as one. We cannot therefore expect to find in it the same nuanced discussions and wide ranging detail that we would in a proper theology of work. Thus, our caution involves not demanding Moltmann's reflection to answer questions which

²⁴ West, (1986), "Cruciform Labour", pp.12-13. Here he argues against Moltmann's suggestion that all human work is a participation in the lordship of Christ. He suggests the possibility that Moltmann's justification of painful suffering work is open to ideological abuse.

are beyond its scope.

This caution however, in addition to safeguarding the project, also suggests that its usefulness in concrete social, political and spiritual contexts might be limited. There is simply not enough breadth to his discussion as it stands to make it widely and directly applicable. For example, most would agree that it would be desirable for a person's work to be meaningful and involve many of his or her creative faculties. However, the question arises as to concretely how can this be guaranteed as a right, rather than simply presented as a desire, in a context where opportunity and resources are limited; that is, in a context which takes seriously economic realities? There may be ways to move toward opening up opportunities for more meaningful work. However, these have not been suggested by Moltmann, nor is it certain that questions like these have been anticipated in his discussions. Our point here is simply that a limited discussion also means a limited usefulness.

Work: Labor or Play?

Having suggested these general limitations and cautions, we now move on to a more specific critique of Moltmann's theological reflections on work. Our foundational criticism is that Moltmann has muddled, and therefore inconsistently presented and interrelated the concepts of work, labor, and play.

At times we find in Moltmann's discussions that the concepts behind the words "work" and "labor" are identical and interchangeable. In the essay on play for example, there are several places where there seems to be no differentiation between the ideas involved within each concept.²⁵ Also, there are instances where, within the same argument, the words are simply and uncritically intermingled.²⁶ Further, in the essay

²⁵ See *TP*, p.17., where the argumentation would just as easily allow the phrase "productive and gainful labor" to be read as productive and gainful "work." See also p.24. Here, the phrases "Earthbound labor finds relief..." and "This also does labor a lot of good." should probably be better read as "work" for he has already argued that creative work "bahrah" can be play, and in a future section he is going to argue that labor cannot become play. See this argument also with reference to the use of "labor" and "creativity" on page 56.

²⁶ See *TP*, pp.21, 22, 35. Page 22 is particularly revealing for Moltmann uses the word

on work, although the word "work" rather than "labor" appears, Moltmann clearly presents a combined idea of laborious and toilsome work when relating human work to the work of Christ.

This lack of differentiation in itself however, is not a problem. The inconsistency arises in that at other times one finds a sharp distinction drawn between the two concepts of work and labor. This most often appears in the essay on play where labor is constantly being contrasted with play. In this essay, forced, productive and necessary labor, is differentiated from those work projects which are free and creative (*bahrah*) and thus play. The key concept within this differentiation is the idea of "necessary". Work that corresponds to God's will will be playful; that is, it will be free but meaningful. This means that it must not be done out of any necessity. Labor on the other hand by definition involves necessity. Thus, true work (which is play) and labor are distinguished from each other and are even antithetical. This differentiation in kind is also seen within the essay on meaningful work. Here, Moltmann distinguishes between the "effortless" work (*barah*) of God in creation, and the painful, toilsome, and laborious work of Christ in redemption.

This inconsistency of sometimes drawing a distinction between work and labor and sometimes arbitrarily not, may not be seen in itself as too serious of a problem. It could be argued that although this is a weakness, it is not one which undermines the general thrust of his argument. Further, one might want to argue that this distinction between work and labor introduced with the concept of necessity shows promise. However, a further complication also adds to the weight of our criticism.

As we have seen, Moltmann argues that true work basically is, or should be, play. In his essay on play he interprets *barah* from the Genesis creation account to mean play. Then, in the essay on meaningful work he discusses this same passage only this time

"labor" here in the context of a discussion on self-representation. This same discussion on self-representation reappears in the essay "The Right to Meaningful Work." In this instance however, he uses the word "work" rather than "labor" thus indicating their interchangeability.

barah means work. Likewise, in this later essay he interprets work through the Sabbath rather than depicting the Sabbath in contrast to work. This thus offers the qualification that all work, including labor, should be seasoned with the Sabbath and thus be more relaxed and playful.

Now, true work is and should be play. Further however, and following on this view, is the idea that work / play should not be, or should not become, necessitated or utilitarian labor. These points form the thesis of *Theology of Play*. Yet, in "The Right to Meaningful Work" Moltmann argues that the theology of the cross justifies laborious and toilsome work (labor). Of course in this essay, (with the appeal to Isa. 43 and 53) this work of Christ is viewed as laborious and toilsome but without involving necessity or utility. Here, "work... receives a meaning that reaches beyond every success of the work." (*HD*, p.44.) However, we suggest that it is inconsistent with Moltmann's theology to argue that the cross is somehow unnecessary or simply a creative playful innovation by God. Rather, Moltmann understands the cross to stem from God's loving and suffering nature. It is not incidental or arbitrary relating only to the actual ongoing history of God. According to Moltmann's theology, the cross is central to and necessarily involved with God's character.²⁷ What we are suggesting is that the distinction between necessary labor and free work loses its force once Christ's work on the cross is appealed to for work's / labor's justification. The work and labor distinction begins to blur when the cross embraces both. The distinction, based on the characteristic of necessity, simply does not hold.

This point is further complicated by the fact that Moltmann explicitly argues that, contrary to work, labor cannot be construed as or become play. Yet, as we have been demonstrating, in "The Right to Meaningful Work", work is positively construed as laborious precisely because of the cross. If then the distinction between work and labor has essentially blurred, and, if work is play, then labor and play also begin to converge. But this is precisely what Moltmann does not want to have happen. Our point is that if,

²⁷ See especially: Moltmann, *The Crucified God* (1974), and *Theology of Hope* (1967).

as we have already established, the sharp distinction between laborious work (labor) and playful work (work) begins to collapse (as the pillar of "necessity" crumbles in relation to the work of Christ), then the antithesis between labor and play also collapses. Why then should it be that labor cannot be construed as play if work, which is laborious, can?

At this point our very basic distinctions between the concepts of work, labor and play begin to disappear. How can it be that work equals play equals labor, if each word is to continue to mean anything distinctively?

The fundamental problem with this whole set of concepts is that Moltmann has not sufficiently defined his terms and therefore he has not been able to remain consistent within specified fields of meaning. He has thus been, at best confusing, and at worst contradictory. There may be some substance or promise to his nuanced renderings of work, labor and play. Indeed he hints to the fact that work's designation before the fall, and thus its future transformation, is positive and creative work as compared to that which is cursed as labor after the fall. (*HD*, p.40.) Yet Moltmann does not develop this point, nor does he integrate it into his discussion. Had he carefully defined his terms and their fields of meaning he might have been able to theologically suggest some important characteristics of work based on these concepts of work, labor and play. He has not done this however. Therefore, he has simply left the reader wondering what he exactly means, and whether his overall thesis might not be flawed. We are inclined to suggest that there is a deep conflict between the concepts in Moltmann's understanding of work / labor / play. However, what his entire discussion does suggest positively is that, corresponding to human experience, work is not a simple concept (it is multifaceted) nor can it be made so.

Moltmann's Reflections on Work and Our Hypothesis

Having suggested that work is not a simple (but rather is a multifaceted) concept, we now want to consider how Moltmann's understanding of work compares with our

threefold hypothesis that work should be construed as instrumental, relational and ontological. Of course Moltmann neither specifically outlines work in these terms, nor does he conceptually interrelate his perceptions along these lines. Nonetheless, as we have shown, his reflections do quite naturally lend themselves to such classification and analysis. Our method here will be use our hypothesis as a tool for a more detailed critique of Moltmann's construal of work. The strength of using a hypothesis like ours for these critical purposes is it that readily highlights either the fluidity and complementary inner-workings of a construal of work, or it reveals within it areas of tension and weakness.

Using our hypothesis we will show that although Moltmann has made contributions to all three of these aspects of work, ultimately his construal falls short in each area. We will thus conclude that his overall theological understanding of work is less than adequate.

Work's instrumental aspect. We begin our analysis by considering Moltmann's construal of work instrumentally with reference to questions of sustenance. As we have shown, Moltmann recognizes work's fundamental connection to questions of sustenance or "life-support." (*HD*, p.53.) As such, utility will be at least minimally a part of work's makeup, even though to Moltmann humane work cannot "consist only in acting for purpose and usefulness." (*HD*, p.41.) Further, we have highlighted that Moltmann does not wish to have one concept of work (the relational) set against another (sustenance). Rather, he desires that these concepts complement and protect each other. (*HD*, p.56.) These points show that Moltmann assumes and allows for some type of utility (instrumentality) to be a part of work's functional nature, even if it is ultimately hierarchically subordinated to work's relational aspects.

However, these qualifications granted, through his critique of utility Moltmann does show himself ultimately to be, at best, little concerned with questions of sustenance, and at worst, dismissive of it. We have argued that Moltmann is finally critical of any concept of work which places too much emphasis on necessity, utility or

purposefulness. His rejection of the model of work as enterprise, his suspicion of usefulness in his discussion of Sabbath, joy and playfulness in work, and his argument that earning a living has little to do with questions of work's meaningfulness, all serve to counter any high valuation of work's utility.²⁸ Further, as we have also argued, the thesis in *Theology of Play* is intended to critique the "spoilsport" who places an over emphasis on necessity, utility and purposefulness in human action, including work. It is the discussion in *Theology of Play* that we now want to address more critically and we want to consider how the ideas therein minimize the importance of work for the sake of sustenance.

We know that the essay "The First Liberated Men in Creation" was written in the context of, and against its broader assertions, as a critique to redress some perceived excesses within certain activist marxist students movements of the 1960's.

A second major contention raised by Moltmann, particularly in the context of the radical student disruptions of the last dozen years, is a criticism of what he perceives to be a certain legalistic fervor and lifestyle of socialism's 'new man.' This legalism is derived from the Aristotelian doctrine of virtue- 'practice makes a master'- taken over later by Marx in his premise that humans create themselves in their labor, in working productively. Thereby if the conditions of production could be restructured so that they are no longer alienating, we then could move from a preoccupation with 'having' to 'being,' and from the drab 'realm of necessity' to the splendid 'realm of freedom.'²⁹

Given these concerns, Moltmann purposefully placed a strong emphasis on aesthetics over ethics and then on "being" over "having" or "doing". As we have shown, Moltmann believes that utility and purpose (ethics) hinders the freedom and beauty (aesthetics) which leads to happiness. Within that discussion, he very directly argued what he perceived to be the danger of "necessity". Necessity hinders the demonstrative value of being and free human self-representation. It hinders the joy of existence and implies that we need to "justify" our existence.

²⁸ See respectively: *HD*, pp. 48-50, 40-41, and 53-55.

²⁹ Chapman, (1981), p.443. See also: Bauckham, (1987), p.49.

The question which we pose however, is why must utility or necessity necessarily prevent or preclude free, creative, self-representative action? Of course it might often be the case that it does. We concede that utility could, and often does, destroy freedom and joy. However, it does not necessarily follow that a utilitarian motive, economic necessity or some other intrinsic or extrinsic motivation for work totally excludes the possibility that one could still also find joy and self-expression in his or her work. Indeed, concrete common experience shows that very little work is completely freed from economic or utilitarian necessity. Do we really believe however, that people never could or never do experience a sense of freedom and joy in that work? If we do, we are clearly incorrect for experience shows at least one example to the contrary. In writing this thesis, we have found ample opportunity for self-expression and self-representation. The freedom and thus joy which we have experienced however, has not in any way diminished the fact that we have also written the thesis for several utilitarian purposes. First, it serves as a means to the end of receiving a Ph.D. Second, another purpose for writing it was to learn what is needed to be able to do something else, to teach theology and ethics. Third, throughout the writing process we have hoped that this thesis will eventually be published. While this in itself will not provide much if any financial resources, it may do so indirectly for having a published thesis may provide us with better employment. Our point here is simply this thesis represents work which is both playful and utilitarian.

If Moltmann wants to demonize utility and necessity, he needs a more persuasive substantiation and defence of his premise than his argument that necessity by definition destroys freedom and thus joy. Against the backdrop of the legalistic socialist "new man" his argumentation may need little authentication. When more broadly considered however, it becomes suspect.

This leads us into Moltmann's view of freedom which gives the hierarchical priority to "being" over "having" or "doing." Moltmann is clear in his belief that, contrary to both capitalism and Marx, "there is no way to get from doing to being."

(*TP*, p.46.) One commentator aptly summarizes Moltmann's view:

it is Christian faith that must reverse the relation between doing and being. As human beings we receive our worth and our identities from God, and not from what we produce; only then are we in turn freed to act and to create... The future in its newness brings a taste of absolute freedom, which is qualitatively different from necessity and yet can be experienced in the midst of our work.³⁰

It is very interesting and also very uncharacteristic of Moltmann to introduce such an abstract ontological distinction as he has with his being verses doing metaphysic.³¹ It is nonetheless perfectly in line with his broader understanding that worth and dignity follow from created existence rather than human achievement. For Moltmann this is foundational. However, at least two other factors in this essay also build into his argument. First, contra Marxist anthropology, is his attack against any attempt to conceive of persons as a creatures of their own works or as products of their own achievement. (*TP*, p.48,51.) Second, appealing to Luther, Moltmann insists that justification by faith rather than works demands this metaphysical distinction with the priority given to being over doing. Moltmann interprets Luther's "man is justified by faith" to mean that "no form of human action leads us from an inhuman to a human reality of man". (*TP*, p.46.) On this particular interpretation of Luther, justification means becoming human, thus being and doing do become antithetical, and the hierarchical priority of "being" naturally follows.

Our criticism however, is that Moltmann offers us false options. One does not have to believe that a person is wholly or solely responsible to "create" him or herself through one's works to believe that a person contributes to his or her human formation positively or negatively through those works. The options in this context need not be justification by faith or by works, Marx or Luther. Nor does one have to hierarchically posit being over doing, or doing over being.

³⁰ Chapman, (1981), p.444.

³¹ Of course, "being" here should probably be understood dynamically as "becoming" rather than statically as a fixed existence. This is due to Moltmann's overall "not-yet" metaphysics which he builds in critical dialogue with Bloch.

On this latter point, we do not need such an abstract hierarchical dualism to preserve human dignity. Generally in life we do not have the situation where a person can “be” without doing something (even if this means simply contributing via existence to a relationship in which the person is involved). Nor can a person “do” without already being something (an existing person). The distinction itself is mostly artificial. We suggest that it is better as a general principle to argue for a complementary “being in doing” and “doing in being” metaphysic / anthropology.³² Of course in cases of severe disability, persistent vegetative state, old age, or even young age we will want to qualify this general principle with an additional argument (presumably from the doctrine of the *imago Dei*), that existence is still valid even if doing in some instances is not possible. However, such an addition does not necessitate the metaphysical dualism which Moltmann has introduced. If Moltmann really does want to preserve the being over doing distinction he will need to suggest more compelling arguments as to why it is necessary. It may be a way to combat the excesses of activist Marxism, and even to preserve the dignity of the handicapped and unemployed, but as a broader anthropological insight it is too reductionistic.

One may argue however, that we still need to deal with the force of his argument about justification by faith rather than works. However, as we have suggested, Moltmann has presented us with false options. We need not be limited to the options of justification by faith or by works with reference to our question. The problem we suggest here (and then will return to later when dealing with the instrumental-spiritual argument) is that Moltmann has unnecessarily and imprecisely combined two related but distinct theological concepts; those of justification and sanctification. Of course, Christian theology denies that a person can save him or herself through works of any kind, including work. That is why, against Marx’s reductionistic anthropology, we agree with Moltmann that a person does not need to create him or herself through work. A person does not receive his or her fundamental being or acceptance with God

³² We want here neither a hierarchy of being over doing (as Moltmann has offered), nor of doing over being. The latter might possibly (by implication) open the door for euthanasia.

or others through work or works.

However, one needs to introduce here the doctrine of sanctification and not only consider the question of justification. If sanctification rather than justification is in view, then theologically it is less problematic to argue that what a person does (including work), in some qualified way, contributes either positively or negatively to what he or she is or becomes. Moltmann does introduce a separate category which he calls sanctification in the section on free works (which follow from justification). (*TP*, pp.48-49.) He does not in this essay however, entertain the idea that these free works have a formative or transformative role positively or negatively on the becoming individual or group.³³ Only in a more isolated earlier instance does he suggest that more may be at issue: that when a man is playing (working included) he is also "at stake as he is himself being played with" or affected. (*TP*, pp.17-18.)

By failing to offer a more nuanced distinction between justification and sanctification Moltmann has built his case around false options. If justification only is in view, then his could be the only legitimate options. However, if sanctification is being considered, and if one allows that justification and sanctification are in any way distinguishable in the salvation process, and if sanctification involves any formative or transformative element, then more possibilities open themselves up. A person does not have to save him or herself through work, nor does being have to be abstracted out and hierarchically established over doing. Rather, with sanctification in view, a person's choices and actions can have real effect on who he or she is and becomes.

Related to our hypothesis, the importance of setting aside Moltmann's critique of utility deals primarily with questions of moral purpose on the one hand, and questions of economics on the other. Both of these are important to any theological construal of work. Any theology of work must address the moral questions which involve determining for what purpose we work. I work for myself, I work for fun, I work to get

³³ He does appear more open to this possibility in his essay on "The Right to Meaningful Work." We will return to this later both in this section and then when discussing the relational-existential aspect of work.

wealthy, I work to serve others, I work simply to survive; all involve evaluative judgements and thus questions of moral purpose. If utility goes, ethics go. But if ethics go, can we then say anything meaningful about work which goes beyond the mere description of what actually happens? How can we make any prescription with reference to work? Yet, as we have seen, Moltmann himself is paramountly concerned with the ethics of work particularly (making prescriptions) as they relate to meaning and rights. Our point is that while Moltmann's critique of utility may contribute something to the quest for joy and thus meaning in work by calling into question an overdone, neurotic, obsessive quest for success, its very arguments ultimately undermine the ethical value that it offers; that is, it is self-defeating.

Also, we have suggested that our setting aside Moltmann's critique of utility is important to our hypothesis because of economic questions. We mean here that Moltmann's construal of work, with its primary focus on rights and meaning, and its specific critique of utility, erroneously subordinates economic issues to relational issues in the sphere of work. We suggest that any theology of work, or theological construal of work, needs to be able to equally value the discipline of economics. We are not implying that Moltmann's construal completely ignores economics. Nor do we mean that he is completely misguided in questioning an exclusive focus on necessity and utility in work. His intention to have work's nature and meaning include elements going beyond its economic life-support value is indeed consistent with the concern for a multifaceted construal of work which we present with our hypothesis. We are suggesting however, that Moltmann's critique of utility and necessity ultimately undermines the ability of his construct to adequately value the experiences faced by most people of the importance, through work, of gaining sustenance with limited resources.

We now want to consider Moltmann's view of work's instrumentality as it touches upon human spiritual development. Protestants have traditionally emphasized the idea

that through a person's obedience to God and service to others in their daily work, he or she grows spiritually in relationship with God. In his discussions Moltmann does not address these ideas as stated. He simply does not use this language in talking about work's relationship to spiritual growth. However, nor does he specifically deny these concepts. His appeal is that our human work should correspond to God's. Why should it? Presumably there is some view behind these assertions that obedience, or at least the imitation of God, is a good. Although it is possible that this would be a strictly deontological appeal to our duty as created beings, it is doubtful whether Moltmann views this desired correspondence in work to be a good strictly apart from any benefit that we ourselves might receive. After all, his whole point is that when our work corresponds to God's it infuses into our work new meaning. Is this meaning, this humanization of work, not another way to talk about spiritual growth?

Further, Moltmann believes that in our work we should come to the point where we experience the joy of existence and the joy of our self-presentation. Life is a material embodied life and this necessarily involves meaningful activity and work. Is our coming to this understanding and experience not another way to talk about spiritual growth? Does this not also mean that work will necessarily also be a part of one's spiritual development?

The problem however, especially in *Theology of Play*, is that Moltmann is reluctant to allow for any view that even approaches Marx's assertion that we form ourselves through our work. He is theologically convinced, as we have seen, that any such construal would violate the principle of justification by faith. Again, the problem is that he has not allowed here for any difference between the doctrines of justification and sanctification. Of course he argues that justification leads to free works and free relationships (and it is here that he chooses to introduce the idea of sanctification). Nonetheless, by here not entertaining the idea that sanctification has formative or transformative power, he is necessarily constrained by his argument that we cannot be formed through our work lest we violate the theological truth of justification by faith.

On this view then, we ultimately become spiritually stranded in that we isolate work from our spiritual growth. It is for this reason that we find weakness in Moltmann's instrumental construal of work with relation to spiritual growth. It does not ultimately account for what traditional biblical, Protestant, and even more recently Catholic construals have. It does not affirm that how we work and what we produce affects both positively as well as negatively who we are and what we become. It does not affirm the role of work in sanctification.

The picture is only somewhat improved in the essay "The Right to Meaningful Work." Here, there is more room given for "individual formation," a concept which closely parallels spiritual growth or sanctification. However, in this context, this concept seems to be understood in a very limited way in relation only to our self-expression in our work and not as a means through which God and the person can develop our being. Thus, even in this context our criticism stands, that Moltmann does not ultimately allow adequate room in his construal of work for spiritual development.

Work's relational aspect. Although Moltmann does not structure his reflections using terminology identical to ours, his construal of work is nevertheless largely concerned with what we have called the relational aspect of work; both in its social-structural and existential dimensions.

We have shown that for Moltmann, the social-structural is the highest functional value of work. Indeed, throughout both articles we find a strong emphasis on concerns such as social justice (particularly human rights and the right to meaningful work) and the protection of the environment. Our difficulty is not with Moltmann's lack of concern for specific social-structural issues, but rather is with what he understands the substance of these concerns to involve. It is not our purpose here to provide an exhaustive critique of, for example, Moltmann's understanding of human rights or environmental protection. Broadly however, we suggest that his weaknesses in the instrumental area, (particularly with respect to utility, sustenance and economics,) carry over into and adversely affect his vision of what is socially good with relation to work.

One example here is his concern to make employment a basic human right for every able person. If one focuses rather exclusively on the relational dimension of work, minimizing for the most part the instrumental dimension related to sustenance, then it is understandable how one could arrive at such a conclusion. This however, is precisely what we are arguing cannot be done, for when it is, we suggest that the content of the ethical standard becomes imbalanced and skewed. The opportunity of employment for everyone may be a good social goal to move toward. However, if this goal is not then taken in relation to other social goals and social realities, for example, economic realities, then the goal itself becomes so abstract that it becomes useless for practical ethical purposes.

Another way to formulate this problem is that Moltmann has not been sufficiently comprehensive in his social-relational analysis. He has simply not taken into account the complex matrix of social structural levels and issues which we outlined above. It is not wrong for him to be concerned with only a few ethical issues, for example, international social justice, the right to work, or environmental protection. It does create problems however, when moral accounts and moral prescriptions fail to factor in and inter-relate all of the relevant and related data. If we want to understand work on a social structural level, we will need to be sufficiently comprehensive in our social analysis so that we avoid unbalanced reductionistic moralizing or abstract utopian idealization with reference to only one or two concerns. We suggest that Moltmann here has left himself open to this charge.

Of course, Moltmann is not solely concerned with social-structural aspects of the relational dimension of work (even though he has built his arguments around the right to work). Rather, he has raised this and other social ethical issues in connection with and growing out of the existential dimension dealing specifically with human meaning. Meaningful work, the existential dimension, is as much of a concern to him as the right work.

Moltmann's main concern in this area is that work neither be understood as

providing too much nor too little meaning for life. Work cannot be the sole locus in life in which meaning is established, nor can it be divorced from questions of its human existential meaning. Moltmann has thus attempted a view of work which can provide qualified meaning for the working person, the community, and life in general.

Although Moltmann is careful to offer several qualifications, he does affirm that work can play a significant role in the life of the working person. He sees work as instilling in a person feelings of independence and ability, and thus self-consciousness. (*HD*, p.54.) He suggests that work is humane when it offers latitude for individual formation. (*HD*, p.54.) He reasons that work is significant for the community when it is perceived as an active participation in the broader social process. He then argues that work is significant for the meaning of life in general because it relates to the Kingdom of God (a point which we will discuss shortly).

Our criticism is not that Moltmann uses these terms, for in themselves they could be helpful and appropriate concepts with respect to work. Rather, our critique is with the way that Moltmann has restricted and qualified their meaning so as to exclude the idea that work in any way involves self-realization. "The expression *self-realization* is too strong because it threatens the young, the old, the handicapped, and the unemployed with nonexistence." (*HD*, p.54.) As we have shown, Moltmann's argument against Marx is that work is not to be a form of self-realization, but rather only a form of self-expression, self-representation, and self-presentation. These are important concepts indeed and we want to affirm that an ethical goal of work should be that it allows room for people to express and reveal themselves through their active and productive lives. The problem however, is the assumption that work is or should only be an expression, representation or presentation of the already existing self. It surely is this, in either a humanizing or dehumanizing way. However, it is also more than this.

Work also has an effect, either positively or negatively, on the becoming self and its identity. In and through the process of working people do change. They become something that they were not before their working began. This change can either go in

the direction of growth or destruction. The point is that people do not simply present who they are, but also in some way become something, and thus in one sense realize themselves in and through their work. We agree with Moltmann in his criticisms of Marx that work is not the only way for the self to change / become. Indeed, Marx was too reductionistic on this point in that he allowed no room for God, personal relationships or simply non-working existence. However, we argue that Moltmann has gone too far in his reaction against Marx and has excluded from work a very real and important characteristic. Work is one way, and for most people a very central way, that the self becomes realized, and this can be either positively or negatively.

Again part of Moltmann's resistance to this idea seems to be his problem theologically that any affirmation of self-realization (or humanization) in work would necessarily be an affirmation of justification by works. Work needs to be free and needs to flow from the changed or justified self for there is no way to get from doing to being. If work contributes to this change, a move from doing to being, then it becomes a means of self-justification. Moltmann prefers Luther to Marx.

The problem however, is that Moltmann has tacitly equated self-realization with justification. Although it may be appropriate to conceptualize justification as in some way a type of, or contributor to self-realization, the reverse does not necessarily follow. It need not be true that self-realization is a type of justification or eternal salvation. Of course many, especially those who do not hold to a Christian view of things, may view self-realization (even through work) to be their secularized version of salvation. On a Christian view, this would be a type of salvation by works. However, it is also possible from within Christian theology to affirm even a non-believer's positive growth, development, or change through their work and to view this as something other than and short of justification or salvation. The doctrine of common grace would seem to apply here. People can still learn and grow in areas of their lives even if we want to affirm that they ultimately still need to experience God's justification and salvation for their whole life.

Our problem with Moltmann is that he has been compelled by his own theology to exclude an important and central characteristic of work. Again, Marx has gone too far with his secularized version of salvation. However, this does not mean that Christians need to, or even can, exclude self realization from the working process.

What do we conclude then concerning Moltmann's understanding of the relational aspect of work? Positively he has highlighted both the social-structural as well as existential dimension of work. Further, he has also provided a very important check and corrective to Marx's anthropology. Negatively however, we conclude that his construal is ultimately unsatisfactory. Although it offers some helpful points of insight, it lacks in scope too much to be of real use. On the social-structural side it is too incomplete to be of much help. On the existential side Moltmann has unnecessarily divorced from work an important existential characteristic, that of self realization.

Further, the theological difficulties which we have pointed to raise questions about its doctrinal coherence. We are not suggesting here that these theological weaknesses necessarily undermine all that has been said. Rather, we simply mean that with such difficulties, Moltmann's view of work's relational aspects falls short of the standard required by our hypothesis.

Work's ontological aspect. As we have argued, Moltmann does not call for or address an ontological understanding of work precisely as we have here defined it. Nor does his construal approach an ontological understanding of work to the degree that it approached both work's instrumentality and relationality. Nonetheless, we have suggested that his theological summary with respect to work, in attempting to provide a theological basis for the significance of work with respect to the meaning of life as a whole, can be understood as a tacit probing for an ontological understanding of work.

As we have outlined, Moltmann is concerned to present a theological understanding of work which has a meaning, not just for the worker or the society, but also for the whole of life. Ultimately, Moltmann wants to ground work, through and because of its significance for the person and society, in the Kingdom of God, that is, through Christ

in eschatology. Work is a way for people to take part in either the destruction or preservation of the unfinished world. It is a way to serve the creating God and work together with the redeeming God. Without detailed explanation, Moltmann suggests that work in the Kingdom of God, in some way closely relates to God's renewing of heaven and earth.

We might wish that Moltmann had more fully developed these ideas and explained his meaning more precisely. Unfortunately, he has not. Nonetheless, what he has provided indicates that he recognizes that there is something to work, theologically conceived, which involves more than its penultimate personal and societal value. What Moltmann seems to be probing for is a view of work, as a form of correspondence to God and as bound up with the new heavens and new earth, which approaches eternal significance.

For our purpose as it relates to our hypothesis, it is not only significant that he is probing in this direction. It is also important to consider the theology chosen which is meant to give work this significance for the whole. Of course there are elements for example, of protology and eschatology throughout the discussion. Generally however, we have seen that the doctrine of God the Father, and then more significantly Christology have been the points from which Moltmann has built his construal. Although it could be done, we shall not challenge any specific formulations with reference to these doctrines.³⁴ Rather, we simply want to highlight that Christology, or even the doctrine of God more broadly, is one doctrinal starting point for establishing something like an ontology of work. With reference to our hypothesis however, the question is whether this is the best doctrinal basis or whether by itself it is a sufficient one?

Obviously any Christian theology, including a theology of work, which is probing ontological questions will need to be (like Moltmann's) in some form built upon the

³⁴ For this type of criticism see the brief critique offered by West, (1986), "Cruciform Labour".

life, cross, and, resurrection of Christ. Any construal which is completely unrelated or contrary to these realities cannot be specifically Christian. We argue however, that there are other ways, particularly with reference to a Christian theology of work, to accomplish this Christological goal which Moltmann has highlighted. One need not necessarily call for the imitation of Christ the working carpenter, nor, as Moltmann has done, to develop a model of work based on Christ's painful and difficult work of redemption. This is not to completely invalidate these approaches. Rather we ultimately believe that there is a better and more convincing way to establish an ontological understanding of work.

Our suggestion is to develop the two interconnected and multifaceted doctrines of theological anthropology and a theology of nature, and to do so teleologically (building upon protological, eschatological and Christological foundations). These we shall show are better starting points for the task of establishing an ontology of work.

This does not mean that the type of ontological grounding which Moltmann indirectly offers is useless. Moltmann has done theology a great service by pointing toward and offering an understanding of work which highlights its meaning for the whole of life and not only for the person and society. However, ultimately Moltmann's attempt is insufficiently developed, and thus inadequate for providing an ontology of work.

We have now come full circle to our original conclusion concerning Moltmann's construal of work. We have shown that, although Moltmann has contributed ideas to all three of work's aspects (the instrumental, relational and ontological) ultimately his construal falls short in each area. Further, we have alluded to how weaknesses in one area carry over into and adversely affect the other. We have thus confirmed our view that Moltmann's overall theological understanding of work is less than adequate.

The Way Forward

Where does this lead us then with respect to both Moltmann's theology, and a way forward concerning our hypothesis? With respect to our hypothesis, having demonstrated in this first half of our thesis that our threefold construal of work is both appropriate and necessary, our task is now to develop a more adequate ontology of work (building from theological anthropology and a theology of nature). In this process we will likewise explore how the ontological aspect of work both establishes and then further gives the parameters to both its instrumental and relational aspects. From this we will demonstrate how each of these three aspects in turn affects the other, and then the whole of work. With this, we will ultimately have established a more comprehensive theological picture of the nature of work than has hitherto been provided.

Concerning Moltmann, we propose to develop many of our ideas in critical dialogue with his broader theology. We are not suggesting that the formulations which we finally present are Moltmann's. We will reconstruct and summarize his views only in as much as we intend to critically dialogue with them for our own purposes. Our method then is to critically plunder Moltmann's theology for our own theological construals, and then to apply these constructs specifically to work.

Hence, we are not proposing to construct a theology of work directly from Moltmann's broader systematics, even though we are convinced that a better one would be possible than he himself has offered. Rather our proposal is to develop our own understanding of an ontology of work using Moltmann and his broader systematics as a dialog partner.

Part 2

**THE ONTOLOGY OF WORK:
A PROPOSAL**

CHAPTER 4

TELEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR THE ONTOLOGY OF WORK

In that which follows, we intend to provide a basic analysis of, and then to make a specific contribution to, Christian theological anthropology, and we propose to do this from a teleological perspective. Our analysis however, will be directed and therefore somewhat limited by our overall goal of finally establishing an ontology of work from this anthropology.

Although we will not be producing a fully detailed teleological Christian anthropology, we recognize that there are a wide range of inter-related issues which a more detailed anthropology must consider. Paramount among these is the concern for an ecologically appropriate doctrine of humanity. We find this concern particularly pressing given that our overall intention, based upon work's ontological aspect, is to suggest a quite high evaluation of the importance of human work. Now it might initially seem that we have an irreconcilable conflict of interests between our concerns. Can human work realistically be highly regarded considering the ecological crisis, which has to a large extent been caused by our work? We believe that it can. However, this is a seriously important and complicated question and it cannot be resolved by simplistically arguing for a revised kinder and gentler form of work (as important as this change in work style may be). Rather, what is more fundamentally needed, and what we shall propose, is a theological anthropology (and a resultant ontology of work) which is developed with a constant reference to a broader theology of nature.¹

¹ For an overview which categorizes and lists several theologies of nature see: Northcott,

Of course, the very distinction between anthropology and nature is somewhat artificial and therefore problematic. On the most basic level of material existence it is ultimately not possible to speak of humanity without also making a comment about nature; since a person is a material / natural being and therefore a part of what we call nature. Even theologically both humanity and nature fall under the same category of created being. By virtue of this fact they stand together and along side each other in relationship to God as part of one and the same created, contingent, and material reality. Indeed, ecological theology is rightly concerned to show that many of our environmental problems appear to have developed from a context where we have drawn too sharp a distinction between humanity and nature.

These challenges notwithstanding, we believe that it is legitimate and even necessary to allow cautiously this somewhat artificial and problematic distinction to stand. Firstly, there is the practical reality that humanity does often understand itself to be (and thus act) in opposition to nature. This is at the root of the ecological crisis. Secondly, for all of our similarities and common properties, humans are in important ways distinguishable from the rest of creation. Theologically we may refer to this difference by pointing to some formulation of the concept of the image of God in humanity. Certainly we must be careful to recognize that even this doctrine does not draw so sharp a boundary as to cut humanity off from our natural existence or other non-human entities. Nonetheless, it does introduce an important, if even a qualified, distinction. What it suggests is that it is appropriate to consider theological anthropology in itself, as long as it can be located within the context of a theology of nature and as long as it is constantly remembered that both anthropology and a theology of nature are essentially and irreducibly linked to and a part of one another.

Too often in recent ecological studies, humanity is collapsed into nature in such a

(1996), pp.124-163. See also: Hendry, (1980). For a recent and helpful theology of nature see: Page, (1996).

Our anthropology and ontology of work will be primarily developed in critical dialogue with the theology / theology of nature proposed by Jürgen Moltmann.

way that we lose our place within nature and thus our unique identity and particularity (which the fact of the studies themselves seem to imply that we have). On the other hand, there has been a tendency in the history of Christian anthropological studies to so differentiate humanity from nature that nature loses its unique place and therefore identity in relationship both to ourselves and to God. We believe that in our anthropological study these problems can be minimized by our giving particularized space both to humanity and to nature and by considering both of them teleologically.

Our particular interest at this point then, prior to our discussions of anthropology / nature, is to establish what we mean when we say that we will be interpreting these subjects teleologically. That is, what do we mean by teleology, and how will it function in our project?

For this project, when we refer to teleology we are not primarily addressing the debate between teleological and deontological ethics. That is, we are not essentially concerned with the debate about utilitarian consequentialism as opposed to rules ethics (although our discussion has implications for this debate). Rather, our interest is with teleology in the sense that it might suggest the purposes or ends of something. Then, we want to inquire whether it is possible to determine by extending from these purposes and ends the moral ought; and if this is possible, how it can be done. Therefore, when we discuss humanity specifically, the teleological questions involve how we understand our *telos*, our purposes and ends, and what bearing these have on our morality. When we talk about nature (non-human creation), the teleological questions involve how we understand its *telos*, or purposes and ends, and what bearing these have on both its particular identity as nature (in itself and before God), and then on our human moral relationship to it.

The main way that the concept of teleology has been used, in both science and in ethics, has been to refer to the "natural" or inherent purposes and ends of something. This understanding follows from the theory proposed by Aristotle. In Christian ethics this approach was adopted, modified, and then placed within a theological context by

Thomas Aquinas. Here the modification involves the idea that the “inherent” purposes or ends of a thing are a part of God’s initial design in creation for a given thing. Teleology on this account is not natural in the sense of being independent or autonomous from God. Rather, it is natural in as much as nature is understood from within a Christian worldview to be creation.²

What we want to establish here then, is that a teleological framework is both possible and necessary for theological ethics in general, and our project in particular. To do this, first the very concept of teleology needs to be revitalized. What we mean is that it must first be shown that it is possible to reason from the descriptive *is* to the prescriptive *ought*. That is, it is essential to first suggest what are the purposes or ends of something, and then, that it is appropriate to reason from this to determine a moral ought.

To accomplish our task we will enter into dialogue with two thinkers: Alasdair MacIntyre, (a moral philosopher) and Oliver O’Donovan (a moral theologian). We begin with MacIntyre.

ALASDAIR MACINTYRE: REVIVING TELEOLOGY

Let us first look briefly at the possibility of a philosophical grounding for teleology. Alasdair MacIntyre in his seminal study *After Virtue* (1985) offers an important contribution to ethics (philosophical and theological) with his proposal for the reintroduction and revitalization of the concept of teleology; that is, that one can and must derive the ethical *ought* from the descriptive *is*.

The thesis of MacIntyre’s book is that moral philosophy since the Enlightenment has lost its bearings and has finally become stranded in a *cul-de-sac* of emotivism with no clear way out. The problem which MacIntyre outlines is that moderns have experienced a loss of language with which to talk about morality. Although key moral words and phrases which indicate concepts of the good and right and wrong have

² Although stated somewhat differently, this is the basic argument presented by Jean Porter in her discussion of Aquinas’ general theory of goodness. See: Porter, (1994), pp.34-68.

survived, they have been divorced from their historically derived philosophical and theological contexts to such an extent that what they signify becomes unverifiable and thus mostly meaningless. What MacIntyre argues for is the rebuilding and restoration of these lost and missing contexts. For this task he ultimately calls for a return to either Aristotle or “something very like it.”(p.117.)³ Although this return to Aristotle by MacIntyre is complex and involves multiple interrelated Aristotelian concepts, one central element in this scheme needing restoration is the concept of teleology.

With Chapter 5, “Why the Enlightenment Project of Justifying Morality Had to Fail”, MacIntyre specifically begins his revitalization of the concept of teleology. Throughout the chapter MacIntyre argues that the problem for modern moral philosophy has been the loss of an Aristotelian teleological framework and / or a theistic version of it as was common from the European Middle Ages to the modern period. He argues that with classical and theistic ethics there was a three-fold scheme operating. These included; ‘untutored human-nature-as-it-happened-to-be’, ‘human-nature-as-it-could-be-if-it-realized-its-telos’ and practical reason, which is ‘the precepts of rational ethics as the means for transition’ from the former to the latter state. (p.53.) MacIntyre argues that all three of these concepts need to be present and operating if the moral project as a whole, and thus the moral language which grows out of it, is going to function and be intelligible.

The error as MacIntyre understands it, is that this three-fold scheme was abandoned. Lost primarily was the idea that reason could be used to genuinely comprehend man’s true end. (p.53-54.) In science (following Pascal) and philosophy (following Descartes) anti-Aristotelian directions set the boundaries for reason. The result of this is that reason is perceived as not able to discern any essential natures or

³ This quote is made in the context of a discussion on whether Aristotle or Nietzsche provides the way forward for moral philosophy. We are interpreting this discussion to be paradigmatic for MacIntyre’s whole thesis. For MacIntyre, Nietzsche is the inevitable outcome of Enlightenment morality. Aristotle, or something very like it, if it could be sustained would make Nietzsche’s entire project pointless and provide a general way forward for moral philosophy.

teleological features in the objective universe. This finally leads to the rejection of any 'teleological view of human nature, and any view of man as having an essence which defines his true end.' (p.54.) These developments in science and philosophy, (even in theology with Protestantism and Jansenist Catholicism) eliminate any notion of man-as-it-could-be-if-it-realized-its-*telos*.

Since the whole point of ethics - both as a theoretical and practical discipline - is to enable man to pass from his present state to his true end, the elimination of any notion of essential human nature and with it the abandonment of any notion of a *telos* leaves behind a moral scheme composed of two remaining elements whose relationship becomes quite unclear. (pp.54-55.)

Stated succinctly, a content for morality has survived but it has been cut off from its teleological context. A certain view of untutored-human-nature-as-it-is has survived, but, since moral pronouncements were originally meant to correct, improve and educate human nature 'they are clearly not going to be such as could be deduced from true statements about human nature or justified in some other way by appealing to its characteristics.' (p.55.) MacIntyre concludes:

Hence the eighteenth-century moral philosophers engaged in what was an inevitably unsuccessful project; for they did indeed attempt to find a rational basis for their moral beliefs in a particular understanding of human nature, while inheriting a set of moral injunctions on the one hand and a conception of human nature on the other which had been expressly designed to be discrepant with each other. (p.55.)

What MacIntyre argues for by way of correction is a re-establishment of the lost three-fold understanding of ethics. He suggests that it is possible to perceive the human *telos*, and that the knowledge for doing this is derived from essential human nature by reason. Ultimately MacIntyre argues that if we reintroduce this three-fold concept we will be able to develop moral statements from factual premises so that morality will then be based on fact rather than emotional wishes. Basically, there will be a way to get from the *is* to the *ought*.

Essential to this project, according to MacIntyre, is to reintroduce the concept of

function to an understanding of a thing's essential nature. (pp.57-58.) He illustrates this by quoting A.N. Prior that logically one can accurately conclude from the fact that someone is a sea-captain that he therefore ought to do what ever it is that a sea-captain ought to do. He further illustrates that if something is a watch, it ought, if it is a good watch, to keep time accurately. The key here is to think of something's essential nature as including its function. If this is allowed, then what a thing *is* implies inherently how it *ought* to be or behave. The *is* to *ought* step is rehabilitated. This move, MacIntyre argues, will only be a problem if one insists on excluding functional (and I argue relational) concepts from the understanding of the essence of a thing.

Concerning humanity specifically, MacIntyre argues that in the classical Aristotelian tradition, Greek or Medieval, humanity was understood as having an essential nature and an essential purpose or function. (p.58.) It is only when this functional understanding of the person is rejected that there becomes a problem in getting from the descriptive *is* to the prescriptive *ought*.

Where however, does this functional description come from according to MacIntyre? It is rooted in the various forms of the social life. (Hence my insistence that functional concepts are ultimately relational concepts.) Functionality is derived from the various roles a person might have; be these family member, citizen, soldier, philosopher, servant of God or the like. (pp.58-59.)⁴ MacIntyre argues that: "It is only when a man is thought of as an individual prior to and apart from all roles that a 'man' ceases to be a functional concept." (p.59.) Another way which one might say this is that it is only when the essence and identity of the person (self) is conceived of non-relationally that functionality ceases to be appropriate for understanding something of the essential nature of the person.⁵

⁴ It is interesting to note that at this point MacIntyre comes very close to Luther's understanding of stations or callings in relationship to moral obligation.

⁵ For a relational anthropology see: Gunton, "Trinity, Ontology and Anthropology: Towards a Renewal of the Doctrine of the Imago Dei." in Persons, Divine and Human: King's College Essays in Theological Anthropology, (1991), pp.47-61. And. Zizioulas, (1993).

The point that MacIntyre is making is that teleology based on reason is a necessary category and needs to be restored in ethics if we are to make moral statements and judgements which are meaningful (factual) and which go beyond emotivism. Indeed on his view, intelligent moral discourse demands that we make such a move.

This brings us back to the point where we began. According to MacIntyre, if moral philosophy and moral theology want to get out of the *cul-de-sac* of emotivism, they will need to restore the lost three-fold understanding of ethics, or something very similar to it. They will need do this by reintroducing and reviving the lost concept of a rational teleology. They will need to return to Aristotle or something very like it - at least with respect to these particular points.

OLIVER O'DONOVAN: THEOLOGICAL TELEOLOGY

Here we suggest that the moral theologian Oliver O'Donovan in *Resurrection and the Moral Order* (1986) provides theology and theological ethics, not with a return to Aristotle as such, but rather, with something (at least to a significant degree) like it. Foundationally, O'Donovan like MacIntyre believes that it is possible and necessary in ethics to affirm the move from the *is* to the *ought*. (p.17.) For both, a teleological framework is an essential part of an ethical system. Herein O'Donovan's framework can be seen as a complement to MacIntyre's Aristotelian teleology.⁶

To begin we offer two summary observations about the teleological framework which O'Donovan has developed. First, he does not take Aristotelian philosophy as the conceptual starting point for his understanding of teleology. This does not mean that he fails to incorporate Aristotelian perspectives, for as we will see he does. Rather, the necessary observation is that he begins with biblical and theological concepts. For O'Donovan it is essential, at least for an Evangelical / Christian ethics, (including

⁶ O'Donovan does argue however that MacIntyre does not follow Aristotle's natural teleology as closely as he should. (p. 221.) Thus, it seems correct to suggest that in some respects O'Donovan is more in line with Aristotle than with MacIntyre. We however, are only suggesting that O'Donovan complements Aristotle. The fact that O'Donovan differs in places with MacIntyre's own Aristotelian scheme is here irrelevant.

teleology) that we begin with theology. He begins his book:

The foundations of Christian ethics must be evangelical foundations; or, to put it more simply, Christian ethics must arise from the gospel of Jesus Christ. Otherwise, it could not be Christian ethics. (p.11.)

For O'Donovan however, even this is not yet precise enough. He goes on to say that this means that Christian ethics starts with and depends upon the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. (p.13.) It is then from this starting point of the resurrection that O'Donovan develops the two doctrines essential for his theological teleology; creation and eschatology. Orientationally for O'Donovan, creation and eschatology in light of the resurrection (rather than Aristotelian philosophy) forms the basis for teleology.

The second summary observation is that O'Donovan presents teleology fundamentally as a relational concept (one which necessarily involves a multiplicity of relationships.) Teleology involves an ordering to, for, along side and the like. It does not, as some critics of teleology suggest, imply a rigid understanding of being which negatively restricts either science or human freedom. (pp.45ff.) Rather, the multiple relational orderings imply some sense of openness, fluidity and dynamism within "being". We are not suggesting by this that O'Donovan understands created existence as open in the sense of being random and therefore dependent upon subjective human interpretations to provide its order. He argues pointedly against this. We are suggesting however, that in depicting teleology in relational terms, he has allowed room for openness and thus "the new" in Christian ethics.

O'Donovan first begins to develop his teleology in Chapter 2 on the created order. He begins by arguing that the resurrection is the vindication of creation and that creation therefore is to be taken seriously in ethics. Creation however, implies more than the raw material of which existence is composed. Creation implies also the order and coherence in which it is composed. (p.31.) This order is both vertical and horizontal. Vertical order means that creation is ordered to God. It is contingent upon God. Horizontal order refers to creation's ordering among and between its parts. From

these two directions O'Donovan forms the concept of order as both end and kind. (p.32.)

An order of kind refers to a generic ordering. This means that things are related to each other reciprocally. A thing can be recognized to have a commonality with another thing and thus have its identity defined relationally with reference to the other. (This would also mean that it can also have its particularity similarly defined within this reciprocal relationship.) An order of kind means that things are ordered 'along side' of each other. A is in some respect 'like' B, and B 'like' A. (p.32.) This idea of kind and generic ordering is intended to repudiate the idea that we live in absolute disorder where a plurality of entities are so unrelated that the concepts of "a world" and "relationship" become meaningless. Ultimately, generic ordering, or relationships of kind, make sense of the idea that we live in a common universe.

With an order of end O'Donovan develops the idea of teleology. Teleology suggests that things are related to other things directionally. In classical Platonic terms this is depicted as an ordering-to-serve. Thus, A is ordered-to-serve B, and B is A's end. (p.32.) In biblical terms O'Donovan illustrates this idea by showing that in Col. 1:15-20 the concept 'for him' (Christ) is an indication of teleological order in creation. Creation is ordered to, and for, Christ. (pp.32-33.) Teleological ordering then, in both Platonic and Biblical senses involves the idea of ordering-to or ordering-for.

When considering the relationship between an order of kind and an order of ends, O'Donovan argues that the only pure teleological relation, unqualified by any generic ordering alongside, is the relation between the creature and its Creator. However, he goes on to suggest that within the created order as a whole there is a complex network of teleological and generic relations. (p.33.) Some creatures which have a generic ordering-alongside, (both man and vegetables are generically ordered-alongside as both are creatures), can also have teleological ordering-to each another. Vegetables are ordered-to men, for example, as food. (He elsewhere also suggests that they may ordered-to other entities like animals distinct from their ordering to humanity. p.35.)

Some generic ordering however, can have no teleological ordering-to. For example, one race cannot make another slaves for the ordered-alongside negates the ordering-to in this instance. O'Donovan's point here with these illustrations and orderings is that we must be careful to remember both generic and teleological relations and the complex way that they interrelate in reality.

Following this discussion O'Donovan turns his attention specifically to a fuller depiction of teleology. So far he has only been referring to teleology in the Platonic sense, as an ordering-to-serve. He now introduces the Aristotelian sense, that is, the idea of an ordering-to-flourish. A is ordered-to-flourish as A. (p. 34.) Vegetable creation is ordered-to grow luxuriantly, animal creation to move with strength and vigour, and rational creation to think. On this view we can imagine a purely natural ordering, or natural teleology within the created world.

In this Aristotelian and natural sense one does not raise the larger relationally defining cosmological questions. Platonic teleology does, for example, when it speaks of an ordering-to-serve divine truth. In Aristotelian teleology however, one asks questions more intrinsic to the nature of a thing itself.

Scholastic Christianity, O'Donovan argues, even though it followed Aristotle in its teleology, nonetheless found it necessary to also include the Platonic concepts of teleology so as to safeguard a unified and whole concept of reality. It did this by posing both natural and supernatural teleological questions. (pp.34-35.) What is the natural end of a thing, and what is the supernatural end of a thing? The Scholastics wanted to show by this that things existed within themselves but also in some type of broader defining relationship, both to others and to God.

As O'Donovan develops his own arguments he wants to preserve and inter-relate both of these senses of teleology. So, the content of the natural teleology of an individual thing will in part be understood and determined by how it relates to the wider order of which it is a part. This nuancing means that teleology becomes open, not only to relationships with other natural things, but also to a relationship with the

supernatural; and it is the supernatural which determines what the flourishing of the natural order is to be. (p.35.)

O'Donovan illustrates this idea when considering the teleology of mankind. A supernatural teleological ordering suggests that mankind's end is to serve God. A natural teleological ordering suggests that mankind's end is to flourish as mankind by functioning as nature's ruler. Of course, it must be remembered that mankind is generically ordered alongside the rest of nature, and that nature also, as creaturely, has its own generic and teleological orderings. The entities of nature have their own orderings to each other, but they also have their orderings to flourish as individual entities. Thus, mankind's rule over nature will be a rule which liberates other beings to be: to be in themselves, to be for others, and to be for God. (p.38.)

Although he wants to preserve both senses of teleology, both the natural and supernatural, in this chapter on created order O'Donovan is ultimately concerned to show the legitimacy of natural (generic) teleology, and its connection to morality. He argues that there is a natural teleology which implies with it a corresponding natural morality. This morality likewise is generic in nature. That is, it is a morality which is not dependent upon varying situations. Nor is it a morality restricted to Christians. Rather, it is a universal morality. It is a morality which must necessarily transcend time-place particularizations and always be the case. (p.39.)

The existence of a generic universal morality (really a natural theology), he argues, is not a theological problem as some have contended. It does not limit God's freedom by imposing upon God an extrinsic moral standard. Nor does it make creation and thus morality a type of emanation of God.

...there is no reason why this proper theological concern should not be fully accommodated within a teleological and generic understanding of created order. In speaking of kinds as independent of time-place particularity there is certainly no need to attribute to them an eternal transcendence such as belongs to God himself. Kinds are not independent of the temporo-spatial universe. No claim is made for their existence 'before creation'. They are simply, by virtue of their role as ordering principles within the temporo-spatial universe independent of

any *particular* time-place determination. (p.39.)

Following on this, and on his response to further objections to a natural teleology, O'Donovan concludes his chapter on the natural order by reaffirming that teleology is ultimately about relationships. It involves links which make it possible to get a picture of the universe as a whole. For him, a natural teleology, (not ignoring supernatural dimensions), is needed so that one does not end up with a fragmented knowledge, which is ultimately no knowledge at all. He says: 'Knowledge of the world without ends can never become a unified knowledge.' (p.50.)

Further, he argues that any abstraction denying teleology creates a dangerous misunderstanding of the place of humanity in the universe. It implies that humanity encounters an inert creation, that is, a creation without movement and without a point to its movement. At this point the mind will create its own teleological order and impose it upon created order. One negative result of this perversion of the given order involves what we are experiencing currently, that is, a lack of respect for, and protection of, the environment. A teleology which recognizes the given and established order will be necessary if we are to avoid such problems. (pp.49-52.)

Next we turn to consider the implications of eschatology for O'Donovan's teleology. As we have previously stated he does not derive the content and shape of his teleology solely from Platonic and Aristotelian ideas. Nor does he form his content for teleology only from the natural, that is, from within the doctrine of creation and created order. Rather, the ultimate shape to O'Donovan's teleology comes in Chapter 3 where he discusses eschatology and history.

The resurrection vindicates created order. In this respect it looks backward to creation. The resurrection also, however, looks forward eschatologically in that it at the same time fulfills that which it has vindicated. Indeed, this fulfillment was always implied in creation even though it could not be realized in the fallen state of man and the universe. (p.54.)

The theological content of teleology then comes from two places or two directions; redemption and transformation. The former looks backward, the later forward. Redemption recovers mankind, but it also recovers the natural order which, in addition to having its own relation to God, is also mankind's context as humanity is the ruler of the ordered creation that God has made. (pp. 54-55.) Redemption however, goes beyond mere restoration. It implies the eschatological transformation of the world. (This will be a crucial issue in our ultimate evaluation of work.) It implies the destiny and direction to which the Garden of Eden was always headed.

The eschatological transformation of the world is neither the mere repetition of the created world nor its negation. It is its fulfillment, its *telos* or end. It is the historical *telos* of the origin, that which creation is intended *for*, and that which it points and strives *towards*. (p.55.)

The resurrection brings together both redemption and transformation. It unites both creation order and eschatology. Herein lies the content and shape of teleology. The origin and the end are inseparably united. (p.57.)

A Christian teleology which involves transformation is not content to be historical (or historicized) teleology. This would mean that the end would be construed simply as development within time. (pp.58ff.) Rather, the eschatological *telos* is the *telos* of history (rather than the *telos* which is history), and is at the same time the *telos* of the created order. Therefore, a Christian view of history, and thus a Christian teleology, must include the idea of a beyond time eschatology. The destined end is not imminently present within the historical process. (p.64.)

This means that a natural teleology (Aristotelian and Platonic) although valid, necessary, and providing a generic morality, is not sufficient by itself. A Christian teleology according to O'Donovan's overall construct will incorporate these, but also go beyond them since a Christian teleology will be transformed by the eschatological element which looks forward to a new creation.

This brings us back to where we started in considering O'Donovan. Does he offer something like an Aristotelian recovery of teleology for morality? The answer broadly

is yes. In incorporating Aristotelian teleology he has to a significant degree met MacIntyre's criteria. However, O'Donovan has finally produced a version of teleology for ethics which is more theological rather than philosophical, and for which the resurrection / transformation is necessarily the starting point. It does not reject philosophical contributions, but essentially it is a Christian rather than an Aristotelian teleology.

OUR TELEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

What then is one to make of the two views of teleology presented? What type of teleology will we adopt for exploring Christian anthropology and establishing an ontology of work? First there is MacIntyre's proposal. MacIntyre's thesis is that the current moral landscape, dominated by emotivism, is a wasteland. This is a compelling argument. Emotivism with its non-verifiable and non-factually based approach to morality does not provide morality with a secure footing, even if one were convinced that it is the only available ground on which to stand. We further agree with MacIntyre that the way out of this dead end street will involve re-traversing the road which we have been on, and, among other things, revitalizing a teleological framework. That is, it does seem that in a system of morality it is essential to in some way be able to perceive the *ought* from the *is*.

In addition to these general directional issues however, there is one other of MacIntyre's concepts that we want to incorporate critically into an understanding of teleology. This is the idea that it is appropriate and even essential to consider concepts of function in determining a thing's essential nature, and thus its *telos*.

Concerning humanity specifically, some may object that ideas of function are destructive and reduce both the essence and value of a person to what he or she does rather than allowing simply for who he or she is. This is a valid concern, especially in a day when the value and dignity of the sick, old, handicapped, pre-born and even unemployed is under attack. These concerns however, do not finally undermine the

suggestion that function is central to a thing's, or in this case, a person's essential nature. On the contrary, only when function is extremely narrowly defined or when one attempts to quantify the value of someone, in for example economic terms, might such criticisms be valid and necessary.

As we have suggested however, the very notion of function, with respect to persons as well as things, suggests the broader idea of relationship. Function is primarily a relational concept and it operates within relational categories and binds things together. Relationship, especially inter-personal relationship, inherently suggests a value and corresponding dignity of those involved in it. Both horizontally with reference to the inter-relationships of created beings, and vertically with reference to a relationship to God, function always directs a thing or self toward the other. It always, and at the same time, both incorporates (provides a means for inclusion) and yet differentiates (allows for distinct particularities) in this directing relationship. Even those listed above, the sick, old, handicapped, pre-born and unemployed are enmeshed in a matrix of directing and functional relationships. Each of these relationships carries with it its own type of functional directedness, and each relationship functions for different purposes and in different ways with respect to another being; be that a personal, animal or other being. This matrix of relationships, functioning as it does so widely, implies that all involved have relational space and thus a place in creation. This suggests that function, far from devaluing a person or thing, in fact highlights its value.

Therefore, it appears that MacIntyre's proposal that function is needed to determine a thing's essential nature (and thus *telos*) need not ultimately be a problem. This is especially true if one believes (as we will argue shortly) that the essence of the self (and thing) is properly perceived relationally.

Also this relational understanding of function is supported by MacIntyre's view that one's function is in many different ways rooted in the social life. One's roles, for example, are integral to one's identity and thus one's essential nature and *telos*. The Reformation doctrine of vocation understood this well.

However, we also want to be careful to add here to MacIntyre's framework and emphasize the vertical dimension to this concept of relationship. We want to also identify a thing's function, beyond simply its social roles, in light of its relationship to the ultimate, that is, to God.

Everything, as a created thing, has some relationship to its Creator. As such, it will have some function specific to this relationship. Following on this, its essential nature and thus *telos* will take into account and ultimately be dependant upon this relationship. Even one's understanding of social roles will be significantly shaped and defined by this relationship. This does not deny the importance of social roles for determining one's functions and thus one's essential nature and *telos*. It does however, mean that even these social roles have a transcendent point of reference, which if not determining, at least sets some boundaries on the social roles themselves.

Here then, we want to affirm that our view of teleology which incorporates function will incorporate vertical as well as horizontal relationships. What then must finally be said about the relationship between function and teleology?

The essential nature of anything is inextricably linked with the concepts of function. In as much as concepts of function involve both a rooting in the social life and a standing before God, they necessarily are relational concepts. As relational concepts they hold things together and safeguard things against being conceived of in an excessively individualistic or atomized manner; which is sometimes associated with the teleological idea of a thing flourishing as itself. Thus, the concepts of function central to teleology, rather than being destructive and alienating, are liberating. They allow things to be what they are both with, and distinct from, others. Teleology which incorporates concepts of function adds a richness to our understanding of the essential nature of a thing rather than robbing it of its dignity and worth.

Thus far we have been discussing our points of agreement with MacIntyre's teleological framework but we have also been further commenting upon them from our

own perspective. Our comments, in as much as they have supplemented and modified MacIntyre's view, have begun also our broader critique of his framework. Now, in line with what we have arguing, and before moving on specifically to our conclusions concerning O'Donovan's teleology, we want finally to suggest what we believe to be MacIntyre's major weakness and why ultimately we cannot be completely satisfied with his teleology.

We believe that an Aristotelian natural teleology (meaning here a thing's ordering to flourish as itself) although necessary, is by itself insufficient. At least for Christian ethics we agree with O'Donovan that something like a Platonic understanding of teleology must also be operating. We include here both the natural dimension of a thing's ordering to another thing, and the supernatural dimension of a thing's ordering to the Divine. MacIntyre does, knowingly or unknowingly with his concepts of social roles and function, include this natural Platonic sense of teleology in his scheme. However, he has not sufficiently allowed for the supernatural, that is, a thing's ordering to the Divine.⁷ At least, we are arguing, he has not made this concept central to or essential for his framework. Philosophically then, we find MacIntyre's teleology lacking.

In theological terms, we believe that Aristotle's natural teleology amounts to a teleology limited to "creation". We do not want to deny the importance of teleological content which is derived logically from "creation". However, we want to suggest that teleology must more fundamentally be built upon the reality of Christ; that is, it must be built upon the eschatological hope which stems from his death and resurrection. This will include a natural teleology but will gather it up into Christ in such a way that it will be fundamentally transformed. It will be natural, but in the sense that it is tied to initial creation and new creation. Creation, not self sufficient or self contained "nature", will be the sense in which natural teleology is natural.

⁷ This is true concerning *After Virtue*. However, as MacIntyre's thought has subsequently developed he has included the concept of an ordering to the Divine. This is particularly seen in this later book *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (1988) where he has identified himself with a Theistic / Thomist version of Aristotelianism.

With these critiques then, we are finally suggesting that MacIntyre's teleology as presented in *After Virtue*, although helpful in pointing moral thought in the right direction, is ultimately unsatisfactory at least for a Christian understanding of teleology. For a Christian teleology, we need to go further, beyond MacIntyre.

This brings us quite naturally to our appraisal of the teleological framework proposed by O'Donovan. With one crucial qualification, an understanding of the nature and structure of teleology can be built from O'Donovan. Here we will simply outline the challenge which we will bring to O'Donovan's view.

Throughout *Resurrection and Moral Order* O'Donovan is concerned to combat anti-foundationalism. (pp.7-8.) He wants to combat a view of reality which sees order, and thus moral constructs, as human inventions imposed upon the natural un-ordered stuff of existence. Rather, he offers a view which asserts that the created order, and thus moral order, is an ontological given by the fact of creation and that the resurrection vindicates this created and moral order. He says for example, 'The order of things that God has made is *there*. It is objective, and mankind has a place within it.' (p.17.)

Thus far O'Donovan's view seems correct. The difficulty however, is in how he depicts this ontologically given order. Our reading of O'Donovan suggests that he sees the created moral order itself as in every way complete and thus unalterable. The primal (ontological) order has always been there, but it simply could not be realized or experienced because of human sin. (p.54.) This view of a completed creation rules out any idea that order, or the moral order, could in any way involve an open dynamic process and development. Nor does it allow for human co-operation with God which, in a real way, could further form the order which has been given. Regrettably, in this bit of writing O'Donovan fails to work through and to see the implications of the logic of the resurrection's transforming significance for the created "given" order (an idea which will become plain when looking at Moltmann).

Care must be taken here for this does not mean that O'Donovan excludes freedom or creativity (the new) from Christian ethics. On the contrary, he presents a refreshing

view which embraces both grace and freedom. Christian freedom involves a genuinely human freedom in Christ through the Spirit to respond as God's moral agent. (p.23.) It is something new to humanity. It is a participation in Christ's authority within the created order. This means that we are now free to do what we were not able to before. We are able to grasp the objectively given moral order and subjectively discern how and where it applies within creation. In Christ through the Holy Spirit we are able to make moral responses creatively.

He [*the Christian person*] has the authority to designate the character of the reality which he encounters, not merely to adhere to certain designations that have already been made for him. As a moral agent he is involved in deciding what a situation is and demands in the light of the moral order. As a moral agent in history he has to interpret *new* situations, plumbing their meanings and declaring them by his decision. This kind of authority is not a challenge to the authority to God; it is a restoration of Adam's lordship in the natural order, the lordship by which he calls things by their names (Gn. 2:19.). (p.24.)

On this view, the givenness of the created order has not changed. It is simply that now, in Christ, humanity can assume its proper place of dominion which God had assigned to Adam. The creativity which we are called to is not really a further shaping of the given order. Rather, it is a creative discernment of the 'mind of Christ' (1 Cor. 2:16.). (p.25.) It is discerning something which has already been established. It is a recognition of and respect for the given natural order.

This view of freedom and moral order here has merit. It does allow for newness, creativity and love in discerning situations while at the same time arguing for an objective basis for morality. The question however, is whether it allows for as much human freedom and participation in the created and moral order as is theologically warranted and ultimately needed? Herein lies the problem.

Could we not still affirm a givenness of the created moral order, and the moral limitations which this implies, and yet also affirm that humanity does in significant ways contribute to (not just recognize) and participate in further forming or shaping

that order? Is it not possible to view creation as complete in the sense that an established order sets the parameters for morality, but that within these parameters God has designed and built in room for genuine creative innovation which does further form that very order itself? Is it not possible to suggest that God has created the world in such a dynamic way that both God and his creation are genuinely open to new and human contributions? The answer to these questions is yes.

We illustrate our idea with the category of family. Theologians have generally affirmed that the concept of family itself is a part of the created moral order. (Family is a creation ordinance, mandate...) The Genesis narrative itself seems to affirm this. However, the given order here sets the parameters rather than determines all of the particulars with reference to family structures and the ethics tied up with and related related to them. The specifics of family order and structure are simply not prescribed (in and by initial creation) beyond an affirmation of the existence and roles of a husband and wife, and children. There is a silence which allows for an openness concerning particulars beyond this. Must family be ordered as an extended clan, or a tribe, or as a modern nuclear family? Each of these understandings of family could be construed to fit within the general parameters given in the initial creation.

When humanity, or a particular culture, organizes itself along specific lines it has the God given freedom, within the parameters (initial creation directed toward the new creation), to in this way form its own reality, and thus, its own order. And, in so doing, the teleologically derived morality necessitated by these humanly created structures will likewise be formed depending upon which structure is chosen. It is not simply that we now in Christ recognize new situations. Through human work and organization we create these new situations and along with this we necessarily give further shape to the ontologically given order itself. We do not simply apply a set of given rules creatively but we also give further form to the rules themselves. The *is* of the relational structures which we create will produce their own particular and new *oughts*. Here the moral order is still a given, but there is an openness within it to real and new particularity and

thus innovation, even human innovation.

This does not mean that everything is now permissible which can be humanly conceived. Indeed, other related *oughts*, derived either teleologically from other relationships or from divine injunctions, will likewise need to be included in the evaluative process. Scriptural revelation for example, still has an important contribution to make even though it will not simply be employed as proof texts. The point here is that the created order and moral order need not be as complete and closed as O'Donovan seems to view it. One can still fight against anti-foundationalism, stand on absolute moral givens and discern the 'mind of Christ' without concluding that the mind of Christ is necessarily made up on every particularity and eventuality which might be encountered or created even by humans.

Finally, in summary we suggest that a teleological theological ethics will recognize and accept the given in the created order, but it will also, in open anticipation of the new creation which is already but not yet come, attempt to provide a further shaping of that created and thus given order. This further shaping (which includes here our work) will not be in contradiction with the initially given and created order, but, given the logic of eschatological transformation, it will include elements which catch up the old but are indeed genuinely new and creative additions to it. This we believe is the design and desire, and thus will of the Creator for human participation in the moral order.

Finally, we will restate in a summary fashion our reasons for looking to teleology to provide the distinctive element for an anthropology and theology of nature. Our reasoning is twofold. First, we believe that teleology is the framework which best captures the idea of creation as both protological and eschatological, and it is creation (or being created / creatures) which is the over-arching and unifying characteristic of both humanity and non-human nature. Second, we believe that for moral principles to be an integral, rather than an appended, part of a theological understanding of both humanity and nature there must be teleological concepts present. That is, the created (initial and new) *is* does imply the moral *ought*.

CHAPTER 5

THEOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY: AN HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY APPRAISAL

THE DOCTRINAL FOUNDATIONS

In the previous chapter we argued that a teleological orientation was necessary for the development of an adequate Christian theological anthropology (with its resultant ontology of work). Having established this orientation, the question now becomes which doctrines does one look to to develop this anthropology? What are the questions and issues which need to be raised? A brief critical evaluation of the history of Christian anthropology with an examination of current trends in the field will provide us with both the boundaries of a theological context, and an introduction to the central issues and questions.

All doctrinal constructions in some way touch upon, and affect one's theological anthropology. However, three areas of doctrine especially stand out as foundational. The first involves doctrine associated with the initial creation (protology). Here the anthropological questions include the origins of humanity, humanity's created nature / essence and God given purposes, the image of God in humanity, humanity's "original" state, and then the fall and the results which follow from it. Following from the question of the fall, a second area of doctrine has proven to be central in the Church's quest for understanding what it is to be human. This is soteriology, with its related counterpart, eschatology. Soteriology looks to the questions of human salvation, (whatever this is understood to be) and restoration. Eschatology proves to be important

in as much as questions of salvation include aspects of humanity's future or final state and destiny. The third area of doctrine which has proven to be essential to a Christian anthropology involves Christology and the related doctrine of the Trinity. Concerning Christology, the issue since the New Testament has been how Jesus has become the true man in God's image, and how a subsequent understanding of what it means to be human must start with Him.¹ Concerning the Trinity, it has been suggested that intra-trinitarian relations provide the basis for understanding what humanness or human essence is. As we will examine, there has recently been a trend to look to a social understanding of the Trinity as model for understanding the human and personhood.²

In developed formulations of Christian anthropology each of these three areas of doctrine has found some place. Questions of origin (creation) and then the end (salvation), however conceived, have been unavoidable. Further, and as a consequence of this, essential too have been questions of how persons relate to, and are understood in light of, Christ and the triune God. However, the ways that these three areas of doctrine have been interrelated, and the emphases placed upon each have varied depending upon the particular tradition and the formulation's unique context; that is, its social - cultural, philosophical, apologetic and theological settings.

THE IMAGE OF GOD

Integral to most traditional Christian anthropologies has been a discussion and some formulation of the doctrine of the image of God in humanity. This does not mean that all constructions of Christian anthropology are formulated exclusively around the image concept. However, most have given the image symbol prominence in their overall

¹ Cairns, (1973), pp.40-60.

² This idea that the image of God in humanity might be understood with reference to the Trinity is not new to contemporary "social" trinitarians. It was explored previously by Augustine, albeit, using what has been termed the psychological model of the Trinity rather than the social model. See: Cairns, (1973), pp.99-107.

constructions. Given this centrality of the *imago Dei* concept in the history of theological anthropology, much of our following discussion will necessarily consider it, and the views of the human which stem from it.

What the image (and likeness) means or might imply has been and continues to be the subject of much speculation and debate. Millard Erickson in *Christian Theology* (1983-5) suggests three basic and divergent ways to approach and understand the image concept. He suggests three distinct views; the substantive, the functional, and the relational. (pp.489-510.) We will here borrow this threefold nomenclature for each of these three categories provides us with a way to emphasize the particularities found in often diverse approaches to the topic. However, we will present the categories more loosely and less restrictively than has Erickson since by using these as separate categories we do not mean to imply that the various views are always or necessarily mutually exclusive of each other. Indeed, they are not. For as we shall see, as well as sometimes being formulated into a distinct view, aspects of the functional view have also been incorporated into some substantive and some relational views. However, having allowed for possible overlap, we have nevertheless chosen to present these three categories separately for by doing so we are better able to demonstrate the three fundamental differences in approach to Christian anthropology.

The Substantive View

The substantive view incorporates many views which argue that there are basic characteristics, qualities, or faculties, within a person which either in themselves correspond to God, or, which constitute that person as in the image of God. These capacities or endowments are the keys for understanding what it means to say that the person is in God's image. These qualities, for example, may be understood to be the capacities of reason, will, or, more narrowly they may be construed as "spiritual" capacities such as consciousness or an awareness of God.

Basically, substantive views stem from and are dependant upon substantive

ontologies. This means that “being”, and thus a human being, is defined as – and is essentially understood to be – a combination or complex of various substances / qualities. The person is a person because he or she has a body, soul, emotions, will, intellect and so on. This approach to metaphysics (a metaphysics of substance) means that substantive views tend to emphasize the image of God in terms of and with reference to the individual, or, the single person. It follows then that substantive anthropologies have tended to focus upon questions of constitution; questions concerning the constituent parts of the individual person.

Substantive anthropologies, in so emphasizing the individual and his or her constitution, have usually been formed in connection with two types of interrelated questions. Colin Gunton refers to the questions usually asked in Christian anthropology as ontological and comparative.³ According to Gunton, the ontological question concerns the kind of entity that the human is. It is a question of what, rather than who, is the person? Throughout the history of the western Church in particular, this ontological “what” question has taken center stage and has most often been answered along the lines similar to a rather radical Platonic, and later Cartesian version of dualism which has started with and stressed the distinction between the body and spirit / soul. Matter and spirit are here perceived as separate substances which make up, or are “in” a person, rather than simply being viewed as two aspects of a single person.⁴ In the Eastern Church, and also in some recent Western theology, the ontological type of question has been answered quite differently by starting with and emphasizing the composite unity of the person. Only after this unity is posited is attention given to the distinction between the spiritual and bodily aspects of the

³ Gunton, “Trinity, Ontology and Anthropology” in *Persons, Divine and Human* (1991), pp.47-49.

⁴ Examples of this dualistic view in the history of the Western theological tradition will be suggested shortly. However, for a discussion which offers an up to date philosophical grounding for this type of dualism see: Swinburne, (1986), and, (1987), pp.33-55.

Here however, it should be noted that Swinburne argues for a version of dualism which, although emphasizing two distinct components, nonetheless allows that these are combined in an intimate unity in the human on earth. (1987), p.33.

person.⁵

The other question, the “comparative” according to Gunton, concerns the way or ways that the human being is understood to be different from other non-human beings. This first involves a comparison and contrast between God and humans. Then, it proceeds to a comparison and contrast between humans and non-human entities. Using this approach, it became common to argue that a person is in the image of God by virtue of fact that he or she, like God and unlike the animals, is rational or has a free will.

The results of these ontological and comparative questions include both the development of an individualistic understanding of the human being, and an atomized understanding of human “being” which focuses on individual substances, qualities or characteristics more than on the whole person. These qualities have mainly been those of the will and the intellect.

This substantive view of the image of God in humans, including both questions of kind and contrast, has been the dominant approach in Western Christian anthropology.⁶ Irenaeus was the first of the Church Fathers / theologians to pay particular attention to the *imago Dei* concept and he inextricably framed his discussions of the person within the structure of a substantiative metaphysic. In the very way that he formulated his argument against gnosticism, that a person’s body and soul (as two distinct substances) are destined for salvation, he introduced into the tradition a substantivist way of describing the person and thus, the image.⁷ Irenaeus’

⁵ Concerning the Eastern view of a composite unity see: Ware, (1987), pp.197-206.

Concerning contemporary Western theology, we will see an example of this composite unity view later in this chapter when we consider the anthropology of Jürgen Moltmann.

Further, it should be noted that there is a strand of Christian theology which wants to move even further away from dualistic concepts. See for example: Thatcher, (1987), pp.180-196. Although Thatcher is not a monist in the same way that a reductionistic materialist would be, he does tend (more than the Eastern Church and Moltmann) toward the monistic end of the continuum. He favors a “broad materialist position” ontologically, but does nonetheless allow for distinctions conceptually. (pp.182-183.)

⁶ For a good survey on the views of the image of God in persons, particularly as it developed in and throughout Western Christianity, see: Cairns, *The Image of God in Man*. (1974).

basic approach was adopted and then systematically developed by Medieval Scholasticism. This tradition firmly embedded the substantive view of the image into the Western tradition. On Aquinas' view for example, the image became directly equated with a person's qualities or characteristics. Specifically these were his or her intellectual capacities or rationality.⁸

Further, even though they were reacting to Scholasticism, Luther and Calvin also framed their discussions of the image of God according to the grammar and structure of substance. In opposition to Catholicism they reformulated their views of the image, but continued to understand the questions mainly in terms of the individual and his or her constitution. That is, they still thought of the image of God as "in" an individual person, and with reference to his or her constituent parts.

Douglas Hall in his book *Imaging God* (1986) adds a slight challenge to this view. He argues that with the Reformers of the sixteenth century there was a break from the classical substantialist view. (p.98.) He suggests that stemming from their focus upon the biblical testimony, Luther and Calvin introduce into the Western tradition the beginnings of a relational ontology. He acknowledges however, that their views were still somewhat entangled in substantialist thinking, and he finally concludes that these Reformers provided mostly the initial resources, and set the stage, for a new direction toward a relational ontology. (pp.106-107.)

This view that the Reformers, at least for the Western tradition, initiated a relational ontology and view of the person is also suggested by C. Stephen Evans.⁹ He states that "a strong case can be made that relational anthropology is really the fulfillment of a trend begun by the protestant Reformers, who rejected the scholastic equation of the *imago* with rationality and instead views the *imago* as the original righteousness

⁷ We need to emphasize that Irenaeus did not develop his view of the image of God in persons into a mature doctrine. Rather he simply offered reflections, mostly secondary, which were only later taken up and more fully developed. See: Cairns, (1974), pp.79-88.

⁸ Cairns, (1974), p.120.

⁹ Evans, C. Stephen. "Healing Old Wounds and Recovering Old Insights: A Christian View of The Person for Today.", in Noll, and Wells, (1988), pp.68-86.

people possessed by virtue of their relation to God.”¹⁰ However, he finally concludes that Reformation theology purposefully, “did not go all the way toward a relational anthropology but preserved, whether consistently or inconsistently, the substantial category of the soul, and even the view that sinners possess a ‘relic’ of the image of God.”¹¹

We recognize the ambiguity and questions here as to whether the Reformers should be considered as representatives of the substantive or relational view. While not rejecting the analysis of Hall or Evans we nonetheless believe that since they continued to work within a substantive grammar it is better to consider them as part of the substantive tradition. We acknowledge however that they may be said to offer the beginnings of a new direction.

In summary, Irenaeus, Aquinas, (and also others like Clement of Alexandria, Athanasius, and Augustine,) - those who by and large established the tradition, - as well as the great Reformers Luther and Calvin, each fundamentally viewed the image of God in human beings substantively with respect to specific characteristics or qualities. As we shall now see, this does not mean that other functional and relational elements were not present within the developing Christian tradition. These other elements however, were not the primary categories used to describe the concept of the image of God in the person.

The Functional View

Another approach to Christian anthropology, one which sometimes forms a distinct view and at other times is simply a part of either the substantive view or the relational view (which we will latter discuss) can be described as functional. The functional view like the substantive actually incorporates many sometimes diverse views. The common characteristics of functional views however, are that they focus upon and emphasize that the image of God and the person in that image are best understood through the

¹⁰ Ibid., p.73.

¹¹ Ibid., pp.73-74.

conceptual grid of God's call upon humanity to specific activity. Particularly, this means that persons and the image are best perceived in terms of what humans do, or, are supposed to do according the call of God, (rather than something they are, have, or experience relationally). Essentially, the content of this call is understood to be dominion or the stewardship of creation (human work), and often following from this, the call to develop culture.

Now the functional view, with an emphasis upon the primacy of performance / action may initially seem strange to contemporary Western culture which, through the pervasive influence of existentialist and personalist philosophy among other things, has become accustomed to hierarchically value existence over function. Also, given its emphasis upon dominion and cultural development, especially at this time when these very concepts are reckoned to be the culprits in the ecological crisis, some may immediately consider the functional view suspect. Might it be a theological perversion, reflecting not biblical teaching but rather the modernist triumphalist spirit which has optimistically attempted to dominate nature in an oppressive way? Might it be that a Hegelian or Marxist notion of progress has co-opted this theology? Or, might the functional view not simply be a contemporary reaction against the speculation of substantive views and the trendiness of relational views? Although one might be able to argue these points to a degree with reference to some formulations of the functional view, we contend that for the view as a whole the answers to these questions are no.

G. C. Berkouwer in his classic book *Man: The Image of God* (1962) highlights two important observations about the functional view. The first is that it is a longstanding position found within the tradition of interpreting the image. He suggests as an example that it surfaces in the Socinian Racovian Catechism (1605). (p.70. note. 11.)¹² Admittedly, this theologically suspect document was composed at a time when the influence of Renaissance humanism (not yet the Enlightenment) would have been present. This notwithstanding, what it demonstrates is that, at the very minimum, the

¹² See also: Pannenberg, (1985), pp.74-75.

basic idea of the functional view existed prior to the Enlightenment and modernity. Further, although it is possible, it is not evident that its understanding of the image was more influenced by the emerging spirit of the age than by biblical insights and the exegesis to which it appeals. Indeed, this leads us to Berkouwer's second observation that the functional view has been essentially derived from biblical exegesis, and particularly from an exegesis of the Genesis 1:26 account of the image. (pp.70-71.) Our reading of various other functional views concurs with Berkouwer on this point that the functional view is primarily an exegetically derived position. Of course it could be argued that the exegesis behind functional interpretations has been tainted, in the earlier document by certain humanist assumptions, or in the case of more recent formulations by modernist assumptions concerning the world. Doubtless it is true that all exegesis is to some degree affected by its particular context; to some degree either embracing or rejecting it. Nonetheless, if one examines the exegetical arguments used to support the view, especially as found in some contemporary and very thorough scholarship, it becomes apparent that there exists an ancient precedent for arguing that the idea of function and stewardship is meant to explain the content of the image concept as found in Genesis 1 and elsewhere in the Old Testament.¹³

Having considered, admittedly briefly, some of the initial and possible reactions to functional views, we now return to consider another chief characteristic associated with them. It is generally the case that when function becomes the orienting point from which to understand the person and image, the questions of individual versus social understanding of being, as well as of individual constitution, begin to recede into the background. These types of questions are not ignored, nor do they become irrelevant or unimportant. Rather, they simply cease to be "the" central concern and assume a new and subordinate place within the overall conception. For example, within functional views the call to stewardship / function as the defining principle of the image necessitates a corporate call, (it is intended for the whole of humanity in all places and

¹³ Anderson, (1994), pp.11-18, 32-33, 119-131.

at all times), yet it preserves individual particularity, (it concretely applies to each person uniquely). Also, questions of individual constitution need not be ignored but rather are left open so that their answers can be explored elsewhere, possibly in other theological constructs, science, psychology and so forth.

We now turn to consider more specifically how the functional view relates to the other two views which we are presenting. In some instances it operates eclectically gathering up insights from the other views. Or it may appear as an emphasis within one or the other of these views. Yet this does not mean that it is always, or ever, simply a combination view, for elsewhere it proves to be a genuinely distinguishable view. Let us demonstrate.

The functional view is not primarily or necessarily concerned to establish one ontology, substantive or relational, above the other. Indeed it can appear on either side of the metaphysical fence. Sometimes the views which emphasize the importance of function for understanding the essence of persons operate within a metaphysical framework which incorporates (but is not necessarily limited to) substantive ontology. One example of this is seen in the view of the image presented by Cornelius Plantinga Jr.¹⁴ Plantinga is careful not to argue for one metaphysic over another. Rather, he accepts that both substance and relation are appropriate and have a place within the same metaphysic. He shows this by claiming that in a non-reductionistic manner the image incorporates various ideas which include dominion (function), the capacity for fellowship and love (relationality), and reason / self-consciousness (substance).¹⁵ He further states that "the image will thus emerge as a rich, multifaceted reality, comprising acts, relations, capacities, virtues, dispositions, and even emotions... [and] I should like to add that one can speak of each God-like act, relation, property, and so forth, as an image of God."¹⁶ Our point here is simply that Plantinga has identified function / dominion as a major (but not the only) aspect for defining the image and has also

¹⁴ Cornelius Plantinga Jr. "Images of God.", in Noll, and Wells, (1988), pp.51-67.

¹⁵ Ibid., p.52.

¹⁶ Ibid., pp.52-53.

continued to utilize substantive concepts and grammar for understanding that image and the resultant person.

As we have suggested however, the functional view, or at least a view which emphasizes the centrality of function for an understanding of the person and the image, also appears on the other side of the metaphysical fence; that is, on the relational side. This is most clearly seen in the view presented by Douglas Hall. In *Imaging God*, Hall explicitly argues for a relational over a substantive ontology. (pp.88-160.) However, he also argues that within this relational metaphysic the key for understanding the calling to be the image is the concept of dominion / stewardship. Hall argues that human dominion is the content that we give to the creaturely reflection of the glory of God, or, the image of God. (p.184.) What we have with Hall is a clear example of a functional understanding of the image and person while at the same time an affirmation of relational ontology.

Importantly however, we have also suggested that functional anthropologies can be understood as separate and distinguishable from substantive and relational views. We mean that it truly does present an alternative and essentially different approach to the question of the image and person.

Generally, in contemporary formulations functional anthropologies surface in two places. Primarily it is developed in Biblical theology (and particularly in Old Testament theologies). Also, and often deriving from Old Testament theologies, it appears in some Reformed circles which place an emphasis upon what has been termed the "cultural mandate."¹⁷

Although there is not unanimity, there is a tendency in Old Testament theology, in interpreting both Genesis 1 and Psalm 8, to describe the content of the image and likeness of God as human dominion or stewardship.¹⁸ A classic representation of this

¹⁷ For an example of this see: Marshall, (1984), pp.20-22. On page 20 (note 1) Marshall notes that his discussion of the cultural mandate, and here the functional image of God, relies heavily upon Al Wolters, "The Foundational Command: Subdue the Earth.", Toronto: Institute for Christian studies, 1973.

¹⁸ In addition to the two theologies which we will now mention see also: von Rad (1972),

view is presented by Hans Walter Wolff in *Anthropology of the Old Testament* (1974) in the chapter entitled "God's Image - The Steward of the World." Wolff's reasoning develops as follows. The special position of man in the world is described by the phrase God's image. This phrase points to a correspondence between man and God. This correspondence is more precisely understood as conferring upon man an office which distinguishes him. (p.159.) Wolff then states that "it is precisely in his function as ruler that he is God's image." (p.160.) Further, "the relationship of correspondence is to be seen in man's function as the ruler of the rest of creation."(p.161.) He then suggests that this rule involves re-fashioning and making comparably useful alterations (human work). (p.163.) Then finally, quoting Ludwig Kolher, he describes the task of ruling as the commission to establish civilization. (pp.163-164. note. 15.)

Admittedly, throughout his discussion Wolff shows us very little of the exegesis upon which he has based his views. Nor does he show an awareness of the possible impact of his view upon the environment. Therefore, he is not able to anticipate challenges or defend his position against those who would consider it ecologically irresponsible.

However, another quite recent Old Testament theology supporting the functional view, which both offers exegetical detail and develops its position against the backdrop of the ecological crisis, is presented by Bernhard W. Anderson in *From Creation to New Creation*. (1994) Concerning the image of God specifically Anderson says:

But the main import of the statement about the *imago Dei* is not just to define human *nature* in relation to God but to accent the special *function* that God has assigned human beings in the creation. Human beings, male and female are designed to be God's representatives, for they are created and commissioned to represent or "image" God's rule on earth. To be made in the image of God is to be endowed with a special task. (pp.14-15.)

p.60.

For a dissenting view however, one leading toward a relational view of the image see: Westermann, *Creation*, (1974), pp.55-60. Yet it should also be noted that Westermann does concede that there is a close linkage between the image and dominion. (pp.49-55.)

Interestingly, we see here an indication that to Anderson the concept of the image of God has little to do with ontology as such. Although he has acknowledged that Genesis 1 presents man as a total bodily whole - a psychosomatic unity, (the question of individual constitution) his point is that function rather than nature is what is really at issue. (p.14.) This relativising of ontological questions is further seen in his subordinating both the concept of relationship and the concept of substance to the idea of function. Concerning relational questions he says:

The worth of human beings lies in their relation to God. They are persons whom God addresses, visits, and is concerned about. But above all they are "crowned" as kings and queens to perform a special task in the Creator's earthly estate. (p.15.)

Further, he also is clear that questions of substance are only of secondary importance. Concerning the phrase in Genesis 1 "Let us make humanity in our image, after our likeness" he says:

One should not tone down the anthropomorphism of this statement by attempting to define the "image of God" as something *in* the human body: "spiritual nature," "soul," "rationality," "freedom," "self-transcendence," and so on. The application of the same language to Seth, a son in Adam's image (5:3; cf. v. 1), indicates that human beings, in their total bodily (psychosomatic) existence, are made in the image of the parent, ... In Gen 1 however, the intention is not to define the essence of humanity or the essence of God, but rather to indicate the task of human beings and their relationship to God. As God's living image on earth, human beings - "male and female" - are to act as God's representatives. (pp.32-33.)

Finally, after acknowledging ecological concerns, Anderson sums up and concludes his arguments on the topic. "Thus the special status of humankind as the image of God is a call to responsibility, not only in relation to other humans but also in relation to nature." (p.130.)

With Anderson (in contrast to some of the others whom we have considered who adopted either substantive or relational ontological categories) we find a functional view of the image of God which simply refuses to allow ontological questions the center

stage. Rather, the emphasis is upon human functioning.

What we have seen in our brief survey of the functional view is a position which attempts to let the biblical material, especially although not exclusively the Old Testament, define the meaning of the image of God. As such it attempts put aside much of the extreme and sometimes bizzare speculation which has surrounded the doctrine. We believe that this functional emphasis is a commendable and necessary ingredient for any developing theological anthropology. However, we also suggest that the image of God concept and theological anthropology in general, while building from biblical theology, are really subjects for systematic theology. The main weakness of the functional view is its refusal to allow many questions which systematics asks into the discussion. Ultimately the insights of the functional view will need to be incorporated into our theological anthropology. However, teleological / eschatological insights will need to be emphasized further. Likewise, more attention will need to be given to the contributions concerning the image of God gained from both the New Testament and Christology. In summary, although function should be central to any theological anthropology, it is not the only thing which needs to be said.

The Relational View

The relational view of persons, personhood, and the image of God in humanity is for Western theology a relatively recent development.¹⁹ It has nonetheless, in the West become an increasingly influential and important view, particularly as it has come to be linked with the renewed interest in and emphasis upon trinitarianism.²⁰ One can find in recent ecumenical discussions on the Trinity a growing consensus for Christian anthropology toward the relational view. This is well illustrated by the 1989 report by the British Council of Churches on *The Forgotten Trinity* where an ecumenical body

¹⁹ For discussions of how relational understandings of the image and relational conceptions of ontology came into Western theology see: Hall., (1986), pp.98-108., Evans, in Noll, and Wells, (1988), pp.71-78., and Cairns., (1974), pp.152-186.

²⁰ Thompson, (1997), pp.9-42.

consciously builds their statement about the person from within a trinitarian and relational framework. (pp.19-25.)

In Protestantism particularly, the relational view has often been associated with the theologies (and existential philosophical presuppositions) of Brunner and Barth. We will not here, outline their views.²¹ Rather, we will here engage a more recently formulated relational conception developed specifically on trinitarian grounds. First however, we want to mention some general characteristics associated with relational constructs.

Broadly, relational views of the image and person are critical of the metaphysics of substance; that is, they are anti-substantialists. This does not mean that they reject metaphysics. For this, as we shall see, is not the case. Nor does rejecting substantive understandings of ontology with respect to persons entail totally rejecting structural concepts and the "isness" of being. What rejecting an ontology of substance does mean, in addition to other things, is that relational views are less concerned with questions concerning the constituent parts of the individual person. That is, the questions addressed do not necessarily focus on, nor do the conclusions offered necessarily depend upon, particular conceptions of individual constitution. For relational views are not first and foremost concerned with the individual *qua* individual. They at times address these questions, and when they do they tend toward holistic and away from dualistic explanations. However, they are ultimately more concerned with a corporate understanding of being, particularly being-with-others, which allows room for both inclusive commonality (relation) and particular individuality (otherness) in the give and take of relatedness.

COLIN GUNTON'S RELATIONAL ANTHROPOLOGY

We now turn our attention to consider, by way of example, one recent formulation of the relational view of the person and the image of God which is specifically

²¹ For a brief account of Barth and Brunner see: Erickson, (1983-5), pp.502-508. For a more in-depth discussion see: Cairns, (1974), pp.152-186.

associated with the contemporary revival of trinitarian thinking. The view that we shall look at has been developed by Colin Gunton in his book *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology* (1991).²² The majority of our discussion will be taken from chapters five and six of this book, the first of which looks broadly at the concept of the person constituted in relation, and the latter looks more specifically toward a renewal of the doctrine of the *imago Dei*. Before turning to the arguments in these chapters however, a few contextual remarks are in order.

Gunton states in the preface of his book that its unity is to be discerned from its being a quest for an ontology. This means that he wants to explore an understanding of the kind of being God is (Trinity), and through this to establish an understanding of what kind of beings we are and what kind of world we inhabit. (p.vii.) This ontological exploration is self-understood to be specifically indebted to and a continuation of concepts shaped by the Cappadocians. (p.viii.)

It is not surprising then that Gunton offers a chapter specifically critiquing Augustine's understanding of the Trinity. His main argument is that Augustine did not grasp the concept (and ontology) of "person" which the Cappadocian doctrine of the Trinity offered. Augustine could not see that for the Cappadocian Fathers the persons of the Trinity are what they are only in their relations and not prior to them. That is, their relations qualify them ontologically in terms of what they are. (p.41.) Rather, Augustine saw relation as a logical, not ontological, predicate. He therefore could not finally make claims about the particular persons of the Trinity. (pp.41-42.) The outcome of Augustine's neoplatonic philosophy was "a view of an unknown substance *supporting* the three persons rather than *being constituted* by their relatedness." (p.43.)

According to our overall interpretation of Gunton, the implication of this was not

²² For a similar and related view developed specifically from an Orthodox perspective see: Zizioulas, (1991), pp.33-46. and, Zizioulas, (1993) Being as Communion. For an additional view similar to Gunton's which is developed in dialogue with the social sciences see: McFadyen, The Call to Personhood (1990).

only to bequeath to the West an inadequate and culturally dangerous doctrine of the Trinity which, in its inability to escape the grips of dualistic ontology based on Aristotelian logic, would pave the way for Western individualism.²³ It further prepared the way for a latter fateful definition of the person “as” a relation, rather than a person “in” relation. (p.40.) That is, Augustine’s understanding of person as a relation contributes to the development of a view which dissolves the individuality of the person into the abstract concept of relation and thus dissolves the identity of the individual. Herein lies the paradox. On the one hand, the groundwork has been laid for individualism. On the other, it has been laid for the eradication of that same individual.

These preliminary observations and interpretations are necessary for they are the backdrop against which Gunton develops his own view of the person, and later, the *imago Dei*. We begin with his view of the person.

In his chapter entitled *The Concept of the Person: the One The Three and the Many* Gunton begins by affirming the view that what we and what our institutions are is largely a matter of persons in relationship. (p.86.) The problem, he argues, is that in following Descartes’ dualism which isolated and elevated the mind over the body / matter, modern Western culture has developed a dualistic and individualistic view of persons. The intellect is the only sure reality. The world outside of it, even the body, is suspect. The person is the mind. The person / intellect is seen as a distinct and abstract entity existing independent of and in isolation from its various relationships (which in reality have shaped its existence). On this understanding, even the possibility of relating to others becomes problematic for they may in fact only be illusions. (p.87.)

In the West then, we have come to treat the person and the individual as the same thing. That is, we have come to define the person as an individual and the result is that we have lost both the person and the individual. (p.88.) This ironically has led to modern collectivism as well as individualism. Both however, are mirror images of each other and both signal the loss of the person; the one into the many and the many into

²³ This idea is further explored by Gunton in *The One, The Three and the Many* (1993).

the one. (p.90.)

Gunton then turns to an alternative tradition in the West which presents a radically different view of the person than that presented by Cartesian thought. It is exemplified recently by the Scottish moral philosopher John Macmurray in his Gifford lectures, particularly in his 1954 lectures *Persons in Relation*.²⁴ Gunton gleans three main points from Macmurray. The first is that his ontology is different. "Where Descartes began with the mind and its distinction from the body, Macmurray begins with the concept of action. As agents we are unities." (p.90.)²⁵ Gunton does not take up and develop this ontology of action. Rather, he simply refers to this different ontology to show that an alternative to the Cartesian view of the person does exist in the West.

The second point which Gunton highlights from Macmurray is that "the concept of the person is logically prior to the other notions that are associated with it. It is that upon which the rest of our knowledge and being depends." (p.90.) This then leads directly to the third point. Gunton interprets Macmurray: "*As persons we are only what we are in relation to other persons*". (p.90.) That is, the self is constituted by its dynamic relationships to other people. It has its being in its interpersonal relationships. (pp.90-91.) Therefore we must "centre our attention first not on the identity of the individual, but on the matrix within which individuality takes shape." (p.91.). It is in community then that each individual remains distinct and the other really remains the other. On this view the individual is "relativized without being legislated out of existence." (p.91.)

From this consideration of Macmurray, Gunton continues on to discuss theology and anthropology, and then specifically, persons and relation. In doing this he sets out his own view of the person. His primary appeal is to the relational concept of the person which owes its development to the trinitarian theology of the Cappadocian Fathers, and particularly to Basil. He states, "By giving priority to the concept of

²⁴ See also his 1953 Gifford Lectures *The Self as Agent*. (1961). These two sets of lectures together constitute the Gifford Lectures given by Macmurray.

²⁵ This different ontology is developed by Macmurray in his 1953 Glasgow University Gifford Lectures, *The Self as Agent*, (1961.)

person in their doctrine of God, they transform at once the meaning of both concepts.” (p.96.) On this view, the *being* of God is understood as communion. Each person in the Trinity is perceived to be a person not with respect to itself, but only with respect to the other persons. Here Gunton appeals to Eastern Christian ontology as argued by John Zizioulas. He quotes Zizioulas, “In God the particular is ontologically ultimate *because relationship is permanent and unbreakable...* In trying to identify the particular thing, we have to make it part of a relationship, and not isolate it as an *individual.*” (p.97.)²⁶ It is here that we see Gunton beginning to move slightly away from Macmurray. Particularly, he takes a different slant on Macmurray’s ontology of the active agent. Rather than a being in the process of action who, in encountering the other discovers the existence of another, Gunton opts ontologically for a person as a “being-in-relation”, which elsewhere Zizioulas calls an ontology of love.²⁷ This brings us to Gunton’s conclusion concerning the person.

A person, we must learn and relearn, can be defined only in terms of his or her relations with other persons, and not in terms of a prior universal or non-personal concept like species-being, evolution or, for that matter, subsistent relation (and the list could be much extended from current political debate). (p.98.)

Before moving on to Gunton’s discussion of the *imago Dei* and the further aspects of anthropology which are developed in chapter six, we first want to highlight some problematic questions which this chapter raises. Gunton’s interpretation of

²⁶ One might want to argue that the ontology in the Eastern Church presented the image of God and human constitution (the person) substantively using the language of Platonic dualism. This would be true to a degree. However, as Bishop Ware has argued, if one probes deeper into the inner logic of the Eastern discussions one sees beyond the substantive / Platonic dualistic language an emerging more integrative holistic conception of the person. (“The Unity of the Human Person According to the Greek Fathers.”, pp.198-199) Also, Metropolitan John Zizioulas and Vladimir Lossky present discussions suggesting that ontologically a more relational view of the image and the person has been perceived in the Eastern tradition from the Patristic period. See: Zizioulas, *Being as Communion* (1993), pp.27-65., Lossky, (1974), pp.111-139. Thus, this ambiguity granted, we suggest that what was emerging in the East is an understanding of the image of God and the person which ontologically was more relational than substantive.

²⁷ Zizioulas, (1991), p.42.

Macmurray, and then his own concept of person understood as almost directly analogous to the concept of person in the Trinity, presents the view that the individual person's being is only defined and realized in and through its relations with other persons. Our question is why must, and even can, a human person be understood *only* in and through his or her relations to other *persons*, (including of course, God)? Should we as persons not also be understood in and through our relationships with other non-human "beings" since our very existence is in the context of, and depends upon, other non-personal realities? Must we define ourselves only through our interpersonal relationships simply because that is how we understand the concept of person to be operating in the Trinity? Following on this, is it even legitimate to make such a direct analogy between God and humans, especially if one's theology already includes the idea of some distinction between God and creation?

If we are to extend this understanding of the person from the Trinity to humans, presumably with recourse to the image of God concept, and if we do so quite directly, does this not require us to consider the person (like God) as something essentially other than a "material" being existing in a material context? Would this not lead us directly back to a view that it is the soul which is the essence of the person and thus in the image of God?

Thus, is it even possible to postulate an understanding of personal human being by only considering his or her relationships with other people, and ignoring the complex matrix of his or her additional non-interpersonal relationship structures? Does not such an abstraction ultimately make any definition of persons growing out of the analogy of limited value, in as much as it is cut off from the real world of human experience? Should not the *human* person at least, also be defined to some extent with reference to a host of additional material relationships within which he or she finds himself or herself? Should these determinate relations not also include relations with non-human creatures and other entities which are part of our creation environment? (A view which Gunton himself will affirm in chapter six.) Further, should the person not also be

defined through its relationship to whole systems, structures, states of affairs, or the concrete results of human action, which of course, have been created by him or herself and / or other persons either subsequently or currently?

These are no small contentions for they have implications in many areas. Obviously, they affect what we can or cannot say about who and what we are as persons. Further however, as mentioned, they force us to consider whether or not the definition of person (person-in-relation to other persons) as found in the communion of the Trinity (ie, the social Trinity) can really serve as a complete analogy for understanding what we as humans essentially are. For, even with our similarities to God we are essentially different beings than God.

Interestingly, Gunton has somewhat modified his view (at least he presents a rather different view) and has made space in his understanding of ontology for human relations with non-human entities in chapter six. This is so even though he does not seem to have anticipated many of the possible implications or difficulties which we have outlined. It is to this next chapter, that we now turn.

At the start of chapter six, *The Human Creation. Towards a Renewal of the Doctrine of the 'Imago Dei'*, Gunton argues that the traditional ontology of human being (usually built upon dualistic presuppositions) is expected to be derived by means of comparison (with God) and contrast (with the rest of creation). The result of this in the history of Christian anthropology has been the elevation of one characteristic, reason, above all others. Gunton finds this entire approach, and its results, unsatisfactory. He suggests that we need a different methodology, something other than "speculative comparison and contrast", for developing our ontology. (p.105.) That is, he argues that we should root the contrast in ontology and not the ontology in contrast. (p.105.) The rest of the chapter is, in effect, his attempt to do this.

Again, Gunton offers a brief outline of what he sees the problem to be. He criticizes the tradition of anthropology in the West, including Irenaeus, Aquinas, John of

Damascus and of course, Augustine. We have already mentioned his critique of Augustine and he offers nothing essentially new here. However, his statements concerning John of Damascus summarize his view well. John offered a definition of the image and person which relativised the dominant place given to reason by qualifying it additionally with the idea of free will. Gunton however states:

While that definition has the merit of not limiting the image to reason, it is to be noted that all of the characteristics are static possessions of the human as individual, rather than (say) characteristics implying relation. (p.106.)

He here is offering a quite standard critique of the tradition with its substantive ontology. His reason for being unsatisfied with the tradition is that it offers only a static (not dynamic or teleological) view of personhood.

Next, Gunton follows Coleridge in a discussion of the anthropologies resulting from three divergent cosmologies and then turns to consider where the space to be human is located in each. One view, the Phoenician cosmology, offers no space between God and the world and thus, no space to be human. The Hellenistic view, he suggests, offers space but locates it in the wrong place, between the mind and body. The result of this is too little space to truly be human. In the third cosmology, the Hebrew, there is space to be human. This is because of the freedom of the immutable God who created *ex nihilo*; that is, God created from nothing something which is truly other and thus particular. The problem here however, is that this makes too much space (the potential of individualism) and therefore, something else is needed to qualify it. Enter – the notion of the image of God.

As Gunton begins to discuss the idea of the image of God he acknowledges that the concept of the person is quite difficult to define. (p.112.) What he suggests however, following an interpretation of Barth, is that “person means primarily what it means when it is used of God.” (p.113. note 18.) This gives him warrant for beginning anthropology with the Trinity. It is here, in the conception of God as three persons in communion, that Gunton finds the space to be human which he has been seeking. This

is a personal space for it is defined analogously by the three persons of the Trinity who exist for, and from, each other in their otherness. "They thus confer particularity upon and receive it from one another." (p.113.) Particularity then implies freedom and together these concepts, particularity and freedom, provide the needed space to be other, and thus they define being. Creation, God's creation of the other, "becomes understood as the giving of being to the other, and that includes the giving of space to be: to be other and particular." (p.113.)

From this Gunton concludes that the world's otherness from God is part of its space to be itself, to be finite and not divine. "But as such it echoes the trinitarian being of God in being what it is by virtue of its internal taxis: it is, like God, a dynamic of beings in relation." (p.114.) He is not saying however, that creation's particularity and contingency (which suggests a type of freedom) implies that all of creation is made in the image of God. That is, he is arguing against a view that simply being created implies that something is in the image of God. Rather, he argues that "creation's non-personality means that it is unable to realize its destiny, the praise of its creator, apart from persons." He cites here Romans 8:19 to demonstrate his idea and then suggests that this type of discussion / context is where one must seek the outlines of a theological anthropology. (p.114.)

Of course, we are in a day when the ecological crisis calls into question such an anthropocentric view of creation. Therefore, we recognize that it is highly controversial to suggest that creation in some way "needs" humanity (persons in the image of God) for its fulfillment. However, biblically one must grant that in some respect creation cannot ultimately reach its destiny (telos) apart from humans (Romans 8:19.). This is so even if the understanding that non-human creation cannot, or does not, praise its creator without humans seems incorrect. The Psalms, particularly Psalm 19 suggests the very opposite when it states that "the heavens declare the glory of God: the skies proclaim the work of his hands."

Gunton's main point however should not be missed because of this secondary

criticism. Here, even though controversial, his point is that the non-personal creation is dependent teleologically upon the personal, (be that Jesus Christ and / or other humans incorporated in Him). Further, this point is not essentially a product of Western modernity for it has its basis in ancient biblical theology. Also, in addition to being biblical, it is likewise similar to the anthropology of Eastern Orthodoxy which argues that humanity is a microcosm, mediator, and microtheos.²⁸

Returning to Gunton's logic however, the questions are still how the created cosmos provides a context for anthropology, and, what are we to make specifically of the doctrine of the image of God? Gunton is clear that he rejects a view that "the image is to be found in reason, or any merely internal characterization of the individual". (p.115.) That is, he rejects substantive ontology. He points then to two contenders for a view of the image, both of which depend upon readings of the first two chapters of Genesis. The first locates the image in the human stewardship of the creation. (The functional view as we have called it.) The second, following Barth's relational construct in the *Church Dogmatics* III/2, locates the image somewhere in the plurality of the male and female created relationship. (p.115.) Concerning this second point, the location of the image in the male / female relation, he finds some warrant in the idea, in that it recognizes the relational dimension of existence. However, he also suggests that it has two important weaknesses. First, he worries that the binitarian tendency of this view will promote an exclusion of the other rather than inclusive communion. Second, he is concerned that it underplays the way that Genesis brings non-human creation into the broader covenant. (pp.116.)

Concerning the first suggestion that the stewardship of creation is what is meant by the image of God, Gunton likewise grants that there is warrant in the idea, particularly in that it is closely dependant upon the Genesis text. Ultimately however, he finds the position too literalistic and too restrictive in light of the New Testament's re-orienting of the image of God doctrine to Christ. (p.115.) Ultimately, in relation to both of these

²⁸ Ware, (1987), pp.200-204.

suggestions what is needed according to Gunton is more than an extended exegesis of Genesis 1:26 ff, if one is to reach a satisfactory use of the concept of the image of God. (p.116.)

Gunton is correct to suggest that the image of God concept needs to be developed more broadly than the Genesis account. He is correct to mention that the New Testament re-orientes the doctrine to Christ. However, we wonder how the following question forms part of the critique. "Is the image of God as realised in Christ to be expressed in terms of his stewardship of the creation - indeed, part of the matter - or must other things be said?" (p.115.) He appears to expect a negative answer: that it is other things (i.e. the primacy of relationality) that should be said. Yet, it is perfectly possible and necessary to affirm that other things must be said, but, at the same time to say that it is fundamentally appropriate to express the image in terms of Christ's stewardship of creation. Why would it not be correct to suggest that eschatologically and teleologically Christ (and those included in him) is the image of God specifically in that he is the redeemer, restorer, Lord, and fulfillment (*telos*) of all things / creation? Why can these ministries not be considered an eschatological extension and vision of stewardship which fits well with both the mission of Christ, and the intent of the idea of dominion in Genesis? The Eastern Church seemed to approach just such a view in their understanding of humanity (in Christ) as microcosm.

To be fair to Gunton however, it must be admitted that he is not as dismissive of the stewardship idea as these early comments on the topic might suggest. Interestingly as we shall now see, in spite of his criticisms, in his own argument he does incorporate a form of the idea of stewardship into his concept of the image of God. In fact, he attempts to incorporate the positive insights from both of the contending views of stewardship and of male / female relationality. The former brings out important elements of humanity's relation to the creation. The latter brings out important elements of human relations with other humans. (p.116.) Indeed, Gunton finds unacceptable any formulation which would force one to choose between two correct insights. He argues

that both views are right in as much as they discern relatedness to be the clue for the solution of the anthropological question. He suggests that the weaknesses of both approaches can be obviated by finding a concept which bases them - and any other dimensions - in a theological ontology. (p.116.) Of course, that concept for Gunton, the conceptual link (given that we are concerned with the human being and not just with qualities and tasks) will be that of the person. (We should note here that we can discern a further opening or expanding of the concept of relatedness beyond what was offered in the previous chapter. For stewardship is about relatedness in that it necessarily involves relations also with non-human entities.)

This conceptual link, the person, is where Gunton suggests that the image of God is to be found.

To be made in the image of God is to be endowed with a particular kind of personal reality. To be a person is to be made in the image of God: that is the heart of the matter. If God is a communion of persons inseparably related, then surely Barth is thus far correct in saying that it is in our relatedness to others that our being human consists. (p.116.)

Now this statement avoids a purely reductionistic functional ontology. Yet, it does not necessarily exclude the functional (stewardship) dimension of existence. It rather highlights our relational nature (yet without reducing our very being to relatedness).

One might again want to question the wisdom of making a direct analogy between humans and God as a communion of persons, but when Gunton considers a relational ontology he qualifies it by suggesting that it takes shape in a double orientation. (p.116.) The first direction indicates that we are persons (thus in the image of God) in so far as we are in right relationship to God; because of sin this is necessarily realized in Christ through the Spirit. This means the "image of God is then that being human which takes shape by virtue of the creating and redeeming agency of the triune God." (p.117.) The second direction is the horizontal one and is an outworking of the first. It is that the human person is created to find his or her being in relation, first with other like persons, but second, as a function of the first, with the rest of creation. (p.117.) The

ontology of the person is to be realized in human community first, but it must also be completed by our relationship with the non-personal world. (p.118.) Gunton's argument emphasizes the concepts both of otherness and of relation. It implies a freedom in both the give and take of relationship. It specifically intends to "rule out both the kind of egalitarianism which is the denial of particularity, and leads to collectivism, and forms of individualism which in effect deny humanity to those unable to 'stand on their own feet.'" (p.117.) It further is argued to provide the basis for an inclusion of what is usually called the spiritual and bodily aspects of existence, and therefore, it relativises all dualisms. Relations are of the whole person and not simply the mind or body alone. (pp.117-118.)

Given our earlier criticisms, we now become particularly interested in Gunton's assertion that "we are not human apart from our relation with the non-personal world." (p.118.) Here he indicates an awareness, previously undetected, of ecological questions, and the implications which his anthropology might have upon ecological issues. He argues that our human community with the world is not the same kind of community which we have with other persons; that is, it is not a community of equals. He does however, suggest that we do receive much of what we are from the world and that in the context of the world we also become persons. The world is in community with us in that both are promised a share in the final reconciliation of all things. (p.118.) However, even though the world is bound up with the human and depends upon humanity for its destiny, it is not arbitrarily at our disposal. On the contrary.

Here, being in the image of God has something to do with the human responsibility to offer the creation, perfected, back to its creator as a perfect sacrifice of praise. It is here that are to be found the elements of truth in the claims that the image of God is to be found in the human stewardship of the creation. (p.118.)

Gunton, following John Zizioulas, specifically brings up here the idea that the very concept of person is eschatological. (p.118.) Being / personhood will only be realized when God is all in all. Yet, this is not to deny that we must also understand the person

to be a protological concept. (p.119.) Origin is also an important concept in that it provides a dynamic orientation of human being to a proposed end. (This inclusion of protology within eschatology is essentially the same as our view that anthropology must be teleological.) This then leads Gunton to state that the image is not static but comes to be realized in various relationships in which human life is set. (p.119.) He further, states that the New Testament in re-orienting the concept of the image to Jesus makes this point well.

It is because Jesus is the 'the image of the invisible God' that God is 'through him to reconcile all things, whether on earth or in heaven...' (Col.1.15,20). The one through whom all was created is also the means of the re-establishment of the image in humanity. (p.119.)

Following this and in conclusion, Gunton again restates his view of the image.

To be in the image of God is at once to be created as a particular kind of being - a person - and to be called to realise a certain destiny. The shape of that destiny is to be found in God-given forms of human community and of human responsibility to the universe. (p.119.)

We notice here that the content (shape) of the image is teleological and involves not simply interpersonal relationships, but also responsible activity; namely stewardship.

With this Gunton returns to one of the questions asked initially in the chapter, that is, how are we understand the idea of comparison with respect to the image? He concludes that human difference with the rest of creation is not an ontological distinction. Rather, it is an asymmetry of relation and is therefore only a relative difference. Our fate as humans is bound up closely with the fate of the rest of the universe and it involves our being stewards and not absolute Lords of creation. The difference between God and those made in his image is not found in some structural difference. It is rather found in the distinction that God is the creator and we are his creation. (pp.119-120.) Gunton then concludes:

The triune God has created humankind as finite persons-in-relation who are called to acknowledge his creation by becoming the persons they are and by enabling the rest of the creation to make its due response of

praise. (p.120.)

What we find in chapter six then is clearly a modified and more nuanced view of the person than we were given in chapter five. We have tried to indicate what these differences are as well as where they appear. We have also pointed to a few theological points as possible nuances which could be important for the attempted resolution of the earlier problems which we raised. Ultimately, we shall not attempt, for Gunton, to resolve the tensions caused by the differences in the two accounts. Exactly how both views fit together, or even if they do, is a question we pose to him. Also, we shall let our points of contention stand unresolved as indicators of what kinds of questions need to be addressed in a more comprehensive teleological anthropology. Here we have simply presented the views, with their tensions and points of controversy, as one current attempt at a relational view of the image and person. We now offer some concluding comments and assessments.

Gunton's view of the person and the image, in as much as it is grounded in the doctrine of God, in as much as it recognizes some of the strengths and potentials of other approaches to anthropology, and in as much it minimizes some of the weaknesses of these other views, has merit. However, it is not without its difficulties, the most fundamental of which questions whether it is really possible to draw such a direct analogy between the sociality and ontology of being in the Trinity and the ontology of human persons. Even though the *imago Dei* doctrine does suggest that it is correct to posit similarity, the nagging question is whether Gunton has drawn the analogy too closely between two related and similar but also very distinct entities; namely God and humanity?

Yet we must remember, similarly to the Eastern Church, that the reality of God is ultimately greater than our capacity to describe it. In this sense it is correct to say that God is a mystery. Therefore, any attempt we make at explaining both God and the human in God's image, as promising as it may be, will be clumsy and when pushed too

far will ultimately show its own weakness and fall short. Therefore, the weaknesses and potential difficulties inherent in Gunton's view, as serious as they are, do not necessarily undermine the fact that he has pointed out some very important truths.

What then are our overall conclusions concerning theological anthropology? Granted it has not been our primary purpose to argue specifically for one approach to anthropology (substantive, functional or relational) over another. For our purposes in the area of a theology of work it simply has been necessary to use the debates in theological anthropology to set the parameters and directions for the discussion which follows on the ontology of work. That is, by broadly sketching the approaches and both highlighting some of their strengths and offering some critical observations we are able to detect where we should and should not probe in seeking to establish from within a teleological Christian anthropology an ontology of work. In the process of establishing these parameters however, we have ourselves come to some conclusions. We shall here, for the broader discipline of theological anthropology, summarize what we have generally concluded throughout our discussions.

We are satisfied to affirm a modified version of a relational metaphysic and a relational conception of personhood. (Relationship here not being restricted to interpersonal relationships but also including relationships with the rest of non-human reality.) This relational view however, building upon our previous discussions of teleology, must also encompass both roles and functions as the implications and applications of the various relationships. Further, our relational view must also allow as a starting point for specific individual substances or entities which we call human persons (if not fulfilled persons).

Why though have we made such conciliatory qualifications to each of the three views? It is not so that in an attempt to find the truth we can present a combined middle ground view. This may be a result, but it is not the reasoning behind our conclusions. First, we have affirmed a relational metaphysic and construal of personhood for it helps us to avoid many of the problems which we have seen in both the substantive and

functional constructions. Generally, on the negative side it keeps us from the individualistic tendencies and unproductive speculations on the constituent parts of the person which are characteristic of the substantive view. Likewise, it helps us to avoid the unintentional tendency in functional views of reductionistically dissolving the person into his or her roles or functions. On the positive side however, the relational view as we have modified it shows itself in practice to be sufficiently open for the many positive and necessary observations which its counterparts have offered. On our view, the relational approach does this better than the others.

Second, we have been careful to include in our relational concept both roles and functions as necessary implications and applications of relationship. Essentially, there can be no relationship without its concrete realizations in various roles and functions. Further, this inclusion of roles and functions helps us to keep the focus on real and concrete human life, rather than on more speculative soul verses body, or image verses likeness dualisms. There may be a place for these discussions (with or without conceiving of them dualistically) but they should not be given the prominence which they have received historically in theology.

Thirdly, we also want to affirm within our relational metaphysic that the entities or substances which we encounter as humans are persons. That is, we want to begin with the substance which is a person and expand from there. We do not mean by this affirmation of substance that we are attempting to divide a person up into a collection of substances. Rather we envision the totality of a person to be a substance. This is important for two reasons. First, negatively, rather than considering people as persons in relationship, there is a tendency in relational metaphysics to reduce the essence of a person to a relationship (and often a relationship in process) the result being that we then lose the distinctiveness of the person as a person in its relationships. Defining the person as essentially a substance helps us avoid such an error. This then leads us to our second reason for beginning with the person as a substance. The eschatological and open orientation of the relational view (stating that we only truly become human

persons eschatologically both in Christ and with others in the new creation) has a possible implication that we might on this side of eternity be seen as something less than human persons. Of course, relational constructions suggest ways of avoiding this. We suggest however, that the best way to avoid such an implication is simply to begin with the substance which is a real (if not fully realized) person.

Now we have not here made conclusions on every point of anthropology which has been raised in our discussions. Nor have we wanted to. However, we have concluded that the above framework is adequate and sufficient to provide the parameters and directions for a theological anthropology. Of course, for a more comprehensive construction of a theological anthropology we would need to more fully develop these and their related points.

Now for our larger purpose of outlining from anthropology our ontology of work we turn to an analysis of and dialogue with Moltmann's theological anthropology. Moltmann too offers both a relational and trinitarian view of the image and persons in that image. We began our discussion with Gunton rather than Moltmann however, mainly because Gunton provided us with a more concise presentation of the overall model. Gunton introduced us more directly to the central issues and more critically explored those issues than will Moltmann. However, Moltmann's presentation will both further theologically develop a version of this model and will apply it more widely than was possible in Gunton's more concise presentation. Finally though, our reason for turning to Moltmann is that when critically considered his anthropology offers additional insights which are needed for our particular conception of a theological anthropology with its resultant ontology of work.

CHAPTER 6

THE ONTOLOGY OF WORK

IN DIALOGUE WITH

JÜRGEN MOLTSMANN'S THEOLOGICAL

ANTHROPOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, in order to demonstrate the ontological aspect of work we are sketching the contours of, and dialoguing with, the Christian anthropology derived from the theology of Jürgen Moltmann. We have especially turned to Moltmann at this point for three reasons. First, with its eschatological orientation, Moltmann's theology in general is compatible with and complementary to our own conviction concerning the importance for theological ethics of an eschatological teleology. A second reason for turning to Moltmann is, as we have already suggested, that his broader theology is a promising dialogue partner for the larger project of constructing a theology of work (especially here an ontology of work). Third, we have turned to Moltmann because his theological anthropology is developed within a broader theology which functions also as a theology of nature. The advantage here is that we will be working with an anthropology which attempts to be ecologically friendly.

Now in sketching the contours of Moltmann's anthropology we are not suggesting that we will here be providing a fully comprehensive reproduction of it. Rather we have selected the themes and issues which will ultimately help us to achieve our overall purpose of demonstrating from a theological anthropology an ontology of work.

Nonetheless, in addition to this stated purpose, we also believe that the discussion which follows makes a broader contribution, not simply to a theology of work, but also to the larger field of theological anthropology. First, our study provides us with the overall shape and direction of Moltmann's anthropology. It does this by indicating what the central tenets of his construct are, and by demonstrating where one would go if one were producing a more comprehensive formulation of it. Second, it also serves to fill in many of the details which other more traditional formulations of theological anthropology either neglect or leave quite vague. As such, it provides a kind of testing ground for those ideas which are sometimes only generically or abstractly described.

As we approach Moltmann it must be recognized that he does not himself explicitly provide us with a fully developed theological anthropology.¹ Rather what we find are bits and pieces of a quite complex view of being human which have been scattered throughout his writings. Sometimes these are extended arguments or developed discussions. At other times however, they are simply incidental comments or possible implications of the larger point which he is at that time making.

One can find in all of Moltmann's writings some indication of his view on humanity's nature, purpose and destiny. However, the most developed anthropological discussions, representing Moltmann's more mature theology, appear in three books: *God in Creation* (1985), *The Way of Jesus Christ* (1990), and *The Coming of God* (1996).² In his other works, the assumed anthropology coheres with what is argued in these books and it would not be unfair to suggest that in these other texts the anthropology is either an anticipation in a less developed form or a reflection of what is specifically discussed in these later books. It is then, the discussions in these three books that will occupy most of our attention.

Having narrowed our primary focus to these three books, there is one other that deserves some initial consideration. It is entitled *Man: Christian Anthropology in the*

¹ Moltmann, *God in Creation* (1985), p.xiv. Hereafter referred to as *GC*.

² *The Way of Jesus Christ* hereafter referred to as *WJC*, and, *The Coming of God* hereafter referred to as *CoG*.

Conflicts of the Present (1974).³ It may seem strange that we have not included this book specifically addressing anthropology in the list with the other three. However, we have not done so for at least two reasons. Firstly, although it is a book specifically on anthropology, it is an early work which does not represent Moltmann's most mature theological reflection. Secondly, it is not a detailed discussion of Moltmann's anthropology. Rather, it is a critique of several of the dominant contemporary approaches to anthropology. However, this limitation notwithstanding, it is a helpful work for our purposes for it shows us both where Moltmann's sympathies do and do not lie, and the directions which his own anthropological constructs will take.

Basically, in this book Moltmann argues that contemporary socio-biological, cultural and religious (existential) approaches to anthropology, although offering several legitimate and necessary insights, fall short of a Christian anthropology. He is critical of the modern images of man which reductionistically attempt to locate human essence within humanity itself through either economics / production (*M*, pp.47-59.), civic or racial identity (*M*, pp.59-67.), natural and judicial law (*M*, pp.67-78.), interpersonal relationality -at the expense of the material- (*M*, pp.78-86.), social role -the detached consumerist approach- (*M*, pp.86-96.), or the experience of "naked decision" / will and choice (*M*, pp.96-104.). Rather, Moltmann points to the Son of Man, and particularly to the crucified Son of Man, as the essential beginning point and paradigm for Christian anthropology. The suffering God and not the human as such becomes the key for developing a theological anthropology.

The humanity of man comes to its reality in the human kingdom of the Son of Man. In the kingdom of the Son of Man man's likeness to God is fulfilled. (*M*, p.111.)

These ideas however, are far from fully developed in this book. They rather simply set the stage for the view of humanity which Moltmann will elsewhere develop in more detail. It is helpful at this point however, before beginning to address some of the more unique contributions which his anthropology makes, to locate his view according to our

³ Hereafter referred to as *M*.

previous survey. Fundamentally, his concept of humankind (and of the *imago Dei*) is a version of the relational view, and more specifically it is a trinitarian and a Christological construction.

Concerning the ontology upon which Moltmann develops his anthropology, he is unequivocal in his call for theology to leave behind the traditional "Aristotelian metaphysics of substance". In connection with this, he further repudiates what he calls the Cartesian "subject" metaphysics. His search then, for a "non-subjectivistic" and non-substantive metaphysics, leads him to conclude that: "Both can only be done away with by means of a relational metaphysics, based on the mutual relativity of human beings and the world." (*GC*, p.50.) This leads him later to the conclusion that it is the whole of human existence and not a perceived characteristic (substance) which is God's image. (*GC*, pp.220-221.)

Moltmann is also equally clear in his argument that being in God's image necessarily entails being in a trinitarian image, and thus, it incorporates human interrelationship. "Human beings are *imago trinitatis* and only correspond to the triune God when they are united with one another." (*GC*, p.216.) On this view we clearly find an application, with reference to the image of God in humans, of his understanding of God as a social Trinity. (*GC*, pp.234-244.) Moltmann argues that the human image of God corresponds to God's "inward nature." (*GC*, p.241.) This inward nature is understood to be God's social trinitarian nature.⁴

Further, and in line with the focus on the Son of Man as the paradigm for the human, Moltmann's anthropology also includes a Christological interpretation of the *imago Dei*; or more specifically as he calls it, the *imago Christi*. The *imago Christi* is the *imago Dei* mediated through Christ. (*GC*, p.218.)

With reference to these points, Moltmann differs very little from the trinitarian and relational approach which we have already sketched. His anthropology becomes illuminating however, as we consider the substantive detail on some of these points, and

⁴ Moltmann argues here for the social trinitarian model only after he has argued extensively against the "psychological" model of Trinity.

as we consider additional motifs which help him to fill out his broader picture of the human being.

Concerning our three sources, we will begin our examination here by looking at the first written of the books, *God in Creation*. It is appropriate to begin with this book for at least three reasons. Firstly, it is the work most focused on creation, and in as much as our concern is with a teleological anthropology which builds upon issues of origins and intended purposes, it is a logical starting point. Secondly, it is where Moltmann himself begins to develop and fill in many of the details of his view of the human person which have so far in his writings been either underdeveloped or implicit. Thirdly, roughly half of the book is devoted to theological anthropology and it is the most specifically developed anthropology which Moltmann has produced.

Having said these things it must be remembered that the ethical concerns behind the book, while embracing anthropology, are ultimately directed toward ecology and the preservation of creation. As such, what has been written about the human is presented in a polemical context which is intended to relativise the human and show the often neglected importance of non-human creation. This does not mean that Moltmann undertakes to depreciate the human. Rather, it indicates that the scope of the questions addressed concerning humanness will be directed and even limited by these broader ethical concerns. Care therefore, must be taken to read Moltmann's anthropology in its ecological context, while at the same time allowing it also to be an anthropology in its own right and not simply a sub-point of ecological theology.

HUMAN PURPOSE IN THE INITIAL CREATION

Structurally, most of Moltmann's anthropological material in *God in Creation* appears in the second half of the book. In the first half, he is attempting to develop a "theology of nature". Yet it is important to notice that he actually begins to discuss anthropology in the section on the ecological crisis (the section which functions as a

bridge into the theology of nature). Specifically, he enters into a discussion of anthropology in this section when dealing with what he calls the “crisis of dominion.”

This observation is important for it establishes the context in which Moltmann will develop his anthropology. Clearly “crisis” is the key word describing this context. Yet for Moltmann the ecological crisis, narrowly defined as a crisis in “nature,” cannot be the real problem. Rather, the crisis as he sees it is essentially “a crisis of the whole life system of the modern industrial world”. This system in turn is a reflection of “fundamental human convictions about the meaning and purpose of life.” (*GC*, p.23.) For Moltmann the heart of the crisis is located in human beliefs about life’s meaning and purpose.⁵ Perceptions of life’s purpose, then, provide a logical entry point for examining what it means to be human beings. Therefore, human purpose becomes a foundational conceptual grid through which to interpret our humanness and personhood.

We concur that this is an appropriate entry point, and we suggest even a necessary one for we believe that questions concerning the essence of human purpose (teleology) are of foundational importance and should provide the directions and contours of a theological anthropology. Now when discussing human purpose, we (and also Moltmann) are not meaning a supposed “intrinsic” purpose of a supposed “autonomous” human. Rather, we like Moltmann begin with the belief that both human and non-human / natural reality together constitute one created and contingent reality. Following on this, we understand human purpose to mean God the creator’s intended purpose for humans. (In this section we are concerned with God’s intended purpose in the initial creation, while in the next section we will be addressing God’s intended purpose for humans in the new creation). Thus, when we refer to human purpose or when we present Moltmann’s views in terms of human purpose we really

⁵ It is not clear here whether the phrase “human convictions about the meaning and purpose of life” is meant to refer only to the meaning and purpose of human life, or, whether it is a statement concerning human beliefs about the purpose of human as well as non-human life. Both options would seem to be plausible given Moltmann’s overall concerns. At the very minimum however, we may conclude that Moltmann is concerned here to show that perceptions of human purpose are foundational to questions of anthropology.

mean human purpose as given to humans by God.

Having said this however, we suggest that the purpose or purposes given by God also necessarily involve the created provision of a sufficient design, (or potentiality in this design), and a general ability to act toward those purposes. Therefore, in a derivative and qualified sense, it is not improper to speak of human purpose as also in some way intrinsic to the human. Yet, according to our view, it is intrinsic only in the sense that it has been purposefully built into the creature by the creator as either a potentiality or actuality for the good of the whole creation.

What however, is a theological understanding of human purpose? Theologically can humanity be said to have a purpose? What is God's intended meaning and purpose for life? How one answers these questions will have consequences for what one actually understands humanness to be, and on what one understands ethical human living to be. Further, and in addition to (and as an application of) these metaphysical and meta-ethical concerns, these questions are foundational to our quest of establishing an ontology of work from a human teleology / teleological anthropology. If theological anthropology is right to ask questions of human purpose, (and we have argued in the chapter on teleology that it must) and if intended human purpose is at all understood to incorporate human projects and the work involved in these projects, not simply as an instrument to achieve some additional purpose but also as an essential aspect of humanness itself, (a point that in this chapter we will be demonstrating), then a view of work as ontological begins to emerge. At this point we are simply making this argument by way of illustration to suggest that a theology of human purpose is an essential category for both a theological anthropology in general, and, for our hypothesis which seeks to establish an ontology of work in particular.

In examining Moltmann's view of human purpose in the initial creation, and this concept's contribution to his overall theological anthropology, we will be considering three of Moltmann's discussions. The first considers whether theology should present an anthropocentric or a theocentric understanding of creation and the natural

environment. This is really the wider question which asks for whom is initial creation intended. As we shall see, the answer to this question functions as a type of pivot around which the idea of human purpose turns.

The second discussion centers around Moltmann's view of nature as humanity's "home country". For purposes of anthropology this is essentially a question of what constitutes humanity's working and yet also dependent relationships with nature. Again a particular vision of human purpose emerges as integral to the picture which Moltmann offers.

The final discussion which we will be considering in this section involves ideas connected with and stemming from Moltmann's understanding of the *imago Dei*. We have already indicated generally what his views on this doctrine are. Nevertheless, it is likewise important to consider how for Moltmann the doctrine leads to certain roles and functions for humanity. It is with respect to these roles that we will further interpret what his view of human purpose is.

Anthropocentric Verses Theocentric Conceptions of Nature

One of Moltmann's purposes in *God in Creation* is to argue against a strongly anthropocentric view of the world and the human domination and exploitation of the world which have stemmed from it. By this Moltmann means to deny the view either secular or theological (supposedly derived from the Genesis 2 creation account) that the world was created primarily for people, and for people to do with as they please.

Interpreting the world as God's creation means precisely not viewing it as the world of human beings, and taking possession of it accordingly. If the world is God's creation, then it remains his property and cannot be claimed by men and women. It can only be accepted as a loan and administered as a trust. It has to be treated according to the standards of the divine righteousness, not according to the values that are bound up with human aggrandisement. (*GC*, pp.30-31.)

Moltmann argues that an erroneous view of the human as the "crown of creation"

has lead to an anthropocentric view which claims that heaven and earth were made for the sake of human beings. According to Moltmann this is not the biblical view, for as he argues, according to both the biblical Jewish and Christian traditions the crown of creation is not the human being but the sabbath. (*GC*, p.31.) He does not deny humanity's special place within the creation, but argues that "God created the world for his glory, out of love". (*GC*, p.31.) This then, is a "*theocentric* biblical world picture" rather than an anthropocentric one.⁶ On this view the human being, with his special position in the cosmos, is simply given "the chance to understand himself as a member of the community of creation" and he is not given the right to dominate it through the sciences. (*GC*, p.31.)

According to this view, the purpose of the whole of creation is God's glory. By implication and application therefore, human purpose is also to bring God glory. This position is a generally accepted Christian view and we have no difficulty affirming it. However, a larger question still remains as to what the specific content of this general description might entail. Moltmann images this concept here metaphorically with the vision of humanity and nature together singing a "hymn of praise of God's glory". Further, his argument suggests that human purpose directed towards God's glory involves humanity's enjoyment (with the rest of creation) "of God's sabbath pleasure over creation". (*GC*, p.31.) The question still remains however, concerning what this might entail concretely. Is the vision here one of an organized service of worship, or is it simply a general statement on the indispensability of worship and sabbath rest? If it is the former, then human purpose does indeed lean toward a hierarchal valuation of organized worship over the rest of life's activities. If it is the latter, we are still left with an abstract general description which, although providing a sense of meaning, still leaves us unsure of what the content of worship and enjoyment, or the sabbath rest, might be.

⁶ Moltmann's theocentric position could be argued to fall under the heading of what in ecological ethics is called the "weak anthropic principle"; which argues that while the human does not have the right to dominate nature (anthropocentrism or the strong anthropic principle) it does in some instances have a claim to priority over other species.

This picture of human purpose will be further developed as we proceed. At this point however, the ambiguity notwithstanding, what we see according to Moltmann is that in a theocentric rather than anthropocentric worldview, human purpose is turned away from the human as such and, is turned almost exclusively toward God. Herein lies the pivot which we mentioned. On this view the question of human purpose is redirected so that it has more to do with God and God's glory than with humanity and human reality. As important as this concept may be for the study of the doctrine of God, such a redirection of the question does not offer much beyond a general limitation for anthropology. We still need to envision what may be concretely involved in glorifying God both in the present world and in eternity. We need then to consider further what may be included in a theology of human purpose.

Nature as Humanity's "Home Country"

In the second half of Moltmann's discussion of the ecological crisis he begins to sketch the outline of what he calls an ecological theology of nature. In the process he focuses his attention on a fundamental issue of the dichotomy and conflict between man and nature. The question which he is exploring is how to resolve this conflict which has in his view led to the ecological crisis. One concept, and according to our interpretation the central concept, which Moltmann develops for this purpose is the idea of humanity's "home country in nature". We call this the central concept of the section for it functions as the pinnacle of his argument. Those discussions which precede it, (*Karl Marx and the Estrangement of Nature*, and *Ernst Bloch: 'Nature as Subject'*) build toward this concept, and those which follow (*Soul and Body*, and *The Naturalization of the Human Being*) provides further detail and explanation of it.

The term "home country" is a concept which Moltmann borrows from Ernst Bloch.

Bloch starts from a correspondence between the human being and nature: the counterpart of the creative person is productive matter, while

the counterpart of the hoping person is the material sphere of the really-possible. Consequently Bloch assumes that there is a subject 'nature' which corresponds as a partner to the human subject. It is only when nature ceases to appear merely as 'nature for the human being' - that is to say, his object and raw material - but is recognized in its individual character as a 'subject' of its own that the history of nature can be perceived as something on its own, independent of human beings: and it is only then that nature's own independent future can be heeded. And only then, too, can a community between human beings and nature come into being in which both can find their 'home country'. (*GC*, p.42.)

Following on this Moltmann cites Bloch with respect to human technology / work. He introduces here the idea of "alliance technology", or, as one might today call it - "soft technology". The idea is that the conflict relationship between man and nature (spirit and matter) can be resolved through their mutual mediation rather than through human exploitation. The human and nature both remain subjects, and both, rather than simply nature, become also and at the same time, objects. However, the point is that the objectivity is relativized and regulated by the primary condition of subjectivity. In summary,

alliance technology... accepts the co-productivity of nature as subject. In this alliance, it is not only the person who desires to bring forth and manifest his true essential being. Nature too is to manifest herself in the alliance, in her own individual character. (*GC*, p.43.)

It is interesting here to notice that, according to Moltmann, Bloch sees the key point of contact and the resolution of the conflict between humanity and nature to be located correspondingly in what might be called work (of humanity) and productivity (of nature). It is in the actively productive (but also protective) "manifestation of essential being" of both subjects that the dichotomy between man and nature dissipates.

Of course, up to this point Moltmann is simply interpretively, and selectively for his own purposes, outlining Bloch's ideas. Yet we can see where this is leading him. For, later in this same section on Bloch, Moltmann suggests that the problem with Marxism is that it "only" conceives of man's practical (instrumental) relationship with nature.

This practical relationship is man's work, and when so conceived the human is the only subject involved and he or she simply works on nature as a raw material (object) for his or her own purposes. (*GC*, p.45.)

When Moltmann turns to his own construal of the "home country" he picks up and develops for his own purposes and within his own theological framework the ideas presented by Bloch. Reflecting the dual subjectivity already outlined, he points to two fundamental concerns. The first is work, and the second is "the interest of habitation". His point in the case of the first is that work - instrumentally described here as obtaining food and building up our own world - assumes that the person is the active agent and that nature is always passive. (*GC*, p.46.) This he accepts as a necessary and valid concern. Yet, humans also need to and do have an interest in habitation. Here humanity not only has to work on nature, it also has to live in it. Following on this Moltmann concludes that the "interests of habitation are different from the interests of work." *GC*, (p.46.)

For Moltmann the image of humanity living in a home country is a vision of a "network of social relationships without stresses and strains." On this view, when I am at home I experience equilibrium and relaxed social relationship without anxiety or struggle; that is, I experience tranquillized social relationships. (*GC*, p.46.) Hence, it follows that humanity will be at home in nature when it adapts to nature; when it has a relaxed relationship with it. Of course however,

Nature is not in itself a home for human beings. On the contrary, the human being's natural constitution shows that he is an unfinished being who is not adjusted to his environment at all. It is only when nature has been molded into an environment that it can become a home in which men and women can live and dwell. (*GC*, p.46.)

It follows then, that in order to achieve both this tranquility but also a molding of one's environment, the goal must be the "symbiosis" between human beings and nature. (*GC*, p.47.) This means that both work and habitation interests are essential but must be "balanced out". (*GC*, p.47.) Only with both concerns, but both concerns in

balance, will the dichotomy between humanity and nature be overcome.

To demonstrate this concept Moltmann then moves the discussion on to a consideration of the composite unity of the soul and body in the human being. He chooses this topic to show that the person in itself is really a prototype of the symbiotic relationship which he is suggesting. (*GC*, pp.47-49.)

Finally, Moltmann turns the discussion to the concept of the naturalization of the human being. This is not to be conceived of as a romantic return to nature. Rather it means that men and women should come to interpret their own being from within the framework of nature rather than in opposition to it. (*GC*, pp.49-50.) This provides one example of how humanity, as the product of nature, also becomes its object rather than always its subject.

Both of these discussions are intended to follow on the idea that a symbiosis or balance between work and habitation, humanity and nature, must be reached. The conflict between man and nature must be overcome. This call for balance, and the legitimization of the two concerns, work and habitation, are not in themselves problematic. However, we do offer a few critical comments about Moltmann's argumentation.

To begin we simply point out that his understanding of the nature of work here is solely instrumental. Sustenance and building up civilization / environment are the only ends in view. As such it is logical to conclude that in work the human is always the active agent and that nature is always passive (that the interests of work and habitation are different). Yet, if work is defined as more than instrumental; that is, if it is also ontological (allowing it to be an end rather than simply a means to an end) and as relational (allowing for personal / interpersonal exploration and demonstration leading to the related artistic / aesthetic and moral dimension) it is possible to see a more interdependent give-and-take relationship between the worker and his or her material / environment. We mean that it is possible to view both as subjects. As an expert wood

craftsman works with rather than against the grain and unique life characteristics of a piece of wood to in effect release the historically produced qualities of the wood, and at the same time allows the processes of working with the wood to further form and affect him, so too can other workers (with this more wholistic and less reductionistically instrumental view of work) work together with rather than against the material elements of their trade. The point is simply that there need not be and is not necessarily a conflict between the interests of habitation (nature) and work. Indeed, it seems to be the whole point of Moltmann's discussion that symbiosis is desirable and possible. Why he needs initially to juxtapose the interest of work against the interest of habitation is unclear. To say that in common experience there often is a conflict of interest may be true. However, this is not the same as saying that the interests of the two are essentially different.

Another, and related critique concerns Moltmann's imagery in exploring the home country concept. He argues that "home" is an environment characterized by equilibrium and relaxed social relationship and that it is a place without stress and strain (habitation is a different interest than work). The implication is that humanity's home in nature will also have these characteristics. However, we find a fallacy here. Home-life is not primarily characterized by a lack of stress and strain. Indeed, we hope that this becomes part of the experience in home-life. This state however, will usually be a by-product of much strenuous and continual work. Relationally, establishing harmony is a long and ongoing task, the fruits of which can be enjoyed but the work of which is never complete. Materially, having a home where relaxation is possible demands constant cleaning, maintenance, repair and the like. The home environment left to itself will deteriorate and become precisely not a place characterized by relaxation and harmony. Admittedly, these tasks can either work with the given reality of a home environment, in which case the work will be less confrontational, or it can work against it, in which case there will be conflict. Our point here is simply that the image of the home as harmonious only comes through much and sometimes difficult work. This

then brings us back to our critique of the idea that the interests of work and habitation are different. They are precisely not different for if there is to be habitation there must also be work.

Moltmann acknowledged as much when he qualified his view arguing that humans, as unfinished beings, not only need to adapt to the natural environment, but they also need to mold (work) nature into a liveable environment. (*GC*, p.46.) Here we begin to detect indications of what Moltmann perceives human purpose to include; the molding of an environment for habitation. Interestingly however, it is humanity which is said to be unfinished (whether this be because of a Fall and / or simply a condition of initial createdness) and no such pronouncement is made concerning nature. Here, non-human nature is not depicted as either unfinished or in need of molding. Thus, since humanity is the incomplete of the two partners we need to mold nature only for our, and not nature's, purposes. Does this mean however, as seems to be implied, that non-human nature is finished and that it does not need in itself to be "molded"? Does this mean that if humanity were "finished" we could simply adapt to nature as it currently is? Do we mean to imply that nature in itself could be a friendly environment and that it is simply our inability to live within it, due to our incompleteness, that forces us to mold it? Theologically, the answers to these questions must be no. It is not simply humanity which is unfinished.

Although "nature" in the initial creation was completed and proclaimed good by God, it was not perfect and complete in the same way that it shall be in the new creation. Indeed, nature too has its own destiny in which it is brought to its fulfilment and completion. Nature too is theologically understood to be much more "in the end" than it was in the beginning. Further, independently of how one views the literalness of the Fall, Genesis 3 does indicate that nature is bound up with humanity's condition and that it too, along with humanity, was "cursed" and in need of redemption. Thus, as both directed toward its future as the new creation (as initially unfinished), and in need of redemption (as fallen and cursed), nature too must be viewed as open; that is, as open

to and in need of some kind of “molding”.

On this view, as we return to the question of work it is not simply humanity which is unfinished and therefore needs to form its environment. Nature too is unfinished. As unfinished we argue that it is likewise opened to be worked upon, not just for our human purposes, but for its own purposes and flourishing. Now we want to be careful not to overstate this point. Nature is not there simply to be worked by humans. Nature is also a subject and not simply an object. Yet, because of nature’s relationship to God, and God’s appointment of humanity as its stewards, nature is theoretically open to our working on it both for our sakes and for its own sake. We would even argue that, in a qualified redemptive sense, nature likewise needs humanity. Nature needs at least a person, Jesus Christ, if it is to arrive at its *telos*; its redemption and recreation. Further, Romans 8:19-25 indicates that it even needs humanity (in Christ) for its redemption. Now of course this redemption of nature in Christ and through our adoption does not mean that our actual human working on nature is, or leads to, its salvation. We simply mean that it is not theologically wrong to posit that nature in some respect needs humanity for its ultimate flourishing. Concerning human working on nature, we simply want to suggest that theologically nature is a partner. It is productive (Bloch’s term) but is also like us in that it is unfinished. Because it is unfinished, or open, like humanity nature must be both object as well as subject. It is not simply a subject, who happens also, for our sake only, to be an object.

This admittedly controversial conception of nature becomes less potentially problematic if we understand it according to our previously presented model of teleology. When applying our understanding of teleology (orderings along-side, orderings directionally to, and an ordering to flourish as itself) to our theological conception of nature we may say the following: In kind (generically) nature is ordered along side humanity. According to its end (teleologically) nature is ordered both to God, and contingently, through its relationship to God, nature has been ordered by God to humanity. (We would likewise caution that conversely humanity has been ordered by

God to protect and work for the interests of nature). Together, both this generic and teleological ordering protect and safeguard nature from the reductionistic teleological construct which argues that nature is simply or primarily there to serve humanity's purposes or interests. Further, we also suggest that nature is ordered by God to flourish as itself. Again this serves to protect nature from any arbitrary and destructive human activities which would threaten to undermine nature's own purposes of flourishing as itself.

Broadly, these various orderings allow space for our contention that nature, as ordered by God, is open to be worked by humanity. It is not solely there for the purposes of human work. Nonetheless, it is not simply a mature partner who tolerates human work simply because humanity is as yet, unfinished. Nature is rightly both subject and object.

Now with these critiques we do not mean to detract from the main point that Moltmann is making; namely that humanity should co-operate with nature as it works on nature so as to live in nature. As we have shown, we are in agreement with this concept. We make these criticisms however, for they help us further to critically identify the view of the human being and human purpose which Moltmann develops in this discussion. Here we have found several indicators of what human purpose will entail which we may then add to Moltmann's view.

The vision of the person that emerges here is of the human being as a domiciliary worker. From our discussion we see that by constitution human beings are unfinished beings. They are beings which, as products of nature, are continually objects of it. Also at the same time, humans as unfinished beings are necessarily always subjects who need to work on and mold nature into a liveable environment. Human purpose then will necessarily include concepts involving work. This is so in as much as work (a particular kind of conciliatory work) is envisioned as a point of contact between the human and nature. We mean that the envisioned new conception of the inter-dependent relationship between the human and nature will be concretely realized primarily through harmonious

working relationships between humans and nature. Herein the conflict between the two is supposed to dissipate, or at least become less problematic. In as much as the crisis of human purpose which Moltmann talks about will involve a theological re-orientation in human culture and activity toward a symbiotic and balanced relationship between humanity and nature, so too will work necessarily be included theologically as a part of this remedy for our ailing sense of human purpose. The naturalization of humanity will simply be the reflective part of humanity's purpose as we theologically seek to understand ourselves as a part of, rather than as over and against nature. Work will be the active side of human purpose, the application of this new understanding. On this view work becomes integral to a theological understanding of human purpose.

Functional Applications and Implications of the Imago Dei

The naturalization of the human being will involve developing a new theological conception which will relate human beings at the same time to both nature and God. Moltmann finds this new and needed conception in his version of the doctrine of the image of God which includes the concept of human beings as also *imago mundi*.

As we have already shown, Moltmann's view of this image is essentially relational. However function also plays a key role in his thought. For him, relationships and functions exist together so that it is often unnecessary, even impossible to differentiate between the two.

Following the implications of the dual subjectivity of human beings and nature, Moltmann develops a two fold interpretation of the human being. Not surprisingly, he talks about the human as created in the image of God. However, prior to this he posits that theology must begin, not with human beings in the image of God, but rather with the understanding that we are first created in the image of the world. Thus, the *imago mundi* is prior to the *imago Dei*. Here we shall briefly explore this concept.

Often theology has begun with the comparative question of the difference between the human being and the animals / the rest of creation. Moltmann argues that from the

logic of creation itself it is better to begin with what links humans and non-humans together, that is, what they have in common. His suggestion is that the human is first a creature in the fellowship of creation. He or she is first the *imago mundi* and then, only subsequent to this, is he or she the *imago Dei*. (GC, p.186.)

Here we find what Moltmann calls a “strange double *function* on the part of human beings.” (GC, p.189. italics added) On the one hand, the human itself is an embodiment of all other creatures. This means that the human being contains all of the simpler systems found in creation. (GC, p.189.) “These systems are present in him and he depends upon them. He is *imago mundi*.” (GC, p.190.) As *imago mundi* the human person becomes a “microcosm in which all previous creatures are found again, a being that can only exist in community with all other created beings and which can only understand itself in that community.” (GC, p.186.) Further, as this microcosm, the human stands before God representing all other creatures. “He lives, speaks and acts on their behalf. Understood as *imago mundi*, human beings are priestly creations and eucharistic beings.” (GC, p.190.)

On the other hand however, humans are also the *imago Dei*. He and she together are God’s representative, or proxy in the community of creation. The human being represents God’s glory and will on earth. Humans “intercede before God for the community of creation.” (GC, p.190.) Herein, as God’s counterpart and reflection, are humans distinguished from the rest of creation. Firstly, they have the divine charge to subdue the earth, (this is understood simply as the commission to eat vegetable food). Secondly, they are supposed to name the animals so as to bring animals into the community of language with humans. Thirdly, unlike animals, humans are social beings and are dependent on the help of others. (GC, p.188.)

Humans are at once both the *imago mundi* and the *imago Dei*. With this concept firmly established, Moltmann then returns to his idea that the purpose of all of creation lies in the sabbath. Speaking of humanity’s “strange double function” he concludes that: “In this double role they stand before the sabbath of creation in terms of time.

They prepare the feast of creation.” (GC, p.190.) He later makes it clear that he understands the crown of creation to be God’s sabbath and that: “It is for this that human beings are created - for the feast of creation, which praises the eternal, inexhaustible God”. (GC, p.197.) Therefore, the “enduring meaning of human existence lies in its participation in this joyful paeon of God’s creation.”(GC, p.197.)

What is most interesting for our purposes in this discussion is how function and roles are closely identified with the human being who is both the *imago mundi* and the *imago Dei*. Now Moltmann does not adopt a functional view of the image like we previously outlined. His view is relational. Nonetheless, his whole discussion is permeated with descriptions of human “being” and human purpose as centrally involving functions and the corresponding roles associated with them. We see for example, that the dual images (*mundi* and *Dei*) mean that humans have a “strange double *function*”. Further, two of the three characteristics related to the *imago Dei* distinguish humans from animals by the functional activities of subduing and naming. Finally, through their “double role” humans actually prepare the feast of creation. This implies that the preparation is a function upon which the very feast depends. (This then makes the fact, and type, of preparation very important for much depends upon this human activity.)

Our point here is that while these characteristics could have each be described in terms of their relational dimensions, here Moltmann himself has chosen functional and active terminology. Indeed elsewhere, after arguing for the relational view of the image of God, Moltmann lists what he calls “three fundamental relationships” involved with being in God’s image. (GC, pp.220-221.) Yet when we examine the list we find again functional rather than purely relational descriptions: such as, ruling over earthly creatures as God’s representative and in his name, being God’s counterpart on earth and talking with and responding to him (both of which are activities rather than states of being), and being the appearance of God’s splendor and his glory on earth. Ruling, representing, talking, responding, appearing, all of these concepts, which Moltmann

rightly calls relationships, are also and at the same time functions derived from the role of being in God's image. Importantly however, in Moltmann's thinking the functions, specifically of ruling and subduing, are not understood to be identical to the image and likeness of God. (GC, p.224.) Nonetheless, we do find a very close connection between the image and likeness and these functions. We suggest that this connection can be described as the necessary application and implication of the image.

Now Moltmann's view of the *imago Dei*, as distinct from the *imago mundi*, is also further defined and discussed. As we have shown, there is the image of God which is the trinitarian image, but there is also the image of Christ. Further, he also includes in this context the *gloria Dei est homo*, or, the eschatological glorification of human beings. (GC, p.215.) We will here begin with his description of the *imago Christi* and consider it further.

As we have stated, for Moltmann the *imago Christi* is the *imago Dei* mediated through Christ. As such, they are not two distinct images. The former is theologically a more complex description of the latter. Further, with reference to how the image of Christ then relates to anthropology Moltmann says, "christology is understood as the fulfillment of anthropology, and the anthropology becomes the preparation for christology." (GC, p.218.) Therefore, Moltmann argues that: "The true likeness to God is to be found, not at the beginning of God's history with mankind, but at its end; and as goal it is present in that beginning and during every moment of that history." (GC, p.225.)

Christ is the image of the invisible God and he fulfills this image as the mediator in creation, the reconciler of the world, and the Lord of the divine rule. (GC, p.226.) Further, "the restoration or new creation of the likeness to God comes about in the fellowship of believers with Christ: since he is the messianic *imago Dei*, believers become *imago Christi*, and through this enter upon the path which will make them *gloria Dei* on earth." (GC, p.226.) Two interpretive implications deserve mention

here. First, believers correspond to Christ (and thus to God). In so doing, they will necessarily correspond to Christ's roles of mediation, reconciliation and lordship. Second, these roles are here summed up as leading to the eschatological glorification of human beings on earth.

These concepts of mediation, reconciliation and lordship come together in the imagery of God's appointment of humanity to rule over the animals. Moltmann is clear in arguing that the ruling talked about in initial creation is only properly understood eschatologically as ruling with Christ. Therefore, the rule of human beings will necessarily be in and with Christ, and as such it will be a liberating and healing rather than oppressive rule.

As a complement to this conception of ruling, Moltmann has already argued that nature's eschatological goal, its redemption, liberation, and glorification, will only be reached through humans. He argues that:

Creation in the beginning started with nature and ended with the human being. The eschatological creation reverses this order: it starts with the liberation of the human being and ends with the redemption of nature. Its history is the mirror-image of the protological order of creation. Consequently, the enslaved creation does not wait for the appearance of Christ in glory in the direct sense; it waits for the revelation of the liberty of the children of God in Christ's appearance. Creation is to be redeemed through human liberty. (*GC*, pp.68-68. cf. pp.189.)

Ruling with Christ then, a rule which is linked with humanity's and Christ's salvation of nature, becomes the eschatological glorification of human beings. Now Moltmann's logic develops as follows: Creation is creation for the sabbath. Likewise human beings are created as the image of God for the divine glory. In glorifying God, creatures themselves "arrive at the fulfillment of what they are intended to be." (*GC*, p.228.) Combining these concepts, the human *telos* of glorifying God must include, but need not be limited to, our ruling with Christ. However, it is also important that this rule is likewise tied up with God's sabbath. Does this mean that the picture of God's sabbath is a parallel picture to Christ's, and thus our, healing and liberating rule?

Although Moltmann himself does not directly make this connection, we suggest that it is so. We will examine in more detail Moltmann's understanding of the sabbath shortly. At this point however, the legitimate implication emerges that creation's goal of sabbath is not to be envisioned as an inactive state. Rather, it is a goal encompassing an active existence which is characterized by, and permeated with, the essence of God's sabbath rest.

So, again we have found that in Moltmann's depiction of the *imago Dei*, (this time as the *imago Christi*), the concepts of function and role have moved to the forefront. Ruling, mediating, and redeeming, are all essentially functions of being in the divine image and each activity implies a corresponding role.

Is it fair however, to so emphasize the concepts of function and role in Moltmann's thought when, although he includes them as integral, he himself does not attribute to them the prominence which we are suggesting? Based on what we have already shown, we believe that such an emphasis is fair. However, there is more which may be said to strengthen our case.

In his discussion of the *imago Dei*, Moltmann himself has provided us with an additional collection of roles and functions to consider which are intended to illuminate further the implications of the image concept. One image which we find, particularly associated with the concept of rule mentioned in Genesis 1:26, is that of "justice of the peace". (*GC*, pp.29-30. cf. p.224.) Further, two related images also appear. These are cultivator and steward of creation. The role of a cultivator is meant to conjure up the image of the protective work of a gardener. (*GC*, p.30.) The image of the steward is used to suggest that humans in God's image are meant to represent God and take care of God's earth for Him, they are tenants on His behalf. (*GC*, p.224.) Preservation and the continuation of the earthly side of creation are discussed here. (*GC*, p.224.) Interestingly, these two concepts are seen as firstly exemplified in the sabbath itself. (*GC*, p.224.) Yet, Moltmann is also clear that as the preservers and continuers of creation: "Human beings become the authors of the further history of the earth."

(*GC*, p.224.) Again, sabbath is understood as a kind of rule rather than as an inactive existence.

We are suggesting then, that these images (together with the ones which we have already cited) give us the warrant for concluding that in Moltmann's thought function plays a key role in understanding the human person as in the image of God. What however, does this further suggest concerning human purpose? The glory of God in God's sabbath is the goal of the whole creation, but it is tied closely with a kind of redemptive and healing rule. Human purpose then, even as derived from the concept of the image of God and as conceived of eschatologically rather than simply protologically, includes the dimensions of human rule. Human rule as a concept necessarily implies some sort of active project; that is, it includes purposeful working.

On this view, to be in God's image through Christ includes, if not directly at least by implication and application, work. The ability, necessity, and orientation for the human being to work then, (in initial creation) is viewed as fundamentally a part of what it means to be a human being. Work is not simply an instrumental activity associated with survival or even spiritual progress. Rather, it is a fundamental condition of human created existence. It is ontological.

HUMAN PURPOSE IN THE NEW CREATION

Questions concerning the content of human purpose should in no way be limited to the theology of the initial creation. Teleologically, human purpose necessarily includes conceptions of ends as well as origins. Theologically speaking, when we contemplate human ends and the purposes contained therein, we are concerned with what it means to arrive at God's goal or destination for the human being. Yet, this goal should not primarily be understood as an end in the sense of a termination of that which has been. Nor more importantly should it be understood at all as if it meant the closing of a system (human life) which previously has been open. Rather, theologically the end for human beings should be envisioned as a consummation and a new beginning.

Christian hope for the human being, hope for the resurrection of the dead, is the hope of salvation and the new creation. This hope as an end is actually a beginning, and, a beginning which, although amply different from the previous existence, nonetheless also (in a transformed manner) incorporates that which has come before. This means that in addition to the obvious elements of discontinuity which the end introduces, it also embraces and perfects that which was originally there.

This vision of the eschatological new creation is important for our explorations toward an ontology of work for it suggests to us that human purpose in the new creation will be related to, although not in every way identical with, human purpose as found in the initial creation. As such there will remain important and genuine points of continuity as well as the obvious points of discontinuity.

Our purpose now is to present and argue for this conception of the (human) new creation, and then to further explore this vision. We suggest here what are some of the essential points of continuity and discontinuity in human purpose between the initial and the new creation. Critical for our purposes of establishing an ontology of work will be to demonstrate that this scheme of continuity and discontinuity is also applicable with reference to human work and that work does continue in the new creation to be a fundamental part of redeemed human existence and purpose. Further, we will suggest what this vision of work may look like given the transformation which is envisioned to take place on a cosmic level.

To accomplish our purposes we here continue our critical dialogue with Moltmann's theology. We take up our exploration again with *God in Creation* but then continue the discussion from both *The Way of Jesus Christ* and *The Coming of God*. Particularly, we intend to establish further the ontology of work by examining several doctrinal themes which cover both the transition from this creation to the new, and then the eschatological eternal state. We have organized these themes into two categories. These we are calling respectively: *Personhood and Gestalt: Resurrection and the Emerging Vision of Salvation*, and, *Salvation: the Sabbath and Shekinah*.

Personhood and Gestalt: Resurrection and the Emerging Vision of Salvation

We have so far seen that Moltmann's discussion of what it is to be a human person, or, personhood, is built upon a relational, trinitarian, and Christological conception of the image of God together with its various functional implications and applications. As we have already indicated, there is more which must be said in a Christian anthropology than these discussions alone can capture. Also important are questions concerning the nature and extent of the transition from this to the new creation for redeemed human beings. That is, questions concerning what is or is not saved, and how this is accomplished, must also be considered. Ultimately, our concern is for a vision of the eschatological eternal state of redeemed creation rather than for a view of the transition to it. The transition is simply the "means through which" rather than the goal of the process. However, what one understands the eschatological eternal state concretely to be will to a large extent be directed and determined by what one envisions the transition from this creation to the new to entail; that is, what will it include and exclude from this life? Only that which is included in the transition, and not that which is excluded, can (together with that which is completely and surprisingly new) contribute to our vision of what this new creation will be. Therefore, before looking specifically at the eschatological eternal state of the redeemed human being, we will consider as an emerging vision of salvation what is involved in the transition from the current to the new creation.

Human constitution and Gestalt. We begin here with Moltmann's understanding of the constitution of the human being in his discussion of anthropology in *God in Creation*. Moltmann argues for an essential unity of the body and the soul (with differentiation) rather than a strict dualism. The very fact that Moltmann takes up this discussion however, is not to be seen as a philosophical hijacking of his theology, or as an inconsistent regression into the realm and terminology of substantive metaphysics. Rather, the theme itself is essential for it is a practical and logical development from his

assertion that “embodiment is the end of all God’s works”. (*GC*, pp.244ff.)

Moltmann’s concern is to argue that in Christian theology the “soul” is in no way to be given primacy over the body. The spiritual is not more important than the material for both have an eschatological future. Ultimately, his vision is that of a “perichoretic pattern of body and soul”. (*GC*, pp.258-262.) By this he means that the soul and body together exist in a mutual interpenetration and differentiated unity with no primacy of the one over the other (no hierarchy of spirit over matter). Rather, this perichoretic pattern of mutual interdependence should be understood as the Gestalt, or totality, of the human being. “We are looking at the *Gestalt* - the configuration or total pattern - of the lived life.” (*GC*, p.259.) Here we find introduced the Gestalt concept which will from this point onward in Moltmann’s writings figure prominently in his view of the human being and human resurrection and salvation.

What however, does Moltmann more specifically mean by Gestalt? Building on terms developed by Gestalt psychology, he argues that a “person’s Gestalt emerges in the field formed by the human being and his environment.” (*GC*, p.259. note 40.) The dimensions involved here are many: “nature” (genetic structure), the “region of the world in which he is born”, the “society and culture in which the person grows up”, the “history which moulds his origins and conditions his future”, the “sphere of transcendence” (religion and value system). All of these, and similar factors, contribute to the formation of a person’s Gestalt and thus, the person. (*GC*, p.259.)

Concerning what is commonly called personhood, Moltmann argues that “in acquiring Gestalt, the person acquires both individuality and sociality.” (*GC*, p.259.) The understanding here is that the very identity of the person, both individually and socially, is constituted by the pattern of their total life, or Gestalt. To the degree that one changes any of these factors, one in effect and to that same degree changes the identity of the person. Now Moltmann comments that on some points Gestalt formed identity is fixed. (Genetic structures would be one example of that which is essentially unalterable.) More importantly however, he further argues that identity and Gestalt are

also “historically open to considerable modification”. (*GC*, p.259.)

Another and equally important point to remember is that a human being’s Gestalt is not merely a product of outward structures / environment. It is also constituted by the inward structures which are identified as the body and soul. Here Moltmann envisions as essential a person’s conscious and unconscious (and dynamically open) relationship with himself or herself as a whole material and immaterial person. (*GC*, p.259.)

Not surprisingly, these outward and inward structures are argued to equally interpenetrate each other and thus together to form one’s Gestalt. Body and soul, and our ever developing perceptions of them whether conscious or subconscious, together with our ever changing environment, contribute to the making of who we are as human persons.

Building on this discussion of Gestalt, Moltmann also makes some additional and related comments about the human which are important for our purposes. If a person (a Gestalt) is “historically open to considerable modification”, the question is how do we construe this openness? Moltmann argues that all living things can be described as “open systems” and as such exist in the direction of their future. “Their future is the scope of their open possibilities, limited by their past and their environment.” (*GC*, pp.264-265.) People, as people, live in the direction of their future. Because of this they are open to possibilities and to changing their historical futures. The important concept here for personhood is that the “totality of the lived life”, which will necessarily include change rather than a fixed “static identity”, will show itself in a person’s alignment toward *the project* of his life. (*GC*, p.265.) This project is “the project of his future” which in turn animates his life, and as a result, further forms his Gestalt. On this view a person is what he or she becomes, so that “We can understand him if we understand the purpose of his life, his project.” (*GC*, p.265.) It is this project which gives meaning and orientation to his life. This project in turn involves his “imaginative power”. Hence “possibilities are explored and tried out in search of images and provisional projects, in anticipations and proleptic realizations of future

conditions.” (GC, p.266.) Importantly, these projects are not just individual, but as they occur in the realm of social communication, they too become essentially social projects. (GC, p.266.)

This discussion of a person’s life project as contributing to and growing out of his or her Gestalt has profound implications for our attempt to demonstrate that work is the ontological foundation of human purpose, not simply in the current creation but also in the new. It is a person’s projects which are the applications and explorations of what and who that person is. As such these projects too, by way of expression and exploration, become part of the person’s history, identity, and Gestalt. Now of course, these projects include more than simply the work involved in their undertaking. However, they also necessarily include the condition upon which they can be undertaken; that is, the active and applied processes which are foundational to their realization as projects. This means that the projects themselves include (although are not limited to) the work involved in achieving them. The ability and tendency to work then, while not in itself the project, is nonetheless a fundamental condition for the possibility of the project. Work therefore, is an ontological ground which is necessary for an open system if it is to remain open; meaning, open to its future and the projects which this future necessarily involves. An ontology of work is thus a basis upon which open systems can remain open. On this view, as long as persons are open systems work ontologically remains a part of their fundamental existence and thus also a part of their essentially human purpose.

Gestalt, salvation and “transition” in Christ. The necessary question to be addressed however, is whether a person in and through their ultimate salvation remains an open system? In human resurrection and salvation, is the totality of the person (as Gestalt) transformed into a new creation in such a way that essential humanness, and thus openness to the future, remains? Or, does the necessary discontinuity mean that somehow the fundamentally human category of openness is lost, and thus with it the

concepts of future, project and work? These questions, concerning what is resurrected and saved, now need to be addressed.

When we begin to talk about human salvation, which is the resurrection of the dead to a new creation, the starting point for Christian theology must be the resurrection and new creation of Jesus Christ himself. We therefore, turn our attention away from Moltmann's *God in Creation* to his christology as found in *The Way of Jesus Christ*.

Appropriately, we begin our discussion with Moltmann's section entitled "Christ's Transition to the New Creation". (*WJC*, pp.256.) Here, before speaking specifically of Christ, Moltmann summarizes his vision of the human in the initial creation.

In the embodiment of a human being his nature and his history coincide, and the two together form the configuration or Gestalt of his life. Personhood is nature structured by the reflection of the mind and spirit, and by history... There are no human persons without nature, and there is no human nature without personhood. (*WJC*, p.256.)

The question however of what this human will become in and through his or her transition to the new creation depends upon what Christ became through his resurrection. Jesus Christ becomes the paradigm for humanity since in his embodiment he suffered both the historical and natural torments of death. Likewise, the nature of his embodiment in its risen form becomes the starting point for understanding what redeemed humanity can hope for. Christ was raised as a whole person, body and soul. We too expect to be raised in like manner, body and soul. What however, is involved with our being raised body and soul? This question is really, "how are we supposed to think of Christ's bodily resurrection?" (*WJC*, p.257.)

Moltmann summarizes the concepts encompassing the raising, resurrection, making alive, transfiguration, and transformation of Christ with the idea of "transition". (*WJC*, p.257.) The bodily risen Christ is the transition, the "beginning of the new creation of mortal life in this world." (*WJC*, p.257.)

The raised body of Christ therefore acts as an embodied promise for the whole creation. It is the prototype of the glorified body. Consequently, a

transfiguring efficacy emanates from it... (WJC, p.258.)

Interesting for our purposes, he also here argues that Christ's body "lives in the heaven of God's creative potencies and reigns with them and is no longer tied to the limited potentialities of earthly reality." (WJC, p.258.) The implication here is that redeemed humans also will experience, in Christ and as we rule with him, God's "creative potencies" and a new set of "potentialities" which have hitherto not been available to us. Whatever this might entail, it at least suggests the vision that humanity will remain an open and active system since Christ's new life too has become eschatologically "open" to these potentialities and creative potencies.

Here, we have see some initial points of continuity between this and the new creation. Before suggesting further points however, Moltmann also suggests where the main points of discontinuity lie. What will be done away with in the transition to the new creation? Because on the cross Christ conquered it, death itself (and all that is characterized by it) will be overcome. The "death" and the "mortality" of "vulnerable human nature" will be done away with. (WJC, p.258.)

With the raising of Christ, the vulnerable and mortal human nature we experience here is raised and transformed into the eternally living, immortal human nature of the new creation; and with the vulnerable human nature the non-human nature of the earth is transformed as well. This transformation is its eternal healing. But if this mortal human nature was accepted, raised, and transfigured like this, then Christ's resurrection also raised and gathered up the original good creation which is the ground of human nature, perfecting it in its own new creation. In Christ's resurrection human nature in its primordial form triumphs over its unnatural imprisonment in transience. (WJC, pp.258-259.)

Here we have been from continuity to discontinuity and then back again to points of continuity. On this vision (and with reference to our own concerns) Christ's resurrection catches up and perfects our human nature and essence as we have experienced it in our lives. Likewise it does away with the transience and death which

have so far been part of our existence. Does this also mean that the nature of human purpose (which we have argued includes work) will be completed and transformed rather than unrecognizably changed or irradiated? We believe that it does.

“Eternal life can only be bodily life; if it is not it is not life at all.” (WJC, p.259.) The continuity here is essential on Moltmann’s view and it lies in the fact that who we will be in eternity presupposes who and what we are and have been in this life. Moltmann captures this idea with the phrase “enduring *somatic identity* in death.” God remembers the human being in his and her death, God knows their names, and death does not destroy their relationship (in his or her own particularity) with God. (WJC, p.261.) “So what endures is the whole person, body and soul, in the Gestalt that has come into being through the history of his lived life, and in which God sees him.” (WJC, p.262.) However, is it simply that God “remembers” a human in his Gestalt and that the particularities of the Gestalt themselves, once having been realized in this life, are then to be done away with in the new life? It seems not.

What has changed? The vulnerability of this personal configuration, its mortality, its sins, its suffering and its grief will be overcome: ‘*This* perishable nature must put on the imperishable, and *this* mortal nature must put on immortality’ (1 Cor. 15.53). Historical identity and eschatological transformation do not exclude one another, but are two sides of the one, single transition to eternal life.

When the sinfulness and the mortality are overcome, will other characteristics of the bodily existence in which men and women are created be set aside too? Will human needs and human dependence on food, air, climate and so forth be abolished? If we were to assume this, it would also mean an end to the earthly community of creation in which human beings live bodily and practically. Will human sexuality be abolished as well, so that there will no longer be ‘male or female’ (Gal. 3.28.), but all human beings will be ‘like the angels’ (Luke 20.35)? If we have to assume this, then it is not this creation which is going to be created anew, for in place of the human being who is created male and female there will be a different being altogether, and ‘the second creation’ will displace the first. But the eschatological new creation of this creation must surely presuppose *this whole* creation. For something new will not *take the place* of the old; it is *this same ‘old’* [creation] *itself* which is going to be created anew (1 Cor. 15.39-42). The transformation into glory of this whole real creation takes place

diachronically, from the last day to the first, on the day of the Lord. It is not something that happens *after* this world, but something that happens *with* this world. The life of created beings in the succession of the generations and times will *as such* be redeemed from guilt and grief and transformed into eternal joy. And from this neither human dependence on nature nor human sexuality can be excluded. (*WJC*, p.262. [] added.)

We have quoted Moltmann here at length for the concepts presented bring us to the heart of the discussion. The basic human characteristics of bodily existence, as well as a bodily existence itself, are seen as continuing into the new creation. The implications of this are immense. Moltmann even goes so far as to argue that the human need for food, and the like, will continue. Of course, in this vision we will not experience the transience and death which are currently associated with obtaining, preparing and eating this food. Nonetheless, the vision here, as with the garden of Eden, implies some sort of activity / cultivation and thus, work. We do not want to overstate ourselves at this point. We simply suggest that on the view presented above, human life in the new creation will still be fundamentally a recognizably human life. That which has gone before in human life, (here without the sin, mortality, suffering and grief) will also continue into the new, only it will be qualitatively new since it has been transformed. Human purpose therefore, will be transformed and freed from sin, mortality, suffering and grief, but it will still be the same human purpose which we currently experience. It will be the same "open" human purpose which now includes among other things projects, and thus work. We suggest then, that the ontology of work is not a limited ontology in the sense that it is only an ontological reality in the present creation. Rather, the ontology of work is ontological because it is also a fundamental condition of human beings in the new creation.

We, with Moltmann, have now made the transition however, from christology as such to eschatology, and particularly to personal eschatology. Admittedly these are fluid concepts and cannot be easily separated. However, we shall continue our

discussion of personal eschatology from *The Coming of God*, Moltmann's volume specifically on eschatology.

Personal eschatology and eternal livingness. The kinds of arguments about personal resurrection and salvation which Moltmann presents in *The Coming of God* are basically the same as those which we have already outlined. Therefore, we do not need to establish again the kind of eschatological vision which he proposes. In summary, the raising and transformation of this whole mortal life, its healing, reconciliation and completion, are the focus of his discussion. (*CoG*, p.70.) What this book adds to the earlier discussions however, is further detail to the vision and additional reflection which anticipates and answers some of the criticisms which could be made against his view. We will take up some of these points, not simply to further develop Moltmann's view, but more importantly so that we can make further comment on our own position concerning the continuation into the new creation of human purpose and thus, an ontology of work.

Early in his section on eternal life / personal eschatology Moltmann argues that our question concerning life "is not whether our existence might possibly be immortal, and if so which part of it" (soul, mind or spirit). (*CoG*, p.53.) The question of life, and thus eternal life, is really "will love endure, the love out of which we receive ourselves, and which makes us living when we ourselves offer it?" (*CoG*, p.53.) What does he mean by this however? He makes his argument as follows:

But human life is livingness, and human livingness means to be interested, to be concerned. Concern in life is what we call love. True human life comes from love, is alive in love, and through loving makes something living of the other too. 'A person's real identity, we may say, is his love: his concern: his minding, not just his mind.' (*CoG*, p.53.)

Now this interest and love obviously include dimensions of interpersonal love and concern. The "other" which is made living through love does include the personal other. This understanding is consistent with Moltmann's relational conception of being. However, here the other need not be limited to the personal other, nor could it be

if life and personhood is understood as defined by our relationships with non-human reality as well as interpersonal relationships. The other here must also include all other entities. The surprise however, is that the impersonal too can become animated, and thus in a sense living, when our love embraces it. By our loving something, we give to it a new quality and significance, a new "life". It follows therefore, that as our life becomes an eternal life, so too, and tied up with this transition, does our concern and its object also become eternal. The vested significance which we offer to something in love thus becomes an eternal significance.

This proposal that it is the impersonal as well as the personal which is the object of our concerns, love and interests is further suggested by the very way that Moltmann develops his discussion. In this context, because love will endure into eternal life, he is arguing for humans to fully engage in the totality of this life (including its materiality) and not to withdraw from it out of a fear of death. (*CoG*, pp.53-54.) The call is not simply to free oneself to love other persons. Rather, it is a call to embrace and love all of life and not to hold back out of a fear that it will all be lost in death.

Related to this call to life we find also the suggestion that a person's very identity is connected with his or her concerns or "minding" about something, whatever this may be, whether human or non-human. As we have seen argued elsewhere, personal identity stems from our Gestalt, and this Gestalt includes our life's projects. In our present context Moltmann does not contradict this previous view. Here however, he does not refer specifically to life's projects. Rather, he addresses our concerns and "minding" which are the motivational basis for this life of livingness / love. Here, the motivation for livingness rather than its application is in view. It must simply be assumed that this animated livingness will "live" itself out in our life's projects.

Our point is that on this view, as our love will continue into eternal life so too will our concern which is and has been embodied in our life's interests including both our relationships and projects. The implication is that not just we as persons will be saved in eternal life, but that so too will eternal life (in some way) be extended to the things

that we love, the objects of our concern, including our projects. This must be the case for if it were not, we as persons would be so abstracted out of our life's contexts and thus so divorced from our Gestalts that in our disorientation and dislocation our very identities (stemming from our concerns our loves and interests) would be lost even as we were supposedly being saved.

This understanding of Moltmann's view and the implications which we (rather than he) have specifically drawn is further supported later in Moltmann's discussion of the "immortality of the lived life". (*CoG*, pp.71ff.) When again discussing the "preservation of the person's identity" in the resurrection and transition to the new life, Moltmann introduces yet another line of reasoning which is meant to show that the continuity between this life and the life to come will necessarily involve our outward as well as inward realities.

Everything that is bound up with a person's name - everything that the name means - is 'preserved' in the resurrection and transformed... What is meant here is not the soul, a 'kernel' of the person's existence, or some inward point of identity, but the whole configuration of the person's life, the whole life history, and all the conditions that are meant by his or her name. (*CoG*, p.75.)

Here the person's name is meant to represent all that a person is and has become in the context of that person's life. This use of "name" is another reference to a person's total configuration or Gestalt, which we also call that person's "spirit". (*CoG*, p.75.) A person's body and soul, past and future, social and natural relationships, the "fabric of the whole person's life" is to be preserved and transformed. (*CoG*, p.75.) "In death, this Gestalt does not disintegrate into its several parts, but remains what it is 'before God'; since the whole is more than the sum of its parts, it is also more than the disintegration of the parts." (*CoG*, p.76.) Likewise, Moltmann later argues that "everything that has put its mark on this life remains eternally." (*CoG*, p.84.)

Now a few comments are in order. According to the picture which is here presented, and specifically according to the idea that everything that a person's "name" means

will be preserved and resurrected, it is important to recognize that this necessarily includes my roles, functions, purposes, webs of relationships, concerns and loves. All of these and the like, are envisioned as carrying over, having been transformed, into the new creation. I as a totality, as the product of my life but also as an open being, will be preserved and transformed. Further, it is my natural as well as social relationships which are here specifically pointed to. It is not simply the "inner" me, nor is it the me of my interpersonal relationships alone which will be preserved and transformed. It is the total me; the me who is a father, husband, churchman, scholar, friend, sportsman, builder, planner, dreamer, and so forth, in all of my particularity and concrete existence.

Is this however, good news? Does this understanding of the resurrection mean that I will be "immortalized", not simply with all of my more positive qualities, but also with all of my "terrible experiences, faults, failings, and sicknesses?" Will the "severely disabled human life" or the "child who died young" simply as such be immortalized? (*CoG*, p.70.) Does this view - that all will be preserved and transformed that has made a mark on our lives - not lead to a vision of hell rather than heaven?

This would be so if immortalization rather than transformation were our hope. Thankfully however, 'raising' means a healing, reconciliation and completion, of all which is and has been, the good and bad. It does not mean its immortalization. (*CoG*, p.70.) Yes, resurrection means that nothing will be lost, neither our moments of happiness or pain. (*CoG*, pp.70-71.) Nor, on our view, will the concrete expressions of our beings be lost; that is, our projects and creations. These too become ontologically part of the actual created order once we have initiated them into existence out of the available possibilities, and once we have vested our love and concern upon them.

However, as we understand Moltmann's idea, this kind of preservation of all things has transformation, not immortalization, as its goal. This means the rectifying of our life histories and not their frozen preservation. (*CoG*, p.71.) If therefore, rectification forms part of the essence of salvation and transition, then it is essential that nothing (inwardly or outwardly, positively or negatively) be lost or ignored. All things stand in

need of rectification: our “best efforts”, but also especially the negative and painful things which have become part of our lives. Salvation is the rectification of this life it is not a substitution for it.

Another question however, begins to emerge for us at this point. If the totality of this life is to be preserved and resurrected, and if the Gestalt of this life is understood to actually have a projective and formative effect upon the eventual particularity of our new and future life, does this not simply lead us to another version of justification by works? On this view of the preservation and resurrection / transformation of this lived life, are we not simply judged by our own lives? Do we not simply become slaves entrapped by what we have done or been involved with in this life? Do we not become products of our works (lived lives) in such a way that the principle of recompense rather than grace becomes the law?

Moltmann himself anticipates similar types of questions later in *The Coming of God* when dealing with the larger question of where the dead are, and specifically when he considers reincarnation. (*CoG*, pp.110-116.) Now our concern is not with reincarnation. Rather, we are interested in the general way that Moltmann answers the types of questions to which our reasoning has led.

Moltmann is critical of what he calls the “doctrine of karma”. Yet he recognizes that it is at once both close to the Abrahamic religions and remote from them. (*CoG*, p.114.) By the doctrine of karma he means the generally accepted “law of act and destiny”. “‘As one acts so one will be.’ ‘As a man sows, that he will also reap’ (Gal. 6.7ff.)” (*CoG*, p.114.) Act and destiny here is not understood however, as a divine judgement. It is simply a law immanent in the world.

Moltmann’s concern however, is not with this general principle as such. His concern comes when this idea is combined with Western anthropocentric ideas so that we conclude that we “are responsible for our own fate in this world and beyond”, and that we “can save our own souls or destroy them.” (*CoG*, p.115.) He is concerned that the doctrine of karma leads in our Western context to self-justification through our

works. Here Moltmann emphasizes that Christian theology sets grace over and against this view of karma. For him, and against this law of karma, grace means four things. Firstly, it is God who creates “a new thing” and God who continually interrupts the chain of act and destiny and repeals the law of karma. Secondly, forgiveness of sins does not dispense with punishment, but is the repealing of the law of act and destiny. People are saved without the consequences of their works. Thirdly, grace means that judgment cannot consist of the consequences of evil action. God does not judge us according to what we have done. Fourthly, the

principle of grace distinguishes very closely between person and act, and does so qualitatively. According to this principle, evil action is condemned, but the person is pardoned. People are no longer nailed down to what they have done and judged according to their works. They are freed from them in all their dignity. People are more than the sum of their works, and more than the sum of their sufferings. That is why being is more important than doing and having. (*CoG*, p.116.)

We notice that Moltmann’s view of the person here, as one who has an existence in this concrete material world separate from actual applications of doing (function) and having, seems incongruous with his anthropology as we have sketched it in this chapter. (It is consistent however, with his anthropology in *On Human Dignity*.) Further, these concepts of a person’s freedom from the concrete reality of his or her life seem to be at odds with his understanding of a person’s preserved and resurrected Gestalt. For, up to this point Moltmann has been arguing precisely that it is the sum total of one’s existence, inwardly and outwardly, which must be preserved and transformed. People are more than the sum of their works and sufferings, but their identities include constitutionally their works and sufferings.

Here we shall not presume to reconcile the tensions between these visions for Moltmann. They may or may not be strictly resolvable within his arguments, (particularly by the qualification offered through the concept of transformation). What we shall do is to suggest for ourselves both the reasons that it would be desirable to

find a reconciliation of these ideas, and what the qualifications necessary for such a reconciliation might be.

We suggest that it is essential for Christian theology and ethics to embrace both the ideas of a person's resurrected Gestalt and the concept of grace. We have been arguing throughout this section our reasons for the former. However, as the above discussion also suggests, in the process we do not want to fall into the trap of self-justification through our own works. If the "new life" is totally dependent on and determined by what our Gestalts have become, rather than simply given shape by them, then this new life does become hell rather than salvation. The key question here is whether our, and Moltmann's, view of a person's Gestalt is understood as totally determining rather than simply providing the shape of the new life? For us, and we suspect for Moltmann, it would be the latter. The concept of the resurrected Gestalt is not understood as a totally determining factor. It does not rule out the fact that God, rather than we, creates the new person. As influential as our own Gestalts are on the shape of the new life, they do not themselves due to some inherent transformative power produce the new life. Rather, God through his forgiving grace creates the new from the old. The key concept in this discussion is transformation. Our new life does not depend strictly upon an act-destiny ordering. Rather, the picture is of an act - transformed (by God) destiny. The act is important not as a determinant, but because without the act there would be no particularity for a transformed destiny. Now, if a particular act were different, that which would be transformed in the destiny would likewise be different. This does mean that the particularity of the individual (an open system) too would be different if the act were different. At issue with grace however, is not the open particularity of the individual person as such. Rather, it is the qualitative effect that anything and everything in a person's life shall be transformed. Grace is total transformative and healing grace. No matter what the act grace so permeates it that while incorporating the act into the new life it is transformed in such a way that it is released from the grip of death.

On this view, we have been and shall be formed, and in this sense only, we have

been created by our past lives, but we are not enslaved or restricted by them. Here then, we can affirm our view of the relational / existential aspect of work as contributing to the becoming, identity, and self-realization of the person, while we may reject that this means a self-justification involving a closed "act–destiny" ordering of human reality. Even the person who has become "self-realized" through their work finds that this realized self is open to and indeed is in need of transformation and rectification. The existential development of the person is not equal to his or her new life which only God's grace can bring.

Ultimately then, we find no difficulty with affirming both a person's preserved and resurrected Gestalt, and God's grace which saves us from hell, and the hell of our current existence. Christian theology and ethics needs both of these concepts.

With this we come to the conclusion of this section. Through our broader theological discussions here we have been making the case that human purpose, as one important aspect of our Gestalt, will be preserved and transformed with the person in the transition to the new creation. Thus, work, understood as an ontological foundation of human purpose, will too be preserved and transformed with the person so that it will remain an ontological precondition of their humanness (the person is still an open system) even as they become a new creation.

The picture here has been primarily one of continuity. We have been emphasizing the similarities between humanness in this and the new creation. Yet, we have also made it clear that there are important discontinuities. Life and livingness point to the continuity, while sin, mortality and death point to the discontinuity. On our view therefore, the person will remain an open system, perfected and completed in the sense of being "released from" sin, mortality and death and "opened to" full flourishing as a real human person. We mean that perfection and completion neither bring an end to human livingness, nor do they imply a radical change in the human from being an open to a closed system. Perfection and completion mean being released and given a new reality which (only as the new creation) enables the human to fully engage in

penetrating the depths of their humanness in a harmonious, and active, relationship with the rest of their environment. This environment will include relationships with both personal and non-human reality; personally humans will be in harmonious and active relationship with God and other persons, yet they will also be in harmonious, active, and mutual relationship with non-human creation. All of this “living” will be done directly for the glory of God, but also the very process of living in this way will itself glorify God. In our glorification God is glorified. Here, then, the new creation is understood to be a new beginning, and not the end, of living life for a truly human being.

This view has implications for work beyond what has already been said about its transformation and translation to the new life as an ontological precondition of eternal life. Our continued ability to take interest in, to love and thus live life will find its concrete expression in what in the new creation will be life’s new projects. These projects, unlike their predecessors, will be released from transience; the conditions of sin, mortality and death. The curse on work which we find in the garden in Genesis 3 will be finally done away with in its totality so that we can both return to work as it should have been, and, go beyond what work in the initial creation could ever have been. Herein lies the newness. It is not simply a return to what should have been, but is a transition to that which can now be which simply could not have been in the original. This newness which will characterize work will involve our fully exploring life (ourselves, our environments, and God) through a new kind of active existence which we could call “glorified work”. This exploration will involve our probing both the newly recreated actualities and also potentialities, and all will be done in the celebration of God and in celebration with God and the rest of creation.

The question which we now face however, is whether this emerging vision of salvation which also saves human work is consistent with the pictures of the new creation which scripture and theological reflection provide? We suggest that it is. Yet, it is not initially evident to many Christians that work (transformed and glorified work rather than either original or cursed work) will be part of the lived life in the new heaven

and new earth. Therefore, our task is to demonstrate that our anthropology in our emerging vision of salvation is compatible with the anthropological vision of salvation as seen in the new heaven and new earth. To achieve this purpose we continue our dialogue with Moltmann. Specifically we are concerned with his vision of anthropology in the eternal state and we will consider this vision through his paradigmatic categories of the sabbath and the Shekinah.

Salvation: The Sabbath and Shekinah

As we begin we need to emphasize, particularly on this topic, that in themselves Moltmann's discussions and imagery of the new creation do not directly take up or point to the question of whether work has a place within the new heaven and new earth. This is our question and not his. Therefore, our task will be to generalize and extrapolate from his particulars, and to look for those characteristics in his imagery which relate either positively or negatively to our purposes. We shall demonstrate however, that there are basic elements in his imagery of the new creation which do suggest that this part of our hypothesis on the ontology of work (that there will be glorified work in the new creation) is appropriate.

Moltmann presents his vision of the new heaven and new earth in detail in *The Coming of God*. His entire discussion is structured around the differentiated yet related concepts of God's sabbath and Shekinah. He begins and ends his section on cosmic eschatology (new heaven - new earth) with these concepts and also refers to them throughout it. (*CoG*, pp.261, 317.) Therefore, we too will use and probe this structure as we present his and our own view of creation, particularly the human, in the eternal state.

Before however, looking at the meaning of these concepts in his thought, we need to mention that Moltmann's concern appears primarily to be the exploration of what these concepts mean for God. That is, they are specifically developed as God's sabbath and Shekinah. This suggests importantly that it is primarily the doctrine of God (his glory

and his *telos*) and not anthropology, which is at issue.

However, this does not mean that it is inappropriate to ask anthropological questions in this theo-logical context. Since humans will be glorified in God, by examining God's glorified state we should also learn something about these transformed humans. Similarly, on Moltmann's view humans will be "deified" in the sense that they will "partake of the characteristics and rights of the divine nature through their community with Christ, the God - human being." (*CoG*, p.272.) Therefore, they too (as God-like) in this context of the doctrine of God become a possible, and also appropriate, focus for enquiry.

Having thus justified our task, we now turn to consider Moltmann's understanding of these doctrines. In his later thought the originally Jewish ideas of God's sabbath and God's Shekinah have become increasingly important. Yet, the complex and interdependent connections which he makes between these ideas renders understanding how he interprets and uses them somewhat of a challenge. Therefore, here we shall carefully trace Moltmann's presentation of the concepts, and where we find it necessary we will add to it our own interpretive comments.

The end is more than the beginning. Moltmann begins his discussion of these two concepts by stating that creation should be understood in the light of redemption and not the other way around. (*CoG*, p.261.) It follows then, that the final consummation of creation is not to be primarily construed as the restoration of its initial conditions. Rather, initial creation should be understood to be completed in its consummation. The idea in Genesis of the "completion" of the initial creation is not to be understood to mean that it was finished or perfect in the sense of being without any future. Rather, its initial completion means that it was fitting, appropriate, and corresponded to the Creator's will. On this view, its end completion will include more than was included in its beginning completion. "The end is much more than the beginning." (*CoG*, p.264.) As we shall see, this idea and the sense of movement captured in it is foundational for Moltmann's Christian interpretation of the sabbath and Shekinah.

When Moltmann in this section first introduces the idea of the sabbath, he presents it as the “promise of future consummation built into the initial creation.” (*CoG*, p.264.) The sabbath itself is not creation’s future glory, but it points to it. The future glory of the new creation is more than the sabbath. It will involve the gathering up of the beginning (including the sabbath) in the end. The continuity, as we have already seen, is established in that its consummation “brings back everything that has ever been before.” (*CoG*, p.265.)

Yet, there is also genuine newness (discontinuity) in the future glory which was not present in the old, at least not present in the same way. This newness is a going beyond that which was initially the case. The discontinuity then, is not simply the abolition of the negative. It is positively the introduction of a new good. How is this new good construed?

What is the difference between the beginning and the consummation of creation, and what distinguishes the ‘first heaven and the first earth’ from the ‘new heaven and the new earth’? It is the different presence of the Creator in the community of those he has created. (*CoG*, p.265.)

Here, rather than focusing upon the abolition of death as the difference between the old and the new creation, the different presence of God becomes the essential point of discontinuity. However, not only does this different presence distinguish the old from the new creation. It is also that which distinguishes the God’s sabbath from his Shekinah.

The sabbath and Shekinah interrelated. According to Moltmann the concept of God’s sabbath is a way of referring to his presence. Yet it is described as a presence “in the *time* of those he has created, or to put it more precisely, the dynamic presence of eternity in time, which links the beginning and end, thus awakening remembrance and hope.” (*CoG*, p.266.) This concept, “in time”, is the heuristic key for understanding what Moltmann believes the sabbath to be. It is a unique mode of being / temporality for God which allows God to be with us in created time in such a way that

the beginning and end, the old and the new, are held together. It is this “temporal” connectedness through God which is then supposed to awaken our remembrance and hope. This is the nature and purpose of the sabbath. The essence of the sabbath however, is that it is a particular kind of God’s presence or dwelling.

The Shekinah, while similar to its sabbath counterpart, is nonetheless different. It still refers to a particular kind of God’s presence / dwelling. However, as the “eschatological indwelling of God in the ‘new heaven and the new earth’”, it denotes God’s presence in the “*space*” of his created beings. (*CoG*, p.266.) It is the idea that God is in our midst and therefore has brought eternal life. It is envisioned as the “new Jerusalem” which becomes the “home of God’s Shekinah (Isa. 65; Ezek. 37: Rev. 21.)” (*CoG*, p.266.) The Shekinah then, is a spatial rather than a temporal concept. It deals with a construal of God’s presence in the space of creation rather than how God inter-connects and relates time in the flow of history to itself and to himself.

The sabbath then, is God’s dwelling / presence in time, while the Shekinah is his dwelling / presence in space. In this respect we find that the two concepts, sabbath and Shekinah, are parallel. Both equally refer to God’s presence. There is more to the parallel however than simply this. As we interpret Moltmann, these are also parallel concepts in that God has both a sabbath and corresponding Shekinah (a presence) in the initial creation, and a similar but different sabbath and corresponding Shekinah (a new presence) in the new creation or eternity.

In the initial creation there is the weekly sabbath and the sabbath year. This is also however, referred to as “God’s homeless Shekinah in the time of exile from Jerusalem, and in the far country of this world, estranged from God.” (*CoG*, p.266.) Here the sabbath and Shekinah are presented as two parallel ways of viewing God’s presence in the initial creation, the difference being in the perspective from which they are viewed, temporally or spatially.

As a parallel in the new creation, we find the new eschatological (rather than homeless) Shekinah: God’s home with creation in the New Jerusalem. This is likewise

represented as a new sabbath, “the perfected sabbath in the spaces of the world.” (*CoG*, p.266.) Again eschatologically, the sabbath and Shekinah are construed as two parallel ways (temporally and spatially) of referring to the same new reality of God’s unified presence.

What we find in these depictions therefore, are essentially three distinct yet interdependent parallelisms operating. The first is that the sabbath is God’s presence expressed in temporal terms, while the Shekinah is His presence expressed in spatial terms. The second is that God’s presence, as both sabbath and Shekinah, is expressed and experienced in the new as well as the initial creation. The third parallel, building upon the first two, is that the sabbath is the Shekinah, and vice versa, expressed simply from a different perspective.

Now an additional type of relationship between these concepts, one embracing but also different than their parallelism, is also argued for by Moltmann. “Sabbath and Shekinah are related to each other as promise and fulfillment, beginning and completion.” (*CoG*, p.266.) As we interpret what Moltmann is doing, here it is not their parallel relationships but rather their complementary relationship with each other which is in view. With reference to promise and fulfillment, the sabbath is reconstrued singularly and located solely in time in the initial creation. The Shekinah likewise has been made into a singular concept and is used solely to refer to the eschatological presence / indwelling of God in the new creation. The key point here is that the Shekinah is the “end” which encompasses, but which is much greater than and thus transcends the beginning (the sabbath). Here surfaces the importance of our initial comments about the necessity of understanding creation in the light of redemption and not vice versa. The end, the redemption, the Shekinah, is the new and as such it is “much greater” than the beginning, the initial creation, the sabbath. This does not mean that the Shekinah annihilates the sabbath. Rather, the former embraces the latter but then transforms it into something genuinely new so that the old, while still present, really has gone and the new has come. Its newness however is not to be understood as

a realization of that which was inherent in the old. It is a genuinely new thing which is done by God with the old. Therefore the Shekinah, (still properly understood also in terms of the eternal sabbath) is not simply a repetition of the initial sabbath in the new creation. It is something genuinely new and different but which embraces the ethos of the old.

In the sabbath, creation holds within itself from the beginning the true promise of its consummation. In the eschatological Shekinah, the new creation takes the whole of the first creation into itself, as its own harbinger and prelude, and completes it. Creation begins with time and is completed in space. The temporality of the first creation is itself its promise, and its openness for the new, eternal creation. (*CoG*, p.266.)

In this complementary rather than parallel scheme, the Shekinah rather than the sabbath becomes the predominant way of expressing the eschatological vision of the new heaven and new earth. This however, does not negate the vision of interchangeableness and balance which is generated by their parallel relationships. However, it does further define and in many ways limit what the nature of this parallel continuity can mean. We understand the complementary relationship between these concepts as promise and fulfillment, to be the relationship which moves the whole idea of God's presence forward to something genuinely new. We understand their parallel relationships on the other hand to be that which preserves the continuity between the loci of movement. Herein we find the inner unity between the parallel and complementary aspects of these concepts. Our suggestion is that the continuity must be understood in the light of the movement and not the other way around. For the end (the goal of the movement, the Shekinah) is much more than the similarity (the beginning, the sabbath). This way of interpretively combining both the parallel and complementary relationships between the sabbath and Shekinah will later be important for it will guide our own conclusions concerning the vision of the new heaven and new earth.

Now Moltmann, similarly seeking to draw together the various relationships in his sabbath and shekinah construct, suggests that there is "inner unity" to the concepts

themselves. (*CoG*, p.266.)

it is to be found in the *menuhah*, the rest to which God came on the sabbath of creation and which he seeks when he desires to dwell in his creation. It does not only mean the end of God's creative and historical unrest; it is also in the positive sense the eternal bliss and eternal peace of God himself. That is why this repose of God's is often linked with 'God's desire'. That is the divine eschatology. Psalm 132.13f. shows the connection between sabbath and Shekinah: 'The Lord has chosen Zion; he has desired it for his habitation; "This is my resting place for ever; here will I dwell".' (*CoG*, p.266.)

The question of what exactly the idea of rest / God's rest means, both related to the initial and new creation, will be returned to shortly. Here we simply point out that the concept of rest, as the inner unity, is meant to accompany the idea of presence (expressed in terms of God's dwelling) as the key for understanding Moltmann's Christian interpretation of the sabbath and Shekinah. The importance of this is its suggestion that God's dwelling, and thus ours in and with God, must be described and understood specifically in terms of rest.

Admittedly, by themselves these concepts of sabbath and Shekinah tell us little about what to concretely envision in the new heaven and new earth with respect to either God, humanity, or non-human creation. Indeed, this does not even seem to be their purpose in Moltmann's discussion. Rather, as we understand it, they function for him as qualifiers rather than quantifiers. His usage of the concepts is as a kind of interpretative grid through which to filter the concepts and imagery associated with eternity. They are the guides which give the structure (or ethos) of the discussion rather than its building blocks. This is suggested by the very design of Moltmann's chapter on the new heaven and new earth as well as its content.

The actual building blocks for Moltmann's vision of the new heaven and new earth in this context include in order: the question of whether the world will be annihilated or consummated (*CoG*, pp.267-279.), a discussion of the end of time in the eternity of God (*CoG*, pp.279-295.), a parallel discussion of the end of space in the presence of God (*CoG*, pp.296-308.), and then finally an examination of the imagery of the

cosmic temple which is the heavenly Jerusalem (*CoG*, pp.308-319.).

We will here diverge from strictly tracing the development of Moltmann's discussion. Yet we will continue to examine portions of it as we need to for our own purposes. For our task of demonstrating that it is appropriate to posit a glorified form of work in the new heaven and new earth, we will need to built our following arguments around three fundamental questions; the question of time in God's and our eternity, the question of rest in God's and our eternity, and the question of the specific imagery associated with God's and our eternity.

The question of time in God's and our eternity. Our question of time in eternity asks what will come with the end of our currently experienced time of this creation? What, if anything in the new creation will replace our currently experienced transient time? If we grant that the end is a new beginning, and that the end of time in the eternity of God is the beginning of something else, related to time but new and therefore different from it, then what will this "transformed time" be and how will we with God experience it? Is eternity and eternal life to be depicted in terms of timelessness or in terms of a transformed and new time or temporality?

These questions are important for our purpose because our vision of eternity, which includes human participation in new projects in the new heaven and new earth (and thus a new and glorified form of work as their ontological basis) necessarily presupposes something like a corresponding new "temporality" in and from which these projects can proceed. The idea of a project itself presupposes the necessity of some reality which we usually depict in temporal terms. We must do something before, (decide, plan,) do something during (act, develop, construct) and do something at the end (conclude, reflect upon, enjoy and so forth) to have a project. If no such correspondingly new concept for temporality exists, then this part of our hypothesis, that the ontology of work exists in the new creation as well as the initial creation, is disproved. That is, if eternity is construed as timelessness, as having no alternative form

of temporality at all, then it will be logically impossible to “do” anything / to have an active livingness in eternal life. However, if there is a “new temporality” which corresponds to eternal livingness, then it is logically possible to also posit a new and transformed ontology of work, call it what you may, which allows for human “projects”, in and with God, as a part of our new life’s livingness.

What then, is the eschatological future of time? Moltmann’s answer to this question is again a quite complex and nuanced argument. It is beyond our purpose here to offer a full and fully critical assessment of the totality of his view. Yet, his conclusions on this question of time have important implications for our hypothesis. What we propose to do therefore, is to sketch his reasoning so as to highlight and interact with his conclusions. Since our concerns are with his concluding picture as such, here we will simply assume rather than critique many of the details of his arguments.⁷

Essential for Moltmann’s discussion of time is the apostle Paul’s concept of the eschatological moment. (1 Cor. 15:52.) (*CoG*, p.279.) This moment is not to be understood, as it is in some theology, abstractly as that which can be existentialized to refer to an immediate religious experience. (*CoG*, pp.292ff.) Rather, it is that which comes with the end of time, the ‘last day’, the ‘day of resurrection’, the ‘last trumpet’. It is the “moment of eternity” when all of the dead will be raised diachronically. (*CoG*, pp.279-280.) “In content it is defined as ‘the day of the Lord’, to which all times are simultaneous.” (*CoG*, p.280.) This moment is “the completion of history and creation, its perfecting into the kingdom of glory in which God himself ‘indwells’ his creation.” (*CoG*, p.280.) It is when the temporal creation becomes the eternal creation. (*CoG*, p.294.)

What this eschatological moment means for time is that, strictly speaking, time shall be no more. However, it is not an annihilation of time strictly speaking or of all temporality as such which is in view. Rather, the picture here is that “temporal creation

⁷ Importantly, in his view of time and space here Moltmann is generally aware of and consistent with the tenor of the discussions of time and space currently being considered in physics. See for example: Davies, *About Time* (1995).

will be transformed into eternal creation, and spatial creation into omnipresent creation." (*CoG*, p.280.) Time in the eschatological moment will be "gathered up, fulfilled and transformed through the eternity of the new creation." (*CoG*, p.280.) It will not become however, "the absolute eternity of God himself; it is the relative eternity of the new creation, which participates in God's absolute eternity." (*CoG*, p.280.) The word which Moltmann borrows from patristic and medieval theology to describe God's time rather than earthly time is *aeon* or *aevum*. (*CoG*, p.280.)

Clearly then, Moltmann envisions an appropriate counterpart to time in the new heaven and new earth. He argues for a transition from temporal to eternal creation, from our time to aeonic time. What then, is the nature of this aeonic time in relation to our current time?

In the classical and Platonic philosophical tradition, time is understood to have as its opposite timelessness. Here, temporality / time is opposed to eternity, as change is opposed to the unchanging. (*CoG*, p.281.) Theology too has often followed this path of definition. However, Moltmann argues that this is inappropriate. Christian theology should not continue to define time and eternity respectively as the opposites, as changeability and unchangeability. God's eternity is something other than "the mere negation of temporality." As Moltmann describes it, God's eternity is "the fulness of creative life" and therefore, it is an "opening for time in eternity." (*CoG*, p.281.)

Moltmann presents two models for understanding this opening "for" time "in" eternity. The first, using personal metaphors talks of God creatively resolving within himself, and in his "eternal time", to create. The second, using spatial metaphors talks of God's self-restricting to allow room for the other, for created time and space, within his eternity. (*CoG*, pp.281-282.) Both of these concepts, depicting a self-conscious and active God, are meant to suggest the same thing. God has made space for time and a time for time in his time which is eternity. Time and eternity are not opposites. Eternity is not to be understood as the mere negation of temporality or as timelessness. Rather eternal time is a different mode of being than earthly time. Eternity (eternal time)

as a mode of being (like temporal time with its transient past, present and future) is still a type of temporality in that it allows room for God to have an active, resolving existence within himself. Likewise, those who will eschatologically be included in eternal time will too still be able to have an acting and resolving existence.

As we summarize the implications of Moltmann's pictures here, even God himself in his eternity experiences himself and creatively resolves to do certain things. For God to experience and resolve there is required some kind of condition within God, akin to temporality, (which Moltmann calls "*primordial aeon*") which provides the space metaphorically speaking for God to be the personal and active God expressed in the Bible. An eternal aeonic time construed as timelessness would simply preclude this idea of a personal and active God. Likewise, as we will be eschatologically included in God's eternity, timelessness would exclude a personal and active life on our part. Aeonic time then, cannot mean timelessness. It cannot be the negation of time.

Ultimately for Moltmann the difference between our time and aeonic time (including both God's absolute eternity - past and future, and our future relative eternity) lies in death, "which is only earthly, not heavenly." (*CoG*, p.282.) Death and the transience which death entails, rather than temporality itself, is the distinguishing factor between these two kinds of time. The fact that both are described as forms of time is important for it further demonstrates that the opposite of time is not timelessness but rather a different kind of temporality.

Aeonic time can be thought of as a time corresponding to the eternity of God: a time without beginning and end, without before and after. The figure, or configuration, of time that corresponds to the one, unending eternity is *cyclical* time, which has no end. (*CoG*, p.282.)

We should be careful not to attribute more to this metaphor of cyclical time than Moltmann himself does. He is simply trying to express the idea of a "timeless form of time" which helps us to conceive of time without transience. (*CoG*, p.282.) We suggest that although the image of cyclical time is ultimately inadequate, it at least allows us to preserve the sense of flow and movement of being which is necessary for

existence while also avoiding the idea of loss (death) which is necessarily a part of transient time.

Moltmann's cosmology then presents us with a "double form of time" in creation. "Earthly creation exists within the context of passing time, but this earthly time, for its part, belongs within the context of the aeonic time of 'the invisible world' continually touching it and being touched by it." (*CoG*, p.283.) Eternity and time again, are not opposites. They are two corresponding forms of the same idea - time. They are inter-related through the latter's inclusion in the former, but they are still different in that time includes transience and death while eternity does not.

Interestingly, again in this context Moltmann employs his promise-fulfillment understanding of sabbath and Shekinah (with its internal logic) to illustrate the idea of created time's transience. Time in the initial creation is the "time of promise" and the essence of this time is "futurity". That is, earthly time is an "open, a-symmetrical, imbalanced system which is aligned towards its future." (*CoG*, p.283.) As it is necessarily always aligned towards its future, it can never be fulfilled as such. If it were, it would cease to be time. Time, and thus creation, is directed toward its fulfillment, as the sabbath is directed toward the Shekinah. (*CoG*, p. 283.) Created time is a constant moving toward its fulfillment - eternal time.

However, the "time pattern" in the initial creation does not only present time's forward moving and "irreversible flow":

it also confers time that is rhythmically interrupted and ordered through the sabbath days and the sabbath years. Rhythm is at once repetition and progress. In the rhythm of the sabbath interruptions of 'time's flow', earthly creation - human beings, animals and the earth - vibrate in the cosmic liturgy of eternity. The ever-flowing stream of time regenerates itself from the presence of eternity in the sabbath rhythm of the days, the years, and the seventh year, thus preparing for the messianic sabbath of the End-time creation and, through that, for the eschatological sabbath of the eternal creation. (*CoG*, pp.283-284.)

This observation is critical for our own purposes for in addition to further

describing the nature of earthly time, it helps us to understand the ethos of the sabbath in the time of the initial creation; and it is this ethos which must be preserved in its eschatological transformation to Shekinah. The sabbath in the initial creation is not, as some understand it, simply a limitation on human work (although it does do this). More fundamental is the idea that the sabbath relativizes work in the context of providing a rhythm to time which in turn is itself an eschatological anticipation of God's eternal presence. The issue of the sabbath then, and the sabbath rest, involves its being a temporal way of expressing God's presence in the rhythm of this created time's flow. Its rest is not first and foremost concerned with limiting human or Divine activity. It does this in the initial creation, but in the context of ordering time to reflect its ultimate eschatological transformation. The question is whether when time and sabbath are eschatologically transformed, will the relativization of and restriction on work too be transformed into something else? We suggest that logically this is necessarily the case. We will however, return to this idea shortly when considering the question of the meaning of rest in the sabbath and Shekinah / initial and new creation.

What we have seen emerging in Moltmann's discussion of time's end, is a view that eternal life will include a corresponding eternal "time" in which to live. Further, we also find that this new time is sufficient for living. Aeonie eternity is ultimately the eternity (time) "of the new life of the future world." (*CoG*, p.291. note 82.) "Eternal life has nothing to do with timelessness and death, but is *full-filled life*." (*CoG*, p.291.) Fulfilled life will take place in fulfilled time, and this fulfilled time is eternal aeonic time in the sense that it is time filled with eternity. (*CoG*, p.295.) Moltmann states:

However we may imagine this, it is the very opposite of 'a deathlike silence'. If we have to think of it as the time of eternal life, then we have to imagine it as the time of eternal livingness... The purposeful time of history is fulfilled in the cyclical movement of life's eternal joy in the unceasing praise of the omnipresent God. The preferred images for eternal life are therefore dance and music, as ways of describing what is as yet hardly imaginable in this impaired life. (*CoG*, p.295.)

The one potential point of difficulty for us is Moltmann's image of eternal time as cyclical time. If this is simply understood to mean a rhythmic flow of time which excludes the loss which transient time necessarily entails, then we find no problem with the image. Indeed this appears to be his meaning with the expression a "mutual perichoresis between eternity and time". (*CoG*, p.295.) If however, the image is pushed so that this new time becomes a type of simultaneous circular existence, an eternal moment, which excludes also any re-conceived formulation of a transformed before, during, and after, then we conclude that the image is inadequate. Then the notion of human "project" disappears. For, as we earlier suggested in our discussion of relational ontology, being necessarily includes the idea of relationship. Relationship necessarily includes the idea of reciprocity and the movement of mutuality (either moving something or being moved by something). Movement necessarily implies with it some kind of temporal space which allows something akin to progression; that is, some sort of before, during, and after. Indeed, even in Moltmann's account, there was a "time", a "*primordial moment*", in God's primordial aeonic time, when God decided to create. (*CoG*, p.282.) Likewise, eternal aeonic time, both absolute and relative, should also include this same possibility. What we envision here, is not a transient before, during, and after which is characterized by loss. Rather, it is an aeonic before during and after, which preserves all of the movement so that nothing is lost. If Moltmann's image of cyclical time can embrace this concept, then we are happy to affirm it. If not, we suggest that a new image is in order.

We now return to our initial questions concerning time and we conclude with Moltmann that time too will be transformed in the new creation into something which allows for the active living of life. Transience and death rather than the "temporal space" for living is what shall be destroyed. Given this conclusion, we have no logical difficulty (with respect to the question of time) in affirming that since there will be a time in the new creation there can also be human projects, and thus work, as a part of

life's new livingness. Our view that human purpose, which includes work, will be transformed in the new creation need not then conflict with the view of time which we find in eternity. Rather they correspond to each other. With transformed human purpose comes the transformed condition / "time" necessary for the realisation of this purpose. The risen life of Jesus, into which we enter, is not the end of activity, but the beginning of a new activity, the resurrection life.

Consequently, since work has already been demonstrated to be fundamental to humanness as ontologically part of human purpose, and since human purpose too will be preserved but transformed in the new creation, we suggest that it is also appropriate to add glorified work (which becomes a type of eschatological play) to the list of eternal life's preferred images of dance and music. We further consider this to be appropriate, even necessary, for glorified work has already been expressed in terms which make it too a type of aesthetic experience. It has been presented as a fundamental precondition for creative projects which themselves are the expressions and explorations of our total glorified humanness (and of glorified non-human nature) in harmonious communion with God in his glory, with other glorified humans, and with glorified nature. With this depiction, glorified work too became essentially both playful and artistic. It became an aesthetic category which, as such, should at least be located beside dance and music, if not made a more fundamental description of these celebrative activities.

The question of rest in God's and our eternity. Now the question which we must face is whether our vision of glorified work in aeonic time conflicts with another concept essential to the idea of the new creation; namely, that of God's and our eternal sabbath rest? If glorified work cannot be understood as encompassed by the ethos of the eternal sabbath rest, (due primarily to the fact that it is further creative activity) then this part of our hypothesis either fails completely, or needs radical modification. Importantly, we also suggest that if the ethos of eternal sabbath rest precludes our vision of glorified work, then likewise will it preclude the images of dance and music since each of these three images involves intensely creative activity rather than simply

reflection, contemplation or even passivity. This means that if work fails the criterion of “rest”, then these other two preferred images likewise will fail and cease to be preferred images.

Our primary concern however, is not with dance and music but with work. Yet the issues and questions involved are the same. Generally, they include what is particularly meant by God’s eternal sabbath rest, and what are the applications of this for our eternal livingness as we participate with God in this sabbath rest? Specifically they ask whether God’s eternal sabbath rest means the end of both human and divine activity and creativity?

Most of the theological resources which we need to answer these questions have been developed already in our discussions with Moltmann of God’s sabbath and Shekinah. What we need to do by way of summary is to indicate what these resources are, and then we shall apply them to our questions at hand.

We previously suggested that God’s eternal sabbath, his eschatological dwelling in his new creation, must be described and understood specifically as his eternal rest. Therefore, so too must our eschatological existence in and with God be depicted as an eternal rest. As Moltmann has suggested, the inner unity of the dual modes of God’s presence, sabbath and Shekinah, is found in God’s *menuah*, his rest. (*CoG*, p.266.)

Rest then, is a common characteristic to both the initial sabbath and the eschatological sabbath. However, according to the logic of the new creation as Moltmann has presented it (the end is much more than the beginning) rest, even God’s rest, like everything else will undergo an eschatological transformation and likewise become something new, something more than it was in the initial creation. For the initial sabbath rest is itself the promise of its future consummation. The consummated sabbath rest then, will be the beginning of a new and greater reality. It will be a completed rest and thus a new kind of rest both for God and for creation.

Moltmann himself appears to capture this idea of continuity yet newness when he comments that “creation begins with time and is completed in space.”⁸ (*CoG*,

p.266.) Notice that the change from the beginning to the end involves here more than simply a movement occurring within a non-differentiated concept - time. The change from the beginning to the end, and thus from God's earthly sabbath presence (sabbath) to his eternal sabbath presence (Shekinah) will also involve a categorical transition - from time (history) to space (eternity). This is why the construct itself, sabbath - Shekinah is used, rather than simply the imagery of earthly sabbath - eternal sabbath. The idea is that the end needs to be understood as more than the beginning.

Another way to express this categorical change is to also notice the metaphorical change which Moltmann uses. He initially represents the idea of God's earthly resting presence (sabbath) as God resting "from" his work. The imagery here is of a rhythmic flow of God's presence metaphorically in time. First, God creates, next he withdraws from his creation, and in so doing he then again "comes to himself". (*GC*, pp.278-279.) The rhythm is represented by God first being free "for" his works, and then becoming free "from" them. This is the very work - rest rhythm which is to be repeated in time with the earthly sabbath. This metaphor then, is one expressing God's presence temporally. His final eschatological resting however, is metaphorically depicted differently. It is understood in terms of a resting place. Eschatologically, God rests "in" his works, in the new Jerusalem. This is clearly a change from a temporal to a spatial metaphor. Again the idea is that there has been a transition for God's presence from time to space.

Now this categorical and metaphorical shift corresponds to the sabbath and Shekinah's complementary (promise-fulfillment) relationship. Of course, when we think in terms of their parallel relationships other things can be said. For example, even in the initial creation God rested both "from" and "in" his works. (*GC*, pp.279-280.) This corresponds to his having both a sabbath and Shekinah presence in the initial creation.

Our interest here however, is not with the implications of the parallel relationships

⁸ This does not mean that Moltmann denies the reality of time and space in common sense terms in the initial creation (where space-time is a unified concept).

between sabbath and Shekinah. Rather it is with the vision generated by the complementary relationship. What this captures is the idea that the eschatological sabbath is something more than simply the original sabbath. As we have previously argued, the Shekinah is not simply a repetition of the initial sabbath, it is something much more, something genuinely new.

However, this new rest should not be seen as annihilating the former kind of rest. In as much as the initial sabbath rest will be taken up into the eschatological sabbath rest, its very ethos as rest (if not its specific application) will need to be preserved and encompassed within the new. How is this possible? How could such a transformation be described concretely which preserves the ethos of rest while also producing a new kind of rest? Here again we must remember our earlier conclusion that the complementary relationship (promise-fulfillment) between the sabbath and Shekinah must be used to interpret its parallel relationships.

Let us remember that the earthly sabbath rest is the sabbath (God's presence) in the "time" of the initial creation. As we have already suggested, its construal as a temporal construct is the key for grasping its ethos in the initial creation. Since it is as such a temporal conception, the idea of the rhythms of time, that is, the rhythms of creative work and reflective rest, become a central application of its ethos. As long as there is a creation with and within transient time, this, or a similar rhythmic application of its ethos needs to be preserved. A sabbath rest from work is clearly part of its application for the initial creation.⁹

However, need the cessation of and from work also be an application of the sabbath

⁹ This view is not only consistent with the conception of sabbath presented in *The Coming of God*. It is also consistent with the discussion of the sabbath presented by Moltmann in *God in Creation*. In this earlier book Moltmann argues that the whole work of creation was performed for the sake of the sabbath, as a feast without end. (*GC*, p.277.) Because of this, because in it the initial creation is blessed and sanctified and because it is the feast of redemption which Jesus too affirms, Christians should also retain a sabbath observance. (*GC*, pp.291-292.) This means among other things that "in the sabbath stillness men and women should no longer intervene in the environment through their labour." (*GC*, p.277) The initial sabbath is a rest from creative and productive work in the initial creation.

ethos in the new creation which is no longer a creation in transient time? We suggest that it need not, and actually cannot be. We believe that in the new creation there will no longer be the rhythmic / temporal anticipation of perfect peace and harmony; that is, there will no longer be an earthly sabbath with its regulatory work–rest cycle. Nor will there be the need for such a sabbath. The eternal sabbath “rest”, which is more and greater than the initial, will have been fully realized and will have become the existent reality when God himself becomes wholly present “in” and with his new creation. The limitation on work therefore, (as part of the earthly sabbath) will have served its purpose as a promise in time of both God’s future Shekinah, and life’s future and eschatological harmony and balance. Neither the limitation on work nor the earthly sabbath will any longer be needed. Nor will they any longer be appropriate to the new kind of space and time of eternal livingness. When God is all in all, all relationships will be characterized by full harmony and mutuality / rest. They will involve the active and creative give and take necessary for relationship. The inter-relationships between God, humanity, and the non-human creation will be so empowered with the divine life, so “life generating”, that both divine and human (and also even natural) creativity and activity can and necessarily will be released from all limitation for their full and harmonious expression, all to the greater glory of God.

What we are arguing then, is that with the transition from the earthly sabbath rest to the eschatological sabbath rest, we will find that the conditions of life have been so transformed that the very application of the earthly sabbath rest too will be changed. The restriction on work therefore, as part of the temporal rhythmic work - rest cycle of the sabbath, will pass away. The distinction between “work”, “rest”, and “play” disappears.

In what way however, will the “rest” ethos be preserved if its concrete earthly application is bypassed? The key for answering this is found in the sabbath’s transition from time to space and thus, in God’s transition from dwelling with his creation in time to his indwelling creation in space. Rest, for God and us, will cease being a rhythmic

resting “from” in time, and become a resting place, a resting “in”. Rest eschatologically first means that God comes to a settled habitation. He ceases his restless and creative wandering and his Shekinah finds its peaceful and harmonious home within his creation. We his creation find our rest correspondingly in that as God is with us we receive our eternal life, our eternal happiness. (*CoG*, p.319.) Thus, eternal rest becomes redirected and applied as a kind of existence, as an eternal living of life characterized by perfect and harmonious relationships between God, humans, and nature.

With this redirection, the question of work becomes irrelevant to the question of rest. No longer at issue is whether eternal rest excludes the idea of glorified work. The question itself is mistaken for it commits the error of mixing categories. The point is that eternal “rest” (peace or harmony) will completely permeate the entirety of the new life and new existence. Rather than being a restriction on creative activity and human projects, rest becomes the way to characterize them. It becomes their release. Glorified work then is glorified work precisely because it is characterized by the new eternal rest. Another way to express this idea is that eschatologically work will become so permeated with the sabbath that it becomes freed and glorified work.¹⁰

This does not mean that glorified work is necessary, as such, to eternal rest. Just the opposite is true. Eternal rest is necessary for glorified work. That is, we are not suggesting that the condition of eternal rest establishes or even proves the idea of glorified work. This has not been our approach. Rather, our reason for positing glorified work lies in its being ontologically a part of our humanness and livingness which will be preserved and transformed in eternal life. Our point here is simply that our conception of glorified work in no way conflicts with the idea of eternal rest. Actually, more than simply the negation of the negative, we can state it affirmatively that

¹⁰ We suggest that Barth in his discussion of the “Hole Day” in his dogmatics, and with reference to the initial creation rather than the future new creation, was probing for an idea similar to this concept of work permeated with sabbath. See: Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, III 4 (1961), pp.50-63.

glorified work positively corresponds to the theological vision of eternal rest in that it allows for the concrete particular life for which rest becomes the characterization.

The question of the specific imagery associated with God's and our eternity. Having argued that neither the question of time nor the question of rest pose difficulties for our view that there will be glorified work (ontologically grounded in transformed humanness) in the new creation, we are left with the final question of whether the actual theological and biblical imagery associated with God's and our eternity precludes such an idea? We suggest that it does not, and to demonstrate this we will continue our dialogue with Moltmann specifically drawing upon his discussion in *The Coming of God* entitled "The Cosmic Temple: The Heavenly Jerusalem". (*CoG*, pp.308-319.)

Now the specific imagery referring to the new heaven and new earth, particularly in Rev. 21-22, is not firstly meant to capture completely (in concrete material terms) all of the particulars of that coming reality. Its purpose is to serve primarily as a prophetic encouragement for those Christians in this world who are resisting its evils, the evils of Babylon / Rome. (*CoG*, p.308.)

To accomplish this purpose the biblical author employs the images (which Moltmann summarizes as) a heavenly Jerusalem, city of God, crystal temple and garden city. Each of these images is important for the project of resistance for each encourages believers with the promise of the coming reality of God's cosmic Shekinah, his "immediate presence which interpenetrates everything", his "unmediated and direct glory", and, their vindication. (*CoG*, p.317.)

This means that the imagery itself is not given specifically to answer our more speculative questions concerning what we might or might not do in eternity. However, we believe that modestly interpreted the visions are nevertheless instructive for showing us something of the nature of eternity; for they show us something about both God and our eternal reality. Moltmann himself seems to concur with this when he writes: "But the visions offer the cosmic image of a different world which accords wholly with God, because he himself dwells in it." (*CoG*, p.308.) Therefore, to more broadly

conceptualize this coming different world we shall explore briefly its general characteristics (rather than explore all of its particulars which have been given for a different purpose). Herein we shall find a vision of eternity which will be useful for many different purposes.

To begin to establish our wider vision of eternity we want to consider the foundational imagery of the heavenly Jerusalem. The heavenly Jerusalem to the theological eye is seen as a holy city; the city of God, cosmic temple, and garden city. (*CoG*, p.313.) Interestingly however, the prototype, the earthly Jerusalem, was viewed by the first Christians ambivalently as both a place of hope but likewise as a place of terror. It was a place of hope for it is where the risen Messiah appeared. (*CoG*, p.309.) (It is thus fitting that it would become a symbol of the new creation.) It was a place of terror however, in that it first was where the godless powers crucified God's Messiah. (*CoG*, p.308.) Eventually, after the destruction of the earthly Jerusalem in A.D. 70, the apocalyptic image of a heavenly Jerusalem became the preferred image of hope. It became the "symbol of the hoped-for new creation of the world, God's dwelling". (*CoG*, p.310.)

It is interesting to notice here how a normal and ambivalent product of human culture, a city, could come to symbolize God's new creation. Of course, the logic of redemption is again at work. The old is taken up into the new (there is continuity), but the new is genuinely something new (there is likewise discontinuity).

Now why was the image of a city chosen to represent God's eschatological indwelling? Moltmann, following Richard Bauckham, offers several important reasons specific to its role as a symbol of resistance. For our immediate purposes however, it is sufficient to note that at the very least it would have been an appropriate symbol because the ancient Christian world was a world of cities. (*CoG*, p.311. note 111.) The Christians were city dwellers and the heathen were called villagers. (*CoG*, p.311.) The political and social implications of this granted, the immediate thing that we notice however, is that it is a city, a specifically human invention, which is chosen to be the

place of (to represent) God's new indwelling. One might have expected to find a garden (Eden) as the preferred image for God's dwelling place since it would have been a divine rather than human creation. Would not God most appropriately dwell in his creation symbolically in something which he has created rather than in something created specifically by humans? This is not the case however. The biblical writers apparently did not have a problem using imagery which itself was an ambivalent product of human civilization and culture. We would not want to push this point too far, but for us this suggests again the idea that the eschatological transformation of human particularity (rather than its annihilation) is a goal of redemption. Human culture has produced something (a new ontological reality) - a city, which when transformed by God shall continue in the new creation. Further, it will be taken up by God and God himself will indwell his creation symbolically in it. Fundamentally this suggests according to the imagery that, as transformed, human projects are appropriate to the new creation and to God's presence.

This idea however, of both continuity and discontinuity, of the human taken up into the divine, is further developed by an additional image for the eternal city which Moltmann highlights and explores.

The city of God is the perfect '*garden city*'. In it the abundance of life and the beauty of the Garden of Eden return, but it is more than just paradise regained. As city, it fulfils the need and longing of men and women to build a living place of their own for human fellowship and culture. As the perfect city, it fulfills the history of human civilization, which according to the biblical saga began when Cain, the city-builder (Gen. 4.17), murdered his brother Able, the nomadic shepherd. The new Jerusalem holds within itself the Garden of Eden ([Rev.] 22.1ff.) and is an image of perfect harmony between civilisation and nature. It thereby also consummates the history of earthly nature with human beings. The city of God lives in nature, and nature lives in the city of God. 'The garden city' was an ancient ideal of the *polis* for many peoples. (*CoG*, pp.314-315.)

This garden city (combining the realities created by both God and humans: garden and city) fulfils human civilization by being the perfect city, the perfect dwelling place

for both God and humanity. As civilization's fulfillment however it also suggests, not the annihilation or end of, but rather a new beginning to human civilization. It suggests a new communal livingness which shall again take form in what could be called transformed and freed, or, glorified human civilization. Thus, we find here yet another way to express the idea that human projects (here cities) are appropriate to the nature of the new creation.

With this proposal we have returned again to the logic of redemption which takes up the old but produces with it something new. This logic is found in the vision of the new Jerusalem which is envisioned garden city, but this city of God is likewise depicted (using this same logic) as God's crystal temple. How is this so?

Moltmann argues: "As city of God, the new Jerusalem is paradise, at once the holy city and the cosmic temple." (*CoG*, p.313.) It is a paradise in that it contains, like Eden, the water of life and the tree of life. (*CoG*, p.313.) Herein we find the sense that the initial, the garden, is gathered up in the new. Further, the new Jerusalem is a holy city in that "it fulfils the ideal of the ancient city, as a place where heaven and earth meet, at earth's central point, the point from which God rules his world and his humanity, not through power but through the force of attraction." (*CoG*, p.313.) Here we find a combination of the old, an earthly city, taken up with the new, God's universal and yet attractive rule.

This city however, is further seen as a crystal temple. The temple signifies God's indwelling presence. It is crystal in that it is the city of light, transparent for the "omnipresent light of God". (*CoG*, p.314.) Here we find a specific illusion to the Shekinah, which was present in the initial creation, but which becomes much more in the new creation; a crystal temple.

With this we have returned to the idea that the primary importance of the imagery is to illustrate God's new Shekinah, his new indwelling presence with his creation. At issue is not simply a conception of the future earthly reality, but what kind of reality it will be with God indwelling it, when God is all in all. Here we must admit that initially

the question of whether there will be glorified work in the new creation seems irrelevant to this specific imagery of the new creation. Yet this is not the case. Firstly, there is nothing in the imagery itself which would deny our hypothesis (and demonstrating this has been our first task). Actually, as we might expect, we have found in the imagery the same theological logic as we have found elsewhere (that the end gathers up but is more than the beginning). While this does not tell us specifically that our hypothesis is correct, it does at least suggest that since there is a strong case elsewhere for our hypothesis, and since the logic there is the same as the logic here, then the burden of proof here is to show that our hypothesis cannot be reconciled with the imagery.

Secondly, the imagery generally suggests that human products and projects (here a city) are appropriate to the new creation (in as much as they are gathered up, and as long as they are transformed). Thirdly, the imagery of a fulfilled ancient city implies what we have also argued elsewhere, that there will be genuine community and continued but new human livingness in the new heaven and new earth. This livingness then, as we have also suggested, can only be concretely realized in terms of projects which are the concrete realizations of mutual relationships. Finally, the imagery of a garden city implies more than simply a new community between God, nature and humanity. It also is an allusion back to the Garden of Eden and suggests a gathering up and transformation of it. If this is so, would it not be legitimate to also posit that as in Eden there will be the transformed and corresponding task of the care and cultivation of the garden? Does not the fact that Eden has an eschatological future also suggest that human work (which was initially mandated in Eden) likewise has an eschatological future? Without pushing this imagery too far we suggest that this proposition, or something akin to it, is in order.

Again therefore, we find that we have overcome a possible objection to our hypothesis that there will be glorified work (ontologically grounded in transformed humanness) in the new creation. Actually we have found this imagery useful for our

purposes. The given images of the new creation do not argue against our hypothesis. They actually make room for it in that they suggest that human creations will be taken up and transformed in the new creation.

With this conclusion then, we may set all three possible objections aside, or, more specifically we may use each them together to positively demonstrate the plausibility of our hypothesis. Having thus finally considered what we take to be the most important potential objections to our hypothesis, we suggest that this part of our thesis stands and has been adequately demonstrated.

CONCLUSIONS CONCERNING THE ONTOLOGY OF WORK

We are now in a position to combine this portion of our hypothesis (that there shall be in the new creation glorified work ontologically grounded in transformed humanness), with the previous portion (that human work is ontologically part of humanness as it is theologically grounded in human purpose). When we do this we find that we have developed a quite strong case from within theological anthropology for a conception of work as ontological; and this is what we have been most broadly seeking to demonstrate. We thus offer the theological conclusion that work ontologically is so fundamental to created and human existence that it is necessarily a part of both this life and the life to come.

It is interesting to notice that while our arguments for an ontology of work have simply made the point that work is fundamental to a natural and human existence (both in this and the new creation), what the ontology of work itself does not tell us directly is the full nature or essence of that work. It does suggest what qualities should characterize work, primarily that it should be permeated with the sabbath, but beyond this and by itself it does not tell us a lot about what work should or should not include.

What this study of the ontology of work has done is provide the theological (the created and eternal) basis and foundation for the totality of work; including here work's other aspects. If we want more detail concerning what the nature of work is, we must

look additionally to work's instrumental and relational aspects. These provide us with most of the particulars about work.

Having said that however, what these particulars can legitimately suggest concerning truly Godly work will additionally be determined by what the ontology of work shows as needing to characterize work. Thus, what emerges is a somewhat circular vision of work where each of its three aspects informs and further shapes the other. This means that there is a mutual give and take necessitated with the relationships between the three aspects of work.

This picture of work then, (with reference to its three aspects) is decidedly not hierarchical in nature. Yes, the ontological aspect initially establishes the other two aspects. Nonetheless, the other two aspects in turn give the content to the ontological aspect (the form) thus bringing the ontological aspect itself into the broader and further defining relationships which exist between work's parts. What then is established with the ontology of work is a set of mutually defining (and restricting) relationships which together tell us what the normative nature and essence of work is to be.

Exploring what this might look like and suggesting what this means for both a broader theology of work and work ethics is now the task which we take up in our concluding chapter.

CONCLUSION

THE THREEFOLD DEFINITION OF WORK AND ITS APPLICATION

A DOUBLE HYPOTHESIS EXPLORED

Throughout this thesis we have explored and argued the case for a double hypothesis. In the first part of our thesis we argued that work theologically should be depicted as a threefold non-hierarchical dynamic interrelationship of instrumental, relational, and ontological aspects. The appropriateness of this descriptive hypothesis for a more comprehensive theology of work was demonstrated through our examination of key historical and contemporary theological understandings of work. As we looked at the questions which theology had asked of work, and then how it depicted human work, it became clear that we needed our sufficiently broad yet unified framework for interpreting work: a framework which allows theologically for a multitude of sometimes diverse propositions concerning work, and yet also holds these propositions together in a meaningful way.

Likewise, in the process of our investigations we found each of our three categories to be necessary (practically and theoretically) to a fuller theological understanding of work. However, we also discovered that although the areas which we classified as work's instrumentality and relationality had been fairly well established, its ontology had been largely underdeveloped. We argued that many theological reflections on work have detected the need for and probed toward something like an ontology of work, (whether implying it from the doctrine of God or from anthropology) but that none had provided a satisfactorily comprehensive theological explanation and defence of it. This then led us to the second part of our thesis and the second part of our hypothesis (that

part upon which the first ultimately depends) that it is theologically appropriate and necessary to understand work ontologically, or, that there is an ontology of work. That is, we have demonstrated that human work is not only an instrumental activity undertaken to reach a secondary purpose whether that be survival, self-fulfilment, spiritual growth, the building of a society / civilization, or the like. Rather we have shown that work itself is a fundamental facet of our human and created existence and that this ontological status is derived teleologically (both protologically and eschatologically) from our essence (constitution and purpose) as humans. As such, work theologically becomes a valued entity in itself with its own particular "isness" and *telos*; even if it necessarily always also has instrumental value and affects both in this world and the one to come.

APPLYING OUR HYPOTHESES TO A THEOLOGY AND ETHICS OF WORK

The task of this thesis has been to demonstrate the validity of this double hypothesis. Now, in our final discussion we want to suggest how this established hypothesis functions, and what its implications are for both a theology and then an ethics of work.

The significance of our threefold understanding of the nature of work, for both a more comprehensive theology of work and then an ethics of work, lies in two areas. First, it provides us with a theological (and thereby an ethical) definition of work. Second, it offers us a practical model, a theological ethics, for evaluating particular instances of work. We shall here consider both of these contributions in turn.

A Theological Definition of Work

In our introduction we stated that this thesis was working toward a theology of work, and then we defined what we understood that to mean methodologically. We likewise suggested that the contribution of this thesis toward that goal was to provide,

first by way of a hypothesis to be tested, a theological definition of work. Rather than beginning with a finalized definition derived primarily from some aspect of human experience (and then proceeding deductively toward a theology of work), we wanted to allow for a significantly higher level of induction and to let theology itself, in relationship to human experience, produce its own more comprehensive definition of work. Our method was neither total deduction nor pure induction. Rather, we offered the skeleton of an open theological hypothesis about work for exploration (one which of course was also itself initially developed through both induction and deduction). What this hypothesis has become however, is our theological definition of work.

With each step in the exploration of our hypothesis there emerged a yet richer theological understanding of what work is currently, will be eschatologically, and thus should be ethically. Although no one sentence can ultimately capture the richness which we have seen, we here offer as a definition a summarized statement of what we have concluded.

Human work is a transformative activity essentially consisting of dynamically interrelated instrumental, relational, and ontological dimensions: whereby, along with work being an end in itself, the worker's and others' needs are providentially met; believers' sanctification is occasioned; and workers express, explore and develop their humanness while building up their natural, social and cultural environments thereby contributing protectively and productively to the order of this world and the one to come.

One value of this definition is that it pushes the field of a theology of work forward by encompassing a complex of issues, not hitherto always recognized, which a more comprehensive theology of work must address. As such, it redraws the boundaries for a theology of work.

Also, this definition makes a contribution to work ethics. It does this by making theologically and ethically normative statements about what human work is, and thus, should be. That is, it is a teleological definition with work's *is* also becoming its

ought.

Our Definition as a Model for Ethically Evaluating Work

This definition then is not only descriptive, it is also prescriptive. It becomes therefore, a practical model or framework for evaluating human work. Here we shall pull together our observations made throughout the thesis to suggest the nature of the model which we have produced, and we will look at what this model offers practically for a theological ethics of work.

The complex totality of work. According to our definition human work is essentially (not incidentally) a threefold activity. The three dimensions of work (instrumentality, relationality, and ontology) are each separate yet interrelated aspects within one complex totality called work. As we have suggested throughout our thesis, one way to express this idea is that the essence of work encompasses the mutual, non-hierarchical, interdependent relationships which exist between these three aspects. Applied ethically, each aspect within work makes its own distinctive contribution to work's essential nature, yet in so doing it likewise qualifies and further defines (and therefore limits) the other aspects. Thus for example, we can ethically deduce from the relational aspect of work that work should be structured and carried out in such a way that workers may experience personal growth and development in and through their work. By making such a prescription however, we have thus set some parameters around what we may legitimately posit ethically concerning both work's instrumentality and ontology. Instrumentality, for example, cannot therefore require that work be primarily about making the maximum amount of profit, if, by attempting to secure an excess amount of profit it would preclude or significantly hinder a worker's opportunity for personal expression and development in and through work. Further, work's ontology cannot simply dictate that work is solely about "the praise and Glory of God" (narrowly defined). Given work's relational aspect, the ontology of work must allow work essentially to be also about human development. In the same way then,

each of work's aspects in their own turn will, by making its own claims, further qualify and somehow dictate what we can ethically prescribe from its corresponding aspects. This dynamic and reciprocal process precludes the possibility that work, according to its aspects, can be construed hierarchically. In our model each aspect of work equally has a defining and qualifying contribution to make to work's essence, and thus to ethics.

Understood as functioning in this way what this conception of work's essential nature primarily guarantees is that we will necessarily resist any reductionistic ethical prescriptions related to work. It provides a set of checks and balances which will simply not allow one particular concern, as legitimate as it may be in its own right, to run roughshod over other important concerns. For example, some, following Adam Smith's defence of free markets and the division of labor, may argue that work is primarily or essentially concerned with human sustenance and that therefore questions of economics and economic efficiency must become the only (or primary) ethical criteria by which to judge particular forms of work, even though this tends to disadvantage the physical health and even the moral vision of the workforce. Others, following the lines of Marx's thought, may argue that work is primarily concerned with constructing a just social order or community and that therefore the only (or primary) criteria by which to judge forms of work will be the principles of social ownership and distribution. Both positions are correct to a point. However, according to our model, individually both of these positions would be ethically unacceptable for each is equally reductionistic. Internal to our framework are ever present ethical challenges to such narrowly and singularly conceived concerns. As we apply our normative definition of work, it becomes impossible to focus upon economic considerations alone for if we were to try we would immediately recognize that economic dictates will have other related social consequences which too need to be ethically evaluated. Here principles of social justice, without undermining the integrity of what some may call economic laws or realities, will nevertheless ethically limit (without prescribing) economics' dictates toward work.

Conversely, it will be impossible to ethically focus solely upon supposed autonomous moral imperatives of social justice, for according to our model, we will also necessarily recognize the ethical implications which for example, the relative autonomy of economics as a normative discipline suggests for work. Here economics will not dictate, but will set some parameters for what we may meaningfully say about our understandings of social justice. Our normative definition or model of work then, approaching a form of ethics sometimes termed Christian realism, will simply not allow us to reduce the nature and meaning of work to one concern only (be that economics, social justice or the like). This is so even if one particular concern proves to be especially important in a given context.

We do not deny then, that different emphases in work (in practice a contextually determined and thus flexible hierarchy) will necessarily be from time to time dependant upon a concrete need. For example, in a location where there is little food production and thus often significant levels starvation it will likely be necessary for work ethics to emphasize the instrumental (sustenance) and thus possibly the economic side of work. Practically, a work ethics may initially need to legitimize a host of economic activities and structures which will simply allow for the provision of resources for basic life support for the greatest number of people. In so doing it may even legitimize certain kinds of work which under less extreme circumstances would be deemed unethical. (For example, repetitive mechanized work in a factory.) The importance of our model however, is that even if we justify exceptions and overemphases for a time (even ultimately destructive ones), there are nonetheless built into the model ethical correctives which will constantly and necessarily be pushing for more overall ethical structures and forms of work. The model will constantly be pushing toward an ethical equilibrium (even though a perfectly harmonious balance may never be reached or may not even be attainable).

So far however, we have simply been demonstrating our model's restricting and balancing non-hierarchical function. Although this role is essential to the framework,

we now turn our attention to summarize what additionally the model offers to work ethics. Here we shall specifically look to each aspect of work; to what each suggests in itself and how it makes room for voices from other disciplines.

The instrumental aspect of work. Throughout our thesis we have referred to the instrumental aspect of work as incorporating two important dimensions. The first is the concern for sustenance. The second is the concern for person's spiritual growth through work.

Sustenance concerns focus upon work as a means through which to provide the necessary resources for human survival and flourishing. We have seen that no theory or theology of work could be complete or meaningful without paying particular attention to issues relating to sustenance. Sustenance must be a foundational element within any understanding of work. What however, does this mean practically? Here is where our theological work ethics model begins to open up and allow voices from other disciplines to make contributions. When we acknowledge that questions of sustenance are of foundational importance to the concept of work, we necessarily allow that the field of economics will have some normative prescriptions to offer. This does not mean that our theological work ethics will uncritically accept what economics at any given time is saying. However, it does mean that questions concerning real conditions (the scarcity of resources, the need for the creation of wealth, markets, personal freedom and choice, efficiency and the like) will be taken seriously and that the conclusions made with reference to these things will establish some ethical parameters.

Practically stemming from this we suggest that the most appropriate context, or economic system, for our complex reality of work is the market system (a version of market capitalism). We recognize however, that the relational and ontological aspects of work likewise require that this system itself is subject to moral critiques and demands. We mean that we will in significant ways want to moralize the markets. However, we will not seek to do this through centralized planning (which practically usually leads to scarcity, diminished choice and the elimination of freedom and creativity). Nor will we

primarily or exclusively seek to moralize the markets through legislation which often times inadvertently stifles human risk and thus creativity and exploration. Rather, we will want to work toward moralizing the markets by working toward the spiritual and moral transformation of those who enter into the market structures. Here both spiritual conversion and some version of virtue ethics becomes indispensable.

This then leads us naturally to our next point dealing with work's instrumental aspect (one that if incorporated into a work ethics would contribute much to moralizing the markets). The second instrumental concern which we have mentioned involves one's personal spiritual growth through their work. This may be referred to as work's contribution to sanctification. Starting with the Bible, throughout much of the history of theological reflections on work this has been a, if not the, primary concern. The idea is that in and through working a person grows spiritually through humble obedience to and dependence upon God, demonstrating to his or herself and others the nature of their relationship to God, being kept from idleness and sin, having resources to share with others and so forth. Here yet broader concerns within the field of theology and moral theology begin to contribute to our work ethics. For example, we find ethical dictates which work must be able to incorporate derived from theological reflection concerning the nature of Christian virtue and spirituality, the nature and demands of Church life, and sabbath principles.

The relational aspect of work. In this thesis we have primarily used the relational aspect to refer two other important dimensions of work. One is the concern for the existential development or self-fulfillment of the person through work. The other is the concern for the impact on, and value of, work for human social, structural and broader societal development.

Concerning a person's existential development or self-fulfillment through work we have argued that a theory or theology of work must allow room for human self-expression, self-exploration and personal development in and through work. If humans are open beings and by their nature not yet finished beings, then all that they do and

participate in will have an important effect upon their becoming and will ultimately contribute to what they become. Work, one of the primary ways (yet not only way) that humans apply themselves to the task of living life, will thus be a central contributor to the evolution of the self.

If this is true then again we find our theological work ethics opening up to contributions from other disciplines. For example, when our concerns focus upon human development and flourishing, we will necessarily look to fields relating to human psychology and human development. What kinds of human effects will certain types of work have on the person? What kinds of conditions and opportunities will the person need to become fully humanized? Theological ethics, although not totally dependant upon psychology for its answers, will nonetheless enter with it into a dialogue to explore these types of issues. Further, especially related to questions of self-presentation and self-exploration, our work ethics will also look to the arts and to the philosophical discipline of aesthetics to gain critical insights which can contribute additional ethical principles for evaluating work.

Concerning the impact on and value of work for human social, structural and broader societal development (civilization), we suggest that human societies are largely what they are as a result of our values which, in our vast array of personal and non-personal relationships, we make concrete through our work. Work ethics then will necessarily concern itself with the broader questions which address the kind of society or civilization that we want to live in. Ethically, what structures and organizational patterns do we want to produce and sustain? What kinds of services and or goods should we recommend that humans value and how do we influence people to want these things (as opposed to others which we have determined to be more harmful)? How do we combat racism or sexism which is imbedded in the workplace?

Again as a theological work ethics begins to consider these types of questions it will open itself to dialogue, albeit critical dialogue, with a host of social sciences. Sociology, management theory, social anthropology and the like will all add their voices

and suggest further ethical principles which will need to be considered within our working habits.

The ontological aspect of work. Finally, a large portion of our thesis has been concerned with what we have called the ontological aspect of work. In the processes of our discussions we have pointed out several contributions which this aspect makes to our theological understanding of work. Here we want to highlight specifically what this means for an ethics of work.

The ontology of work allows us to posit that work in its essence is more than the sum total of its instrumental and relational parts. "Ontology" indicates that there is a greater reality and *telos* to work than its instrumentality and relationality, either individually or combined, can capture.

Although it is derived from our human createdness and destiny, the ontology of work means that work cannot be reductionistically construed as simply a means to an end; be these human or other natural ends. There is more to work than its useful results for humanity, other beings, and nature. Theologically the sabbath is the crown of God's creation. All work, therefore, is to be permeated with the idea of the sabbath. This means that work is not simply an activity which we undertake to achieve a derivative, albeit useful, human or natural end. Work must first be understood as a thing in itself, ordered to itself and standing in itself before God. In this respect work does have its own character, independent of the individual worker. It is a transformation of the earth, in order that the Sabbath may be brought about.

A voice of one calling: "In the desert prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken." (Isaiah 40:3-5.)

This means that all *positive* transformative action (for construction rather than destruction) may be considered to participate in the nature of the Sabbath or the

fulfillment in the present of God's will on earth, which is the due preparation for the coming of the Messiah. In this limited sense we may meaningfully make statements to the effect that work is an end in itself and that work has its own intrinsic value.

The ontology of work then, suggests that our work or works intrinsically become acts of worship, and that our works become entities which themselves, by flourishing as themselves, can praise God. Work is not simply a means to instrumental or relational ends. It is certainly not less than this, but in being these things, together with its ontological aspect, work also becomes more than these things. The whole does become more than the sum of its parts.

Having said these things, both that work has a kind of intrinsic value and that it also has extrinsic value, we want to further clarify what we find to be the value and ethical prescriptions which follow from the ontology of work. Firstly, since work is in one respect an end in itself, any particular work (or product of work) must be treated and evaluated appropriately according to the dictates of its own being; so as to preserve its unique integrity as a particular work. Ethically we cannot only or simply evaluate work on the basis of its resultant functionality. The fact that it is a work itself with its own kind of being makes it ethically imperative that we treat each transformative act with a respect, reserve, or excitement which is appropriate to its own integrity and character as a work. We mean by this that work, as an end in itself, thrusts upon us certain ethical demands intrinsic to its being work; namely, that we are obliged to treat a work according to its ordering to flourish as itself.

Secondly however, since work ontologically also always has eternal value, (that is, since it necessarily contributes to the current world order, and as a part of that order when transformed will too affect the resultant nature and order of the new creation,) work must be ethically evaluated in terms of its success or failure to conform to the values of the new creation to which it is thus, necessarily linked. The ontology of work guarantees that work is not to be judged solely according to its current practical benefits. If it is to be fully ethical work it will also need to come into line with and

promote the values theologically associated with the new creation. Of course no human endeavour can completely accomplish this goal. The question however, becomes to what degree a work or kind of work points in this direction.

The logical rather than metaphysical priority of the ontology of work. Having thus looked separately at each aspect of work's essential nature we are finally in a position to step back and see one more important dynamic relationship within work itself which forms one more fundamental contribution of the ontological aspect of work. Our concern is here is again with how work's dimensions relate to each other (more positively rather than restrictively) in providing the framework for an ethics of work. Here we offer one further suggestion concerning work's essentially dynamic, non-hierarchical, interrelated and interdependent nature.

In addition to the premise of the equality of the dimensions: that each aspect of work is necessarily equal to the other and thus that each partially defines as well as holds the other mutually in check (both constitutionally and ethically), conceptually we also argue that the ontological aspect is logically prior (although not metaphysically prior) to the other aspects. How can this be so without our model ultimately turning into a hierarchical construct?

Logically the ontological aspect functions as the foundational basis for the other two aspects. We mean that the instrumental and relational aspects find their ultimate legitimization from their relationship to the ontological. What does this mean? The instrumental and relational aspects of work have obvious practical values in this life, especially with respect to continued human existence and human flourishing. However, a question may be asked as to whether, and if so how, can we suppose that these two results of work (continued human existence and human flourishing) are ultimately ethically good? What guarantees the goodness of human life itself? Radically, one might want to question whether human existence and flourishing are really goods at all given the apparent cost of these to the environment as a whole. Or less radically one could suggest that although these conditions are generically (and intuitively from our

perspective) perceived to be ethical goods, they may indeed not ultimately or fundamentally be so. We might posit that they look like fundamental goods, but that in the light of the evolution of the whole cosmos they must be understood as simply emotivist wishes that we ourselves have understandably invented. In a universe of chance, how could they be absolute or necessary goods?

Alternatively, it may be theologically argued that although work (instrumentally and relationally conceived) has some current value, in the light of eternity it is not really in itself significant. Work might be important now and even important eternally in as much as it relates to or affects one's individual spiritual development. However, beyond this, work in itself simply has an earthly and limited, and not eternal value.

To each of these lines of reasoning our response is "no". The ontological aspect of work locates both work's instrumental and relational aspects totally and resolutely into an eternal, and thus an absolute framework. The ontology of work means that work as a whole, including its constituent parts, is embedded into the fabric of both this world and the one to come. This legitimizes both the instrumental and relational aspects of work in such a way that their results (continued human existence and human flourishing) can be claimed to be absolute and fundamental ethical goods. Continued human existence and flourishing are goods not simply from an emotivist perspective. When work's instrumental and relational dimensions are placed in an eternal framework, both human flourishing and existence become bound up with and a part of God's eternal *telos* for his creation. That is, they make a contribution to and become part of God's new creation. Therefore, they have an ultimate heavenly and not simply earthly existence and resultant value. The ontology of work means that work's parts (as well as the whole) have eternal significance in themselves. With the ontological aspect then, the other two aspects of work (instrumental and relational) and their results (continued human existence and human flourishing) are guaranteed an ethical grounding and ultimate value from an eternal perspective.

Importantly, we do not find here any reason why this role ascribed to the ontology of work, the logically prior legitimization of work's instrumental and relational aspects, would necessitate a resultant metaphysical hierarchy between work's constituent aspects. Indeed in this thesis we have already argued why such a hierarchy (whether only affirming the metaphysical priority of the ontological aspect, or whether also derivatively affirming the metaphysical priority of the relational over the instrumental aspect) would be dangerous, and why it cannot be the case. Here we simply conclude that being the logically foundational aspect of work's essential nature does not require any further metaphysical moves or commitments. Rather, such a role simply suggests one more unique and necessary contribution of the ontology of work to the complex totality of work.

FINAL COMMENTS

We have now come to the end of our explorations into a theology of work. To what end have we written this thesis on work? We are convinced that the Church of Jesus needs to provide Christ's followers with yet more encouragement to explore and to imaginatively experiment with how our daily "normal" working activity (which occupies most of our waking lives) relates to: the whole of our lives (in our various relationships), to our spirituality, to God, to the rest of creation, and to eternity. We believe that the Church's effectiveness in witness, and her continued relevance to the lives of her children depends to a large extent upon how well she moves toward this goal. We are convinced that her task must increasingly be to guide all of her children into a deeper integrative understanding of the nature and meaning of human work. To that end this thesis is dedicated.

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