

Architects of Hope

*Constructions and constructiveness
in the theological worldviews
of Jürgen Moltmann and Sergei Bulgakov*

Kerry George

BA (English) Murdoch University

BTheol (Hons) Murdoch University

This thesis is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Murdoch University, March, 2009

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary educational institution.

Abstract

The thesis evaluates the Christian worldviews of two theologians, Jürgen Moltmann and Sergei Bulgakov, with the purpose of constructing a relevant theology of hope for the 21st century. The working definition of hope used in this thesis is that hope arises because there is some correspondence between the human will to live and the world that sustains and supports humanity. It follows that if humans can find no correspondence between the world and themselves then hopelessness arises. Increasing signs of alienation in society may stem from viewing the world as a meaningless place, or from viewing human life as meaningless, or both. Within these parameters of meaning, a theology of hope needs to encompass a purpose for both human life and the world. Jürgen Moltmann, a western Protestant theologian of the second half of the twentieth century, has based his life work on the theme of hope. Hope is to be found in God's promise to humanity of a future in which God will be all in all. God, and only God, may be relied upon to save sinful humanity come what may. In contrast, Sergei Bulgakov, an eastern Orthodox theologian of the first half of the twentieth century, rarely speaks of hope. Yet Bulgakov offers a worldview in which humanity has an ontological place in the world, which he calls God's divine Wisdom (Sophia). God's relationship to the world is based on providential interaction, not omnipotence, because God has created the world with its own being. Humanity's actions as co-workers with God have significance in the world's future. Because of the foundation of goodness in the world, these cumulative actions may be relied upon to contribute to the positive future of the world when God will, indeed, be all in all. I present Bulgakov's sophiology as a more relevant theology of hope in the world today because there is an intimate correspondence between the human will to live, and therefore hope, and the world which is created to support and sustain humanity.

Table of Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	1
Jürgen Moltmann	11
Sergei Bulgakov	23
Comparison and Conclusion	40
<i>Part 1: Jürgen Moltmann and Hope</i>	43
<i>Chapter 1: A Theology of Hope: the importance of hope</i>	43
Introduction	43
‘Theology of Hope’	44
The Praxis of Hope.....	62
Conclusion.....	67
<i>Chapter 2 The Crucified God: suffering in the world</i>	73
Introduction	73
The Historical Jesus and his Cross	75
God and the cross.....	83
Humanity and Praxis in light of the Cross	91
Conclusion.....	100
<i>Chapter 3 God in creation: humanity and ecology</i>	105
Introduction	105
A theology of creation: God’s relationship to the world	109
Anthropology: Humanity as the image of God and the world.	117
A theology of hope revisited. The relationship between humanity, the world and God.	131
Conclusion.....	139
<i>Part 2: An Eastern Perspective: Sergei Bulgakov and Sophia</i>	142
<i>Chapter 4 God in creation: Sophia and humanity</i>	142
Introduction	142
A sophiology of creation: God’s relationship to the world.....	146
Creaturely Sophia.....	169
Humanity.....	175
Conclusion.....	180

<i>Chapter 5 Christ, Sophia and Evil</i>	182
Introduction	182
Humanity and the Fall.....	184
The Incarnation	190
Sophian Humanity – Conforming to Christ.....	201
Conclusion.....	212
<i>Chapter 6 A theology of hope? The Spirit, Sophia and the future</i>	216
Introduction	216
The Place of the Spirit	218
The Work of the Spirit.....	225
Eschatology	245
A theology of hope?.....	255
<i>Chapter 7 Moltmann and Bulgakov: convergence and divergence</i>	259
Introduction	259
God in Creation.....	260
Christology: Theodicy in the Face of Evil	270
The Holy Spirit and Eschatology	276
Convergence and Divergence.....	283
<i>Conclusion</i>	291
<i>Bibliography of Works Cited</i>	301

Acknowledgements

To my supervisor, Alex Jensen, my greatest thanks for your supervision and for your unwavering optimism and faith that I would complete my thesis. Your positive guidance and cheerful disposition were of enormous importance to me. I would like to thank Murdoch University for giving me this opportunity and for providing wonderful on-campus facilities. I owe a great debt of gratitude to Theresia Johnston for the many life-coaching sessions that kept me going. Many thanks to Cecily Scutt for getting me through the first writer's block and many others thereafter. Thank you very much to Lloyd Porter and Hans-Georg Stork for help with translation. I could not have finished this thesis without the love and support of many friends and family members and I would particularly like to thank the following people. To my long time friend Maggie White, thank you for proof reading the thesis and providing many "brain food" dinners. I am grateful to the two who led the way, Carmel Posa and Liz Boase, both for their example, their valued friendship and for the unforgettable champagne picnics. Thank you to all my fellow postgraduate students, especially my good friends Alisoun Nicol and Kathryn Imray. Thank you also to my thesis writing group—Heather Conroy, Chris Klisc, Tracey Jones and Keren Geddes—for three years of practical support and friendship. Above all, I wish to thank my parents, Rosemary and Tony George, who gave me everything, and to thank my children, Lawrence and Tess and my daughter-in-law Jade, for their love and support.

Introduction

Each person is an architect, building a framework of reference from the available materials of existence, both visible and invisible. We are first given the building blocks of life by heredity, the circumstances of birth and the surrounding society and environment. We continue to be framed by personal experiences and relationships, in short, by our whole inner and outer world. As we grow into adulthood we construct an ever-changing worldview that enables us to understand our world and our place in it. It is largely unseen and unconscious yet it strongly influences how we think and act. As we mature we can become more conscious of our worldview and on how it affects our own lives, the lives of those we interact with and the world around us.

Although each person has his or her own worldview, it is primarily shaped by a larger societal worldview. The major paradigm that has shaped societies in advanced industrial nations is the scientific worldview. Over the last few centuries the scientific revolution has changed the way many of the peoples of the world think about that world. A key belief in a modern scientific worldview is that the universe, life and humanity exist by chance.¹ The perspective that there is no intrinsic meaning to human existence and that each person is just one small blip in an endless and expanding universe can be a frightening and depressing one.² Another premise concerns the way human beings gain knowledge of the world. In the scientific

¹ Malcolm Hollick, *The Science of Oneness: A Worldview for the Twenty-First Century* (Winchester, New York: O Books, 2006), 162.

² Studies in psychology support the link between meaning, emotions and coping strategies. See, for example, Shelley E. Taylor et al., "Psychological Resources, Positive Illusions, and Health," *American Psychologist* 55, no. 1 (2000): 99-109.

worldview, objective science is the means to true knowledge.³ The universe is comprised of matter or energy and we understand the world by studying its smallest components.⁴ This belief in the subject/object distinction has effectively separated humanity from the world around us. The sense of alienation or otherness coupled with a failure to value whole systems could be the root cause of the many environmental problems in the world today. Feelings of separateness could even be the basis of many other inhuman acts which result in war, famine, poverty, and so on. Of course, these are broad generalizations yet there is no denying that the world is in crisis. Malcolm Hollick proposes that nothing less than radical change in our understanding of the universe and of the meaning and purpose of life will lead to a better future.⁵

To this end I seek to contribute to a worldview that offers a different understanding of the universe, one that challenges notions of chance and meaninglessness. The worldview that I wish to construct begins from the whole instead of the parts yet also gives an intrinsic meaning and purpose to life, both at an individual and personal level and a universal level. This is a thesis about hope and meaning. It considers that each person can be the conscious architect of his or her own worldview. We are given the building blocks and we may also be constructive, taking what we need from the world to make sense of our lives. My own framework is a Christian one therefore I seek a Christian worldview which offers a sense of meaning and purpose in my life. I also seek an inclusive worldview which respects all people and all life on this earth that we share. I look for hope and meaning because they appear to be rare and wonderful commodities at a time when

³ Hollick, *Science of Oneness*, 9.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., 1.

fear and mistrust are sown by those in power.⁶ My specific interest in this dissertation is in what kind of Christian worldview is needed to help one live an affirming, hopeful and constructive life in a changing, conflicted world.

I will describe and assess two particular Christian worldviews, one eastern and one western, with an overarching question of hope: can a Christian-based eschatological hope in the future be the basis of personal hope in life on earth now? I examine the worldviews of two theologians, a western perspective from Jürgen Moltmann and an eastern perspective from Sergei Bulgakov. One theologian is German Protestant, writing in the second half of the 20th century and into the 21st; the other, Russian Orthodox, writing in the first half of the 20th century. Each theologian experienced times of great political and social turmoil in their countries of origin. Their work can be seen as explorations into meaning in their own lives and the world around them. Thus, the thesis examines and compares and contrasts the work of these two theologians from a perspective of hope and meaning. The thesis also presents a broad convergence of ideas in these two theologians, where east meets west enriching and vitalizing each other.⁷ Taking aspects from both worldviews as well as adding personal reflections I construct my own worldview as an example of a personal position of hope. My overall intention is to bring a sense of Christian hope into purposeful life in the here and now. My thesis is that a worldview which gives humanity a meaningful place in the world is more likely to engender hope in the future. Hope in the

⁶ For example, former Australian Prime Minister, Malcolm Fraser, comments on the atmosphere of fear used by the U.S. government, particularly after the events of September 11, 1999, to have neo-conservative policies passed which led to the "War on Terror." Malcolm Fraser, "Torture Team: Human Rights, Lawyers, Interrogations and the 'War on Terror' - a Response to Philippe Sands," *Melbourne Journal of International Law* 9, no. 2 (2008).

⁷ The terminology "east" and "west" will be used in a general sense in this thesis to distinguish between the Orthodox churches and their theologies and the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches and their theologies.

future, in turn, motivates and activates one to work towards the change that is needful in the 21st century.

Hope as a subject in its own right has been defined by many disciplines, including psychology, philosophy, sociology and theology. I will not give an extensive treatment of hope in this dissertation but offer some framework here on how hope may be understood in its relationship to meaning. Hope is a fundamental human affect. It has been described as 'the wager that there is some correspondence between this human will to live and the world which supports and sustains life.'⁸ This is a daring wager but it forms the basic presupposition for this thesis. Even against all evidence to the contrary hope moves our human will presupposing that life is somehow worthwhile. Without hope the will is paralysed. I suggest that despair and hopelessness arise when the world is seen as alien and one feels disconnected from it. In that case making the connection between humanity and the world restores hope and the will to live and moves one to work positively in the world. Studies in behavioural psychology support these contentions. People who are more hopeful have the ability to create successful pathways in their lives so that life is experienced in a qualitatively more positive way.⁹ Faith and hope have also been positively linked. Religious thought lends itself to positive expectations, including expectations about greater concerns such as the future of humanity.¹⁰ Actively religious North American people are more likely to live longer, happier and healthier lives.¹¹ Conversely, there is a

⁸ Michael J. Scanlon, "Hope," in *The New Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Joseph Komonchak, Mary Collins, and Dermot A. Lane (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan Ltd, 1989), 493.

⁹ C. R. Snyder, "Hope and Optimism," in *Encyclopedia of Human Behavior*, ed. V. S. Ramachandran (San Diego: Academic Press, Inc., 1994), 536-8.

¹⁰ Christopher Peterson, "The Future of Optimism," *American Psychologist* 55, no. 1 (2000): 49.

¹¹ David G. Myers, "The Funds, Friends, and Faith of Happy People," *American Psychologist* 55, no. 1 (2000): 63. See also H. G. Koenig, *Is Religion Good for Your Health? The Effects of Religion on Physical and Mental Illness* (Binghamton, N.Y.: Haworth Press, 1997), 97.

well-documented relationship between hopelessness, depression and self-harm.¹²

Hope and meaning may have an intimate connection both at a personal level and an extended, universal level. We can cultivate hope in our own lives and also have hope for the future of the world. Many religious worldviews encompass both. Already in the Christian tradition we find the importance of a hope that is both personal and encompasses the future of the world. Augustine was the first Christian writer to elaborate on the virtues of faith, hope and love, famously inscribed in 1 Cor. 13: 13: "And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of all is love." Augustine and later Aquinas describe the theological virtues of faith, hope and love as operative faculties for the sanctification of the human soul. Each person is a *homo viator*, journeying through life with one's aim fixed on God. In Augustine's thought, the path has been sanctified by Christ through the Passion and resurrection:

Through the compassion of love He is here, through the hope of love we are there. "For we are saved by hope" (Rom 8:24). Because our hope is certain. Although it refers to what is to come, we are described as though hope had already reached fruition.¹³

Aquinas equates hope with the Holy Spirit as well as Christ. On the one hand, Christ sets an example 'so that they will understand that the path to redemption goes through suffering.'¹⁴ On the other hand, the Spirit helps

first against the evil which disturbs peace, since peace is disturbed by adversities. But with regard to adversities the Holy Spirit perfects

¹² See, for example, R. R. Holden, "Hopelessness," in *Encyclopedia of Psychology*, ed. Raymond J. Corsini (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1994), 156.

¹³ Augustine, *Homilies on the Psalms, Psalm 122, 1*, in Augustine, *Augustine of Hippo: Selected Writings*, ed. John Farina, trans. Mary T. Clark, *Classics of Western Spirituality* (New York: Paulist Press, 1984).

¹⁴ Aquinas, *Collationes Credo in Deum*, sec. 6, in Eleonore Stump, "Aquinas on the Sufferings of Job," in *Reasoned Faith: Essays in Philosophical Theology in Honor of Norman Kretzmann*, ed. Eleonore Stump (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1993), 353.

[us] through patience, which enables [us] to bear adversities patiently... Secondly, against the evil which arrests joy, namely, the wait for what is loved. To this evil, the Spirit opposes long-suffering, which is not broken by the waiting.¹⁵

Difficulties are a part of life but the Spirit comforts and guides us. Yet as Eleonore Stump suggests, Christianity does not call people to a life of self-denying misery but to a life of joy even in the midst of pain and trouble.¹⁶ Without joy, Aquinas says, 'no progress is possible in the Christian life.'¹⁷ The Holy Spirit 'confirms our hope in eternal life,' 'counsels us in our perplexities about the will of God' and 'brings us to the will of God.'¹⁸ Here hope is also correlated with *not* knowing. There are times when faith alone must be the source of hope.

The connection between hope and meaning can be correlated to hope and faith. It can be difficult to distinguish between the concepts of faith and hope. If hope is hope for one's salvation as Paul suggests (cf. Col. 1: 5) then it appears to be a matter of faith, a belief that one will be saved. Both Aquinas and later Luther distinguish faith and hope on the basis of understanding and will. In Aquinas' thought, faith has a cognitional character.¹⁹ It is a recognition of God's revelation in Christ. Hope is volitional, part of the human will.²⁰ Luther concurs: 'faith consists in a person's understanding, hope in the will.'²¹ Faith for Luther is also

¹⁵ Aquinas, *Super ad Galatos*, chap. 5, lec. 6.

¹⁶ Stump, "Aquinas on Job," 354.

¹⁷ Aquinas, *Super ad Philippenses*, chap. 4, lec. 1. Cited in *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Aquinas, *Collationes Credo in Deum*, sec 11. In *Ibid.*, 351.

¹⁹ Aquinas, *S.T. 2a2ae*. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae, Volume 33: Hope (2a2ae. 17-22)*, trans. W. J. Hill, 60 vols., vol. 33, *Summa Theologiae* (London: Blackfriars, 1966).

²⁰ Aquinas, *S.T. 2a2ae*.

²¹ Martin Luther, *Table-Talk* (Translator: William Hazlitt) [eBook] (Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 2008 [cited June 2008]); available from <http://www.netlibrary.com.prospero.murdoch.edu.au/Reader/>. CCXC VII.

connected to absolute trust in God.²² In *Table-Talk* Luther describes the elements of both faith and hope and thus distinguishes faith in understanding from hope in the will. Faith precedes hope and is needed to teach right hope. Faith 'indites, distinguishes, and teaches, and is the knowledge and the acknowledgement; hope admonishes, awakens, hears, expects, and suffers.'²³ Faith 'fights against errors and heresies; it proves and judges spirits and doctrines. But hope strives against troubles and vexations, and among the evil it expects good.'²⁴ Faith is 'a gift from God.'²⁵ Hope is 'the courage and joyfulness in divinity [and] an elevation of the heart and mind...hope endures and overcomes misfortune.'²⁶ The meaning that comes from faith is the inspiration for hope. In both Aquinas and Luther hope is an important part of the relationship with God for the *homo viator*, a positive, enlivening feeling which opens the heart for love, the highest of all feelings. Hope, based on faith, motivates the will to act in the world and both enlivens and encourages the heart and the mind. Hope gives courage and joy. Hope gives endurance and the power to strive to overcome difficulties.

The theological understandings of faith and hope offered by Augustine, Aquinas and Luther support the correlation between hope and meaning that is the basis of this dissertation. Meaning, or faith, supports and inspires hope. The second supposition is that there is some correspondence between the hope that arises in the human will and the world which supports and sustains life. I propose that such a correspondence is necessary for any

²² Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, trans. Robert C. Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 44. Cf. *Martin Luther Werke*, Kritische Gesamtausgabe (Weimar, 1883), 30, 133.

²³ Luther, *Table-Talk* ([cited]).

²⁴ *Ibid.* ([cited]).

²⁵ *Ibid.* ([cited]).

²⁶ *Ibid.* ([cited]).

worldview that encompasses hope. A theology of hope then should demonstrate a positive connection between God, humanity and the world so that human hope is purposeful. The meaning that is the basis of hope would then be that there is a *purpose* for both human life and the world. These are the parameters of meaning I will be using when examining the worldviews of Jürgen Moltmann and Sergei Bulgakov.

Hope is important yet not as important as faith and love in the writings of Augustine, Aquinas and Luther. There will be no extensive theology of hope until Jürgen Moltmann's work in the 20th century. Moltmann began his extensive body of work with *Theology of Hope* in the 1960's. He united hope and eschatology, basing hope in God's promise to us for the future. Since then he has explored various areas of Christian theology and his worldview will be examined to understand how Moltmann comprehends God, the cosmos and humanity's place within it. In contrast Sergei Bulgakov in his own wide-ranging body of work rarely mentions the concept of hope. Bulgakov developed a system which gives God's Wisdom (Gk. *Sophia*) an intrinsic place within God, the cosmos and humanity. Because of humanity's integral place within the cosmos I propose that Bulgakov's sophiology is an *implicit* theology of hope. Bulgakov is an architect of hope because he has constructed a worldview of wholeness and meaning.

Moltmann and Bulgakov share some similarities as well as differences in their worldviews. For both the triune God is intimately connected with the created world. Hope is based in a certain future with God in the eschaton. On the path of the *homo viator* Christ is the exemplar and the Spirit is, as also noted in Aquinas, the source of joy amidst suffering. The crucial difference in the theologies of Moltmann and Bulgakov concerns how God interacts with creation. In Moltmann's theology God is the active subject of the world and is the power of salvation. Through Christ God takes the world of sin

into the godself's being.²⁷ The power of the resurrection is a sign of God's promise that God will also act in the future to overcome the sin in all of creation. In Bulgakov's thought God's relationship to the world is based on providential interaction, not omnipotence, because God has created the world with its own being. Humanity's actions as co-workers with God have significance in the world's future. Because of the foundation of goodness in the world these cumulative actions may be relied upon to contribute to the positive future of the world when God will, indeed, be all in all.

I will argue in this thesis that hope in the 21st century must reside in more than God alone. It is time to renew our hope in humanity, knowing the faith God has in us and knowing that humanity is created for the highest possible spiritual destiny. Bulgakov's theology returns humanity to its place as an agency of change and transformation in the cosmos revealing the inherent wisdom of creation. Hope in humanity is also about developing trust in our fellow human beings. Relationships are the fertile ground where hope and trust develop in mutual enrichment. Relationships include those with other living beings, both spiritual and earthly. Moltmann's theology reminds us that there is a time for challenging the injustices of the world and that there is a time for stillness, for being "at one" with all of creation. Taken together the two theologies create a worldview where meaning is ultimately about human responsibility for its own world.

I will now introduce each theologian more fully together with the influences which have helped them shape their respective worldviews. Each chapter of the thesis will also be summarized and situated within the thesis as a whole. Some parameters of the dissertation will be given in where it follows on

²⁷ A note on inclusive language. I use the term "godself" as a non-gender specific pronoun for God in this thesis. I will also alter quotes wherever possible to use inclusive language.

from my contemporaries and in where it offers a unique juxtaposition of two theologians from very different backgrounds.

Jürgen Moltmann

Jürgen Moltmann (born 1926, Hamburg, Germany) has been described as 'the most important German-speaking Protestant theologian since the Second World War.'²⁸ He has been a prolific writer and his books have sold in large numbers and been translated into many European and Asian languages. It is worth mentioning some of the key life experiences that have shaped his theology since these all contribute to his worldview. Moltmann had a secular upbringing. His early interest in mathematics and physics changed to theology as a result of his war experiences. As a prisoner of war in Scotland he learnt of German atrocities in the prison camps of Bergen-Belsen and Auschwitz and experienced the horror and shame of being a German soldier. A life-changing event occurred when, having been given a Bible by an army chaplain, he discovered the psalms of lament as well as the cry of Jesus from the cross: "My God, why have you forsaken me?" In *The Source of Life* he writes, 'I knew with certainty: this is someone who understands you...the divine brother in distress, who takes the prisoners with him on his way to resurrection. I began to summon up the courage to live again, seized by a great hope...this early fellowship with Jesus, the brother in suffering and the redeemer from guilt, has never left me since.'²⁹ We will especially encounter this motif of finding God in godforsakenness in Moltmann's christology, the subject of Chapter 2.

A second important experience in the prisoner of war camp was Moltmann's encounter with the ecumenical movement towards reconciliation. A group of Christian Dutch students spoke of Christ as the bridge through which they could bring themselves to speak to the prisoners. Moltmann recalls that

²⁸ Geiko Müller-Fahrenholz, *The Kingdom and the Power: The Theology of Jürgen Moltmann*, trans. John Bowden (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 12. Moltmann

²⁹ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Source of Life: The Holy Spirit and the Theology of Life*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 5.

they spoke of their own wartime experiences, including the loss of Jewish friends, encounters with the Gestapo and the destruction of their homes. Moltmann realized that 'we too could step on to this bridge which Christ had built from them to us, and could confess the guilt of our people and ask for reconciliation.'³⁰ He experienced the power of confession and forgiveness and this example of Christian reconciliation in practice became an important motif in Moltmann's own ecumenical drive. However, although this initial feeling of reconciliation was through a human vehicle Moltmann's theology of hope is firmly centred on God's and not humanity's capacity for reconciliation.

The last experience relevant to his worldview that I will mention is the guilt of the survivor. Moltmann survived a firebombing in Hamburg in 1943 while his friend standing next to him was killed. In his first turn towards God, he cried out "My God, where are you?" and later he says, 'the question "Why am I not dead too?" has haunted me ever since.'³¹ God came to Moltmann out of the horror, misery and darkness of war and he felt that survival was not just a gift but a responsibility. As a pastor and theologian Moltmann has lived his life in God's service and in thanksgiving. From 1966 he held a chair of Reformed theology at Tübingen University for 25 years. His dialectical theology, however, has its roots in his early life-changing experiences of the extremes of despair and hope, of shame and forgiveness, and the witnessing of death and life. The metaphor of Christ as the bridge mentioned above has remained elusive in Moltmann's theology. It is only in his later theology that some sense of reconciliation between the dark and the light or the human and the divine takes place.

³⁰ Ibid., 6. Cited in Müller-Fahrenholz, *Kingdom and Power*, 18.

³¹ Moltmann in Müller-Fahrenholz, *Kingdom and Power*. Original quote in Moltmann, *Source of Life*, 2.

Moltmann's personal experiences of the world around him have continued to influence his theology. Moltmann wrote about hope in the 60's, the politics of suffering in the 70's, ecology in the 80's, and the turn to the Spirit in the 90's. Geiko Müller-Fahrenholz points out that it is Moltmann's intention 'to be recognized as a committed man of his day'³² and to dialogue with the issues of the times. Chapters 1-3 assess Moltmann's theology historically, that is, appraise the unfolding of his thought over four decades. The concerns of each decade are broadly summarized by four themes, each with significant publications. They are hope and eschatology, (*Theology of Hope*, 1964³³), christology, (*The Crucified God*, 1974³⁴), creation, (*God in Creation: An Ecological Doctrine of Creation*, 1985³⁵) and pneumatology, (*The Spirit of Life*, 1992³⁶). Two later works that reflect some changes to his earlier eschatology and christology are also included as major texts: *The Way of Jesus Christ*, 1990³⁷ and *The Coming of God*, 1996.³⁸

I will mostly be working with the English translations of Moltmann's work and supplementing this with the original German when certain concepts need clarification or closer interpretation. The themes represented by these works form Moltmann's worldview. We have hope in this future because it is God's promise to us. The guarantee of this promise is Jesus Christ who is present to us through the cross and the resurrection. The Spirit is God's presence on earth, sharing both the joy and the suffering of existence. One

³² Müller-Fahrenholz, *Kingdom and Power*, 154.

³³ Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, trans. James W. Leitch (London: SCM Press, 1967).

³⁴ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, trans. R. A. Wilson and John Bowden (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1974).

³⁵ Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation: An Ecological Doctrine of Creation*, trans. Margaret Kohl, English ed. (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1985).

³⁶ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992).

³⁷ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus Christ: Christology in Messianic Dimensions*, trans. Margaret Kohl (London: SCM Press, 1990).

³⁸ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Coming of God: Christian Eschatology*, trans. Margaret Kohl (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1996).

sees an elucidation of the basis of hope in all areas of Christian theology viewed through an eschatological lens. In other words, Moltmann has “filled out” his original theological impulses with his work over the decades since *Theology of Hope*. My intention in the three chapters on Moltmann is to offer a broad overview of his theology and to give an outline of his theological worldview.³⁹ My focus is on those elements of his worldview which establish the relationship between God and the world and my aim is to determine any correspondence between God, the world and human hope.

Chapter 1 of this dissertation, entitled “A theology of hope: the importance of hope,” begins with a synopsis of Moltmann’s earliest meditations on hope in *Theology of Hope*. Moltmann presents eschatology as the central focus of his doctrine of Christian hope. God’s promise of salvation is the source of hope. The resurrection of Christ, which prefigures the new creation, changes the category of human history into one of God’s history. The future is dialectically opposed to the present and the past so that reality will only be achieved in the future. Hope informs Christian praxis by motivating both the church and the individual to challenge and revolutionize the present.

Moltmann’s intent in *Theology of Hope* is to challenge the eschatological thinking in the theology of the preceding decades. His first concern is to return eschatology to a central and contextual place within Christian theology. Moltmann contends that the renewed interest in eschatology in Protestant thinking of the previous sixty years (that is, from the end of the nineteenth century) was based in problematic forms of Greek thinking.

³⁹ For a detailed exposition of Moltmann’s theology see Richard Bauckham, *Moltmann: Messianic Theology in the Making* (Basingstoke, Hants, UK: Marshall Pickering, 1987), Richard Bauckham, *The Theology of Jürgen Moltmann* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995), Müller-Fahrenholz, *Kingdom and Power*.

This has obscured the “real language” of eschatology.⁴⁰ The transcendental eternity of Karl Barth, Bultmann’s existentialism and Kierkegaard’s eternal present all suffer, in Moltmann’s thinking, from a Greek notion of the *logos* as the epiphany of the eternal present.⁴¹ Moltmann calls this kind of thinking ‘transcendental eschatology.’⁴² He objects to its ahistoricity and to its definition of the transcendental self whereby human self-revelation lives in this realm of eternal revelation. The future kingdom of God has little or no relationship to history or the world. However, Moltmann’s resituating of eschatology in terms of God’s revelation falls into similar difficulties. Human history becomes subsumed into God’s history. The world must be resisted in its godforsakenness until God resurrects all in the eschaton.

Chapter 1 includes Moltmann’s later writings on hope. *Theology of Hope* found an enthusiastic audience in the 60’s in an atmosphere of what Moltmann later described as an “outburst of hope.”⁴³ But the world of the 21st century is a different place. Therefore chapter 1 also assesses whether Moltmann’s theology of hope was a product of the times or whether it still has relevance today. In Moltmann’s later theology he attempts some reconciliation between God’s actions and the world. Instead of the resurrection seen as an alien event and a contradiction it is seen as the path of the human spirit. Spiritual growth is possible through the trials of the world. There is some sense of a progressive revelation of the Spirit and some correspondence between this world and the future. In terms of the dissertation this is important for a sense of hope in the world of today because it gives some reason for life on earth.

⁴⁰ Moltmann, *Hope*, 40.

⁴¹ See Introduction, 60.

⁴² Moltmann, *Hope*, 45.

⁴³ See Richard Bauckham, "Moltmann's *Theology of Hope* Revisited," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 42, no. 2 (1989): 201.

Chapter 2 of the dissertation is entitled “The Crucified God: suffering in the world.” This chapter examines Moltmann’s christology and includes a synopsis of *The Crucified God*. Its purpose in terms of the overall dissertation is to establish where Moltmann situates hope in the face of suffering. And this is Moltmann’s own purpose in this book: it is a response to the fundamental issue of theodicy— why is there suffering in the world? His aim is to understand the crucified Christ in the context of the resurrection so that the crucifixion is central to humanity’s picture of freedom and hope. He acknowledges that a theology of the cross is not obvious in his previous work, *Theology of Hope*, but asserts that it was the guiding light all along.⁴⁴ As Richard Bauckham points out, in this return to the centrality of the cross Moltmann is indebted to Luther and to his own Reformed tradition.⁴⁵ He adopts Luther’s dialectical mode of theological thinking as well as Luther’s central thesis: *Crux probat omnia* (‘The cross is the criterion of all things’).⁴⁶

Moltmann cites his own influences as beginning with lectures by Hans Joachim Iwand, Ernst Wolf and Otto Weber in 1948/49 in Göttingen. From a background of Reformation theology, these lectures centred theology around the crucifixion, ‘in the sight of the one who was abandoned and crucified.’⁴⁷ Later influences in the 1960’s included the Second Vatican Council and the World Council of Church’s Uppsala Conference in 1968. These two events gave Moltmann hope that from the post-war criticism of church and theology new horizons could open up for society and the church. For Moltmann, ‘Whether or not Christianity, in an alienated, divided and

⁴⁴ Moltmann, *Crucified God*, 1.

⁴⁵ Bauckham, *Moltmann*, 65-7. See also, Moltmann, *Crucified God*, 7, 70.

⁴⁶ Moltmann, *Crucified God*, 7. Bauckham gives a concise summary of *Crucified God* and Moltmann’s influences in Bauckham, *Moltmann*, 53-90. For Luther’s theology of the cross, see A. McGrath, *Luther’s Theology of the Cross* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), Moltmann, *Crucified God*, 70-73.

⁴⁷ Moltmann, *Crucified God*, 1.

oppressive society, itself becomes alienated, divided and an accomplice of oppression, is ultimately decided only by whether the crucified Christ is a stranger to it or the Lord who determines the form of its existence.⁴⁸ Theology becomes political in terms of resistance to alienation, division and oppression in the world. In Moltmann's desire to give a more profound dimension to his theology of hope he is aware that he is 'following the same course as Johann Baptist Metz, who for several years has been associating his politically critical eschatology more and more closely with the "dangerous remembrance" of the suffering and death of Christ.'⁴⁹ Moltmann sees a crisis of identity for the church and Christians which can only be alleviated by living into the world, that is, by moving into a 'social and psychotherapeutic commitment.'⁵⁰

From these various influences, Moltmann frames his own christology. Chapter 2 gives a summary of this christology. It examines Moltmann's interpretation of the historical Jesus and his humanity and how Jesus in history becomes the resurrected Christ. Moltmann is at pains to situate the cross of Jesus within the whole Trinity. He is influenced by the Jewish theology of Abraham Heschel, in which 'God is affected by events and human actions and suffering in history.'⁵¹ The cross is not just the suffering of God but also a protest against suffering. The resurrection therefore represents an eschatological victory over suffering. He proposes a kenotic model where humanity follows Christ 'along the way of self-emptying into non-identity.'⁵² The way of praxis is determined by dialectic thought: he

⁴⁸ Ibid., 3.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 5.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 13.

⁵¹ Ibid., 270. For the concept of the pathos of God, see Abraham Heschel, *The Prophets*, New York, 1962.

⁵² Ibid., 18.

who was godforsaken is raised, therefore we also can identify with the godless and forsaken.

Chapter 2 closes with a critique of Moltmann's christology and discusses how successful Moltmann's answer to theodicy is. The problems of the divine/human divide remain in Moltmann's christology and theodicy. Moltmann rejects the early doctrine of the two natures in Christ⁵³ and reframes the crucifixion as an "event" between Father, Son and Spirit. There is only one nature for Moltmann so that the human suffering of Jesus is shared by the Father and the Spirit. God joins with the world and its history in this event but this does not mean that any reconciliation within the human world occurs. Reconciliation is only possible as a divine feat of the eschaton. There is no correspondence to be found between the world itself and humanity except in its shared godforsakenness. Yet God's love has been revealed to humanity in the shared suffering of the cross and human praxis now means acting in solidarity with those who suffer. Moltmann, however, has no answer for the presence of suffering or evil in the world.

The final chapter on Moltmann's theology is entitled "God in creation: humanity and ecology." Chapter 3 examines Moltmann's theology of creation in God's relationship to the world and humanity's relationship to the world. Its purpose is to complete the picture of Moltmann's systematic enterprise and revisit his theology of hope. This chapter specifically focuses on two books: *God in Creation* and *The Spirit of Life*, but references several other works that give Moltmann's later thoughts on eschatology and hope. Although this later theology appears to be almost a complete reversal of the theology discussed in the previous two chapters there are fundamental aspects that do not change. God has joined with creation yet creation has no

⁵³ For the doctrine of the two natures, see the Chalcedonian Creed in J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, Third ed. (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1965), 339-40.

purpose in its own right. Humanity is not an agent of transformation towards the promised eschaton when God redeems all things. Humanity, however, is given the relational model of the Trinity as its guide to overcome its natural perversity and continues to have a certain hope in the future.

Moltmann's aim in *God in Creation* is to forward a new theology of creation that addresses the modern ecological crisis. His method is twofold. He critically examines the historical unfolding of theological doctrines of creation in order to find the reasons for the current human understanding of the world. Then, to form his own theology of creation, he takes positive aspects of these theologies of creation and combines them with an engagement with new, post critical scientific methods and ways of thinking. *God in Creation* represents a marked shift in Moltmann's thinking. Humanity's alienation from the world, previously seen as necessary in *The Crucified God*, is now seen in a negative light. The world has changed from something that is condemned to pass away to one that needs saving. The goal changes to peace with nature. Moltmann now gives a comprehensive survey of theological doctrines of creation in terms of their propensity to alienate and isolate humanity from the world. These polarizing doctrines, where nature is opposed to God, body to spirit, and so on, are shown to cause the unhealthy state of the world today. He offers an ecological theology of nature, with the central metaphors of openness and closedness. Self-transformation is achieved through developing an openness to nature.

God in Creation is a response to the ecological crisis that was becoming more and more evident since the 1980's. In German Protestant theology Moltmann finds a problematic alternative posed: 'either "natural theology," which thought that God's order could be discovered in the natural conditions of nation and race...or "revealed theology," which hears and

holds fast to Jesus Christ as “the one Word of God.”⁵⁴ Moltmann endeavours to bring these two alternatives together so that salvation history is revealed *in* the world. He gives a comprehensive history of modern theology’s tendency to dismiss natural theology as peripheral to revealed theology. Friedrich Schleiermacher, Friedrich Gogarten, Rudolf Bultmann and Emil Brunner are named as examples of the divisive split made in philosophy and theology between humanity and nature.⁵⁵ He prefers to adopt an earlier natural theology which sees a reflection of God in nature and that ‘all divine activity is pneumatic in its efficacy.’⁵⁶ *God in Creation*, therefore, is largely Moltmann’s pneumatology. Through emphasizing the working of the Holy Spirit Moltmann emphasizes relationality and mutuality as the way forward for an ecological theology. He wants to move away from an anthropocentric world view to a theocentric cosmic viewpoint.

In *Spirit of Life* Moltmann develops cosmic hope, that is, hope for all of creation. Central to this hope is the Spirit’s role in creation and in the eschaton. Moltmann looks to a trinitarian model of God to understand the essence of mutuality and relationship. He maintains a dialectical view of the world but proposes that oppositions need to be viewed as complementary, as aspects of a common process. This makes it possible ‘to discern and define more precisely the possible reconciliation between freedom and

⁵⁴ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, preface, xi.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 35. See Friedrich Schleiermacher, "Sendschreiben an Dr. Lücke, as Introduction to *Der Christliche Glaube Nach Den Grundsätzen Der Evangelische Kirche*," *Bibliothek theologischer Klassiker* 13 (1889). Friedrich Gogarten, *Der Mensch Zwischen Gott Und Welt* (Heidelberg: 1956). Rudolf Bultmann, "The Understanding of Man and the World in the New Testament and in the Greek World," in *Essays Philosophical and Theological* (London and New York: ET, 1955), 88. Emil Brunner, *Dogmatics I: The Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption* (London and Philadelphia: ET, 1952), 7f.

⁵⁶ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 9. An example given is Basil, *On the Holy Spirit*, ch. 38 (PG 32, 136B).

necessity, grace and nature, covenant and creation, being a Christian and being a human being.⁵⁷ Reconciliation becomes the new catchcry.

A major influence for Moltmann in developing an ecological theology is the kabbalistic tradition of Judaism, specifically the ideas about the divine *zimsum* (God's self-limitation) and the divine *Shekinah*. *Zimsum*, meaning concentration and contraction, is used to signify God's relationship to creation. Instead of the Augustinian idea of creation as an act of God outwards, Moltmann uses this understanding of the kabbalistic doctrine of the self-limitation of God. For Moltmann, this means that 'God makes room for his creation by withdrawing his presence.'⁵⁸ It is the Holy Spirit who resides in the world. Moltmann takes understandings of the shared suffering of *Shekinah* with the people of Israel to create a metaphor of the Spirit as a motherly presence who resides with us in the world. From Franz Rosenzweig he takes up the importance of the sabbath for God both in creation and in the world to come.⁵⁹ The sabbath becomes the pinnacle of creation for Moltmann, a day for being rather than becoming.

Moltmann's theocentrism is evident in the relatively small amount of writing he devotes to anthropology. It is surprising that Moltmann does not address anthropology in *Crucified God*. He does examine humanity in chapters 8 and 9 in *God in Creation*. He considers evolutionary humanity and the human being as God's image in creation. With his new emphasis on the created world he largely resituates the human person by emphasizing its close relation to the rest of nature.⁶⁰ One positive result of this is that Moltmann, in his move towards wholeness and nature, reclaims bodiliness

⁵⁷ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 9.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 87.

⁵⁹ See Franz Rosenzweig, *Der Stern Der Erlösung, Pt Iii, Book 1* (Heidelberg: 1959), 63-9.

⁶⁰ See William C. French, "Returning to Creation: Moltmann's Eschatology Naturalized," *Journal of Religion* 68, no. 1 (1988): 83.

in his use of *Gestalt* theory.⁶¹ The theological model for the human being is Jesus Christ. Moltmann disagrees with Karl Barth's idea of Jesus Christ as the model of 'ordered oneness and wholeness.'⁶² Moltmann's Jesus is a human being who struggles at Gethsemane and dies believing himself forsaken by his Father.⁶³ Moltmann prefers a social analogy of the human being in God's image where the ideal of human relationship is modelled on the social Trinity.

In the conclusion of Chapter 3 I summarize Moltmann's theological worldview. I suggest that his theocentric emphasis can often make human endeavour look superfluous. It is God who atones, raises up and glorifies creation. God carries the human history of suffering and injustice. Although Moltmann supports the notion of reconciliation in human society this reconciliation does not affect the eschatological redemption of creation. Despite this lack of efficacy Moltmann supports resistance to forms of oppression, environmental awareness and societal change. There are signs of promise in life on this earth and this gives us hope for the future when God will glorify the world. The discussion of Moltmann's theology will continue in chapter 7, which will compare the theologies of Jürgen Moltmann and Sergei Bulgakov in the light of their respective worldviews and my own thesis on hope arising from a relationship between the human will to live and the world which sustains and supports life.

⁶¹ Moltmann uses the terms of *Gestalt* therapy with reference to F. S. Perls, R. F. Hefferline, and P. Goodman, *Gestalttherapie. Lebensfreude Und Persönlichekeitsentfaltung* (Stuttgart: 1979). H. Petzold, *Die Neuen Körpertherapien*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: 1980). Et. al. in Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 353, f/n 40.

⁶² Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, vol. 3, III/2, 332. In Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 352, f/n 30.

⁶³ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 353, f/n 30. Also Moltmann, *Crucified God*, 145-53.

Sergei Bulgakov

Chapters 4-6 of the dissertation examine the work of Sergei Bulgakov (1871-1944), a Russian Orthodox priest and scholar.⁶⁴ My intention in examining this particular eastern perspective is to introduce the theory of sophiology. Bulgakov's understanding of Sophia, the Wisdom of God, is one which offers a different understanding of the role and purpose of humanity in creation to the one encountered in Moltmann's theology. Chapter 4 of the thesis will focus on God's relationship to creation and humanity through Sophia. Chapter 5 examines Bulgakov's interpretation of Christ, particularly his understanding of the crucifixion and evil and their effect on Sophia and humanity. Chapter 6 will interpret sophiology as a theology of hope, addressing Sophia's history, past, present and future, with particular reference to the work of the Spirit.

For someone who has been called 'one of the leading theologians and thinkers of our era'⁶⁵ Bulgakov is largely unknown in the west. English scholarly engagement has been hampered not only by a dearth of translated texts, a situation in the process of being deservingly rectified by translator Boris Jakim, but interest has no doubt also been hampered by the radical and complex nature of the work itself.⁶⁶ The study of Sophia, too, is also largely unknown in western theology, found only in some feminist and ecotheological writings. Yet I propose that both Bulgakov and Sophia have

⁶⁴ A note on transliteration and spelling: I will be using the U.S. Library of Congress System of transliteration of the Russian (Cyrillic) script except in certain cases where another spelling is common in English. I have elected to use the spelling of "Sergei" but it should be noted that other translations use Sergius, Sergii (which denotes priesthood), Sergey and Sergej.

⁶⁵ Myroslaw Tataryn, "Sergius Bulgakov (1871-1944): Time for a New Look," *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 42 (1998): 315.

⁶⁶ Most of Bulgakov's major works are also available in French, translated by Constantin Andronikof, as well as some material in German. See Introduction, *Sergei Bulgakov, Towards a Russian Political Theology*, trans. Rowan Williams (Edinburgh: T&T Clark Ltd, 1999), 14-17.

much to offer in the search for human meaning, purpose and hope. Here is a brief introduction to both Bulgakov – his life and influences – and Sophia.

Sergei Bulgakov was born in central Russia in 1871, the son of an Orthodox priest. In the revolutionary climate of Russia in the late nineteenth century, Bulgakov rejected his faith and adopted Marxism, later becoming a lecturer in political economy at Kiev. A study of German idealism led him to renewed interest in both religion and philosophy and to study the sophiology of Vladimir Soloviev. A thorough biography which traces Bulgakov's spiritual evolution at this time is *The Cross and the Sickle: Sergei Bulgakov and the Fate of Russian Religious Philosophy, 1890-1920* by Catherine Evtuhov.⁶⁷

Bulgakov returned to his faith and was ordained in 1918, but was soon forced to live in exile for the remainder of his life. He and his wife and children moved to Prague and then Paris, where Bulgakov became dean and professor of dogmatics in the newly formed Russian Orthodox Theological Academy. Bulgakov was a man of immense learning, embracing the Scriptures, patristics, philosophy, psychology, Russian and Western literature, economic and social theory as well as engaging with theologians from many countries and denominations.⁶⁸ He was one of the founders of the ecumenical Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius in 1927. This organization, which continues today, provided a forum for contact and friendship between Orthodox and Anglicans.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Catherine Evtuhov, *The Cross and the Sickle: Sergei Bulgakov and the Fate of Russian Religious Philosophy, 1890-1920* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997).

⁶⁸ Michael Plekon, "Russian Theology and Theologians Revisited," *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 44 (2000): 412.

⁶⁹ For a history of the Fellowship see *A Historical Memoir by Nicolas and Militza Zernov* (1979) http://www.sobornost.org/fellowship_history.html.

Like Moltmann, key personal experiences helped to shape Bulgakov's theological enterprise. Bulgakov experienced a being that he recognized as Sophia. He encountered Sophia both on the steppes of southern Russia and in the Hagia Sophia, Constantinople. In the Hagia Sophia, 'St Sophia was revealed to my mind as something absolute, self-evident, and irrefutable.'⁷⁰ Perhaps openness to these visions occurred because Sophia has a place in Russian Orthodox liturgy.⁷¹ Bulgakov experienced both the highs and lows of existence. After the death of his three year old son he wrote, "In the light of a new, hitherto completely unknown experience heavenly joy together with the pain of the crucifixion descended into my heart, and in the darkness of God-forsakenness, God reigned in my soul."⁷² Both Moltmann and Bulgakov experienced God even in the darkness of suffering.

His exile from Russia was also formative. He became a part of what is called the Russian School. The theology of the Russian School developed differently from Orthodoxy in Russia as the exiles grappled with the challenges of a displaced faith community.⁷³ These included, as Valliere proposes, 'the tension between tradition and freedom, the challenge of modern humanism, the mission of church to modern society, the status of

⁷⁰ Sergius Bulgakov, *A Bulgakov Anthology*, ed. James Pain & Nicolas Zernov (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1976), 13.

⁷¹ See Andrew Louth, "Wisdom and the Russians: The Sophiology of Fr Sergei Bulgakov," in *Where Shall Wisdom Be Found? Wisdom in the Bible, the Church and the Contemporary World*, ed. Stephen C. Barton (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 169. According to Louth, Bulgakov justifies the importance he gives to Sophia by appeal to liturgical traditions. For examples of these Orthodox traditions see Sergei Bulgakov, *Sophia, the Wisdom of God: An Outline of Sophiology*, trans. Rev. Patrick Thompson, Rev. O. Fielding Clarke, and Miss Xenia Braikevitc, Revised edition ed. (Hudson, New York: Lindisfarne Press, 1993), 127-32.

⁷² Bulgakov, *Anthology*, xii. Original quote in Sergei Bulgakov, *Avtobiographicheskie Zametki* (Paris: 1946), 68.

⁷³ Also called the "Paris School." Valliere suggests that there is a homogenizing tendency to present the theology of the Russian School as without significant differences of opinion. See Paul Valliere, "The Paris School of Theology: Unity or Multiplicity?" (paper presented at the La Teologia ortodossa e l'Occidente nel XX secolo: Storia di un incontro, Seriate, Italy, October 30-31 2004). <http://www.geocities.com/sbulgakovsociety/> (accessed February 22, 2009).

dogma in modern intellectuality and the significance of religious pluralism.⁷⁴ Valliere describes the Russian School as the first Orthodox people to struggle with these modern issues. Western Christendom had had centuries of religious change in the Renaissance, Reformation and Enlightenment. Patristic Orthodoxy on the other hand had maintained the centrality and importance of Orthodoxy without any such engagement. The Russian School in its diaspora 'sought to reconstruct the theological tradition, to move beyond patristic Orthodoxy to a philosophic Orthodoxy for new times.'⁷⁵ Engagement with modern philosophy was a defining characteristic of the Russian School, philosophy being regarded in its basic sense as the search for *sophia* (wisdom), for insight into the meaning of life.

In one of Bulgakov's first major works, *Philosophy of Economy* (1911)⁷⁶ he transforms his beginnings in Marxism and political economy with this philosophical engagement, particularly of German Idealism combined with his Russian inheritance of Sophia. Bulgakov rejects the economic materialism of Marxism and the positivistic turn to science and introduces a metaphysical "sophic" economy where the object of human labour is to transform fallen nature. For the concept of world unity he turns to Friedrich Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* with its 'identity of subject and object and the understanding of nature as a living, growing organism.'⁷⁷ Following Vladimir Soloviev, Bulgakov identifies this organism as Sophia, God's Wisdom.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Paul Valliere, *Modern Russian Theology: Bukharev, Soloviev, Bulgakov - Orthodox Theology in a New Key* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 3.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Sergei Bulgakov, *Philosophy of Economy: The World as Household*, trans. Catherine Evtuhov (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000).

⁷⁷ Ibid., 83.

⁷⁸ Vladimir Soloviev, *Lectures on Divine Humanity*, Revised and edited by Boris Jakim ed. (Hudson: Lindisfarne Press, 1995), Editor's Introduction xiv.

Soloviev is the founder of the sophiological stream in modern Russian philosophy. He begins with the problematic dualism in Christian consciousness between God and the world. This dualism has been developed in two different ways. In the west the human principle of reason and personality has been developed at the expense of connectedness with God. In the east a passive and other-worldly ascetic and conservative spirit has been developed. The two principles can and should help one another towards humanity's goal, a free union with God, which Soloviev calls Divine humanity.⁷⁹ In *Lectures on Divine Humanity*, Soloviev begins to develop the two key concepts of divine humanity and the doctrine of Sophia. Divine humanity is the union of the *Logos* with Sophia, the world soul. In *The Justification of the Good*⁸⁰ Soloviev elaborates on the threefold expression of love that enables this union in time. If the human being is the middle place of transformation there is an ascending love whose object is God, an equalising love between human beings, and a descending love that acts upon material nature, bringing all within the fullness of the absolute good. Many of Bulgakov's ideas of Sophia are developed from Soloviev's work: the idea of Sophia as the creative love of God become the ideal substance of creation, Sophia as the body and soul of humanity, Sophia as the meaning and truth of creation, Sophia as the spirit of creation, as its ideal and its beauty, and Sophia as the Body of Christ and the Church.⁸¹ Bulgakov's contribution to these diverse factors in sophiology is an endeavour to systematize them into a trinitarian theology.

⁷⁹ "Divine humanity": Богочеловѣчество (*Bogochelovechestvo*), that is, Бог, *Bog* (God) and человекѣство, *chelovechestvo* (humanity).

⁸⁰ Vladimir Soloviev, *The Justification of the Good: An Essay on Moral Philosophy*, ed. Stephen Graham, trans. Nathalie A. Duddington, *Constable's Russian Library* (London: Constable and Company Ltd., 1918).

⁸¹ For a succinct introduction to Soloviev's religious metaphysics, see the Editor's Introduction, Soloviev, *Divine Humanity*, x-xv.

In this endeavour Bulgakov ventured into new territory, naming God's nature Sophia. His theology was controversial and was condemned in certain parts of the Russian church.⁸² Although Bulgakov was not under any of the hierarchs that accused him he chose to defend his theology and was exonerated of all charges.⁸³ However, after Bulgakov's death few theologians continued his work in both east and west.⁸⁴ Valliere suggests that this was partly due to the neo-Patristic Orthodoxy which dominated Orthodox theology after Bulgakov's death and which rejected much of the Russian School's theology.⁸⁵ More recently there has been renewed interest in his work in both east and west but there remains great scope for engagement with Bulgakov's theology.⁸⁶

Bulgakov's theology has suffered fifty years of neglect but Sophia herself has had 1500 years of neglect. Sophia's history is complex but because Sophia is integral to Bulgakov's worldview and because Sophia is largely unknown in western theology I will give some broad sweeps of her story. Bulgakov gives some background to the biblical basis for his sophiology in *Sophia: The Wisdom of God*.⁸⁷ For a comprehensive history of Sophia through the

⁸² For the controversy surrounding the so-called "Sophia Affair," see Antoine Arjakovsky, *The Sophiology of Father Sergius Bulgakov and Contemporary Western Theology* (2001 [cited February 22 2006]); available from

<http://www.geocities.com/sbulgakovsociety.SVTQArjakovskyEssay1060204.doc>. See also Alexander Schmemmann, *Russian Theology: 1920-1972 - an Introductory Survey* (1967 [cited 4/04 2004]); available from <http://www.schmemmann.org/byhim/russiantheology.html>.

⁸³ Winston F. Crum, "Sergius N. Bulgakov: From Marxism to Sophiology," *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (1983): 12.

⁸⁴ Rowan Williams gives a survey of scholarly engagement until the end of the 20th century in Bulgakov, *Towards*, 14-18. Until the 1970's the only major piece of secondary literature was a summary of Bulgakov's system by Lev Zander, *Bog I Mir (God and the World)*, 2 vols. (Paris: 1948).

⁸⁵ Valliere, *Modern Russian Theology*, 373-403.

⁸⁶ See below, 43. An English online resource of primary and secondary material is regularly maintained by Robert Thompson at the *Sergius Bulgakov Society* ([cited March 1, 2009]; available from <http://www.geocities.com/sbulgakovsociety/>).

⁸⁷ Bulgakov, *Wisdom*, 26-31.

centuries, see Thomas Schipflinger, *Sophia-Maria: A Holistic Vision of Creation*.⁸⁸ Another extensive work which demonstrates the many incarnations of Sophia in different cultures and times is *Sophia, Goddess of Wisdom: The Divine Feminine from Black Goddess to World Soul* by Caitlin Matthews.⁸⁹ I will give a précis of Sophia's history from a biblical orientation, which begins with the Hebrew Bible, continues with contention during the early patristic debates, and then although largely disappearing, diverges into distinct western and eastern streams.

Sophia as personified Wisdom is an important figure in the Hebrew Bible. Indeed, only four other figures have more words devoted to them: God, Job, Moses and David.⁹⁰ Her first appearance occurs in Proverbs where she calls from the street for all to embrace her wisdom because 'she is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her' (3: 18a).⁹¹ She is an integral part of the created world:

The Lord created me at the beginning of his work,
The first of his acts of long ago.
Ages ago I was set up, at the first,
Before the beginning of the earth...
When he marked out the foundations of the earth,
Then I was beside him, like a master worker,
And I was daily his delight,
Rejoicing before him always,
Rejoicing in his inhabited world
And delighting in the human race.

Prov. 8: 22-24; 29-31.

⁸⁸ Thomas Schipflinger, *Sophia-Maria: A Holistic Vision of Creation*, trans. James Morgante (York Beach, Maine: Samuel Weiser, Inc, 1998).

⁸⁹ Caitlin Matthews, *Sophia Goddess of Wisdom: The Divine Feminine from Black Goddess to World Soul* (Hammersmith, London: Thorsons, 1992).

⁹⁰ Susan Cady, Marian Ronan, and Hal Taussig, *Wisdom's Feast: Sophia in Study and Celebration* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989), 15.

⁹¹ Unless otherwise stated all biblical quotations are taken from *The Holy Bible, the New Revised, Standard Version*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1989).

In the Wisdom of Solomon her divine, cosmic character is more fully delineated as well as her connection to humanity and the created world.

There is in her a spirit that is intelligent, holy,
Unique, manifold, subtle, mobile, clear, unpolluted,
Distinct, invulnerable, loving the good, keen,
Irresistible, beneficent, humane, steadfast, sure,
Free from anxiety, all-powerful, overseeing all,
And penetrating through all spirits
That are intelligent, pure, and altogether subtle.
For wisdom is more mobile than any motion;
Because of her pureness she pervades and penetrates all things.
For she is a breath of the power of God,
And a pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty...
For she is a reflection of eternal light,
A spotless mirror of the working of God,
And an image of goodness.
Although she is but one, she can do all things,
And while remaining in herself, she renews all things...
She reaches mightily from one end of the earth to the other,
And she orders all things well.

Wis 7: 23-27a; 8: 1

Other key texts are found all through the Wisdom literature and texts that refer to her cosmic origins include Sirach 1: 1-20, Sirach 24: 3-22 and Wisdom of Solomon 10: 1-21. Sophia fell from her high status in the Hebrew Bible to post-patristic obscurity in the fifth century CE. The turning point came in the christological battles of early Christianity. The language of the Prologue of John's gospel was seen to reflect the wisdom literature of the Hebrew Bible and there was no doubt in the minds of these early theologians that Jesus as the Logos was Sophia incarnate.⁹² The dispute between Athanasius and Arianism in the fourth century CE was over how the Wisdom/Logos collocation might affect the divinity of the second person of the Trinity. Because in Proverbs 8: 22 God "created" (ἐκτίσέν, *ektisen*) Sophia or

⁹² For a summary of this understanding in early Christianity in the work of Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria and particularly Origen, see Joan Chamberlain Engelsman, "The Feminine Dimension of the Divine" (Drew University, 1977), 165-74.

Wisdom at the beginning of creation, Arius and his followers argued that the Son as Wisdom incarnate was a creature who had a beginning in time.⁹³ Athanasius eventually won the support of the early church with his interpretation of *ektisen* as “begotten,” meaning that the Son ‘is the offspring from the Father’s substance...he is Wisdom (Sophia) and Word (Logos) of the Father, in whom and through whom he creates and makes all things.’⁹⁴ This meant, in effect, that Sophia was accepted as fully divine, consubstantial with the Father.

In a patriarchal religion influenced by Hellenistic philosophy an additional problem was Sophia’s gender. Philo of Alexandria, for example, writes that ‘progress is indeed nothing else than the giving up of the female gender by changing into the male, since the female gender is material, passive, corporeal and sense-perceptible, while the male is active, rational, incorporeal and more akin to mind and thought.’⁹⁵ In his pursuit of progress Philo replaces the feminine Sophia terminology with the masculine Logos terminology. By the fifth century CE the Logos/Son had become the authoritative terms used for the second person of the Trinity. Bulgakov will later challenge the complete identification of Sophia with the Logos but at this point in history Sophia is effectively replaced and displaced.

In western Christianity Sophia would live on only in pseudonymic guises, such as Lady Philosophy, the goddess Natura and the Virgin Mary until the twentieth century.⁹⁶ In the east, renewed interest in the biblical Sophia arose again in the late nineteenth century in Russia. However, Vladimir Soloviev’s retrieval of Sophia in nineteenth century Russia was not from

⁹³ Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 227-28.

⁹⁴ Athanasius, *Orations against the Arians* 1.16.

⁹⁵ In Engelsman, "Feminine Dimension", 112. Original quote, Philo of Alexandria, QE I, 8 in *Loeb Classical Library edition* (12 vols), Harvard University Press, 1929-62.

⁹⁶ See Matthews, *Sophia*, 191-99, 231-34.

total obscurity. Sophia had survived in the east in Orthodox liturgy and iconography.⁹⁷ Soloviev also experienced visions of Sophia who he associated with the personified Wisdom of the Bible.⁹⁸ Renewed interest in Sophia in the west appeared with the advent of feminist theology and ecotheology in the latter part of the twentieth century.⁹⁹ The focus here, however, has been on separate traditions of Sophia rather than eastern liturgical traditions. Feminist theology has returned to early christological debates to find feminine aspects of the divine as noted below.

It is perhaps surprising that Russian sophiology and the western feminist retrieval of Sophia have rarely coincided. Two exceptions have been in the work of Brenda Meehan and Celia Deane-Drummond. Meehan compares the two groups and believes that 'both groups have constructed Sophia in a way that serves their own social, political, and religious purposes.'¹⁰⁰ Feminist theology has sought a feminine image of the divine to counteract 2000 years of patriarchal dominance while Soloviev sought a model of wholeness to counter the positivism, materialism and atheism of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, she suggests several retrievals that offer positive and emancipatory aspects of sophiology. These include the values of 'relational mutuality, inclusivity, nondomination, and an overturning of

⁹⁷ Paul Valliere suggests, however, that the Sophia of liturgy and iconic representation has little to do with the modern phenomenon of sophiology. See Paul Valliere, "Sophiology as the Dialogue of Orthodoxy with Modern Civilization," in *Russian Religious Thought*, ed. Judith Deutsch Kornblatt & Richard F. Gustafson (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996), 177-8.

⁹⁸ For Soloviev's visions of Sophia, see Valliere, *Modern Russian Theology*, 113. Key examples of personified Wisdom texts are: Prov. 8: 22-31; Wisdom of Solomon 7: 22-8: 1; Sirach 24: 3-11.

⁹⁹ A few examples of this are: Elizabeth Johnson, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Co., 1992). Cady, Ronan, and Taussig, *Wisdom's Feast*. Silvia Schroer, *Wisdom Has Built Her House: Studies on the Figure of Sophia in the Bible* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2000). Celia Deane-Drummond, *Creation through Wisdom* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000).

¹⁰⁰ Brenda Meehan, "Wisdom/Sophia, Russian Identity, and Western Feminist Theology," *Cross Currents* 46 (1996): 149.

oppositional dualisms.¹⁰¹ Deane-Drummond, too, illustrates the differing approaches to Sophia between feminist theology and the Russian sophiologists. The feminist approach has taken as its starting point 'the experience of wisdom in the *world*, rather than wisdom as a theological term which links creaturely wisdom.'¹⁰² Deane-Drummond draws together the insights from both groups, creating a holistic theology of creation. Using Bulgakov's work, Sophia is in all three persons of the Trinity which 'works together in a unity of communion and love'¹⁰³ while Sophia as the feminine face of God 'highlights the feminine divine in the creative process.'¹⁰⁴

In the past twenty years there has been a growing interest from both east and west in Russian sophiology in its own right. Because sophiology covers all aspects of theology, books, theses and articles have covered such diverse subjects as eschatology, Mariology, pneumatology, ecclesiology, iconography, ecotheology, christology, the Church, the angels and cosmology. Even so the field is still comparatively small. Michael Meerson is a present-day Orthodox theologian reviving the project of the Russian school.¹⁰⁵ Among the English resources, Paul Valliere has offered a comprehensive study of both Soloviev and Bulgakov.¹⁰⁶ *Wisdom from Above: A Primer in the Theology of Father Sergei Bulgakov*, by Aidan Nichols offers an introduction to Sergei Bulgakov and a systematic presentation of his dogmatic theology. Another good introduction is an edited anthology with

¹⁰¹ Ibid.: 164.

¹⁰² Celia Deane-Drummond, "Sophia: The Feminine Face of God as a Metaphor for an Ecotheology," *Feminist Theology* 16 (1997): 18. Original emphasis.

¹⁰³ Ibid.: 31.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Valliere, *Modern Russian Theology*, 3. See, for example, Michael A. Meerson, *The Trinity of Love in Modern Russian Theology: The Love Paradigm and the Retrieval of Western Medieval Love Mysticism in Modern Russian Trinitarian Thought (from Solovyov to Bulgakov)*, ed. Zachary Hayes, *Studies in Franciscanism* (Quincy, IL.: Franciscan Press, 1998), 159-88.

¹⁰⁶ Valliere, *Modern Russian Theology*.

notes by Rowan Williams: *Sergii Bulgakov: Towards a Political Theology*.¹⁰⁷ In *Living Icons: Persons of Faith in the Eastern Church* Michael Plekon ranks Bulgakov with Tillich, Barth and Rahner as one of the great 20th century theologians.¹⁰⁸ Plekon gives an interesting biographical and theological overview, noting Bulgakov's zeal for unity of the Church arising from his eschatological experience and perspective.¹⁰⁹

My intent in this dissertation is to present my own broad overview of Bulgakov's trinitarian theology, with reference mainly to his "great trilogy," *The Lamb of God, The Bride of the Lamb, and The Comforter*.¹¹⁰ The chapters on Bulgakov's work are not a chronological survey. To affect a comparison with Moltmann's work they are organized to reflect the themes in the chapters on Moltmann's theology: hope and eschatology, christology, and creation and pneumatology. Therefore, Chapter 5 addresses Bulgakov's understanding of God in creation, including his anthropology, chapter 6 looks at christology and theodicy, and chapter 7 examines pneumatology, eschatology and hope. As with Moltmann's work I will mostly be working with the English translations of Bulgakov's work. However, I will reference some Russian texts which have not been translated into English. I will also refer to the Russian when concepts need clarification or closer interpretation or when English equivalents do not give justice to the original words or concepts.

¹⁰⁷ Bulgakov, *Towards*.

¹⁰⁸ Michael Plekon, *Living Icons: Persons of Faith in the Eastern Church*, Foreword by Lawrence S. Cunningham ed. (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002), 54.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 29-58.

¹¹⁰ Sergius Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, trans. Boris Jakim (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008). Sergius Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, trans. Boris Jakim (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2002). Sergius Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, trans. Boris Jakim (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004).

Chapter 4 is entitled “God in creation: Sophia and humanity.” This chapter examines Bulgakov’s theology of creation, including God’s relationship to humanity and humanity’s relationship to the world. Its purpose in terms of the overall thesis is to present Bulgakov’s cosmology as a complete system with humanity integral to and effective within it. The picture presented is one of the idealism of creation, both in its inception and in its future. This is the basis of hope: humanity is created with its perfect world and place in which to move towards the fullness and clear “sophianicity” of existence.

In Bulgakov’s theology of creation as outlined in *Bride of the Lamb* he discourses with Plato, Aristotle, patristics and Thomas Aquinas. He suggests that between the extremes of cosmism, with the world as uncreated and self-evident, and dualism, with its separation of God from the world, there is a middle way. Bulgakov’s middle way is a theology of Sophia. The Russian School’s quest for *sophia* became for Bulgakov a quest to understand *Sophia*. It was a search for wholeness that led to a theological understanding of the relationships between apparent opposites or apparent difference. Boundaries are movable, such as in apophatic/kataphatic theology – what can and cannot be said about God. Or boundaries are shown to have created false dichotomies, as in philosophy and theology. Mystery and revelation belong together. Human and divine natures belong together. Furthermore, our boundaries are not God’s boundaries: God is an Absolute/Immanent being, not just one or the other. Bulgakov offers a new Chalcedon, a systematic exploration of the ousia of God leading to a new hypothesis of how the human and divine natures unite in one hypostasis. This union is of fundamental significance for God’s relationship to creation because creation is formed from God’s divine nature, the divine Sophia.

Creation is a trinitarian act. The Father is the substance of the world, the Son is the manifestation or structure of the Father’s substance and the Spirit

gives reality to this substance, “birthing” the world. Creation is a part of God kenotically formed from God’s nature, Sophia. The basis of creation is God’s love and humanity is created to freely experience God’s love. Humanity is a microcosm and mirrors God’s relationship to the godself’s divine nature, Sophia. Humanity is created to be the hypostatic centre of the creaturely manifestation of Sophia, the “I” of its nature. In its ideal state humanity’s task is to reveal the sophianicity of the world.

The radical aspect of Bulgakov’s theology of creation is that creation is formed from God’s own substance. The criticisms included in this chapter are Bulgakov’s kataphatic exploration of the Chalcedonian dogma and creation theology. The difference between Creator and created is said to be lost because God begets from the godself’s own substance as distinct to creation from “outside” of God. However, his sophianic system supports my own thesis of hope because there is an intimate relationship between God, humanity and the world. Humanity also has a meaning and purpose within the world.

Chapter 5, entitled “Christ, Sophia and Evil,” explores Bulgakov’s christology. This chapter examines the role of Christ in the incarnation, death and resurrection and the balance of good and evil in the world. Whereas Chapter 4 presents the ideal of creation in the divine Sophia this chapter examines fallen Sophia/humanity. The misunderstanding of the first humanity (the unified “Adam”) about the process of self-determination results in the “Fall,” a terrible imbalance between humanity and its nature. Because of the compatibility between the divine and the human, Christ, as the second Adam, is able to redeem the prototype of humanity. The lifting of the weight of sin allows humanity to continue its process in time.

The subject of evil and its power in creation is an important issue of theodicy and also of human agency. Why evil exists is one aspect; how much power

it has is another. Bulgakov's understanding of the doctrine of original sin is different from the western one influenced by Augustine. He sees western understandings as 'an exaggerated and extreme expression'¹¹¹ of the doctrine of original sin. According to Bulgakov, in Luther's doctrine of the *servum arbitrium* humanity loses the image of God and is powerless to do the good.¹¹² Orthodox and Catholic doctrine, however, sees a *weakening* and not a total loss of human freedom. Humanity has some agency and some power to overcome personal sin. Bulgakov supports the Orthodox doctrine of theosis, the divinization of humanity and the world. Humanity works within the world creatively revealing its sophianicity, its basis in God's wisdom. The resurrection brings Christ's real presence into the world. Together with the world's basis of goodness this means that the good is stronger than the forces of chaos and evil in the world, giving humanity hope that love and beauty will prevail.

The last chapter on Bulgakov's theology is Chapter 6, entitled "A theology of hope? Sophia and the future." It examines Bulgakov's eschatology and pneumatology to complete a picture of his worldview. In *The Comforter*, the second book of the great trilogy, Bulgakov forwards a unique concept of the dyadic relationship between Christ and the Holy Spirit based on biblical interpretation but overturning 1500 years of church dogmatics. Once again Bulgakov thoroughly examines the history of interpretation, this time on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Bulgakov's aim is to honour a trinitarian theology where each Person of the Trinity is 'equally eternal, equally divine, and equally important.'¹¹³ Bulgakov sees a fundamental weakness in Cappadocian theology which, in its articulation of three hypostases united in one essence, tends towards impersonalism in God. Because the three

¹¹¹ Bulgakov, *Bride*, 190.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ Bulgakov, *Comforter*, 69.

persons are united by nature alone God is 'only the divine *It*, not the trihypostatic *I*, the divine triunity.'¹¹⁴ However, this tendency can be countered by balancing 'a unity in nature, [with] a unity of Personhood, a trihypostatic One.'¹¹⁵ There is a unity of personhood in God as well as a unity of nature, a three-centred union.

Bulgakov proposes that the idea of three centres in one has the power to overcome the problematic filioque clause, which has been part of the division between east and west for a thousand years. He believes that there are problems on both sides and both have their basis in understanding the personhood of the Son and the Spirit in terms of origin, producing a theology which tends towards subordination not equi-divinity. For Bulgakov the sending of the Spirit is an economic role within the Trinity, not a statement of the Spirit's origin from the Father. All three persons of the Trinity are eternal and can have no beginning. Bulgakov, in his positive pneumatology, restores the Spirit as person to equi-divinity and personhood in the triune God. The importance of this move is that the Spirit has an equally efficacious role in the economy of salvation.

In its economic manifestation the Spirit is the sophianic basis of creation. Since the Pentecost, the Spirit, together with Christ, works personally (hypostatically) within the world until the end times. Continuing the principle of trinitarian kenosis, Bulgakov posits that the Spirit's form of kenosis constitutes a kind of holding back from creation. The Spirit gives life and form to creation in the beginning but allows for a creative process within creation that continues until the Spirit's complete union with creation in the final transfiguration. The human spirit illustrates humanity's capacity

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 32. Original emphasis.

¹¹⁵ Nadia Delicata, "The Comforter and Divine-Humanity," *Theandros: An Online Journal of Orthodox Christian Theology and Philosophy* 5, no. 1 (2007): 7.

to be influenced by the Spirit through the Spirit's tools of sanctification and inspiration. The human being is also an ensouled and corporeal being, part of Sophia. It is humanity's task to participate in the sanctification of the world, until the world is 'brought to a state where it can receive the coming of the God-Man in glory and where God will be all in all.'¹¹⁶ This is part of a mysterious process of divine-human cooperation.

The Holy Spirit is the agency through which the final transfiguration of the world is achieved. Like Moltmann, Bulgakov is certain of this final glory. But, unlike Moltmann, Bulgakov emphasizes that this transfiguration is not an external act of God, imposed upon the world and alien to it. The Spirit has descended into the world to actualize the salvation of the world. The world is a very part of God. The mystery is that God must 'suffer the world with its imperfection, without destroying its proper self-determination.'¹¹⁷ Free will exists and human agency exists and humanity has a part to play in its own self-determination. Therefore, there is a positive and a negative aspect to the world's history. On the one side, human sin affects the world in its very being, ontologically, and cannot be simply forgiven or erased from the world slate: 'Once committed, a sin must be lived through to the end.'¹¹⁸ Although salvation is assured there will be a time of judgment when any sin not overcome will be experienced in Christ's presence and measured against the image of Christ. The purpose of this time of judgment is for purification in readiness for the final glorification. In this life, however, a human person can work creatively and transformatively with the substances of the world and participate in the process of theosis as consciously as possible. The balance for Bulgakov always remains with the good because the good is the basis of creation.

¹¹⁶ Bulgakov, *Comforter*, 350.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 352.

¹¹⁸ Bulgakov, *Bride*, 475-6.

Comparison and Conclusion

Chapter 7 is entitled “Moltmann and Bulgakov: convergence and divergence.” This dissertation is unique in its comparison of the theologies of Moltmann and Bulgakov and it is also unique in assessing Bulgakov’s theology as a theology of hope. Although from very different backgrounds, my first premise in constructing a worldview which is relevant to the 21st century is that any wisdom from any age or time may be used if it meets the criteria of hope, meaning and purpose suggested in this dissertation. Thus, my first criterion in selecting these theologians was that I felt they both had something to say about hope, Bulgakov implicitly, and Moltmann explicitly in his first major publication, *Theology of Hope*. My second criterion was that both men had a comprehensive body of work from which a specific (Christian) worldview could be constructed. There is no direct engagement between Bulgakov and Moltmann because Bulgakov died before Moltmann’s academic career began and Moltmann has not referred to Bulgakov’s work.¹¹⁹

There are many similarities as well as significant differences in the theologies of an exiled Russian Orthodox priest writing in the first half of the 20th century and a post war German Protestant theologian writing in the second half of the 20th century. Although Bulgakov is writing from an earlier period in history and necessarily influenced by the philosophy and theology of that period there is much about his writing that is relevant today. Bulgakov’s christological and trinitarian writing on doctrine ventures into areas considered radical even today but no less important because of that. In his cosmological unity of Sophia he prefigures ecological concerns

¹¹⁹ Moltmann knows at least of the existence of Russian sophiology which he mentions in regard to Vladimir Soloviev and the delight of divine Wisdom. See Jürgen Moltmann, *Experiences in Theology: Ways and Forms of Christian Theology*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 25.

and scientific theories of wholeness. His eschatology also ventures into new territory, proclaiming universal salvation at a time when judgment eschatology was the norm.

It is particularly in Moltmann's later work that we discover closer resonance with Bulgakov's theology of the cosmos and humanity. They both draw on the idea of kenosis for God's relationship to the world and of the interpersonal relationships within God as the ideal model for human relationship. The basic difference, however, in reference to my own thesis of hope, is a major one. Moltmann's principle of relationship between God and humanity is a social one. The world is place, although humanity is expected to respect that world as God's creation. For Bulgakov, the ontological principle dominates over the social or moral principle. The world is not just place, it is *our* place, humanity's very nature and an intrinsic part of ourselves. Each individuality contributes to the whole.

The difference in viewpoint may be a matter of religious background. A gross simplification would be to say that Moltmann, despite his efforts, cannot overcome an Augustinian (western) tendency to view humanity as critically flawed. Bulgakov, despite all evidence to the contrary in the difficulties of his own life and life in war-torn Europe, cannot shake the belief that God's creation, and all in it, is good. These fundamental starting points influence the theology of these two men both subtly and overtly.

In the final chapter, the Conclusion, the dissertation returns to the importance of hopeful living for its effects on the world now. One basis for such hope is based in wisdom or understanding. The focus shifts from a cosmic worldview to the personal. Each person can construct his or her own framework of hope and meaning with the tools available in his or her own life. We can use Bulgakov's sophiology to give a larger Christian worldview of meaning. The human being is made in the image of Christ out of God's

love. Humanity is given self-determination within its own world. The importance of human agency demonstrates our human responsibility within the world. Knowledge or understanding of these principles may give hope that each one of us can make a positive and effective contribution to the world. In terms of this thesis Moltmann's worldview is flawed as a theology of hope but nevertheless aspects of his Christian praxis can add to the worldview framed by sophiology. Moltmann reminds us that there is a time for challenging the injustices in the world and there is a time for stillness, peace and joy in God's creation.

Part 1: Jürgen Moltmann and Hope

Chapter 1: A Theology of Hope: the importance of hope

Introduction

The first three chapters of this dissertation examine the worldview of Jürgen Moltmann. Broadly speaking, the subject of this chapter is hope and eschatology; of chapter 2, suffering and evil; and of chapter 3, humanity and the world. The purpose of examining Moltmann's larger worldview is to discover any correspondence between the human will to live and the world that supports and sustains us, which is the underlying thesis of hope in this dissertation.

Moltmann has been credited with returning the theme of hope to theological reflection in the twentieth century.¹ Moltmann places hope in the God of the Bible who promises eternal life to sinful humanity. This is the theme of *Theology of Hope*, Moltmann's first significant publication in his academic life, and this remains an important theme throughout his long (continuing) career. The emphasis in this chapter is on a critical examination of *Theology of Hope* because it gives Moltmann's most systematic presentation on hope. I will examine *Theology of Hope* in two areas: one, eschatology as the doctrine of Christian hope, embracing both the object of hope and the hope inspired by it, and, two, how hope works in praxis, revolutionizing and transforming the present. My examination will also include later work (and contemporary

¹ For example, Bauckham, *Moltmann*, 3.

criticism) which augment the fundamentals of hope as both God-centred and eschatological that we find in *Theology of Hope*.

We will see that Moltmann's engagement with the modern world is formative in shaping his theology of hope. Post war questions of theodicy are raised which Moltmann answers dialectically. The cross represents the godlessness and forsakenness of the world while the resurrection symbolizes hope for the new world of the future. The covenantal promise of God to humanity is apocalyptically fulfilled in Christ. God reveals the godself's power and potentiality in the resurrection and humanity responds with obedience, entering the new covenant of Christ's history. Hope comes from the future when God's promise is completed in the new world of the eschaton. The dialectic nature of *this* world is problematic in Moltmann's early theology, bearing little relationship to the eschaton. Active opposition and resistance are needed to the evil in the world. The sharp distinction between worlds is ameliorated in later theology by proposing a progressive revelation of the Spirit. Spiritual growth is possible through trials in the world. Human history is a witness to God's covenant and revelation through Christ and the Spirit. Faith and hope reside in the God of the promise.

'Theology of Hope'

Moltmann's intent in *Theology of Hope* is to reintroduce eschatological thinking as a central Christian doctrine. He engages with non-Christian expressions of hope as well as recent eschatological scholarship. Instead of eschatology as some 'loosely attached appendix'² tacked at the end of Christian dogmatics, Moltmann aims to underscore its importance as the

² Moltmann, *Hope*, 15.

basis of Christian hope. One of the non-Christian catalysts for Moltmann's challenge is Ernst Bloch's *The Principle of Hope*.³ Bloch extensively examines hope from a Marxist perspective, seeing hope as the driving force propelling humanity to a utopian humanist future. Moltmann formulates *Theology of Hope* in part as a Christian response to the question of hope. He challenges the "provisionality" of Bloch's open world process because of its lack of finality.⁴ The endless possibilities of Bloch's utopia arise from the world itself. Moltmann opposes this thinking by safeguarding the transcendence of God: God's future does not result from the trends of world history; God is *creator ex nihilo* both in creation and in the eschaton.⁵ However, Moltmann's courtship with Bloch's work also attracted criticism. Karl Barth called *Theology of Hope* Bloch's principle of hope "baptized."⁶ Moltmann refutes this, saying 'I did not seek to be Bloch's "heir" ...I wanted to undertake a parallel action in Christianity on the basis of its own presuppositions.'⁷ It is just this parallel thinking that is problematic according to Gerhard Sauter, who finds Moltmann's use of Blochian language indiscriminate.⁸ Richard Bauckham suggests that because of this slippage, Moltmann fails to clarify the relation between the immanent and transcendent possibilities in the world.⁹ Moltmann insistence on hope in a God who transcends all that is wrong with the world diminishes any immanent possibilities for God in the world.

³ Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, trans. Neville Plaice, Stephen Plaice, and Paul Knight, Paperback ed., Three vols. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1995).

⁴ Moltmann, *Hope*, 79.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 221.

⁶ Müller-Fahrenholz, *Kingdom and Power*, 42.

⁷ *Ibid.* Original quotation in Jürgen Moltmann, ed., *How I Have Changed: Reflections on Thirty Years of Theology* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1997), 15.

⁸ Gerhard Sauter, "Angewandte Eschatologie: Überlegungen Zu Jürgen Moltmanns "Theologie Der Hoffnung"," in *Diskussion Über Die "Theologie Der Hoffnung" Von Jürgen Moltmann*, ed. W. D. Marsch (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1967), 116-20. Dass angemessene Begriffe häufig fehlen. [115]

⁹ Bauckham, *Moltmann*, 22.

Moltmann also takes up the theology of Johannes Weiss and Albert Schweitzer, who, at the end of the nineteenth century both highlighted the importance of eschatology for Jesus and early Christianity. Both drew attention to the radical nature of Jesus' message, notably the contrast between the kingdom of God to come and the world. For Weiss, this makes Jesus "supra-worldly,"¹⁰ with nothing in common with the world. For Schweitzer, Jesus' attempt to bring in the kingdom of God is crushed by "the wheel of the world."¹¹ On the one hand, according to Moltmann, eschatology is 'suppressed by idealism' and on the other it is 'condemned to ineffectiveness.'¹² For Moltmann, Weiss' idealism ignores Jesus' historical message and the import of Jesus' message lies only in future apocalyptic times. Moltmann appreciates Schweitzer's portrayal of the foreignness of Jesus but takes exception to his view that the Son of Man is part of a cyclical and eternal struggle.

Karl Barth and, later, Rudolf Bultmann, also endeavour to underscore the eschatological nature of Christianity: "If Christianity be not altogether and unreservedly eschatology, there remains in it no relationship whatever to Christ."¹³ Moltmann supports this new turn to Christian eschatology but finds Barth's understanding of the eschaton problematic because the eschaton is 'a transcendental eternity, the transcendental meaning of all ages, equally near to all the ages of history and equally far from all of them.'¹⁴ For Barth, "every moment in time bears within it the unborn secret of

¹⁰ Moltmann, *Hope*, 38. Original quote in J. Weiss, *Die Predigt Jesu vom Reiche Gottes*, 1892, 145.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 39. Original quote in A. Schweitzer, *Von Reimarus zu Wrede. Eine Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung*, 1st ed. 1906, 367, English translation by W. Montgomery, *The Quest for the Historical Jesus: a critical study of its progress from Reimarus to Wrede*, 2nd ed, 1911, 368f.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Karl Barth in *Ibid.*, 51. Original quote in Karl Barth, *Der Römerbrief*, trans. The Epistle to the Romans English translation by E. C. Hoskyns, 1933, 2nd ed. (1922).

¹⁴ Moltmann, *Hope*, 39-40.

revelation, and every moment can thus be *qualified*.”¹⁵ Bultmann’s existentialism also talks of the ‘eschatological moment.’¹⁶ The problem for Moltmann with transcendental notions of eschatology is that they arise from the Greek understanding of the *logos*, namely, the epiphany of the eternal present. From Homer and Parmenides to Goethe, Hegel and Nietzsche, the eternal present is believed to be accessible to humanity and God can be sought and experienced in the *kairos*, the now of time. This leads to Kierkegaard “where the eternal is concerned there is only one time: the present.”¹⁷ What matters in this thinking is ‘to perceive in the outward form of temporality and transience the substance that is immanent and the eternal that is present.’¹⁸ For Moltmann, however, this means that the eternal present has no relationship to the world or to history. Indeed, it makes any sense of history obsolete because the eternal can be found in any moment.

Moltmann’s purpose then, in *Theology of Hope*, is to challenge the idea of “transcendental eschatology.”¹⁹ Not only is this problematic for its relationship to history and the world, it is problematic for understanding the revelation of God. In classical Kantian thinking, the goal of revelation is identical with its origin.²⁰ The notion of eschatology, because it resides in the future, cannot be understood now. God’s revelation to humanity is only to be understood in the experience of human selfhood, of one’s self-revelation. It is addressed in the sphere of moral reason, of the practical ability to be a self. Through this one attains to ‘the non-objective, non-

¹⁵ Barth in *Ibid.*, 51. Incomplete reference: Moltmann mentions that Barth said this in 1922.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 40. See, for example, Rudolf Bultmann, *Existence and Faith*, Selected, translated and introduced by Schubert M. Ogden ed. (London: Collins, 1961), 91-2.

¹⁷ Moltmann, *Hope*, 51. Original reference not given.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 27. This is Moltmann’s interpretation of Hegel’s early thought here.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 45. According to Moltmann, Jakob Taubes and Hans Urs von Balthasar used this term to designate Kant’s doctrine of the end.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 46-7. This is Moltmann’s interpretation of Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*.

objectifiable realm of freedom and of ability to be a self.²¹ The eschaton is the realm of the transcendental self. Moltmann also opposes this understanding of the “inward apocalypse.”²² Moltmann’s theology divides humanity and the eschaton, because, at least in *Theology of Hope*, there he struggles to find any connection between God and the human world.

For Moltmann, the real language of eschatology is not based in Greek notions of transcendence or the eternal but in biblical thinking. By this he means the language of promise to Israel which becomes a new language of promise to Christianity. The eschatological message was (and continues to be) confused ‘especially where Christianity encountered the Greek mind.’²³ The challenge of theology is to unveil the original message of promise in order to understand our relationship to the world and to history. Furthermore, God’s promise of the glory of the end times should not only be an uplifting hope and joy that helps one face the difficulties of the here and now, it should also be understood contextually, as intrinsically related to the doctrines of the cross and the resurrection. Towards this end, *Theology of Hope* addresses biblical revelation and covenantal history. This biblical orientation shows God acting in the world in Israel’s history culminating in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. God demonstrates the godforsaken nature of humanity. Faith and hope reside in God’s ability to overcome the contradictions of earthly existence.

In Moltmann’s thought, eschatological theology must be situated in the historical faith of Christianity. He returns to the original biblical message of God’s promise in order to understand humanity’s relationship to God, to the world, and to history. In the Hebrew Bible, the biblical promise arises with

²¹ Ibid., 48.

²² Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Prometheus*, Studien zur Geschichte des deutschen Idealismus, 1947, 92. Cited in Ibid.

²³ Ibid., 41.

God's covenant with humanity. In the first instance this is Yahweh's promise of the land to Israel. However, the promise is part of a covenant in which Israel promises to uphold the law. Yahweh is faithful and the people have a choice to obey or disobey. Since the historical promise is not fulfilled, it becomes open to 'a constantly new and wider interpretation.'²⁴ Gerhard von Rad suggests that the prophetic teaching becomes eschatological and the basis of salvation is shifted away from the disobedience of the people and on to a future action of God.²⁵ The teaching also becomes universal, seen in Amos where 'God judges all wrong, including that among the peoples who do not know his law.'²⁶ The covenant holds but it has become a universal eschatological promise.

The message of promise takes centre stage in Moltmann's own eschatology. The New Testament is the witness to a new interpretation of the message given to Israel. Moltmann describes Paul's quarrel as being not with the law but with the promise. The promise is not the promise of possessing the land but the promise of life, the quickening of the dead (Rom. 4:15, 17). The promise for eternal life begins with the resurrection of Jesus. Christ is the end of the law (Rom. 10:4) but not the end of the promise. On the contrary, the promise has 'its rebirth, its liberation and validation.'²⁷ This promise is still based in biblical thinking because God is expected to 'act uniquely and comprehensively upon the world.'²⁸ The promise has now become an eschatological certainty in Christ. Indeed, 'Christianity stands or falls with the reality of the raising of Jesus from the dead by God.'²⁹ This is the real

²⁴ Ibid., 104.

²⁵ Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, trans. D.M.G. Stalker, 2 vols., vol. 2 (London: SCM Press, 1975), 118. Cited in Moltmann, *Hope*, 128.

²⁶ Moltmann, *Hope*, 128. See Amos 1-2: 5 for God's judgment on Israel's neighbours.

²⁷ Ibid., 145.

²⁸ Ibid., 144.

²⁹ Ibid., 165.

language of eschatology. The resurrection of Jesus stands 'directly within the special horizon of prophetic and apocalyptic expectation, hopes and questions about that which according to the promises of this God is to come.'³⁰ Hope is based on God's future faithfulness to bring about the fullness of what has been promised.³¹

The promise is now part of God's history and becomes transcendent. The promise 'keeps the hoping mind in a "not yet" which transcends all experience and history...'³² Jewish notions of apocalyptic thinking are rejected by Moltmann and described as an 'obstinate exclusiveness,'³³ holding to a sense of 'the historic and this-worldly fulfilment of the promises.'³⁴ It is interesting to note that, according to Jacob Neusner, later rabbinic Judaism overturned the historical model and formed a paradigm of the transcendent, that is, of the eternal truth of the Temple.³⁵ What is temporal or specific was then explained in terms of what is eternal and transcendent. Neusner observes that this way of understanding history has been practised within Christianity as well as Judaism so that both use, not human measurements of time, but 'God's way of telling time.'³⁶ This is also Moltmann's principle, where the resurrection has moved human notions of time into an eschatological paradigm.

The resurrection is central to God's promise of the glory of the end times. This promise is not only an uplifting hope and joy that helps one face the difficulties of the here and now, it should also be understood contextually, as

³⁰ Ibid., 191.

³¹ Ibid., 119.

³² Ibid., 102.

³³ According to Randall E. Otto, "The Resurrection in Jürgen Moltmann," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 35, no. 1 (1992): 81.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Jacob Neusner, "Paradigmatic Versus Historical Thinking: The Case of Rabbinic Judaism," *History and Theory* 36, no. 3 (1997).

³⁶ Ibid.: 355.

intrinsically related to the doctrines of the cross and the resurrection. Moltmann proposes that eschatology is

the doctrine of Christian hope, which embraces both the object hoped for and also the hope inspired by it. From first to last, and not merely in the epilogue, Christianity is eschatology, is hope, forward looking and forward moving, and therefore also revolutionizing and transforming the present.³⁷

Moltmann will develop a theology of the resurrection more particularly in *The Crucified God* but his underlying ideas are already apparent in *Theology of Hope*. In *Theology of Hope* he does not explain the resurrection but sets it within an eschatological framework. This is because the resurrection is inexplicable in terms of worldly or historical or human experience. Moltmann speaks apophatically in terms of what the resurrection is *not*. The resurrection does '*not* stand within a cosmological horizon of questions as to the origin, meaning and nature of the world... [nor] within an existential horizon of questions as to the origin, meaning and nature of human existence.'³⁸ Influenced by Wolfhart Pannenberg, the category of the resurrection is the future.³⁹ The resurrection is not dependent on the past but is something new in the world and points to a transcendent future. For Pannenberg, it is the future which determines the now, not the past, and the task of the human being is to remain open to this 'power of the future.'⁴⁰ Moltmann agrees that, since the resurrection, there is a change in relationship to historical time. However, he goes a step further. In this early theology, the resurrection is an alien event in the world. The world and the resurrection stand in such a contradiction that 'this world "cannot

³⁷ Moltmann, *Hope*, 16.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 191. My emphasis.

³⁹ See, for example, *Ibid.*, 178. For Pannenberg's concept of the relationship between history and the future Kingdom of God see Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom of God* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1969), 62-4.

⁴⁰ Pannenberg, *Theology and Kingdom*, 63.

bear" the resurrection and the new world created by resurrection.⁴¹ That Jesus Christ is crucified shows 'the godless reality of sin and death' in the world.⁴² This world of death cannot be progressively transformed into the new world of the eschaton. Although this position is ameliorated in later theology, it is worth noting Moltmann's initial stand because it is a basic position that he attempts yet struggles to modify, as we shall see in Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

In *Theology of Hope* the resurrection serves as a symbol of the godforsakenness of the world. Randall Otto suggests that Moltmann's use of the term "resurrection" diverges significantly from its usual usage. An understanding of 'the social character of Moltmann's use of this symbol is vital to a proper apprehension of his work.'⁴³ In fact, the resurrection appears to be *only* symbolic, with no obvious transformative or physical function in the world. As symbol, the life of Jesus provides the model for the social life:

The historical person of Jesus thus provides the model of the life of liberating suffering that each man is called to emulate in history until, at last, new being is achieved and the provisional eschatological titles of Jesus ("Christ," "Lord," and so forth) become ontological realities that all people share in the community of the kingdom.⁴⁴

Ontological reality is only possible in this future. Otto points out that Moltmann has a basic nonontological stance for the world featuring 'the processive character of reality, the ontology of the not-yet, and the lack of a finalized, objective fact in any sense of the word.'⁴⁵ This is not the real world and the resurrection can only work in the world at a social and symbolic

⁴¹ Moltmann, *Hope*, 226.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Otto, "Resurrection," 85.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*: 90.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*: 85.

level until the end times. Until then, we assent 'to the tendency towards resurrection of the dead.'⁴⁶

The use of the word "tendency" describes Moltmann's tentative approach to understanding any sense of a process in history or worldly existence in *Theology of Hope*. Indeed, we cannot understand human life nor can we understand God. God acts in the world in unfathomable ways. The resurrection and the eschatological future are both alien events in which God acts for the sake of humanity. This understanding becomes problematic when hope for the future is bound up with understanding the nature of God's promise to us. For Moltmann, 'the word is a word of promise...yet...it stands in contradiction to the reality open to experience now and heretofore.'⁴⁷ Norman Young succinctly states the dilemma in Moltmann's theology of hope: 'Hope calls us to action but does not tell us what kind of action. We are to act anticipating the fulfilment of God's promises but cannot be sure what is promised.'⁴⁸ Indeed, God's future actions cannot be anticipated. God's actions, the creation, the resurrection, and the eschaton are mysteries. Thus, the resurrection is 'without analogy, without correlation—it cannot be understood.'⁴⁹ Moltmann states that it does not speak 'the language of facts.'⁵⁰

Although there are problems with this one-sided shaping of the present from the future what Moltmann has to say about the power of hope and the future *is* important. Moltmann maintains against criticisms from Karl Barth and others that the main question must be: is the future an extrapolation of

⁴⁶ Moltmann, *Hope*, 211.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 103.

⁴⁸ Norman Young, "Hope, Faith and Action," in *Hope: Challenging the Culture of Despair*, ed. C Mostert (Hindmarsh: ATF Press, 2004), 9.

⁴⁹ Otto, "Resurrection," 83.

⁵⁰ Moltmann, *Crucified God*, 173.

the present or does the future determine the present in anticipation?⁵¹ Moltmann naturally supports the latter, unfortunately at the expense of the former. However, like Teilhard de Chardin's cosmic Christ, the God of the future does pull humanity forward to the promised future and this concept must not be lost to the other extreme found in some scientific worldviews: that the future is solely a result of the past and present.⁵² In later work Moltmann too embraces the cosmic Christ as the moving power in evolution and as the redeemer of all creation.⁵³ Anticipation is closely associated with both hope and planning. Some sense of the future is necessary for hope to be realistic and planning to be fruitful.⁵⁴ Moltmann's theology would be more balanced if he accepted Barth's notion that God is God of all modes of time, giving equal importance to past, present and future.⁵⁵

However, the eschatological future remains in contradiction to present reality. The word of promise 'cuts into events and divides reality into one reality which is passing and can be left behind, and another which must be expected and sought.'⁵⁶ There is a clear divide between this world and the next. Eschatological thinking is 'the condition that makes possible the adaptation of Christianity to its environment and, as a result of this, the self-surrender of faith.'⁵⁷ The "adaptation" to the environment, in *Theology of Hope*, is to see the world as a passing reality, as alien even. The world is not

⁵¹ Jürgen Moltmann, "Antwort Auf Die Kritik Der »Theologie Der Hoffnung«, in *Diskussion Über Die »Theologie Der Hoffnung« Von Jürgen Moltmann*, ed. W. D. Marsch (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1967), 209.

⁵² Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, however, conceives of a more embodied future. Christ, as the "Omega Point" of the future causes all conscious particles of the universe to draw towards him. See Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Christianity and Evolution*, trans. René Hague (London: Collins, 1971), 143.

⁵³ For example, Moltmann, *Way of Christ*, 286f.

⁵⁴ Jürgen Moltmann, *Hope and Planning*, trans. Margaret Clarkson (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1971), 178.

⁵⁵ In Moltmann, "Diskussion "Theologie Der Hoffnung", 214.

⁵⁶ Moltmann, *Hope*, 103.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 41.

as it should be but we must have hope and faith that God will be faithful to us. The one who hopes 'will never be able to reconcile himself with the laws and constraints of this earth, neither with the inevitability of death nor with the evil that constantly bears further evil.'⁵⁸ Hope and planning are in a dialectic relationship to the world and its history so that anticipation of the coming kingdom results in a refusal to conform to 'the coercive powers of this world.'⁵⁹ Yet faith and hope in the eschaton is the answer to the contradictions, trials and godlessness seen in this world, the faith and hope that God will be faithful and overcome these contradictions.

History is also understood in these terms. History is a part of the reality which will pass away. It has nothing to do with 'evolution, progress and advance.'⁶⁰ Moltmann's reasoning here is: 'If the word is a word of promise, then that means that this word has not yet found a reality congruous with it, but that on the contrary it stands in contradiction to the reality open to experience now and heretofore.'⁶¹ This word will only be found in the eschatological future and this is the only sense in which history exists, as the "not-yet" of the future. World history and even 'the historic character of human existence'⁶² are meaningless. The future 'does not have to develop within the framework of the possibilities inherent in the present, but arises from that which is possible to the God of the promise.'⁶³ According to Otto, despite some misconceptions by other scholars, Moltmann does not support the Barthian stand for 'the space-time factuality of the resurrection.'⁶⁴ It is a 'word event' alone, for the purposes of hope, for imagining of the future.⁶⁵ The crucifixion is an historical event (*historisch*) but the resurrection is historic (*geschichtlich*) and eschatological. In *Hope and Planning*, Moltmann

⁵⁸ Ibid., 21.

⁵⁹ Bauckham, *Moltmann*, 45. Original quote in Jürgen Moltmann, *Religion, Revolution, and the Future*, trans. M. D. Meeks, Charles Scribner's, New York, 1969, 137-8. See also Moltmann, *Hope and Planning*, 179.

speaks of the resurrection as historical 'in as far as it creates history by opening up a new future.'⁶⁶

Otto suggests that Moltmann imposes a revisionist Marxist view of history upon the Hebrew Bible resulting in a view of God that is alien to it 'and that is instead the processive becoming of humanity.'⁶⁷ In Marxism the end of human labour pre-exists in human consciousness and constitutes the law that guides a person's action.⁶⁸ Moltmann substitutes this end with God's promise of the future. Hope is 'not something which one man has and the other does not have, but is a primal mode of existing...'⁶⁹ What is problematic for Otto in this view is that the human person, in fact, 'has no need for any God to make promises so as to open history for him.'⁷⁰ Humanity moves forward because it has to, pulled forward by the mode of being in the "not-yet."

However, the resurrection of Jesus Christ *does* occur in the world, in history. In Moltmann's thought, the historic raising of Jesus Christ stands as the beginning of a new history discontinuous with the past. This is 'the mysteriously continuing history after Easter.'⁷¹ That the world and time continue at all is a mystery in the light of the resurrection. There is a time

⁶⁰ Moltmann, *Hope*, 103.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Otto, "Resurrection," 85.

⁶⁵ For the significance of imagination, see the work written under Moltmann by G. Green, *Imagining God: Theology and the Religious Imagination* (New York: Harper, 1989). Cited in f/n 23, Otto, "Resurrection," 86..

⁶⁶ Moltmann, *Hope and Planning*, 215.

⁶⁷ Randall E. Otto, "God and History in Jürgen Moltmann," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 35, no. 3 (1992): 375.

⁶⁸ Ibid.: 382.

⁶⁹ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Experiment Hope*, trans. translated and foreword by M. Douglas Meeks Edited (London: SCM Press, 1975), 20. Cited in Otto, "God and History," 383.

⁷⁰ Otto, "God and History," 383.

⁷¹ Moltmann, *Hope*, 226.

lapse between the raising of Christ and the raising of humanity and creation. This time lapse is not history in the sense of events following on from events. There has been a historical past before the resurrection which has been, as we have noted, a witness to the promise. The new history is a witness to the transformed promise. The new history is not historical but a waiting for the future. There is no process or progress but a now and a then. The resurrected Christ will be experienced in the future. Jesus Christ is 'the hidden Lord and hidden Saviour,' and we must wait for the 'future unveiling.'⁷² The parousia is seen as something coming towards us from the future. It is not waiting for the return of Christ but it is 'a presence which must be awaited today and tomorrow.'⁷³ It is 'a different thing from a reality that is experienced now and given now.'⁷⁴ It points towards a different reality, not just a revelation of the 'hidden ways'⁷⁵ but of a reality that contains newness, something 'which has so far not yet happened through Christ.'⁷⁶

It is the demonstration of God's power of resurrection in the raising of Jesus which gives us the hope we need to live in the present world of sin and death. The purpose of the resurrection is seen to be a 'revelation of the potentiality and power of God.'⁷⁷ God raises Jesus Christ to demonstrate his faithfulness and his promise.⁷⁸ This idea will be fully developed in *The Crucified God* and described in the following chapter. The purpose of the new history is to be witness to God's faithfulness shown in the resurrection: 'the continuity of the risen Christ with the earthly, crucified Jesus

⁷² Ibid., 87.

⁷³ Ibid., 227.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 228.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 229.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 226.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 227.

necessitates the acceptance of the historic witness about him and about what happened to him.⁷⁹ God's faithfulness, shown in the resurrection of Jesus, is the sole basis of our hope. Indeed, God is the effective (and only?) force of transformation. History is the necessary process between now and then. It is a process which must happen, determined, it appears, by God alone. The resurrection shows that Christ has already assumed lordship over the world in readiness for the time when humanity is set free from the world. The reason for the time lapse between this resurrection and the future resurrection of creation is not fathomable for human beings. The resurrection is a part of "God history" where God acts upon the world and sets in motion

an eschatologically determined process of history, whose goal is the annihilation of death in the victory of the life of the resurrection, and which ends in that righteousness in which God receives in all things his due and the creature thereby finds its salvation.⁸⁰

As in 1 Cor. 15: 25, Christ '*must* reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.'⁸¹ There is some necessity that time elapses before this reign is complete though there is no fathoming why this must be or how long this may be.

The resurrection is a new action by God. Although the words "anastasis" and "resurrection" imply some form of repetition there is there is no "again" about resurrection. In Moltmann's opinion, '*Resurrectio* is no restoration, but rather a *promissio*. It has no *anamnesis*, but rather anticipation.'⁸² He proposes that Paul and the disciples utilized the prevalent apocalyptic symbol of the resurrection to explain what was otherwise inexplicable.⁸³ Following the

⁷⁹ Ibid., 300.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 163.

⁸¹ Ibid., 162. Moltmann's emphasis.

⁸² Jürgen Moltmann, "Die Kategorie Novum in the Christlichen Theologie," in *Perspektiven Der Theologie: Gesammelte Aufsätze* (Munich: Kaiser, 1968), 179. Cited in Otto, "Resurrection," 83.

⁸³ See Otto, "Resurrection," 86.

principle of newness, Moltmann suggests that Jesus as Christ was 'created out of nothing,'⁸⁴ The doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* becomes one of a God who creates out of nothing not just in the beginning but also in the resurrection and in the eschaton. It is God's loving free will that underlies God's actions. The world is not divine in itself and the resurrection is necessary to contradict 'the nothingness of transitoriness.'⁸⁵

The importance of Christianity as a religion of history suffers under Moltmann's theology. L. Gilkey has said, 'Until Moltmann and Pannenberg, no one conceived that historical inquiry could again be a ground for a Christology based on the Resurrection.'⁸⁶ Paul Ricoeur 'applauds Moltmann's resituation of the Resurrection as hope for the future within the framework of the Jewish theology of the promise, removing it from the Hellenistic schemas of 'epiphanies of eternity.'⁸⁷ These are examples of the widespread misconception that Moltmann's theology has a historical basis. It is easy to see how such a misconception could arise given the weight of argument Moltmann gives to history in *Theology of Hope* and given his opposition to any kind of Greek notion of the eternal present. However, Moltmann rejects all previous understandings of both non-historical *and* historical thinking, offering a new framework of God's history.

In his interpretation of Greek thinking, the eternal present is said to rob us of hope, time and history. Yet Moltmann can call for the 'turning in to the nearness of God' while simultaneously dismissing a 'mysticism of being, with its emphasis on the living of the present moment.'⁸⁸ In later work

⁸⁴ Ibid.: 82.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ L. Gilkey, *Religion and the Scientific Future: Reflections on Myth, Science, and Theology* (New York: Harper, 1970), 25. Cited in Otto, "Resurrection," 81.

⁸⁷ David Jasper, "The Limits of Formalism and the Theology of Hope: Ricoeur, Moltmann and Dostoyevsky," *Journal of Literature and Theology* 1, no. 1 (1987): 5.

⁸⁸ Moltmann, *Hope*, 30.

these positions are not placed in such opposition. In *The Coming of God*, Moltmann speaks of the simultaneity of the eschaton to all times.⁸⁹ Here Moltmann is influenced by Rudolf Bultmann's principle that meaning in history lies in the present, in the ever-present possibility of the eschatological moment.⁹⁰ Bultmann calls Christian existence a paradox because it is both 'an eschatological unworldly being and an historical being.'⁹¹ To be historical is to live from the future, the sphere of indefinite possibilities. However, this also raises an anomaly, as pointed out by Richard Bauckham:

Moltmann does not seem to have faced the problem of how the simultaneity of the eschaton to all time can be understood from the perspective of a moment within historical time, which would somehow have to be understood as *both* a moment within the flow of time *and* as in immediate relationship with the transcendent future in which it will be transformed into eternity.⁹²

To Moltmann's mind, time remains transitory and cannot belong to or have a relationship to God's eternity. However, the imaginative power of hope can cling to the future time because of a "similarity" between the present moment and the eschatological moment.⁹³

For Moltmann, history (*Geschichte*) is grounded in the subjective historic moment, not in objective, factual history (*Historie*).⁹⁴ Human history is subjective history. The history of the Hebrew Bible is simply a 'word history,'⁹⁵ a witness to the promise. This promise is validated in the event of Christ and 'starts the traditional promise to Abraham off on a new history.'⁹⁶

⁸⁹ See Moltmann, *Coming of God*, 287-94.

⁹⁰ See *Ibid.*, 293. See also Rudolf Bultmann, *History and Eschatology: The Gifford Lectures*, Reprint, 1975 ed. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1957), 155.

⁹¹ Bultmann, *History and Eschatology*, 154.

⁹² Richard Bauckham, "Time and Eternity," in *God Will Be All in All: The Eschatology of Jürgen Moltmann*, ed. Richard Bauckham (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 176.

⁹³ Moltmann, *Coming of God*, 294.

⁹⁴ See Otto, "God and History," 379.

⁹⁵ Moltmann, *Hope*, 152.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

Yet this history, too, is a word history, a witness to God's action in the resurrection of Christ and the promise of an eschatological future. For Aaron Park, this 'flatly contradicts the historical understanding which the writers of the New Testament had as they recorded the eschatological message for the Christian church.'⁹⁷ In his comparison of the theologies of Moltmann, Bultmann and Pannenberg, he states,

Such terms as "history" and "future" when used by the theologians of hope, do not necessarily convey a historical meaning in the sense that an ordinary historian understands. They are really meant to designate categories or forms of thought by means of which one can conceive reality meaningfully.⁹⁸

The category is dialectical philosophy. Both history and the future can only be understood in dialectical terms because of the 'discontinuity between Jesus' message of the kingdom and the church's Christological message of the kingdom.'⁹⁹ In Park's estimation Moltmann writes 'as if the future of Jesus Christ did not depend on human activities at all and as if it could be assured of its own fulfilment, because of the inner necessity of the Christ-event itself.'¹⁰⁰ Once again, human freedom is circumscribed. Park concludes that 'the interpretation of Christian hope as offered by both Pannenberg and Moltmann is definitely not in accord with the eschatological message of the New Testament.'¹⁰¹

In summary, Moltmann's theology of hope in *Theology of Hope* is a contextualized eschatology. Our basis of hope lies in God's action in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, which prefigures the future resurrection of all of creation. The new creation is 'expected and hoped for solely in a totality of

⁹⁷ Aaron Pyunghoon Park, "The Christian Hope According to Bultmann, Pannenberg, and Moltmann," *Westminster Theological Journal* 33, no. 2 (1971): 171.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*: 169.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*: 165.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*: 171.

new being.¹⁰² Therefore, history and the world are part of a current reality which must be resisted. We hope for the future fulfilment of God's promises and while we wait in hope we actively challenge worldly conceptions of reality. This leads us to the second area under discussion in examining Moltmann's doctrine of hope and its relationship to the present. We have summarized the theoretical basis of eschatology as the doctrine of Christian hope, embracing both the object of hope, that is, the resurrected Jesus Christ, and the hope inspired by the resurrection. The second concern of *Theology of Hope* is Christian praxis. How does hope work in praxis, in revolutionizing and transforming the present?

The Praxis of Hope

If God is the effective force of transformation, what is the role of humanity in the waiting period before the eschaton? How do we achieve the 'earthly, historic correspondence with the hoped-for and promised kingdom of God and of freedom'?¹⁰³ These are important questions if we are seeking a worldview that gives humanity a meaningful place in the world. Moltmann's use of the word "correspondence" here is misleading, however, because none can be found. Indeed, correspondence really should read "alienation." Somewhat surprisingly, this need for alienation with reality is also seen as a call for action: the 'life of everyday accordingly becomes the sphere of the true service of God (Rom. 12:1ff).'¹⁰⁴ Christian praxis takes place in the dialectic between the cross and the resurrection. The cross is the symbol of the godlessness and forsakenness of the world while the resurrection is the symbol of hope for a new world. Hope reconciles us to the not-yet and makes us ready to bear the cross of the present. Moreover, hope encourages us to challenge present reality knowing that this reality is

¹⁰² Moltmann, *Hope*, 226.

not the eschatological future for which we wait. We become followers of Christ in obedience, faith and hope.

What does this active discipleship entail? Obedience means entering into the new covenant, the new history which has begun with the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This covenant is one of faith in God's faithfulness and hope in the eschatological future. To have neither faith nor hope is a sin. God 'has exalted man and given him the prospect of a life that is wide and free'¹⁰⁵ yet humanity does not respond in like faith. The sins of faithlessness and hopelessness are seen in passivity: 'it is not the evil he does, but the good he does not do, not his misdeeds but his omissions, that accuse him.'¹⁰⁶ Unwillingness to act is a sin against hope and against God. Conversely, obedience means a willingness to enter into covenant with God, which is also a call for action. What action is called for? We must take up the cross of existence in both the 'trials of the body and the opposition of the world.'¹⁰⁷ This action calls up two seemingly opposed attitudes. The "trials of the body" call for an attitude of acceptance while "the opposition of the world" calls for the contrary attitude of non-acceptance and active challenge. Both attitudes lead to action, even the attitude of acceptance. We will examine each of these aspects.

The acceptance of the trials of the body does not arise from or lead to passivity. Followers of Christ 'obediently take upon them the sufferings of discipleship and in these very sufferings await the future glory.'¹⁰⁸ This

¹⁰³ Ibid., 334.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 161. Rom. 12: 1-2: '...present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing to your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect.'

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 22.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 23.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 161.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

acceptance is 'the self-giving non-resisting way of the cross.'¹⁰⁹ Both the trials of the body and the opposition of the world must be accepted 'in terms of seeking after, and calling for, the coming freedom in the kingdom of Christ.'¹¹⁰ Suffering is spiritually transformative: to suffer is 'to be changed and transformed.'¹¹¹ God alone can transform the world but for humanity there remains the possibility of spiritual growth. Indeed, God 'stands opposed to (*entgegen-steht*) the human spirit'¹¹² so that we may have the freedom to choose obedience and in this obedience there is then the possibility of transformation at a spiritual level.

The world, also, is an oppositional force. The acceptance of the trials of the body, which leads to spiritual transformation, does not mean acceptance of the world as it is. The second aspect of Christian discipleship is, therefore, active opposition and resistance to the world. Because 'faith cannot suffer the world to become a picture of God, nor a picture of man,'¹¹³ we must oppose and resist the godless and forsaken world. Meaningful action is 'possible only within a horizon of expectation otherwise all decisions and actions would be desperate thrusts into a void and would hang unintelligibly and meaninglessly in the air.'¹¹⁴ The gospel message of hope informs our relationship to the world. We oppose all that is not part of this eschatological horizon, all that is at odds with righteousness and peace.

Moltmann adopts the notion of "progressive revelation," meaning that the revelation of the kingdom of God 'becomes progressive in the human spirit, or that the progress of the human spirit can be interpreted as the self-

¹⁰⁹ Young, "Hope, Faith and Action," 11.

¹¹⁰ Moltmann, *Hope*, 161.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 118.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 120.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 69.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 327.

movement of absolute Spirit.’¹¹⁵ In the divide between this reality and the future reality of the kingdom of God, it is not clear what “progressive” means here. The movement of the human spirit is ‘onwards—not upwards.’¹¹⁶ We can not transform present reality but we keep moving forward towards the new reality promised to us. Indeed, it is eschatology that ‘keeps history moving by its criticism and hope.’¹¹⁷ The person of hope ‘leaves behind the corrupt reality and launches out on to the sea of divine possibilities.’¹¹⁸ The scope for transformation is at a spiritual level and made possible by future projection to, by faith and hope in, the kingdom of God. God calls from the future kingdom and humanity responds with faith and hope. There is an obvious divide between current and future reality but the mysterious “sea of divine possibilities” is set between the two as part of God’s progressive revelation. We try to live into this future. Thus, any spiritual transformation moves us forward but does not appear to have any transformative effect on the kingdom of God itself.

Moltmann’s conviction is that the future alone can bring hope. The present and the past is not a source of hope. He considers that ‘it is not our experiences which make faith and hope, but it is faith and hope that make experiences and bring the human spirit to an ever new and restless transcending of itself.’¹¹⁹ Faith and hope in the future lead us to challenge the world and ourselves. Our challenge to the world is that which creates our experiences. The positive side to this is that imagining the future of God’s kingdom should affect life now. God’s promise is our source of joy. Developing this theme in *The Coming of God*, Moltmann speaks of God

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 225-6. Moltmann derives this term from the work of Richard Rothe and Ernst Troeltsch. See Moltmann, *Hope*, 74-5.

¹¹⁶ Moltmann, *Hope*, 118.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 165.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 226.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 120.

drawing all created beings into the mutual relationships of the trinitarian God, 'into the wide open space of the God who is sociality.'¹²⁰ The fullness of God gives Moltmann 'the liberty to leave moral and ontological concepts behind' for this eschatological future.¹²¹ The negative side to this thinking is that Moltmann avoids the question of human (and, in a sense, God's) morality in existence now. Hugh Pyper finds this a 'crucial gap' in *The Coming of God* because it denies that death in and of the world may be part of God's purposes.¹²² What does it mean, he asks, to die with Christ?

Moltmann's praxis of the individual becomes a part of the collective praxis of the church. Bauckham calls mission the second main theme of *Theology of Hope*, after the theme of promise.¹²³ The praxis of the church begins with the missionary proclamation of the gospel, 'that no corner of this world should remain without God's promise of new creation through the power of the resurrection.'¹²⁴ The new history since the resurrection must continue to be proclaimed. The church is also enjoined to act responsibly, both in the human and natural world. The church acts 'in the interests of a humanizing of conditions and in the interests of the realization of justice.'¹²⁵ The Christian church works towards community in respecting the humanity of each person. It also sees itself 'in a profound bodily solidarity with the 'earnest expectation of the creature' (Rom. 8: 19ff.), both in its subjection to vanity and in the universal hope.'¹²⁶ This is the beginning of a theology of creation which will lead to the environmental awareness of *God in Creation*.

¹²⁰ Moltmann, *Coming of God*, 336.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Hugh Pyper, "Book Review of "the Coming of God", *Theology* 100, no. 794 (1997): 132.

¹²³ Bauckham, *Moltmann*, 39.

¹²⁴ Moltmann, *Hope*, 328.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 338.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 69.

Conclusion

In summary, the praxis that is outlined in *Theology of Hope* begins with hope in the future kingdom of God. This hope informs our relationship to the world, which we challenge and resist because of its contradiction to the coming kingdom. There is also the beginning of an attempt to outline some sense of correspondence between the divine and earthly kingdoms, if only in the possibility of individual spiritual transformation. This, together with the preferential option for the poor, will be developed further in *Crucified God* and in later works. However, even 'the best of all the possible worlds open to us is still a human world and won't become a divine one, for what is divine is not an enhancement of what is human.'¹²⁷ The divide between the human and spiritual worlds remains.

The strength of Moltmann's systematic beginnings of *Theology of Hope* is the return to theological debate of two important themes: eschatology and hope. Moltmann challenged what he saw as the continuing failure of theology to engage with eschatology as well as the contemporary world. Hope looks to the future and is a vital attribute to humanity. Without hope, there is despair, apathy and an inability to act. Moltmann places hope in a Christian context of Christ's deed for the future of the world. Because of this deed of Golgotha we can look forward to a redeemed future. God is, indeed, our hope. The publication of *Theology of Hope* was greeted with great enthusiasm in the 1960's even beyond the theological world. There was a climate of optimism, the "outburst of hope," which, as Bauckham suggests, made it

¹²⁷ Jürgen Moltmann, "Liberating and Anticipating the Future," in *Liberating Eschatology: Essays in Honor of Letty M. Russell*, ed. Margaret A. Farley and Serene Jones (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 205.

seem as though this 'hopeful turning to the future was *the* characteristic of modern humanity.'¹²⁸

Although this book continues to have influence there are aspects that have been seen as dated and relevant only to its historical context. For example, S. Smith has wondered about the sense of separation between Moltmann's God and the world. We will only be truly united with God in the future eschaton. Is this sense of separation a sign of the times? Smith has speculated, '[b]ecause our materialism and narcissism have blinded us to God as a living presence, have we now conjured a theology to somehow account for this by putting him into the future? Has virtue (hope) become the child of tragic necessity?'¹²⁹ Is hope our only hope? Yet Moltmann is assured of God's promise for eschatological union. This surety has also been critiqued as if the end is so certain that there is 'no real discussion to be made.'¹³⁰ Moltmann ignores the prospect of future judgment as condemnation. This one-sidedness challenges the nature of human freedom. If God redeems all of creation no matter what, then this is a determinism that disregards human freedom (and responsibility!) Humanity (despite Moltmann's call for Christian praxis) needs only to wait. Indeed, Smith has questioned whether the church for Moltmann is 'in its witness and mission anything more than the harbinger of the truth of all men.'¹³¹

It is interesting to note that the task of theology for Moltmann is similar to the definition of hope in this dissertation, that is, that there is a correspondence between the human will and the world which sustains and supports it. Moltmann writes that it is the task of theology 'to expound the

¹²⁸ Bauckham, *Moltmann*, 4. Original emphasis.

¹²⁹ S. M. Smith, "Theology of Hope," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1992), 534.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

knowledge of God in a correlation between understanding of the world and self-understanding.¹³² And yet there is little correlation to be found in this earlier theology. The knowledge of God is given to us in revelation, in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is the beginning of a new history which leads to a new future. Moltmann returns eschatology to its central position in Christianity. The future glory of God beckons to us and we look towards it in hope. The difficulty in this eschatology is not only to be found in the relationship between God and the world but particularly in humanity and its relationship to the world. The risen Christ's lordship over the world is to set humanity free from this world 'for the coming salvation in faith and hope.'¹³³ At the same time he can say, '[i]s any self-understanding of man conceivable at all which is not determined by his relation to the world, to history, to science?'¹³⁴ Yet this correlation between this world and knowledge of God remains tenuous. We are promised a glorious future but the way is not clear. Our "self-understanding" is that we are "subject to vanity" (Rom. 8: 19) along with all of creation. We are 'wayfarers.'¹³⁵ The world is no longer to be regarded from the standpoint of the law. Indeed, human beings and the world are materially untransformable. *This* world does not appear to correlate with the new world at all. We have the historical parable of the coming kingdom (as in Barth) but Moltmann continues to presuppose 'an enduring qualitative difference between earth and heaven.'¹³⁶

Moltmann interprets Paul's proclamation of "the end of the law" as an end to *all* that has gone before. There is no room for transformation or a gradual

¹³² Moltmann, *Hope*, 65.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 299.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 65.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 69.

¹³⁶ Moltmann, "Liberating the Future," 205.

development of any earthly entity or process. The world is so unredeemable that we need a new creation, out of nothing. Moltmann's answer to Auschwitz is that it is unanswerable. He does not attempt a theodicy of this world, an answer to the sheer weight of pain and suffering experienced in the world. Christ has taken the weight of evil upon himself in his 'lordship over the world'¹³⁷ yet evil appears to be growing exponentially. The fact of this continuing world existence is unanswerable if not embarrassing in terms of a Christian theodicy. And yet any systematic exploration of the creaturely relationship to God must examine the problem of evil. Moltmann will develop his anthropology further in both *The Crucified God* and *God in Creation* yet, as we will see in the following sections, he does not formulate a response to why evil exists or the dilemma inherent in bodily existence. Moltmann will emphasize moral and political evil rather than natural evil.

The social symbolism of the resurrection mentioned above also translates into Moltmann's anthropology. Because the world and humanity are untransformable, bodily resurrection is understood symbolically: '[n]ot the corpse that we can dissect objectively, but the body with which we identify in love, stands in the horizon of the resurrection hope. There is no meaningful hope for the body we *have*, but only for the body we *are*.'¹³⁸ New being is only achieved in the future kingdom. The body is a social unit where a person can find identity in this life by going out of one's self 'and becoming personally, socially, and politically incarnate.'¹³⁹ Moltmann himself had a personal, resurrection experience. He describes how, while a prisoner of war during World War II, he experienced resurrection: 'faith

¹³⁷ Moltmann, *Hope*, 299.

¹³⁸ Jürgen Moltmann, *Religion, Revolution, and the Future* (New York: Scribner's, 1969), 58. Cited in Otto, "Resurrection," 89. Original emphasis.

¹³⁹ Moltmann, *Religion, Revolution*, 57. Cited in Otto, "Resurrection," 90.

inside the "house of the dead."¹⁴⁰ This came about through an acceptance of suffering and can be seen as the personal impetus behind a theology of both hope and the resurrection. The resurrection is experienced even within *this* world and is a symbolic representation of the resurrection of the eschaton.

There is no denying Moltmann's enthusiasm for the power of God. God *will* act in the end times to bring about 'new, eternal life' for all.¹⁴¹ For Moltmann, hope comes from this eschatological future. Our hope is assured because it is God's promise to us. The biblical promise encapsulated in the covenant with Israel is revealed in a new light since the Christ event. The promise becomes universal. Our guarantee for the future is in the person of Jesus Christ, now present through the cross and the resurrection. The cross symbolizes the godlessness and forsakenness of the world. The resurrection reveals the power and potentiality of God, symbolizing hope for the new world. Because God has raised Jesus Christ we can have faith and hope that God will act again in the eschaton to bring in the new world. All the contradictions inherent in the world as it is now will be overcome. History since the resurrection is witness to a progressive revelation of the Spirit which will culminate in the eschaton. It is not necessarily apparent to the human world what this revelation consists of, however, human spiritual growth is possible through engagement with the trials of the world. Thus, Christian praxis operates between the cross and the resurrection. We live in time and materiality for now but the reality of the world in its forsakenness and godlessness must be challenged and resisted. The work of the church is to proclaim the new covenant and the Christian response begins with obedience. Obedience, faithfulness and hope then give the strength needed to work towards a true humanity and justice.

¹⁴⁰ Moltmann, *Experiment Hope*, 85. Cited in Otto, "Resurrection," 89.

¹⁴¹ Moltmann, *Crucified God*, 170.

Moltmann expertly highlights all the contradictions of the world, the dichotomies of existence. We live in a dialectical world, with only the promise of a different future. *Theology of Hope* represents the early Moltmann. It can be seen as arising from his own life, his own points of reference, as Jaeger has noted.¹⁴² Moltmann himself stated his challenge of the 50's and 60's was to formulate an answer to Auschwitz.¹⁴³ He was also responding to the theology of his times, which was 'busy creating a theology without God, or, at least, without considering him.'¹⁴⁴ Theology was suffering from a "death of God" mentality. Moltmann could not find an answer to Auschwitz, or, indeed, human and worldly existence and history. He chose to look to a God in the future and a redeemed future for the world. Hope could only be found in God, not in the world and certainly not in humanity. In the next chapter, we will see this dialectical approach in Moltmann's theology of the cross.

¹⁴² John David Jaeger, "Jürgen Moltmann and the Problem of Evil," *The Asbury Theological Journal* 53, no. 2 (1998): 5-6.

¹⁴³ Moltmann, ed., *How I Have Changed*, 19.

¹⁴⁴ Park, "Christian Hope," 167.

Chapter 2 The Crucified God: suffering in the world

Introduction

This chapter adds a significant facet to Moltmann's worldview: the significance of the crucifixion of Christ for both God and humanity. Moltmann wrote *The Crucified God* partly as a response to the political climate of the late 1960's and early 70's.¹ The movements of hope in the 60's had met stronger resistance and opposition than they could deal with and it was now important to address issues of theodicy and evil. As Moltmann has pointed out, a theology of the cross is inherently important but not obvious in his early theology of hope.² Thus, the starting point in *Crucified God* becomes, not the resurrection and the future, but an integrated theology of the cross—the resurrection of the *crucified* Christ. In the history of Christian theology Moltmann finds an emphasis on theologies of the resurrection which he wants to redress with a new emphasis on the crucifixion. Moltmann also speaks of the crisis of relevance and identity in Christian life, and a theology of the crucified Christ is needed to answer this twofold crisis. Although the cross does not figure greatly in *Theology of Hope*, many of its other themes are further developed in *Crucified God*. The dialectical principle of knowledge is still the basis for revelation. The crucified Christ becomes the example *par excellence* of the unredeemable nature of the world and humanity highlighted in *Theology of Hope*. Whereas in *Theology of Hope* this leads humanity to challenge the world, in *Crucified God* this challenge is shown to have already been faced and overcome by

¹ Moltmann, *Crucified God*, 2. Moltmann cites the end of the Civil Rights movement in the USA, the end of "socialism with a human face" in Czechoslovakia and the end of reforms that had been begun after the Second Vatican Council of the Catholic Church.

² *Ibid.*, 23.

Jesus. We follow the path of Jesus because he has become the eschatological Christ of hope. Moltmann develops his trinitarian theology, focussing here on the first two persons of the Trinity.

Moltmann's aim in *Crucified God* is threefold: firstly, to interpret the crucified Christ in the light and context of his resurrection, so that the crucifixion is central to the picture of freedom and hope; secondly, to challenge and revolutionize our concept of God by asking, "who is God in the cross of the Christ who is abandoned by God?" and, lastly, to examine humanity by going beyond ideas of personal salvation and examining the "demonic" crisis in society. Moltmann's approach is to proffer dialectical thought as the primary means of knowledge. Revelation occurs in contradiction. He then highlights the scandalous and contradictory nature of the cross and outlines why the cross needs to be the basis for Christian theology. He proposes a trinitarian God who experiences suffering and encompasses the negative so that humanity need not suffer alone.

I will begin with a précis of the main points of *Crucified God* under three headings, followed by a conclusion. The three areas reflect Moltmann's threefold intent. They examine the historical Jesus and his cross, God and the cross and humanity and praxis in the light—or shadow—of the cross. My aim in examining *Crucified God* is to establish whether Moltmann's theology of hope is enhanced or changed by his christology. Are the theological difficulties of his theology of hope—determinism, absence of judgment, ontology of future, lack of reconciliation—addressed or answered in *Crucified God*? Does humanity continue to stand separate, somewhat bewildered and unreconciled in earthly existence while looking for a distant hope? In many respects the answer to this question is yes. The world remains godforsaken and humanity's hope lies in the God of the future. We can absolutely trust that God will save humanity in the eschaton. What has

changed is that the God of the future is also present with humanity in its godforsakenness. The Father, Son and Spirit all share in the suffering of humanity through the events of the cross. Moltmann adds a healthy corrective to an emphasis on the resurrection with his examination of the life and death of Jesus.

The Historical Jesus and his Cross

Moltmann describes the centrality of the cross in defining Christianity, yet to speak of death on the cross was, for both the Israelites and the Romans, degrading and an embarrassment. Paul's theology of the cross highlights the "foolishness" of proclaiming the crucified Christ (1 Cor. 23). For Moltmann, this foolishness has been disregarded, or at least, ameliorated in the history of theology. Instead, he proposes that the death on the cross must be regarded in its radical, confrontational, alien and contradictory nature. There are starting points for a traditional doctrine of the Trinity that are based on the incarnation but, according to Moltmann, it is only in the modern era, since Hegel, that a doctrine of the Trinity emerges that starts with the contradiction of the cross.³ Moltmann approaches his theology of the cross from two directions. The first one begins with Jesus' historical life leading to the cross, and the second one begins with the resurrection and looks back at the cross. According to Moltmann, early Christian theology emphasized the resurrected Christ and the consequences of the resurrection for humanity and the world.⁴ And, indeed, *Theology of Hope* also emphasized the resurrection. Moltmann now sees a need to give equal weight to a theology of the cross that incorporates the life and death of Jesus. As noted in the Introduction, in this return to the centrality of the cross

³ Jürgen Moltmann, "Antwort Auf Der Kritik an »Der Gekreuzigte Gott«, in *Diskussion Über Jürgen Moltmanns Buch »Der Gekreuzigte Gott«*, ed. M. Welker (Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1979), 175.

⁴ Moltmann, *Crucified God*, 179.

Moltmann is indebted to Luther and to his own Reformed tradition.⁵ Moltmann adds a new element by assessing the participation of all three persons of the Trinity. Because God is revealed in the suffering of the cross, the crucifixion challenges the way we know God.

Moltmann looks at the *particularity* of Jesus' life and the implications that his death has for a theology of God. The crucifixion must be viewed from both directions and not just be historically assessed in light of the resurrection. For Moltmann, it is *because* of Jesus' life in its political and social challenge that he is crucified. Jesus was handed over to the authorities because his message was considered blasphemous—he named himself God. However, the sentence of crucifixion was only given to those who posed a threat to the political or social order of Rome. Jesus was seen as an instigator of foment because of his challenge to Rome's authority. So although the Pharisees and Zealots see Jesus as a traitor to the sacred cause of Israel, he is tried as a fomenter of social unrest by the Romans.⁶ In the larger picture, Jesus is, indeed, both of these things in his public testimony of the law of grace being above the laws of nations, empires, races and classes.⁷

There is an intentionality about Jesus' actions that leads him to the crucifixion. Jesus sets out for Jerusalem and takes the expected suffering upon himself. Moltmann, however, does not see this as 'an example of patience and submission to fate.'⁸ Indeed, the cry of abandonment and the agony of his death point to the opposite viewpoint. The mystery of Jesus' death, however, is in its manner, which is so unlike comparable narratives of

⁵ Introduction, 20.

⁶ Moltmann, *Crucified God*, 143.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 145.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 51.

the death of great witnesses of faith.⁹ Jesus believes himself forsaken by his God and he suffers greatly. For Moltmann, 'every Christian theology is consciously or unconsciously answering the question, "Why hast thou forsaken me?"'¹⁰ Although Jesus through his political machinations actively seeks death, he dies forsaken and abandoned by God. Jesus cries, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mt. 27: 46; Mk. 15: 34). Moltmann believes that the words from the cross are theologically motivated additions.¹¹ Later tradition 'took doctrinal offence and reformulated the cry of Jesus and made it more pious.'¹²

In his own exegesis of the (authentic) words of forsakenness, Moltmann observes a change in meaning from their original sense in Psalm 22:1. Psalm 22 is the plea of a righteous person for God to defend the Godhead's own righteousness and faithfulness. Jesus, however, calls to God to defend the Son's *theological* existence. The cry means 'not only "My God, why hast thou forsaken *me*? But at the same time, "My God, why hast thou forsaken *thyself*?"'¹³ It is not just the relationship of God to humanity, as in Psalm 22, but God to God, God to his Son. Radically, Moltmann suggests that Jesus 'died as one rejected by his God and his Father.'¹⁴ The rejection is seen to be a rejection of all that is of the world, all that is (in)human. The death on the cross is God's indictment not only on human society but on the whole world. Moltmann does not change this view over time. In one of his latest books, *In the End- the Beginning*, Moltmann speaks of a God who must

⁹ Ibid., 147. As examples of the deaths of other witnesses of faith, Moltmann cites that Socrates died 'cheerfully and calmly,' the Zealots died conscious of their righteousness, and Christian martyrs went 'calmly and in faith to their deaths.' Moltmann, *Crucified God*, 145-6.

¹⁰ Moltmann, *Crucified God*, 153.

¹¹ Ibid., 147.

¹² Jürgen Moltmann, "The "Crucified God": A Trinitarian Theology of the Cross," *Interpretation* 26 (1972): 283.

¹³ Moltmann, *Crucified God*, 151.

¹⁴ Ibid., 152.

endure the creation of human beings and the inherent inhumanity in the world.¹⁵

How does the earthly Jesus become the eschatological Christ? Here Moltmann takes into account the second viewpoint of the cross—the cross in the light of the resurrection. The perennial problems of Christianity and the world reside in the tension between the two aspects of ‘the earthly and the eternal, the particular and the universal, the temporal and the eschatological.’¹⁶ Moltmann poses four questions to distinguish Jesus from his divine titles, such as “Christ,” “Son of Man” and “Son of God.” The questions are: “Is Jesus true God?” “Is Jesus true Man?” “Are you he who is to come?” and “Who do you say that I am?”

The first question, “Is Jesus true God?” examines how the eternal, unchangeable God could live in temporal, transitory existence. He rejects Fichte’s and Hegel’s notions of the self-revelation of God, of God as subject, and of the ‘sublimation of history in the spirit’¹⁷ because they do not take into account the historical person of Jesus. Any attempt to sublimate anything of the world into the divine world is an attempt to understand history as a necessity. For Moltmann, ‘only a new creation which is based on the crucified Christ can sublimate the scandal of his cross into a pure hymn of praise.’¹⁸ This line of thinking is a continuation from *Theology of Hope* in the radical discontinuity between the time before and after Christ. The life and death of Jesus illustrate the unredeemable nature of history.

¹⁵ Thus, after the Flood, ‘God suffers the world in its contradictions, and endures it in his long-suffering, instead of annihilating it. He takes on himself the dissonance between the world’s creation and its corruption, so that in spite of its corruption the world may live.’ Jürgen Moltmann, *In the End-the Beginning: The Life of Hope*, trans. Margaret Kohl, First Fortress Press ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 41.

¹⁶ Moltmann, *Crucified God*, 85.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 92.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

In Moltmann's answer to the second question, "Is Jesus true Man?" he attacks the Christian anthropology which has defined humanity in relationship to Jesus as a human person. He rejects most of the early theology which names the resurrected Jesus in terms of formulas of adoption, enthronement or representation because they emphasize the resurrected Christ over the crucified Jesus.¹⁹ These titles (Christ, Son of God, *Kyrios*) subordinate the human experiences of Jesus to the divine, eschatological Christ. He agrees, however, with the *sense* of his expiatory role: humanity could not achieve its own righteousness and needed Christ as liberator from its sin and to enable communion with God. In the death of Jesus, God acts in favour of humanity. Humanity can gain a share in the resurrection (Phil. 3: 10-12) by 'sharing in the fellowship of Christ's suffering.'²⁰ The cross is 'the form of the coming, redeeming kingdom.'²¹ The resurrection becomes the basis for this new kingdom, which we share in its provisional form until the end times.

Moltmann rejects Kant's basis of reason and Schleiermacher's basis of feeling as a ground for a "Jesuology" hermeneutic. The dispute centres on how the human being apprehends God. According to Moltmann, for Kant we can only understand through our faculty of reason, and anything beyond reason is of no practical use.²² However, this assessment may be unbalanced. Although Kant privileges reason over faith, he speaks of a practical and soteriological faith in the Son of God. Kant's basis of this faith arises from a kinder picture of humanity. He supposes that humanity must have some God-given capacity to emulate the Son of God and this is to be found in the

¹⁹ Ibid., 179. Moltmann is referring to the earliest Christian communities but gives no more detail here.

²⁰ Ibid., 185.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid., 93-4.

human being's faculty of reason.²³ Moltmann contrasts this christology of moral example with Schleiermacher's supposition that God can be experienced directly through the feeling life. According to Schleiermacher, humanity can experience consciousness of God because Jesus perfected human God-consciousness.²⁴ Moltmann's criticism with both schemas is that the transcendent perfection of Christ is the mode of knowledge and this denies both the suffering of Jesus and his rejection by God. Moltmann's own basis is 'the transcendence of concrete rejection.'²⁵ Christ is 'outside history, outside society and outside the question of the humanity of living men.'²⁶

Moltmann develops this thinking further in the next two questions. The third question is "Are you he who is to come?" Moltmann answers yes, but if Jesus is the Christ then an eschatological re-evaluation of Judaic messianic expectation must be undertaken. We have noted in the previous chapter that the promise given to the Israel becomes a universal promise of salvation (above, 49). If the Messiah has now come, what does this mean for atonement? Moltmann rejects the Christian concept of the instigation of a *process* of redemption with the resurrection. He sees the new messianic expectation as a hope in the future kingdom, with the resurrection as a sign of God's promise. The human person is brought 'to repentance through his own suffering in the cross of Jesus.'²⁷

The last question, "Who do you say that I am?" is similarly answered. Because the future kingdom is discontinuous with the present world, the person of Jesus Christ is seen to be a novelty. The 'centre of his existence is

²³ Immanuel Kant, *Religion with the Limits of Reason Alone*, trans. Theodore M. Greene and Hoyt H. Hudson (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), 54-5.

²⁴ Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, trans. H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart, English translation of the Second German Edition ed. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1928), 389.

²⁵ Moltmann, *Crucified God*, 98.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 102.

outside of himself²⁸ until the eschaton, when the novelty will no longer be a novelty and Christ will be the basis of a new creation. The idea of a new creation marks a change from early Jewish apocalyptic thought. Instead of the Jewish apocalyptic understanding of the resurrection of the dead, Christian proclamation announces that one person has already been raised *from* the dead. The transcendent God becomes immanent in Jesus and the immanent Jesus is transcendent in God.²⁹ The great mystery of dichotomies arises: true life in the midst of false life; reconciliation in the midst of strife; the law of grace in the midst of judgment, and creative love in the midst of legalism. The resurrection is proleptic, anticipating an expected future event as though it was already an accomplished fact. It does not speak the human "language of facts," but only the language of faith and hope, that is, the "language of promise."³⁰ The old world of suffering and strife cannot demonstrate the new creation. The resurrection arises from a new element that God introduces into the world, which will become universal in the eschaton: '[c]reation, new creation and resurrection are external works of God against chaos, nothingness and death.'³¹

According to Moltmann, in early Christian tradition there was little dispute over the resurrection of Jesus.³² The disputes were over the interpretation of the death of the cross in the light of resurrection. Moltmann agrees that all of Jesus' life must be explained in light of resurrection: 'his future determines and explains his origin and his end his beginning.'³³ Yet the resurrection is a mystery: 'God is disclosing something which is concealed from the knowledge of the present age of the world. He is revealing

²⁸ Ibid., 106.

²⁹ Ibid., 169.

³⁰ Ibid., 173.

³¹ Ibid., 192.

³² Ibid., 161.

³³ Ibid., 164.

something which cannot be known by the mode of knowledge of the present time.³⁴ The resurrection heralds a 'new eschatological understanding of time.'³⁵ The 'future of the new world of life has already gained power over this unredeemed world of death and has condemned it to become a world that passes away.'³⁶ In the eschaton, this mystery of life over death will be revealed to humankind.

Moltmann's project is to "resurrect" the resurrection in light of the cross. He does this by assessing the crucifixion in terms of the life of the historical Jesus. He wants to reclaim the horror of Jesus' death on the cross and with it, its radical, alien and confrontational nature. Jesus is forsaken by his Father, and human society and the earthly world are indicted. Yet, despite this, God raises Jesus from the dead, instituting (or perhaps escalating) the tension between the earthly and the eternal, and the temporal and eschatological. The eschatological presence of Christ stands in tension with the godforsaken world. How does Jesus' forsakenness accord to God's righteousness? To answer this question, Moltmann adds a trinitarian element to his interpretation of the crucifixion. Moltmann examines both the Trinity as persons and the Trinity as the one God to examine first the righteousness of God, the Father, and second, what the crucifixion expresses about God as one. Moltmann interprets the death of Jesus not as a divine-human event but as a trinitarian event between the Son and the Father, from which the Spirit arises. This new framework challenges earlier interpretation which seeks to understand the crucifixion through the relationship between the human and divine natures.

³⁴ Ibid., 167.

³⁵ Ibid., 171.

³⁶ Ibid.

God and the cross

Moltmann has already stated that God the Father abandoned the Son on the cross. How then does the crucifixion correspond to the righteousness of God? According to Richard Bauckham this question is central: 'the heart of the argument of *The Crucified God* is an interpretation of the cross of Jesus as the abandonment of the Son of God by his Father, set within the horizon of the question of theodicy.'³⁷ The importance of the crucifixion lies in its effect on God. Moltmann asks, what does Christ's suffering on the cross mean for the triune God? He believes a problematic distinction between the divine and human natures in trinitarian doctrine within western theology has led to an incorrect understanding of God's relationship to the crucifixion.

The Chalcedonian Creed states that Christ is both fully human and fully divine 'inconfusedly, inalterably, undividedly and inseparably.'³⁸ Moltmann's first challenge is to the nature of divinity. According to Moltmann, early Christianity inherited the Platonic notion of *apatheia*: God in the Godhead's divine nature cannot suffer.³⁹ Because God could not suffer, the suffering of Christ was seen to be suffering in Christ's *person* in his human nature and not in the Godhead's trinitarian nature. Later, with the help of the scholastic notion of *communicatio idiomatum*, one could 'attribute the human characteristics of suffering and death to the whole person of Christ.'⁴⁰ Now the divine nature could suffer and die but only within the person of Christ, not within the whole Trinity. The distinction arose between the immanent Trinity and the Trinity in the economy of salvation. To support his idea of the suffering of God, Moltmann challenges the history

³⁷ Bauckham, *Moltmann*, 58.

³⁸ See Richard A. Norris, ed., *The Christological Controversy, Sources of Early Christian Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 159.

³⁹ Moltmann, *Crucified God*, 269.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 232.

of interpretation of the two natures of Christ. He believes that trinitarian doctrine has been weak in western theology with a problematic distinction between divine and human natures. Adopting Platonic notions of the transcendent God, early theology believed that God in the Godhead's divine nature, cannot suffer.⁴¹ The suffering of Christ was seen to be suffering in Christ's *person* as the second person of the Trinity and not in the Godhead's trinitarian nature. With the help of the scholastic notion of *communicatio idiomatum*, one could 'attribute the human characteristics of suffering and death to the whole person of Christ.'⁴² The divine nature could suffer and die but only within the person of Christ, not within the whole Trinity. The distinction then arose between the immanent Trinity and the Trinity in the economy of salvation. Reformation theology also debated this. Moltmann rejects Zwingli's view that 'God remains untouched in his sovereignty by taking the human nature of Christ. Christ suffers and dies according to his manhood, his veil of flesh, on our behalf.'⁴³ He prefers Luther's notion that the person of Christ is determined by the divine person. Therefore, 'the divine person also suffers and dies in the suffering and death of Christ.'⁴⁴ John Jaeger too detects a Hegelian influence of 'negative and painful elements in human history being included in God's history.'⁴⁵ Moltmann's God suffers *with* humanity. In supposing the suffering of God, Moltmann rejects the Christian tradition of the transcendent God: 'Were God incapable of suffering in any respect...then He would also be incapable of love.'⁴⁶ Christ's suffering is shared by God and taken up into God.

⁴¹ Ibid., 228.

⁴² Ibid., 232.

⁴³ Ibid., 233.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Jaeger, "Problem of Evil," 6.

⁴⁶ Moltmann, *Crucified God*, 230.

In more recent theology Moltmann demonstrates a blurring of the distinction between the transcendent and the immanent God.⁴⁷ For Rahner, the Trinity *is* the nature of God and the nature of God is Trinity. Furthermore, 'the Trinity of the economy of salvation *is* the immanent Trinity.'⁴⁸ Moltmann agrees: 'we must abandon the doctrine of the two natures and with it any concept of God-metaphysical, moral, or political – that is assumed to have general validity.'⁴⁹ Moltmann proposes that we must give up the distinction between God in godself and God for us, so that 'the nature of God would have to be the human history of Christ and not a divine "nature" separate from man.'⁵⁰ This nature is, following Rahner, the Trinity.⁵¹

The nature of the Trinity is not an ontological category but a social one. It is exemplified in the event of the cross, in the relationship between the Father, the Son and the Spirit. Following his logic that the Father abandons his Son on the cross, Moltmann speculates that not only does the Son suffer in believing himself forsaken in his Father's love, the Father also 'suffers in his love the grief of the death of the Son.'⁵² In Moltmann's opinion, the problem of the doctrine of the two natures for is that it 'must understand the event of the cross statically as a reciprocal relationship between two qualitatively different natures, the divine nature which is incapable of suffering and the human nature which is capable of suffering.'⁵³ Moltmann prefers to understand the crucifixion and resurrection as a trinitarian event. The death on the cross 'is not the event of co-humanity, but the event of Golgotha, the

⁴⁷ Ibid., 239.

⁴⁸ Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, trans. Kevin Smyth, vol. 4 (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1966), 94. Original emphasis.

⁴⁹ Moltmann, "Trinitarian Theology of "Crucified God", 288.

⁵⁰ Moltmann, *Crucified God*, 239.

⁵¹ Ibid., 240.

⁵² Ibid., 245.

⁵³ Ibid.

event of the love of the Son and the grief of the Father from which the Spirit who opens up the future and creates life in fact derives.⁵⁴ The Spirit is that which weaves between the Father and the Son in their love and their grief. God is the “event” between the Father, Son and Spirit. Moltmann’s pneumatology is not developed in any detail until his later work in *God in Creation*. Because of this, Carl Braaten believes that Moltmann’s desire to offer a trinitarian concept of God here fails. The relations between the Father and Son are spelled out but ‘the Spirit goes along for a free ride. Would not a bitarian concept of God work as well?’⁵⁵ With his emphasis on the crucifixion as a trinitarian event Moltmann also leaves the human nature of Jesus behind.

In *Theology of Hope* Moltmann defines God by the raising of the crucified Jesus from the dead. In *Crucified God*, Bauckham proposes that God is defined by God’s own self-abandonment on the cross.⁵⁶ Moltmann writes, ‘in the forsakenness of the Son the Father also forsakes himself.’⁵⁷ The Father suffers the grief of love. Moltmann tries to avoid patripassianism by introducing the term “patricompassianism” (*Patricompassianismus*) in *The Future of Creation*.⁵⁸ Both the Father and the Son suffer and act in surrender: the Father surrenders the Son and the Son surrenders to the will of the Father. However, the Father does not suffer and die like the Son. The Father suffers ‘Sonlessness’ when he forsakes his Son just as the Son feels forsaken by the Father.⁵⁹ Unfortunately, Moltmann himself devotes only a few

⁵⁴ Ibid., 247.

⁵⁵ Carl E. Braaten, "The Crucified God," *Journal of Religion* 56, no. 1 (1976): 118.

⁵⁶ Bauckham, *Moltmann*, 59.

⁵⁷ Moltmann, *Crucified God*, 243.

⁵⁸ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Future of Creation*, trans. Margaret Kohl (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1979), 73. In the original, Jürgen Moltmann, *Zukunft Der Schöpfung: Gesammelte Aufsätze* (Munich: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1977), 80. John Jaeger and others, however, continue to see patripassianism in Moltmann’s work: Jaeger, "Problem of Evil," 12.

⁵⁹ Moltmann, *Crucified God*, 243.

sentences to the difference in suffering of the Father and the Son. Braaten suggests that, because Moltmann wants to use language about the suffering of God, 'this should have merited an explicit treatment rather than a mere assertion that the Father's suffering is of a different kind than the Son's.'⁶⁰ Because Moltmann defines God by the crucifixion, he has also been criticized for effectively identifying God with the historical process begun in the crucifixion. Walter Kasper asks, 'How does [Moltmann] escape the (no doubt unwanted) consequence that God needs history to "come to himself"?'⁶¹ Moltmann replies that his dialectical thinking is not to be understood as a collapse of oppositions into identity. Rather, God freely empties godself into what is alien in order to bring the world into the future glory of God. It is a picture of hope because it demonstrates God's openness to involve the Godhead in salvation history.⁶²

The title *The Crucified God* is challenging. The suggestion that God experiences death is a radical one. The early theology of the church considered that it was the human nature of Jesus which died, not the divine nature of Christ and this understanding has prevailed. The Christ as the Logos and as part of the Trinity cannot die. Indeed, it is through the Logos that the created world exists. D. Attfield sees the monolithic nature of Moltmann's theology problematic because it supposes that the second person of the Trinity can die. He proposes a distinction in Christ's roles to overcome this dilemma. In his role in the incarnation Christ becomes the logical subject of the human being Jesus. In this role Christ does not use his

⁶⁰ Braaten, "Crucified God," 118.

⁶¹ Walter Kasper, "Revolution in Gottesverständnis?," in *Diskussion Über Jürgen Moltmanns Buch »Der Gekreuzigte Gott«*, ed. M. Welker (Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1979), 146. 'Wie rettet er sich vor der (zweifelloos nicht gewollten) Konsequenz, dass Gott die Geschichte braucht, um zu sich selbst zu kommen?' (My translation above).

⁶² Jürgen Moltmann, "»Dialektik, Die Umschlägt in Identität« - Was Ist Das? Zu Befürchtungen Walter Kaspars," in *Diskussion Über Jürgen Moltmanns Buch »Der Gekreuzigte Gott«* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1979), 152-5.

omnipotence or omniscience to overrule the actions of Jesus. (We will see that Sergei Bulgakov has this same understanding of the relationship between the divine and human natures of Christ (chapter 5, 195).) In Attfield's thought, it is the human Jesus who suffers, believes himself abandoned on the cross, and dies. However, Christ also has a discarnate role as an integral part of the triune God. In his divine nature '[t]he Word, with his Father and the Spirit in the Trinity and in his cosmic sphere, feels himself as the man enduring the gallows tree.'⁶³ In this way, the two natures do not have to be a divisive element in God. Hypostatic union between the two natures ensures that the trinitarian God is connected to Jesus Christ.

Despite the theological difficulties, what is important for Moltmann is that God becomes God "for us" in this mutual suffering. Through this suffering, God brings righteousness into an unrighteous world. God's righteousness of grace is described by Bauckham as 'unconditional love which at the cost of divine suffering accepts the unrighteous and identifies with the forsaken.'⁶⁴ One person is raised so that he can communicate God's creative love and new righteousness which 'breaks through the vicious cycles of hate and vengeance and which...creates a new [hu]mankind with a new humanity.'⁶⁵ For Moltmann, Christ 'introduces the coming reign of God into the godless present by means of representative suffering.'⁶⁶ Through Christ's suffering and death, 'the risen Christ brings righteousness and life to the unrighteous and the dying.'⁶⁷ The new righteousness is based on grace, not the law. The representative suffering of Christ is not to be associated with a sacrificial expiation of sins. Expiation is interpreted within the

⁶³ D. G. Attfield, "Can God Be Crucified? A Discussion of J. Moltmann," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 30, no. 1 (1977): 57.

⁶⁴ Bauckham, *Moltmann*, 61.

⁶⁵ Moltmann, *Crucified God*, 178.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 185.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

framework of the law and is retrospective: 'By sin man falls short of the righteousness of the law and comes under the accusation of the law; by expiation he is restored to the righteousness of the law.'⁶⁸ Righteousness is moved out of a human framework of law and into a new framework of God's righteousness demonstrated in a new creation.

As noted in the beginning of this section, Bauckham believes that the heart of *Crucified God* is a question of theodicy based on an interpretation of the abandonment of the Son of God by his Father. Yet the above model of righteousness is as far as Moltmann goes in offering any systematic treatment of evil or of theodicy either in *Crucified God* or in later works. Evil has come into the world through humanity but Moltmann does not excuse it, nor explain why there is so much pain and evil needing transformation. Nor does Moltmann say that evil is necessary for the sake of good. In *The Future of Creation* (1977), he writes, 'we cannot go beyond the fact of evil, for which no reason can be given...'⁶⁹ The cross is the centre of all theology because, through the cross, God joins with creation and takes upon himself all the evil and suffering in the world, transforming it into his own history. Evil is overcome and 'integrated in the being of God.'⁷⁰ God acts in solidarity with the suffering world. However, as Celia Deane-Drummond notes, a theology of shared suffering does not necessarily diminish God's responsibility for

⁶⁸ Ibid., 183.

⁶⁹ Moltmann, *Future of Creation*, 77.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

that suffering.⁷¹ Nor is she convinced by Moltmann's idea of substitutionary atonement because of the implications it has for a God of love, especially in the context of the suffering in the natural world.⁷²

An important consideration in traditional theories of atonement is how the benefits of Christ's death and resurrection are transferred to all humanity. Braaten believes that 'a fundamental treatment of the concept of substitution would seem to be absolutely essential if the Father's participation in the suffering and death of the Son would carry ultimate salvific meaning for those who suffer alone and die forgotten deaths today.'⁷³ Indeed, because Moltmann offers no critical analysis of the classical theologians, Braaten finds Moltmann's methodology problematic in the whole of *Crucified God*:

In a book that proposes to treat in a fundamental way the saving and significance of the suffering and death of Jesus, one has to ask by what methodological right a theologian can insert his own theory into the history of theology without verifying its legitimacy for the church through a critical discussion with the mainstream of that church's tradition.⁷⁴

Because Moltmann bases his theology in dialectical thinking he has difficulties with the concept of reconciliation. Bauckham comments:

For Moltmann, the cross and the resurrection of Jesus represent total opposites: death and life, the absence of God and the nearness of God, Godforsakenness and the glory of God. Jesus abandoned by his Father to death and Jesus raised by his Father to

⁷¹ Celia Deane-Drummond, "Shadow Sophia in Christological Perspective: The Evolution of Sin and the Redemption of Nature," *Theology and Science* 6, no. 1 (2008). URL: <http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/section?content=a789609271&fulltext=7132409> (accessed February 10, 2009), 6.

⁷² Ibid.: 5.

⁷³ Braaten, "Crucified God," 115.

⁷⁴ Ibid.: 114.

eschatological life in the divine glory represent an absolute contradiction...⁷⁵

The contradiction between cross and resurrection is the contradiction between the human and the divine, between this world and the new creation. Suffering is a fact of the world and, through Golgotha, the triune God experiences this suffering. Reconciliation will only be achieved in the eschaton, when God will be all. Thus, the promise contained in the resurrection of Jesus continues to be the basis of Moltmann's hope. The love shown by the triune God's participation in the cross and resurrection motivates us to challenge the evil still present in the world. This is the basis for Christian praxis, the subject of the final section of this chapter.

Humanity and Praxis in light of the Cross

As we have seen above, Moltmann contends that the cross has never been given the weight of theology that it deserves, particularly in comparison to the resurrection. And yet it is vitally important that we correct this imbalance in terms of the current twofold crisis within Christianity of relevance and identity. Moltmann believes that there has been a turning away from the church in modern society because its members have experienced a crisis of relevance.⁷⁶ Christianity has been seen to be a major western form of oppression. Moltmann believes that the difficulty lies in Christian life with notions of sameness, with the safety of upholding 'our' beliefs instead of challenging the status quo. He believes that it is essential that we learn to identify 'with what is other, alien and contradictory' because

⁷⁵ Bauckham, "Moltmann Revisited," 202-3.

⁷⁶ Moltmann, *Crucified God*, 8-9.

that is Christ's model.⁷⁷ Moltmann writes, 'Whether or not Christianity, in an alienated, divided and oppressive society, itself becomes alienated, divided and an accomplice of oppression, is ultimately decided only by whether the crucified Christ is a stranger to it or the Lord who determines the form of its existence.'⁷⁸ That forms of Christianity have, indeed, become such agents of oppression points to the lack of support in history for a theology of the cross. Such a theology of the cross, according to Moltmann, is founded with Paul, leaps forward to Luther and in the present is supported only in the 'persecuted churches of the poor and oppressed.'⁷⁹

The crisis of relevance becomes a crisis of identity. What is it to be Christian today? One does not have to be Christian, after all, to fight against injustice or have a social commitment to the poor. If the definition requires that 'social and political commitment is necessary, what is "Christian" about it?'⁸⁰ For Moltmann, Christianity must stand or fall with the cross of Christ. He answers questions of relevance and identity with his own theology of the cross. It begins with identification with the crucified Christ and continues with an acceptance of God's proclamation from the cross. A theology of the cross is the common denominator which must determine Christian identity and relevance. Christ has identified with the godless and the abandoned in his death on the cross and in his resurrection God has championed the godless and the abandoned.

The human person seeking Christian identity and relevance is to follow the path of Christ in two processes: in suffering and in kenosis. The world and humanity are suffering, as shown by war, famine, environmental degradation, (mis)use of nuclear technology, suicide, drug use, and much

⁷⁷ Ibid., 25.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 3.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 13.

more. Furthermore, 'capitalism, racism and inhuman technocracy quietly develop in their own way. The causes of misery are no longer to be found in the inner attitudes of men, but have long been institutionalized.'⁸¹ However, unless Christianity 'apprehends the pain of the negative, Christian hope cannot be realistic and liberating.'⁸² Recognizing the godless forsakenness of Jesus' death, 'arouses a love which can no longer be indifferent, but seeks out its opposite, what is ugly and unworthy of love, in order to love it.'⁸³ This is a mysticism of the cross that, through identifying with Christ's suffering, can lead the poor and oppressed out of 'their submission to fate and apathy in suffering.'⁸⁴ Christianity also stands for all those 'who have turned away from their inward and external forms of domination and oppression.'⁸⁵ Jesus spoke out for the godless and the oppressed, thus we all must 'take sides in the concrete social and political conflicts going on.'⁸⁶ By entering into, but not submitting to, the suffering of our times, we follow Christ. Christ in his suffering but also the historical person of Jesus provide 'the model of the life of liberating suffering that each man is called to emulate in history until, at last, new being is achieved and the provisional eschatological titles of Jesus ("Christ," "Lord," and so forth) become ontological realities that all people share in the community of the kingdom.'⁸⁷

The second way we follow Christ, through kenosis, is closely linked to the dialectical principle of knowledge. For Plato, like is known only by like, but Moltmann prefers Hippocrates' dialectical principle of knowledge: we know

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid., 5.

⁸³ Ibid., 39.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 52.

⁸⁵ Ibid..

⁸⁶ Ibid., 53.

⁸⁷ Otto, "Resurrection," 90.

something by its opposite.⁸⁸ Knowing by its opposite is the epistemological principle of the world – by hot we know cold, by evil we know good, by hate we know love. Moltmann acknowledges Plato's principle of analogy but emphasizes the necessity of supplementing this with the dialectical principle of knowledge. The contradictory nature of the cross supports this principle in that he who is righteous suffers an unrighteous death. The process of the crucifixion is also kenotic, so that only when 'with all the understanding and consistency he possesses, a man follows Christ along the way of self-emptying into non-identity, does he encounter contradiction, resistance and opposition.'⁸⁹ For Bauckham, what Moltmann calls "revelation in the opposite" (*Offenbarung im Gegenteil*) should more appropriately be called "revelation in contradiction" (*Offenbarung im Widerspruch*).⁹⁰

The following of Christ is necessarily political: only when the human person goes 'out into anonymity of slums and peace movements...is he tempted and tested inwardly and outwardly.'⁹¹ With the challenge of dialectical thought and dialectical existence, one's own identity 'has to be recognized and set forth in what is different and alien.'⁹² Christian praxis, then, must be based on a theology of the cross. This is because the cross is the one truly political point in the story of Jesus.⁹³ We identify with the suffering on the cross and we initiate resistance to the world to facilitate the kenotic process of identifying with the other. Moltmann expands upon the trinitarian principle of political theology in *The Experiment Hope*.⁹⁴ The revelation of

⁸⁸ See Moltmann, *Crucified God*, 26-7.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁹⁰ Richard Bauckham, "Moltmanns Eschatologie Des Kreuzes," in *Diskussion Über Jürgen Moltmanns Buch »Der Gekreuzigte Gott«*, ed. M. Welker (Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1979), 48.

⁹¹ Moltmann, *Crucified God*, 18.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 26.

⁹³ Moltmann, *Experiment Hope*, 110.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 101-18.

God is to be found in the crucified one, not in the institutions of the day.⁹⁵ The task of Christians is to enter into solidarity with the oppressed, even if (particularly if!) the oppression comes from the civil religion of the society.⁹⁶

Together with political and social action, Moltmann supports the principle of resistance to institutionalized oppression. Notions of resistance are framed by the negative dialectic and critical theory of T. W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer. Horkheimer's critique of capitalist society extends to religious idols which have the power to legitimize the church's claim to represent truths. Horkheimer also presupposes that we do not know what the "wholly other" is. Moltmann sees the essence of Horkheimer's critical theory as 'a negative theology which prohibits images.'⁹⁷ Adorno takes Horkheimer's ideas into an imageless transcendence.⁹⁸ Moltmann uses this principle of negative dialectic in his theology of the cross: 'the physical pain and death of Christ is regarded as the negative side of its symbolism of God, resurrection, judgment and eternal life.'⁹⁹

The role of the church is to support the political and social drives of such a theology of the cross. Douglas Sturm notes that Moltmann is 'critical of the privatization of religion in modern society [and] argues that the central concept of Christian eschatology, the "kingdom of God," is radically relational or public.'¹⁰⁰ The kingdom of God is the consummation of righteousness or justice. The promise of the kingdom of God is that which leads to action, the effort to overcome the dehumanizing conditions that

⁹⁵ Ibid., 107.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 110.

⁹⁷ Moltmann, *Crucified God*, 224. Moltmann references Max Horkheimer, *Die Sehnsucht Nach Dem Ganz Anderen* (1970), Max Horkheimer, *Kritische Theorie I*.

⁹⁸ T. W. Adorno, *Negative Dialektik* (1966), 392. In Moltmann, *Crucified God*, 283, f/n 66.

⁹⁹ Moltmann, *Crucified God*, 284, f/n 66.

¹⁰⁰ Douglas Sturm, "Praxis and Promise: On the Ethics of Political Theology," *Ethics* 92, no. 4 (1982): 739.

currently prevail. The church represents a political factor for Moltmann.¹⁰¹ Any hermeneutics or ethics within the church have a political thrust because they should be orientated towards social and economic change.¹⁰² The new political theology 'is not concerned with the dissolution of the church into left-wing or right-wing politics, but with the Christianization of its political situation and function in terms of the freedom of Christ.'¹⁰³ Freedom for all accords with supporting basic human rights. The world has "vicious circles of death," such as poverty, racial and cultural alienation, force, senselessness and godforsakenness. The "demonic crisis"¹⁰⁴ means that evil is not just personal but institutional. The church should support democracy, economic co-determination, cultural integration (in the sense of acknowledgment), and peace with nature. The church also has an obvious role in offering a meaning and purpose to life which overcomes the apathy and despair in the world.

The central message of the church should be, according to Moltmann, the crucified God. The cross has become an ameliorated symbol of the church. The original, scandalous message is blanketed beneath two thousand years of outward form and tradition. The sacramental "cult" is particularly criticized by Moltmann. He sees the form of the eucharist service as an expediency of the early church. Because Christianity was born into an ancient world of religions that required sacrifice to the gods the church was

¹⁰¹ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Holy Spirit*, trans. Margaret Kohl, English ed. (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1977), 15.

¹⁰² Many of Moltmann's ideas are taken up and developed in the economic realm in M. Douglas Meeks, *God the Economist: The Doctrine of God and Political Economy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989).

¹⁰³ Moltmann, *Crucified God*, 327.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

'also obliged to fulfil this public need for cult and sacrifice.'¹⁰⁵ The eucharist was offered as a symbolic representation of Christ's sacrificial death. The problem with this for Moltmann is that the crucified Christ should represent the *end* of cultic sacrifice. Christ died "once for all" and his death 'is not a sacrifice which can be repeated or transferred.'¹⁰⁶ For Moltmann, 'cultic religion must be replaced by the spreading of the word of the cross, the celebration of faith and the practical following of Jesus.'¹⁰⁷ It must not forget what was 'unique, particular and scandalous' in the death of Christ.¹⁰⁸ The eucharist should be like the meals shared with "publicans and sinners," and so celebrated with 'the unrighteous, those who have no rights and the godless.'¹⁰⁹ Naturally, Sergei Bulgakov would not agree with this assessment of the eucharist. In the Orthodox (and Catholic) church the eucharist is not only symbolic but also has transformative significance for the world (see Chapter 5, 199).

Because all persons are equal before God, all people should be equal in the world. The church's mission and the mission of the Christian person are political: 'Christianity must stay on this path of the secularization, desacralization and democratization of political rule if it wants to remain true to its faith and its hope.'¹¹⁰ In *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* (1975), Moltmann rejects the Protestant reformers' critical distinction between salvation and welfare.¹¹¹ For Moltmann, the Reformation 'relativized the political orders, making them necessary orders in this world which can serve

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 42.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 43.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 44.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 43.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 44.

¹¹⁰ Moltmann, *Church in Power of the Spirit*, 179.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 178.

the welfare of all, and ought to do so, but do not minister to salvation.¹¹² Moltmann wants to combine the two in mission. According to Stephen Williams, Moltmann's eschatology 'is about a single, undivided freedom and our quest for it must be one, its elements (fellowship with God, man and nature) equally weighted.'¹¹³ The struggles for equality are part of the anticipation of the kingdom of God: 'They are to be apprehended as a process, which is unfinished and, historically speaking, unfinishable.'¹¹⁴ Human struggles do not appear to be salvific since it is only God who "finishes" this "process." When God 'brings his history to completion (1 Cor. 15: 28), his suffering will be transformed into joy, and thereby our suffering as well.'¹¹⁵ Gutierrez acknowledges the importance of Moltmann's work for liberation theology but feels that there is a tendency to replace 'a Christianity of the Beyond with a Christianity of the Future...'¹¹⁶ By this he means that Christian praxis must be situated in a concrete present reality so that liberation is a hope for this life and not just a future hope.¹¹⁷

The certainty of hope in Moltmann's soteriological eschatology has been criticized for its repercussions for personal salvation. As Jaeger demonstrates, Moltmann has no doubt that, in the end, there will be 'an eschatological victory over all forms of evil.'¹¹⁸ But this could be taken to mean that there is no need for the human struggle against evil. Jaeger continues, 'if all persons and all creation are destined to be in God's

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Stephen N. Williams, "The Problem with Moltmann," *European Journal of Theology* 5, no. 2 (1996): 164.

¹¹⁴ Moltmann, *Church in Power of the Spirit*, 181.

¹¹⁵ Jürgen Moltmann, "'the Crucified God'," *Theology Today* 31 (1974): 18.

¹¹⁶ Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation*, trans. and edited by Sister Caridad Inda and John Eagleson (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1974), 218.

¹¹⁷ However, Ivan Petrella argues that liberation theology itself has failed to place the reality (and not just the promise) of liberation in the present by its failure to construct new models of political and economic organization. See Ivan Petrella, *The Future of Liberation Theology: An Argument and Manifesto* (Aldershot, England/Burlington, USA: Ashgate, 2004), vii.

¹¹⁸ Jaeger, "Problem of Evil," 11.

kingdom of glory, they lack freedom to choose otherwise.¹¹⁹ Another problem is that this denies biblical teaching on the soteriological importance of the need for human endeavours to attain the kingdom of God.¹²⁰ Williams believes that, in fact, 'the nature of our personal relationship to God *does* affect our entitlement to hope for its positive eschatological consummation.'¹²¹ For Williams, there is a process of personal reconciliation with God evident in the Bible, which distinguishes those who are worthy of the kingdom of God through their actions and attitudes from those who are not. Although this may be an unpopular notion to the desire for salvation for all, it at least suggests the importance of one's relationship to God as much as to one's fellow human beings. Moltmann acknowledges the importance of prayer – 'in the brotherhood of Jesus, the person who prays has access to the Fatherhood of the Father and to the Spirit of hope'¹²² – but the connection between prayer and personal salvation is not made. Personal salvation is assured because it is in the hands of a loving God.

This aspect of Moltmann's theology does not change. In *The Spirit of Life* (1992), the resurrection still justifies all *despite* the world. Although the Spirit's role is given more emphasis in the trinitarian event of the cross, it is God who reconciles the world into God's self. Even though the cross is an event in God, reconciliation and new life become possible for all humanity. Although Nancy Victorin-Vangerud supports Moltmann's attempt to combine a liberation hermeneutic with justification, she finds the project flawed: '[l]ike an enabling, well-meaning parent, God serves as the intermediary, taking care of the situation and then expecting the family

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ See, for example, the many references to the kingdom of God, for example, Mt. 19: 16-24; Mk. 4: 26-32, 9: 42-47; Lk. 6: 20-35; Acts 14: 22; Rom. 14: 12-23; 1 Cor. 6: 9-10.

¹²¹ Williams, "The Problem with Moltmann," 164. Original emphasis.

¹²² Moltmann, *Crucified God*, 247.

members to live in peace.¹²³ The problem with this is that it does not take into account the possibility for reconciliation in the world: '[j]ustice, forgiveness, love, and reconciliation all have historical and institutional dimensions incorporating the transformed relations of victims and perpetrators.'¹²⁴ Moltmann's model of conformation 'complicated by Moltmann's language of surrender and self-sacrifice, tends towards human passivity, rather than the active labour of struggle.'¹²⁵ Once again, human history is subsumed into God's history.

Conclusion

Moltmann's theology of the cross is challenging but are the theological difficulties of *Theology of Hope* – determinism, absence of judgment, ontology of future, lack of reconciliation – addressed or answered in this later theology? The question I posed at the beginning of the chapter – does humanity continue to stand separate, somewhat bewildered and unreconciled in earthly existence while looking for a distant hope? – must now be answered. There is a basic similarity to Moltmann's early theology reflected in the two major publications *Theology of Hope* and *Crucified God*. They are two sides of the same coin. For Bauckham, these two books constitute the core of Moltmann's early theology and have 'a concentrated power of argument focused on their central integrating ideas...'¹²⁶ Although these books 'have a certain polemical extremeness...' Bauckham prefers their intensity of vision '... to the greater breadth of view in the later writings.'¹²⁷

¹²³ Nancy Victorin-Vangerud, "The Spirit's Struggle: Reconciliation in Moltmann's *Pneumatologia Crucis*," *Colloquium* 29, no. 2 (1997): 100.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.: 101.

¹²⁶ Bauckham, "Moltmann Revisited," 199.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

The later work will be examined in greater detail in the next chapter. However, there are certain consistencies in this earlier theology which hold true throughout Moltmann's career. I suggest that none of the issues that were raised in the first chapter on *Theology of Hope* are addressed satisfactorily in *Crucified God*. Despite Moltmann's best intentions, humanity remains unreconciled in earthly existence. Reasons for this include dialectic thinking that operates in terms of contradictions and a God-centred vision that fails to find any divinity in godforsaken humanity or the godless world. Although both of these particular reasons are softened in the ecotheology that will follow, there is, and there will be no sense of a mediating principle between the human and divine worlds. Rather, Moltmann swings between total opposition between God and the world and collapsing God into the world. He seems to be happiest writing from God's perspective and uncomfortable writing from within the world.

This God perspective is most obvious in Moltmann's christology. The only aspects of Jesus' humanity which Moltmann allows are, one, his social and political challenge, and, two, his suffering and death on the cross. Yet even these two aspects are largely developed in terms of their divinity. The challenge to society is seen to be God's condemnation of humanity and the world. Jesus' suffering and death on the cross are God's suffering and death on the cross. There is no interface between the divine and human worlds. Indeed, as we noted above, Christ is outside history, society and even outside humanity.¹²⁸ The human world is everything that the divine world is not. This is the ultimate conclusion that Moltmann takes because of his dialectical thought processes. Any dichotomies that have arisen because of the resurrection are taken into the trinitarian Godhead – into the Father, Son and Spirit. The divine and separate God acts from outside the world so that

¹²⁸ Moltmann, *Crucified God*, 98. See above, 106.

all that is divine is external to the world. As also noted above, creation, new creation and resurrection are external works of God against chaos, nothingness and death.¹²⁹ Moltmann does not want to divide the earthly Jesus from the eschatological Christ¹³⁰ but succeeds in doing just that. In part this is because Moltmann's trinitarian theology is weak in this early theology. Moltmann accuses Barth as being not trinitarian enough but, as Braaten points out, 'Moltmann, of course, does not himself hold on to his own rule about speaking of God in trinitarian fashion. He reverts time and time again to a simple concept of God, where God is the subject of the sentence without any trinitarian differentiation. It proves at last to be as unavoidable to him as it was to Karl Barth.'¹³¹

There is still a fundamental lack of process, or indeed, of the world receiving any benefits from the resurrection. Humanity must suffer until the apocalypse when this condemned world will pass away.¹³² Our only comfort is that God now suffers with us. Although Moltmann has no explanation for evil he takes the godforsakenness of the world seriously. He proposes a steadfast resistance against evil in its various forms as described in Christian praxis in the world. Braaten believes that the boldest part of *Crucified God* is Moltmann's treatment of evil and theodicy but here, he comments, 'Moltmann is flying on his own, making no attempt to ground his resolution of the problem of evil in the Scriptures or the history of theology. What to do about evil? Moltmann takes care of it by putting it into God himself.'¹³³ To suggest that God's suffering is like human suffering is also problematic. Jaeger notes that, on the contrary, human beings appear

¹²⁹ Ibid., 192. See above, 108.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 181.

¹³¹ Braaten, "Crucified God," 117.

¹³² Moltmann, *Crucified God*, 171.

¹³³ Braaten, "Crucified God," 118.

to suffer randomly and have no choice in the matter.¹³⁴ Despite such criticism, Jaeger believes that Moltmann's theodicy 'strives to balance present activism with future hope, social engagement with spiritual devotion, and human freedom with divine guidance. In this sense, the theologian's approach to the problem of evil is successful.'¹³⁵

Despite Moltmann's God perspective, the knowledge of God remains mysterious for humankind and the relationship between the human person and God is not described in any detail. Yet hope in the face of the world's problems remains solely in the God of the future. The premise of this dissertation is that hope arises because a correspondence can be found between the human will to live and the world that sustains humanity. The theological hermeneutic of this premise is that there is also some correspondence between the God of the world and humanity. Because of the lack of human agency in the world Moltmann's theology of hope does not support these premises. In the following chapter Moltmann balances some of the dialectical extremes of this earlier theology so that there is more of a sense of unity between humanity and creation and a purpose for the world. He consciously moves away from his "Yes or No" decisional dialectic, as he calls it, and embraces trinitarian thinking.¹³⁶ In the worldview that has been outlined thus far Moltmann highlights the problems of both the world and the church in modern times. Although his systematic theology may be unsatisfactory his sincere attempt to face the problems of the day is impressive. Ultimately Moltmann grounds his theology of the cross in God's love and answers Auschwitz with a theology of shared suffering. Jaeger believes that 'no other major theologian has combined a theology of

¹³⁴ Jaeger, "Problem of Evil," 11.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Jürgen Moltmann, *A Broad Palace: An Autobiography*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 288.

eschatology with a theology of the cross in this manner.¹³⁷ I close this chapter with a quote from Moltmann which, I think, demonstrates this sincerity, and summarizes the connection for him between love, suffering, and history.

Where men suffer because they love, God suffers in them and they suffer in God. Where this God suffers the death of Jesus and thereby demonstrates the power of his love, there men also find the power to remain in love despite pain and death, becoming neither bitter nor superficial...He who enters into love, and through love experiences the deadliness of death, enters also into the "history of God." On the other hand, he who recognizes the trinitarian history of God in the cross of Christ can live with the terrors of history and despite them remain in love.¹³⁸

¹³⁷ Jaeger, "Problem of Evil," 11.

¹³⁸ Moltmann, "Crucified God," 17.

Chapter 3 God in creation: humanity and ecology

Introduction

In *Theology of Hope*, Moltmann proposes that it is the task of theology 'to expound the knowledge of God in a correlation between understanding of the world and self-understanding.'¹ And yet, as we have seen in the earlier theology of *Theology of Hope* and *Crucified God*, the knowledge of God is a mysterious, unknowable entity,² and the understanding of the world and humanity is only useful to dialectically understand what God is *not*. From *The Future of Creation*, published in 1977, onwards, Moltmann's theology changes direction to embrace an ecological theology. The works that followed, including *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God* (1980)³ and *God in Creation* (1985), appear to be almost a complete reversal of his earlier theology. Now Moltmann tentatively moves towards finding some knowledge of God in the created world. Creation *is* good now. The body now serves some purpose as a house of the soul and spirit. Moltmann embraces an understanding of the human *Gestalt*, which he uses to explain the modern ecological crisis in terms of human unconsciousness. If consciousness is reflective and reflected spirit, then the human being is largely unconscious, and the consequences for the world have been, and continue to be, catastrophic. Thus, humanity remains the most problematic part of the equation in its quest for the knowledge of God, now seen in terms of humanity's self-understanding and its alienation from the world.

¹ Moltmann, *Hope*, 100.

² Moltmann, *Crucified God*, 167. See also above, Chapter 2, 90.

³ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God : The Doctrine of God*, trans. Margaret Kohl (London: SCM Press, 1981).

According to Moltmann, the serious problems of today have their basis in how humanity has understood God as the absolute and transcendent subject of creation. The world is God's object, the object of God's creation, preservation and redemption. Humanity, as God's image on earth, is the world's subject, the ruler of the world, enjoined to dominate and subdue the created world. The world is viewed through the polarizing lens of a subject/object dichotomy. Moltmann suggests that the world, or any object, or even God, can better be understood within the context of its relationships and its environment. We need to 'revert to the pre-modern concept of reason as the organ of perception and participation.'⁴ Our purpose becomes not one of domination but one of perception 'in order to participate, and to enter into the mutual relationships of the living thing.'⁵ We must look to a trinitarian model of God to understand the essence of mutuality and relationship. Moltmann maintains a dialectical view of the world but proposes that oppositions need to be viewed as complementary, as aspects of a common process. As noted in the Introduction, this leads Moltmann to seek reconciliation between freedom and necessity, grace and nature, covenant and creation, being a Christian and being a human being.⁶

Reconciliation becomes the new catchcry. In his earlier theology, the world is an unredeemable place which will pass away, leaving room for the new creation of the eschaton.⁷ Now the world has changed from something that is condemned to pass away to one that needs saving. The goal changes to peace with nature. Moltmann now gives a comprehensive survey of theological doctrines of creation in terms of their propensity to alienate and isolate humanity from the world. These polarizing doctrines, where nature

⁴ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 2.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁶ See above, Introduction, 26. Cf. *Ibid.*, 9.

⁷ Moltmann, *Hope*, 226. See above Chapter 1, 68.

is opposed to God, body to spirit, and so on, are now shown to cause the unhealthy state of the world today. He offers an ecological theology of nature, with the central metaphors of openness and closedness. Self-transformation is achieved through developing openness to nature. It is humanity's "closedness" that has created the environmental problems that we now perceive. The sabbath's time of rest and dwelling with the present is suggested as the antidote to closedness.

By focussing on the trinitarian concept of relationality, and particularly the work of the Spirit, Moltmann attempts to correct the negative and polarizing dichotomies of historical doctrines. The concept of Christ the mediator also appears.⁸ Moltmann's ecological doctrine, *God in Creation* is, above all, his pneumatology. His former theology, which may broadly be seen as addressing God the Unknowable Father in *Theology of Hope*, and Christ in *Crucified God*, has been criticized for its simple concept of God, where God is often the subject of the sentence without any trinitarian differentiation.⁹ Moltmann begins to address this issue by developing a social doctrine of the Trinity in *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God* and he sees *God in Creation* as a continuation of this work. The ecological ideas in *God in Creation* can also be seen to be a development of his work in *The Future of Creation*. Moltmann develops his pneumatology further in *The Spirit of Life*, and this work will also be examined here.

This chapter focuses on Moltmann's new picture of humanity and its relationship to the world. Moltmann insists that the ecological crisis must be addressed by any modern theology. However, with Moltmann's former assessment, this world was not a part of God and would pass away in the end times. What has changed in his outlook? Why should we look after this

⁸ Moltmann, *Trinity and Kingdom*, 103f.

⁹ Braaten, "Crucified God," 117. See above Chapter 2, 135.

world? If, indeed, we learn about ourselves through understanding the world around us, does this give a new basis for a theology of hope? In other words, in terms of my own thesis of hope, are we agents of change, and can a change of relationship to the world offer a basis of hope for the future? We will discover that the ecological shift does offer a more connected picture of humanity with its world. The more comprehensive worldview is enhanced by Moltmann's trinitarian perspective, particularly the Spirit's participation in creation. Ultimately, the human person does not have a role in the transformation of the world but each person is urged to follow God's model of love. Moltmann's strength is his recognition of the social, economic and environmental issues of his day, and his renewed theology of hope is a worthwhile theological engagement with them. The three sections to be covered in this chapter are: a theology of creation, which examines God's relationship to the world, anthropology, that is, humanity as the image of God and the world, and a theology of hope revisited, exploring the relationship between humanity, the world and God.

A theology of creation: God's relationship to the world

Moltmann's aim in forwarding a new theology of creation is to address the modern ecological crisis. His method is twofold. He critically examines the historical unfolding of theological doctrines of creation in order to find the reasons for the current human understanding of the world. Then, to form his own theology of creation, he takes positive aspects of historical theologies of creation (which have been passed over in time) and combines them with an engagement with new, post critical scientific methods and ways of thinking.

Moltmann proposes that, since Augustine, Christian theology has seen creation as 'an act of God outwards: *operatio Dei ad extra*.'¹⁰ This is distinguished from God's *internal* act, which constitutes the divine relationships within the Trinity. Creation is separate from God: *non de Deo, sed ex nihilo* (not from God, but out of nothing).¹¹ Moltmann understands this "nothing" to mean that

[w]herever and whatever God creates is without any preconditions. There is no external necessity which occasions his creativity, and no inner compulsion which could determine it. Nor is there any primordial matter whose potentiality is pre-given to his creative activity, and which would set him material limits.¹²

"Nothing" is intended to negate that there is a "something" from which God creates. Platonic philosophy distinguished between the $\mu\eta\ \acute{o}\nu$ and the $\acute{o}\nu\ \acute{o}\nu$, the relative and the absolute negation of being.¹³ Any understanding of nothing is set against being. The relative negation of being, the $\mu\eta\ \acute{o}\nu$, defines nothing as being's negation: it has no substance of its own, however,

¹⁰ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 86.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 75.

¹² *Ibid.*, 74.

¹³ Plato, *Timaeus*, 28a, reference in *Ibid.*, 74, f/n 4. In fact, Plato's distinction here in *Timaeus* is between Being and Becoming. Becoming must come from a cause and that cause is the 'ever-existing ($\pi\epsilon\rho\iota\ \tau\acute{o}\nu\ \pi\acute{o}\tau\epsilon$) God.' Cf. *Timaeus*, 34b.

it can appear in time as the potential for being in its becoming. The absolute negation of being, the οὐκ ὄν, opposes absolute Being with absolute Nothing. Moltmann rejects this possibility because it suggests that absolute Being can be delineated by absolute Nothing. The absolute Being, God, must be beyond any such defining in terms of opposition. Moltmann favours the μὴ ὄν concept because the *relative* negation of being counters this 'mystical reversion to pantheism,'¹⁴ by excluding absolute Being, God, from the equation.

Moltmann supports the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* as the μὴ ὄν in principle, but finds any language which suggests that creation is *outside* of God problematic. Although creation out of Nothing is *ad extra* to God, Moltmann suggests that the Nothing is a realm set aside *within* God. According to Moltmann, the idea of creation outwards and inwards is 'a much discussed point in the Jewish kabbalistic tradition.'¹⁵ He uses Isaac Luria's doctrine of *zimsum*,¹⁶ meaning a withdrawing of oneself into oneself through concentration and contraction, to support the concept of a within and without of God rather than an inward and outward act of creation. Moltmann sees the first act of creation as a setting aside of the nothing within God's self. God makes room for creation by 'withdrawing his presence and his power.'¹⁷ This is an act of self-limitation and it is a space of non-God, non-being. This space of nothing allows for the possibility of becoming yet also contains the possibility of the hell of annihilation through the creature's own self-limitations or self-isolations. This separation protects God from a pantheistic connection to creation—creation is both "within" and "without" God.

¹⁴ Ibid., 75.

¹⁵ Moltmann, *Trinity and Kingdom*, 108.

¹⁶ Moltmann examines *zimsum* in detail in Ibid., 109ff.

¹⁷ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 87.

God's next act is creation itself. Moltmann finds significance in the use of two different verbs in the Genesis account of creation. In Gen. 1: 1 the verb *bara'* (create) is used for the creating of the heavens and the earth. According to Moltmann, *bara'* means a bringing forth in the sphere of history, nature and spirit, through which something comes into existence which was not there previously.¹⁸ The other verb *'asah* (make) is 'the term for the purposeful "manufacture" of a work, in which something is given its particular character and aptitude.'¹⁹ On the seventh day, God finished the work that was *made* (Gen. 2: 2). In fact, the terms appear to be used more interchangeably than Moltmann suggests: the great sea monsters are also "created" and human beings are "made," for example. Moltmann's point, however, is that the initial act of creation is unique, and it is unified: it happens 'in a moment.'²⁰ "In the beginning" does not refer to time or to eternity but it is 'the sheer, unqualified precondition for all happening in time...'²¹ Time actually begins after this initial act of creation with the separation of night from day (Gen. 1: 4-5). The uniqueness of the event of creation means that there is no human analogy for divine creation. Moltmann disagrees with Paul Tillich's synopsis that creation is eternal.²² Tillich postulates that the eternal origin of God and creation are identical. Paradoxically perhaps, Moltmann proposes that 'creation certainly has a beginning, but its consummation in the glory of God has no end.'²³

How and why does God create the world? Traditionally, doctrines of decree begin with God's will and name God as absolute subject. Creation is then a

¹⁸ Ibid., 73.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² In Ibid., 84. See Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology: Three Volumes in One* (The University of Chicago Press: 1967), 252.

²³ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 81.

decision on God's part. For Moltmann, the problem with this is twofold. Firstly, as we have noted, God is seen as transcendent and distant, if not absent, from creation. Secondly, as we have also noted, humanity has used this subject/object distinction as a model for its own subject/object relationship to the world and has used this distinction as a mandate to dominate the world. Doctrines of emanation, however, are equally problematic for Moltmann. They begin with God's essential nature as supreme substance. According to Moltmann, these doctrines were gnostic and Neoplatonic in origin and were condemned by the early church, but have appeared again more recently. Tillich, for example, suggests that, it is God's nature to create eternally.²⁴ God's nature is the inevitable source of the world. This nature, which is love, overflows into creation. The problem with this for Moltmann is that it is difficult to separate God from creation at all. God cannot be equal to creation: 'if God is supposed to be his own Creator, then he would also have to be his own creature.'²⁵

The question revolves around God's freedom. Was God free to create or is creation an inevitable outcome of God's divine nature? Moltmann wrestles with the two poles of decree versus emanation with a conversation between love, freedom and necessity. Creation is, indeed, a disclosure of God's very being. Since God is love, God cannot help but confer God's goodness on creation. Because God's nature is love, God has no choice but to reveal and share this divine nature. God 'cannot but love the world eternally...'²⁶ This is seen as a divine "necessity." God is free, however, because God is 'entirely free when he is entirely himself.'²⁷ Thus, God's freedom, love and necessity are synonymous. This conclusion is also reached Bulgakov, as we

²⁴ In *Ibid.*, 84. See Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 252.

²⁵ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 84.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 85.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 83.

shall see in the following chapter.²⁸ Our human notion that freedom and necessity are opposites does not apply to God. Love dissolves the dichotomy. Yet creation is still a decision on God's part, an act of God's will first and foremost. It is not an *arbitrary* act of will, it is a *decision* on God's part to share the divine love. Moltmann upholds the principle of a creation where God decides to share the Godhead's nature of love with a world of God's creation. However, creation 'is not an emanation from God's essential nature [but]...a divine resolve of the will to create.'²⁹

In the end, Moltmann attempts to *combine* traditional doctrines of decrees, which understand creation as an act of divine will, with doctrines of emanation, which see creation as the overflowing of the divine nature, to propose that creation is a creative letting-be, to be seen more in motherly than fatherly categories. God is absolute subject and shares God's nature with creation. God's purpose in creation is to reveal the Godhead's divine nature of love and glory. Nature, once again, is not an ontological category. Moltmann removes any ontological categories of matter from the act of creation. This enables a separation of God from creation but pays homage to God's nature of abundant, overflowing love. This is an important point. One could ask, why do we need this separation at all? Bulgakov, for example, as we shall see in the next chapter, does not separate God from creation in this way. For Bulgakov, creation is an act of God's will *and* formed from God's ontological nature. I suggest that Moltmann needs this separation between God and creation to remove the responsibility for evil from God's actions. God can only be responsible for all that is good. I will return to this point in the following section on the human world.

²⁸ Chapter 4, 201.

²⁹ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 75.

The distinction from and connection to creation is developed further in Moltmann's understanding of the transcendent/immanent God. In terms of connectedness, the God who is transcendent in relation to the world and the God who is immanent in the world 'are one and the same God.'³⁰ Moltmann develops his trinitarian theology to explain the transcendent/immanent God's relationship to creation: 'the Father is the creating origin of creation, the Son its shaping origin, and the Spirit its life-giving origin.'³¹ The Father is called the Creator, who then sends the Son and the Spirit to work in creation. The Son 'gathers the world under his liberating lordship, and redeems it.'³² The Spirit is the life of creation, both in the sense of quickening life and of eternal life. Although each of the persons of the Trinity acts in unique ways, God cannot be divided. The Father God is not separate but experiences the suffering of creation through the Spirit. Thus, all three persons of the Trinity are immanent in the world.

How is God still transcendent? Moltmann is less clear on this in his efforts to bring wholeness and synthesis to his theology. God appears to maintain a quasi-transcendence by dwelling in the heaven of God's own creation. Heaven is created to be the complement of the earth. Where the earth consists of *created* potentialities and energies, heaven is the *creative* possibilities of God, which God can call forth in the future glory.³³ God creates heaven and earth and chooses heaven as God's dwelling place: 'God's presence is understood spatially as being located in heaven—that is, in the sphere of his creative potentialities; and spatially it moves from heaven to earth.'³⁴ Thus, heaven is the place of all God's creative

³⁰ Ibid., 15.

³¹ Ibid., 98.

³² Ibid., 97.

³³ See Ibid., 182.

³⁴ Ibid., 183.

potentialities for the world, but this means that it is the *total* of all earth's potential yet to be realized. God can and does work from within creation, that is, from heaven. In fact, creation 'lives from the continual inflow of the energies of the Spirit of God.'³⁵ Moltmann allows for God's freedom to work at any time in creation, but most particularly in the future eschaton when the world will be redeemed. Indeed, it is important to distinguish between the kingdom of God and heaven: heaven is understood as the potential which will be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is the kingdom of glory which will be the renewal of heaven *and* earth. It will be 'the indwelling of the triune God in his whole creation.'³⁶

The indwelling of God in creation signals the new eternal eschaton. Following Augustine, Moltmann agrees that creation does not begin in time, time begins with creation.³⁷ There is no place for circular notions of time for Moltmann, the idea that, as in beginning so also in the end. The consummation of creation 'is something *new* over against creation-in-the-beginning.'³⁸ The difference between the beginning and the end is the difference in the presence of God within creation. In the beginning, God sets an independent creation in motion. In the future, God joins fully with creation. God eschatologically dwells within the new heaven and earth 'in the *space* of his created beings.'³⁹ There is a new relationship between space and time. Eternity is 'the fullness of time, not timelessness. If the beginning of creation is also the beginning of time, then time begins with the future out of which the present comes into being.'⁴⁰ The incarnation of Christ is an

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Moltmann, *Coming of God*, 264. See Augustine, *Saint Augustine's Enchiridion*, trans. Ernest Evans (London: S.P.C.K., 1953), 106. [check 106]

³⁸ Moltmann, *Coming of God*, 265.

³⁹ Ibid., 266.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 264-5.

anticipation of this future event. Using the metaphor of the *menuha*, or rest, Moltmann speaks of the fulfilment of time as the eternal peace of God with God's *Shekinah* (Spirit) and Christ *within* the new, eternal creation. Moltmann does not specify the dynamics of the transition from temporal to eternal creation. Indeed, the idea of 'the fullness of time' may indicate that eternity is still a function of time. This would agree with Moltmann's lack of separation between God and creation in the eschaton. The eternal God can and will fully unite with God's creation. Creation, both temporal and eternal, is an act of God's will in two parts.

Moltmann's whole theology of creation is an attempt to hold the oppositions of historical understanding together. Since he now views oppositions as complementary, as aspects of a common process, the aim of the dualisms of creation theology – transcendence/immanence, freedom/necessity, grace/nature, heaven/earth – is reconciliation. As we have seen, Moltmann's doctrine of heaven attempts to preserve God's distinction from earth and yet it is also meant to symbolically represent God's openness to the created world. However, heaven is also 'the sphere of reality which is inaccessible and unknowable.'⁴¹ God may be open to us but humanity's openness to heaven is a little more difficult. The problem of reconciliation, both the how and the when, is God's problem. God holds the balance of these dichotomies in the Godhead's self and true reconciliation will only be achieved in the end times. This may be the reason why Moltmann appears to struggle with his own attempts to hold the dichotomies of his theology of creation together. He admits that his aim is not to achieve a 'well-balanced and harmonious synthesis'⁴² of doctrines of decree and emanation. His

⁴¹ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 159.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 85.

purpose is 'to find a deeper understanding of the creative God.'⁴³ The problem for this dissertation is that, although Moltmann speaks of reconciliation, it is not apparent that any principle of reconciliation is a mutual one. What is humanity's relationship to God? If hope is based in understanding that there is a purpose to one's own life, what is humanity's purpose in the world? The question may also be asked whether humanity and the world have any effect on the Godhead. The following section will examine Moltmann's anthropology and seek the answers to these questions. We will see that humanity's relationship to the world and to God is largely viewed through the lens of the creative God, primarily understood as the work of the Spirit. The human perspective is more difficult to find.

Anthropology: Humanity as the image of God and the world.

For Moltmann, creation 'exists in the Spirit, is moulded by the Son and is created by the Father. It is therefore from God, through God and in God.'⁴⁴ Despite its creation out of Nothing, Moltmann is at pains to emphasize God's connectedness to creation. What, then, is creation's—and humanity's—connection to God? This is somewhat difficult to ascertain in Moltmann's theocentric theology. The problem is, as Celia Deane-Drummond suggests, that while Moltmann 'says rather too little about creation itself, he says rather too much about God.'⁴⁵ He is more comfortable coming from God's point of view than humanity's. Humanity is God's object and described from Moltmann's understanding of God's perspective. Moltmann distinguishes between God's *work* in creation, which means that creation is 'not essentially similar to the Creator'⁴⁶ and God's *image* in

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 98.

⁴⁵ Celia Deane-Drummond, *Ecology in Jürgen Moltmann's Theology*, vol. 75, *Text & Studies in Religion* (Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellen Press, Ltd, 1997), 304.

⁴⁶ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 77.

creation, which is humanity. As God's image, humanity corresponds to God in God's essence, which is love. This element in creation is created to recognize God as Creator and creation as God's creation. Humanity is created to love God. Humanity learns to love God through recognizing God's deeds in the world, that is, through Christ's sacrifice and the Spirit's pervasive presence in creation. Above all, humanity learns to love by mirroring the perfect relationality of the triune God. Moltmann begins his anthropology with a theology of wholeness. To understand humanity's relationship to world and God is to begin with the whole of creation in order to understand the parts.

Moltmann proposes that creation must be viewed as a whole, and that we need to start from the principle of complexity. More complex systems explain simpler ones because they are capable of integrating them. The highest model for this principle is the work of the Spirit in the Trinity. The Spirit is the unifying person in the Trinity: 'the Spirit always points away from himself towards the Son and the Father.'⁴⁷ This holistic and perichoretic character of the Spirit also pervades creation. The Spirit of God is the "'common spirit'" of creation.'⁴⁸ The Spirit holds creation together, yet the Spirit is also the principle of process, that is, of individuation and of evolution into wholeness. Moltmann sees 'each individual as part of the whole, and everything limited as a representative of what is infinite.'⁴⁹ The process in time is an evolutionary movement towards complexity. At every evolutionary stage the Spirit 'creates interactions, harmony in these interactions, mutual perichoreses, and therefore a life of co-operation and

⁴⁷ Ibid., 97.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 100.

⁴⁹ Ibid. This is similar to Bulgakov's understanding of prototypes and the limitedness of the individual. See Chapter 4, 227.

community.⁵⁰ The greatest complexity known in the cosmos presently is found in human and human social systems.⁵¹ Self-preservation and self-transcendence are the two sides of this process of evolution. Self-transcendence is the movement towards complex open systems, ending in God as the transcendence of the world. Indeed, this self-transcendence is only possible because of 'the forecourt of an inviting and guiding transcendence.'⁵² Self-preservation is the maintenance of distinction. Humanity is on an evolutionary path towards both self-transcendence and self-preservation.

The goal of creation is not a return to paradise but a new revelation of the glory of God. This represents 'the fulfilment of the real promise implanted in creation itself.'⁵³ The cosmos is not a closed system but open to possibilities because of the Spirit. Moltmann counters the deterministic laws of classical physics (of cause and effect) to support modern quantum theories of openness and change. The future is not completely inherent in the present but includes randomness and newness.⁵⁴ Timothy Gorringer supports Moltmann's idea of open process as an appropriate response to the 'aggressive pluralism of beliefs and lifestyles'⁵⁵ in a postmodern world. He states, '[a] theology of open process is not only the necessary non-fundamentalist response to the situation of postmodernity, it reads the whole of creation, including human nature, in terms of possibility.'⁵⁶ In Moltmann's thought, although creation is open, a design is in place. The universe 'contains within itself the trend towards the universal symbiosis of

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid., 214.

⁵² Ibid., 205.

⁵³ Ibid., 207.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 201. Moltmann does not give specific references here.

⁵⁵ Timothy Gorringer, "Eschatology and Political Radicalism," in *God Will Be All in All: The Eschatology of Jürgen Moltmann*, ed. Richard Bauckham (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 111.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 112.

all systems of life and matter.⁵⁷ Matter organizes itself and transcends itself. Through the Spirit, God is also present in the very structures of matter. Creation contains 'neither spirit-less matter nor non-material spirit; there is only *informed* matter.'⁵⁸ There are different kinds of information in all matter, arriving at consciousness in the case of humanity. Indeed, 'every single person, and indeed every single living thing in nature, has a meaning.'⁵⁹ This is possible because the Spirit is the coherence of the universe: it 'moves and evolves in the energies and powers of the divine Spirit.'⁶⁰ For Moltmann, this is why pantheism is such a plausible philosophy. Knowledge of God, through the Spirit, is to be found in creation itself. However, Deane-Drummond notes that, while Moltmann's attempt to engage with new scientific thinking is worthwhile, his lack of empirical references leads to a speculative, quasi-scientific synthesis of science and Christian cosmology.⁶¹ The idea of a self-organizing universe, she suggests, would be more convincing if it were based on biological concepts rather than certain quasi-mathematical concepts of quantum physics.⁶²

Humanity's role in the open process of creation is to become more conscious. Thus, conscious knowledge of God is the mandate for humanity. This is possible because human beings are both created in the image of God (*imago Dei*) and in the image of the world (*imago mundi*). Reminiscent of Aquinas, the natural knowledge of God is experienced directly through the testimony of the human conscience and indirectly, by observing the outer world.⁶³ A reflection of the paradisaal knowledge of God exists in the world, which also

⁵⁷ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 205.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 212.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 197.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 212.

⁶¹ Deane-Drummond, *Ecology in Moltmann*, 275-6.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 275.

⁶³ For Aquinas' ideas on the knowledge of God, see, for example, *Summa contra Gentiles*, IV. 1.

reflects the glory which is to come. It is *this* world which 'is destined to be revealed in its eternal transfiguration.'⁶⁴ For Moltmann, however, *theologia naturalis* 'confers wisdom, but it does not confer salvation or blessedness.'⁶⁵ This comes solely from the revelation of God in Jesus Christ through scripture. Before we review Moltmann's christology let us understand what Moltmann means by *imago Dei* and *imago mundi*.

From Moltmann's point of view, if human beings are created in the image of God this refers to the whole person, that is, one's whole existence, body and soul, and one's relationship within community and nature. This image is worthy when the whole Trinity is reflected in a perichoretic, communal, equal and holistic whole. Thus, even human nature as a reflection of the *imago mundi* can itself reflect God. However, the dualism that separates heaven and earth manifests in the earth itself, shown in the difference between good and evil, or natural and unnatural. The natural world is good. The unnatural world, meaning human nature, has succumbed to evil. God does not create evil. God only creates all that is favourable and good. There is no "dark side" to God.⁶⁶ Creation, as we have noted, is formed from out of nothing. It is this separation from God's goodness that allows the possibility of evil. However, although creation is "inside" God, it effectively stands "outside" of God, and can succumb to evil. Evil is 'the perversion of the good, the annihilation of what exists, the negation of the affirmation of life.'⁶⁷ There are obvious manifestations of evil in humanity, which appear as sin and death, and there are 'apparently' perversions of this kind in

⁶⁴ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 63.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 57.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 168.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

heaven, in the angelic world.⁶⁸ Although he does not elaborate, Moltmann maintains that this evil, too, is separate from God.

If there appears to be an anomaly here between the God of love and creation, it is to be found in creation itself. The creation that is good has its basis in the hell of nothingness. Such an anomaly allows Moltmann to continue his indictment of humanity. God may be love but humanity is *inhumanity*, demonstrating the perversion and nihilism of an 'unnatural will to power.'⁶⁹ God may be eternally active in creation but humanity has damned, and continues to damn, both itself and the natural world. Yet despite 'humanity's history of disaster' God continues in the Godhead's great labour of salvation.⁷⁰ Humanity is, after all, also created in God's image. There must be something about humanity that is worth saving. In later works Moltmann places a greater emphasis on God's love for creation. The pneumatology, which he develops in *The Spirit of Life* and *The Source of Life*, and which will be addressed in this section, is a witness to God's love. The question must still be asked however: does humanity have the ability to contribute to its own salvation?

Humanity, as *imago Dei*, represents God on earth. We have noted that humanity corresponds to God in God's essence, which is love, and humanity has the capacity to move towards the perfect relationality of the triune God. Likeness to God 'can only be lived in human community.'⁷¹ The 'socially open companionship between people is the form of life which corresponds to God.'⁷² The trinitarian model of perichoresis can overcome not just the egotism of the individual but also the egotism of the couple, because it is a

⁶⁸ Ibid., 169.

⁶⁹ Ibid., xi.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 89.

⁷¹ Ibid., 222.

⁷² Ibid., 223.

higher principle than a male/female dualistic image of God.⁷³ The true image of humanity, however, is only to be found in the end times, in the *imago Christi*. In Christ's image, 'people become what they were intended to be.'⁷⁴ The conforming to the image of the Son means that humanity's true image lies not with the Trinity but with the Son. The resurrected and glorified Jesus is God's true image, and humanity is also destined for glorification. This salvation is in God's hands. For the human being there is another process, a becoming human, also consummated in time. This process is a *social* one and it is here that humanity follows the whole Trinity for just as the Father, Son and Spirit are one, so human beings aim to be one in their social fellowship.⁷⁵

Where does the world fit into this picture of God and humanity? The world is in crisis because of humanity's distorted picture of its own relationship to nature. A positive and united concept of body is essential to redress this balance, together with a return to a cosmic understanding of spirit. Moltmann contends that modern understanding has lost sight of the spirit in nature, and therefore, body. Indeed, the alienation of humanity from bodily existence is the inner aspect of the external ecological crisis.⁷⁶ If spirit is understood at all it is related to the mind, that part of the human being which differentiates the human being from nature. Moltmann, however, calls spirit 'the forms of organization and communication of all open systems of matter and life.'⁷⁷ Spirit is in everything, even matter. Thus, he says, if 'the spirit in the human being is once more to be integrated in the

⁷³ Moltmann further develops the concept of perichoresis as the unity of God in Moltmann, *Experiences in Theology*, 316-23.

⁷⁴ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 225.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 241.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 263.

surrounding field of nature, and in his own embodiment, we must go back to the full and comprehensive concept of the cosmic Spirit.⁷⁸

Moltmann expresses his concept of spiritual embodiment in the *Gestalt* – the configuration or total pattern of the lived life, of the whole human organism. The *Gestalt* emerges within one's environment, with heredity, place and circumstances of birth, society and culture. It is the common task of the body and the soul to develop the *Gestalt*, which develops both inwardly and outwardly with exchange between what is conscious and unconscious. The body 'talks continuously to the soul, just as the unconscious influences what is conscious, and just as the involuntary is always present in all voluntary acts.'⁷⁹ Exchange and dynamism are the characteristics of this process as the *Gestalt* develops through the myriad of inner and outer experiences. The human person is both formed by and distinguished by these experiences, just as the Spirit is the principle of both cohesion and individuation. Moltmann gives no primacy to any part of the formation of *Gestalt*. For example, soul experiences are not more important than bodily experiences. The *Gestalt* is an idea taken from psychotherapy. Deane-Drummond notes that by introducing theological concepts of spirit, Moltmann takes his understanding of the *Gestalt* beyond its original meaning.⁸⁰ His concept of spiritual embodiment is a theological addition, meaning that he introduces the Spirit's presence into the *Gestalt* concept of the whole human person.

Moltmann gives a positive, if not fluid, definition of the human person in terms of the *Gestalt*. For Moltmann, 'if the person is at one with himself – and that means at one with the needs and powers of his body – he forms an

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 260.

⁸⁰ Deane-Drummond, *Ecology in Moltmann*, 273.

identity for himself and is worthy of trust.’⁸¹ If the Spirit is the ultimate form of communication between all forms of life, then human beings are conscious communicators only as much as they are aware of the myriad processes of communication in their inner and outer world. Moltmann calls this consciousness of the Spirit, the *spirit-body*. The spirit-body is the human embodiment that is ‘pervaded, quickened and formed by the creative Spirit.’⁸² I suggest that if we think of communication at a cellular level, we must conclude that we are mostly unconscious of our spirit-body at this stage of evolution. *Spirit-soul* is the human soul (that is, feelings, ideas, intentions, etc) that is ‘pervaded, quickened and formed by the creative Spirit.’⁸³ If we think of the alignment of our feelings with our actions then spirit-soul must also be seen as a largely unconscious entity. The combination of spirit-body with spirit-soul is the *spirit-Gestalt*. Logically then, although Moltmann does not spell this out, human beings are a long way from being “at one” with themselves, their *spirit-Gestalt*. This means that, according to Moltmann’s definition of the *Gestalt*, humanity is far from being dependable or worthy of trust.

Despite his theology of humanity as *imago Dei*, Moltmann has a Gaia-like approach to the place of humanity within creation. Body, or human nature, can be used to understand nature in a wider sense as environment. The human person is not isolated from the environment but shares the very same spiritual essence. This is the same Spirit that is the common spirit of creation, of the whole cosmos. This spirit has hitherto been understood as that which sets humanity above common creation, and which differentiates humanity from a spiritless nature. Moltmann rightly comments that the spirit of the human being must be ‘once more integrated in the surrounding

⁸¹ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 262.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 263.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

field of nature, and in his own embodiment.⁸⁴ However, for Moltmann, this means that humanity is just one life form in an infinite cosmos and certainly 'not the meaning and purpose of the world.'⁸⁵ This is similar to the premises of the Gaian thought of deep ecology, which acknowledges the *equal* importance of all life forms.⁸⁶ The extrapolation of this for Moltmann is that he can envisage a future where humanity has 'disappeared from this planet.'⁸⁷ Humanity may have been created to identify God, love God and praise God, but the rest of creation will still do this if humanity disappears. Moltmann calls this 'a new theocentric interpretation of the world.'⁸⁸ The meaning of the world is to be found in God, not in humanity. Moltmann still maintains that 'every single person, and indeed every single living thing in nature, has a meaning.'⁸⁹ This meaning is in God. While championing the cause of the natural world (and nature does, indeed, need champions) Moltmann effectively dismisses an important agent for change in the world—humanity. As we shall see, this is a fundamental difference between the theologies of Moltmann and Bulgakov. Bulgakov, with a similar understanding of shared spirit between God and the world, advocates a fundamental purpose for humanity in the world.

If humanity is not the pinnacle of creation, what is? For Moltmann, it is the sabbath, the seventh day of creation. In Christian theology of the creation,

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 197.

⁸⁶ Arne Naess and George Sessions created 8 principles for deep ecology, see URL <http://www.deepecology.org/platform.htm> (accessed December 12, 2008). The first principle states: '[t]he well-being and flourishing of human and nonhuman life on Earth have value in themselves (synonyms: intrinsic value, inherent value). These values are independent of the usefulness of the nonhuman world for human purposes.' This will also be discussed in Chapter 5, 270.

⁸⁷ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 197.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 197.

the seventh day has been 'much neglected, or even overlooked altogether.'⁹⁰ With the emphasis on the six days of creation God is seen as a creating God, which, in turn, has meant that humanity feels justified in existence when it is busy "doing." If the emphasis is shifted to God's joy and rest on the seventh day, then "not-doing" is given its rightful place. The sabbath rest (*menuha*) is not created: it is 'the uncreated grace of God's presence for the whole creation.'⁹¹ Moltmann calls for the sabbath to be celebrated in stillness so that 'men and women no longer intervene in the environment through their labour.'⁹² Moltmann proposes that the Jewish sabbath be honoured by beginning the Christian sabbath with Saturday evening devotions that flow into the Christian Sunday message. It is through tradition that Sunday has become the day of celebrating Christ's resurrection, but Sunday must also be seen as a celebration of the liberty of the new creation. Sunday is a day of hope to be celebrated in stillness: a day 'without pollution of the environment—a day when we leave our cars at home, so that nature too can celebrate its sabbath.'⁹³

Moltmann calls for an "ecological theology of nature," where humanity learns to adapt to its natural environment. His former emphasis on liberating action and dynamic world transformation becomes "being," "dwelling," and "resting" in the world. This emphasis could be seen as contradictory in Moltmann's "open system," which stresses God's transforming activity. French highlights the radical shift Moltmann has made—but not acknowledged—in his theology in *God in Creation*. For French, his earlier work constituted 'one of the most thoroughgoing and

⁹⁰ Ibid., 276.

⁹¹ Ibid., 281. Moltmann disagrees with Abraham Heschel, who writes that *menuha* was created on the sabbath. In Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 355. See Abraham Heschel, *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man* (New York: 1951), 22.

⁹² Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 277.

⁹³ Ibid., 296.

influential attacks on creation and nature in the name of eschatology and "history" seen in modern theology. If Moltmann is right now, he was wrong then.⁹⁴ Indeed, Moltmann has overturned much of his earlier theology. Yet the new emphasis on the ideal of passivity may be similar to his former stress on the human inability to transform the world. For Moltmann, the future lies in God's hand alone. Humans do not seem to be able to work in the world without polluting it, "intervening" with their labour. The only positive agency of transformation appears to be God, or more specifically, the Spirit. Deane-Drummond assesses Moltmann's change of direction more affirmatively by drawing out the implicit ecological themes of his earlier theology.⁹⁵ She points out that the differences highlighted between God and the world in *Theology of Hope* and *Crucified God* do not disappear in his ecological theology but more positive guidelines are given for living with the tensions of human existence. Although there is suffering in the world there is also the presence of the risen Christ in his beauty and glory and this leads to doxological joy.⁹⁶

In *The Spirit of Life*, Moltmann continues his efforts to draw God and creation together, further exploring the role of the Spirit. Perhaps Moltmann's amelioration of his former position of radical discontinuity arises from his continued exploration of pneumatology. Moltmann's emphasis is on the work of the Spirit because the Spirit 'is in all created beings.'⁹⁷ In *The Spirit of Life* Moltmann constructs a unique argument of the presence of God in creation by exploring the *ruach-Shekinah* imagery from the Hebrew Bible. By using the metaphor of *Shekinah* (Hebrew: presence of God), Moltmann wishes to emphasize three aspects of the Spirit. Firstly, *Shekinah* emphasizes

⁹⁴ French, "Returning to Creation," 78.

⁹⁵ Deane-Drummond, *Ecology in Moltmann*, 52-79.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 61, 74.

⁹⁷ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, xii.

the personal character of the Spirit. The medium of *ruach* (Hebrew: spirit) is experience, present in every aspect of human life.⁹⁸ Secondly, *Shekinah* is the efficacious presence of God in the world.⁹⁹ This is a common theme in both *God in Creation* and *Spirit of Life*. Thirdly, he continues the theme of the sensibility of God. In the *Shekinah* tradition suffering is shared with creatures. Just as Moltmann maintains the Father God's suffering in the crucifixion, God is also shown to suffer through the suffering of *Shekinah*.¹⁰⁰ *Shekinah* is a motherly presence, supporting early Christian communities which spoke of the Spirit of God as mother.¹⁰¹ The Spirit is the 'universal undertow of the divine life which leads to a radical affirmation of life, in particular also in all its broken and damaged forms.'¹⁰²

Moltmann's use of *ruach-Shekinah* imagery is both creative and constructive and forms part of his program to show a continuation from the Hebrew Bible to the New Testament.

This idea about *the God who suffers with us* then inevitably leads to the bold concept that God's self-deliverance goes together with the deliverance of Israel. When Israel is delivered, God's *Shekinah* will return home from its wanderings.¹⁰³

There are two concepts to be elucidated here. The first one speaks of God's self-deliverance, and the second one links this self-deliverance to the deliverance of Israel. God's radical discontinuity with creation is now God's involvement with creation at such a level that God can only be "self-delivered" in time. This is personification of God at such an extraordinary level that God appears to be completely identified with the historical

⁹⁸ Moltmann, *Spirit of Life*, 43-7.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 51.

¹⁰⁰ See *Ibid.*, 49. One example which Moltmann gives is '*Shekinah's* consoling companionship in "the valley of the shadow of death".' (Ps. 23:4)

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 186.

¹⁰² Müller-Fahrenholz, *Kingdom and Power*, 193.

¹⁰³ Moltmann, *Spirit of Life*, 49. Original emphasis.

progress of Israel. Israel is transformed into a universal concept of the Holy Spirit. According to Moltmann, the books of Ezekiel and Jeremiah emphasize 'the corporate hope for Israel's rebirth from God's Spirit, not so much the coming of a messianic representative for Israel.'¹⁰⁴ In Moltmann's example from Ezekiel 37, *ruach* is poured out over all of Yahweh's people and all are raised, not just representatives of the people. Moltmann then moves from the particularity of the people to the universality of "all flesh" in Joel 2: 28. The Spirit is universally poured out over "all flesh," which now extends not just to humanity but to all of creation. This, in turn, is encompassed by the metaphor of *Shekinah* returning from the wilderness to the Most High. This is both a bold concept and a creative one.

Ultimately, Moltmann's anthropology is another dialectic category. Humanity is formed in God's image yet it is not the pinnacle. Moltmann suggests that we move away from an anthropocentric view of creation. Humanity is not the pinnacle of creation but one aspect of it. The highest stage of creation, and therefore the universe, is not humanity but the sabbath. Honouring the sabbath is the ultimate act within creation. Humanity is also created in *imago mundi*. There is an onus on humanity to challenge its own way of operating in the world, to learn to look after the world. Consciousness of problematic thinking is a beginning towards a healthy human *Gestalt* and a responsible cohabitation of the planet.

At this point we return to Moltmann's theology of hope to elicit how his life's work so far has affected his notions of hope. Humanity's hope remains in God's promise but how much power does this faith give humanity to change its ways or the planet? Indeed, is this so important if God is the ultimate power? After all, God's immanent transcendence now is not an

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 55. Original emphasis.

ontic but an eschatological presence. In this last section we will examine God's eschatological presence with a view to answering this question of human hope. Is faith in God our only source of hope or can we hope in humanity's possibilities as well? Once again we will find that Moltmann's faith in God is strong while his relationship to the human world remains in didactic categories. Moltmann is clear on how humanity *should* act but it is not apparent that Moltmann has any faith in humanity's capacity to act responsibly. Despite this, all will be saved.

A theology of hope revisited. The relationship between humanity, the world and God.

In addressing hope, what can be said about Moltmann's program for living, both on the level of the individual and of the Church? What does a Christian theology of hope have to offer the world? This last section will look at the practical outcomes of Moltmann's theology of hope. His earlier theology of hope will be revisited in the light of his later work to give a fuller picture of Moltmann's worldview and what that means for human action in the world. Although hope is still contained within the eschatological horizon of the future, this hope is Moltmann's incentive for Christian praxis, for celebrating God's creation while also challenging the injustices of the world.

Moltmann's intent in *Theology of Hope*, according to Geiko Müller-Fahrenholz, is 'to overcome the abstract opposition between God's action and human action by a dynamic and kairological theology of the Spirit.'¹⁰⁵ God comes from the future in the form of the Spirit to offer 'charisms of the

¹⁰⁵ Müller-Fahrenholz, *Kingdom and Power*, 59.

spirit on the whole front of creaturely misery.¹⁰⁶ The Spirit aims to inspire us with hope, a hope that challenges the front of present reality, knowing that this reality is not the eschatological reality for which we await. This is the field of Christian praxis, taking up the cross of existence, knowing that in this opposition arises the possibility of spiritual transformation. As we noted in Chapter 1, for Moltmann, it is faith and hope 'that make experiences and bring the human spirit to an ever new and restless transcending of itself.'¹⁰⁷ As an individual, and as part of the church, this dissatisfaction with the present leads to the fight against injustice and inhumanity in the world. In *Theology of Hope* there is an opposition between this world and the world of the future. Human action is a part of *this* world whereas God's action is effective in the eschaton. The abstract opposition between God's action and human action that Müller-Fahrenholz raises is *not* overcome. They are different in terms of their transformative effects: God transforms the world, the human person acts in the world. In later work, such as *God in Creation* and *The Way of Jesus Christ*,¹⁰⁸ Moltmann does attempt to realign God with creation and humanity and gives further indications of the role of the Spirit in sustaining human hope, but, once again, I suggest that God's action and human actions are dissimilar and unconnected.

Future hope is ever of vital importance to Moltmann. In *God in Creation* Moltmann correlates hope with meaning and intention. We understand someone if we understand 'the purpose of his life, his project.'¹⁰⁹ Without direction or purpose one's 'essential hope in life is disappointed' often leading to physical illness.¹¹⁰ Openness to the future is spirit. Closedness is

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. Original quote from Moltmann in W. D. Marsch, ed., *Diskussion Über Die "Theologie Der Hoffnung" Von Jürgen Moltmann* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1967), 237.

¹⁰⁷ Moltmann, *Hope*, 120. See Chapter 1, 86.

¹⁰⁸ Moltmann, *Way of Christ*.

¹⁰⁹ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 265.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

a “dis-spirited” condition.¹¹¹ Of course, in any one life there is both openness and closedness at different times. A true life is one which experiences the highs and lows of existence. It is love that makes one ‘capable of happiness and at the same time capable of suffering.’¹¹² For Moltmann, this is an ‘insoluble paradox’ that the more a person loves, the more intensely that person experiences both life and death.¹¹³ Health is not about staying happy or even staying healthy. Moltmann believes that the World Health Organization’s definition of health as the state of complete physical, mental and social well-being¹¹⁴ is an unrealistic and unsustainable ideal. It is not even ‘a particularly humane ideal’ because it produces false hope.¹¹⁵ Moltmann prefers to understand health as an *attitude*. ‘Health is not the absence of malfunctionings. Health is the strength to live with them.’¹¹⁶ The strength to be human is then ‘displayed in the person’s capacity for happiness *and* suffering, in his acceptance of life’s joy *and* the grief of death.’¹¹⁷ Otherwise, every illness or physical or emotional suffering is seen as an insufficiency which has the power to rob one’s confidence in life and destroy one’s sense of self-worth.¹¹⁸ When hope becomes disappointed the ‘*history* of their lives takes its impress from what they *expect* of life.’¹¹⁹ Thus, it is important to see thwarted hope in one’s personal life as part of the fabric of life, yet not allow it to form the basis of future expectations so that one becomes hope-less.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 266.

¹¹² Ibid., 268.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ The Constitution of the World Health Organization, Basic Documents, Forty-fifth edition, Supplement, October 2006, p. 1, at www.who.int/entity/governance/eb/who_constitution_en.pdf (accessed December 5, 2008). See also Ibid., 271.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 273. f/n 57

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 265.

Suffering is part of the very fabric of the world. Moltmann suggests that the systematic unfolding of evolution, that process of increasing complexity, is driven by suffering. In the natural world, the more a life system is capable of suffering, or bearing strain, the stronger and more capable of survival it shows itself to be. However, this is not necessarily a positive concept when applied to the human world. It is only because of the creature's sin that God needs to enter into creation through Christ's passion. The 'transforming power of suffering [becomes] the basis for the liberating and consummating acts of God.'¹²⁰ God sustains the world in spite of its sin with long-suffering patience: God 'suffers the contradictions of the beings he has created.'¹²¹ Suffering has become necessary for God. God guides this process, not through supernatural interventions, but through the continued experience of Christ's passion, through 'the opening of possibilities out of his suffering.'¹²² Again: God's inexhaustible patience and active capacity for suffering is 'the root of his creative activity in history.'¹²³ In my opinion the concept of the "opening of possibilities" of Christ's suffering is not sufficiently defined or clarified. Nor does Moltmann clarify what the opening of possibilities means for humanity. If he is referring to his definition of health as the strength to live with difficulties (see above) then how this, in turn, becomes "creative" is not clear. In *The Way of Jesus Christ* it is through faith that one must discover 'the therapeutic powers of Christ in the world's present situation, and allow them to be experienced.'¹²⁴

For Moltmann sin has taken hold of creation beyond personal sin alone right into the very structures of society. The unjust structures in political and

¹²⁰ Ibid., 211.

¹²¹ Ibid., 210.

¹²² Ibid., 211.

¹²³ Ibid., 210.

¹²⁴ Moltmann, *Way of Christ*, 275.

economic life are deadly forces in the world.¹²⁵ It is these structures which Moltmann called for a need to challenge in *Theology of Hope*, and it is a feature of his theology that he continues to challenge the injustices of the world. Moltmann's intent to challenge the problems of our times is laudable. His voice on behalf of the powerless is an important one. He gives some indications of what needs to be done. He calls for the need to work out the relationship between traumatization and avoiding new injustice, thus breaking, in Müller-Fahrenholz's words, the 'vicious circles of collective hurts and patterns of retaliation'¹²⁶ In his later theology of reconciliation Moltmann looks towards the justice of compassion as the highest form of justice.¹²⁷ However, as Müller-Fahrenholz points out, he does not detail what this means in terms of human justice.¹²⁸

Because of such omissions and lack of concrete examples, it is easy to imagine that justice and reconciliation is in the province of God alone. Moltmann separates creation itself from creation in time. Creation in time is God's history. This is described in prophetic theology as God's burden and weariness (Isa. 43.24).¹²⁹

Through the Son, God creates, reconciles and redeems his creation. In the power of the Spirit, God is himself present in his creation – present in his reconciliation and his redemption of that creation. The overflowing love from which everything comes that is from God, is also the implicit ground for God's readiness to endure the contradictions of the beings he has created.¹³⁰

Once again, God is the active subject of creation. This statement could almost be a summary of Moltmann's entire theology. And again: 'God *has*

¹²⁵ Moltmann, *In the End*, 38. See also Müller-Fahrenholz, *Kingdom and Power*, 191-2.

¹²⁶ Müller-Fahrenholz, *Kingdom and Power*, 192.

¹²⁷ Moltmann, *Spirit of Life*, 142.

¹²⁸ Müller-Fahrenholz, *Kingdom and Power*, 142.

¹²⁹ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 210.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 15.

created the world, creates the world in the present moment, and will fulfil it.'

¹³¹ God is the one who will actively reconcile and redeem creation. This raises the question of just how active God is in creation and whether creation itself has its own impetus or self-regulation. Despite Moltmann's own description of the symbiotic nature of the cosmos,¹³² there still appears to be no transformational purpose for any reconciliation between human beings or between human beings and God. The dialectic of divine responsibility and protest has no resolution until the eschaton.¹³³

Moltmann's God-centredness has often been criticized. Müller-Fahrenholz, for example, points out that, in Moltmann's theology, only God can atone, God raises up, judges and puts right. God carries human history of suffering and injustice.¹³⁴ For Müller-Fahrenholz, if only God can atone, human reconciliation becomes superfluous.¹³⁵ The problem is manifold, and is to be found in Moltmann's anthropology, his *pneumatologia crucis*, and his eschatological understanding of history. The first problem lies in humanity's contradictory nature. Moltmann cannot overcome a belief that humanity is at best, passive and at worse, perverse and nihilistic. In Moltmann's view of creation, God must 'endure' (German: *ertragen*)¹³⁶ contradictory humanity. I would like to suggest that love never has to "endure." Love is love. Love may suffer for another but suffering done out of love is not the same as enduring the existence of someone. Moltmann's God is at times the Yahweh of the Hebrew Bible, who can be irritable and angry with his people!

¹³¹ Ibid., 83. Original emphasis.

¹³² See above, 158.

¹³³ See Bauckham, *Theology of Moltmann*, 90.

¹³⁴ Müller-Fahrenholz, *Kingdom and Power*, 191.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Jürgen Moltmann, *Gott in Der Schöpfung: Ökologische Schöpfungslehre*, 3rd ed. (Munich: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1987), 29.

The second problem is that history remains an eschatological category. It is the future which determines time and all things become contingent on the future. This is a messianic approach. History is God's history. Human history and the particularities of human life are transitory. It is the love of God who 'reaches out beyond the limits of death and snatches all that is transitory and fragmentary into his loving fullness in order to put right what has never achieved its rights.'¹³⁷ By "rights" Moltmann is applying personal judgment to what a human life should encompass. However, can we really judge what another person's life is meant to achieve? It may be a judgment made when, for example, a child dies. The mourners judge a life cut short or not achieving full potential, and so choose to place their hope in a God who will raise the dead in the end times. When Müller-Fahrenholz speaks of Moltmann's process leading to the "kingdom of glory" this is what he means: God's transformation of all of creation from a lower state to a future form of glory.¹³⁸ Bodily death is part of the process of resurrection which remains an eschatological process. Until then we are "anticipatory" beings of time, looking to the God of the future.

Müller-Fahrenholz uses the word "process" to describe Moltmann's principle of transformation. This term applies only to God's transformation of the world in the eschaton. There is no process or progressive transformation until the eschaton, which leads inevitably to a divide between now and the future. Thus, the divinization of the human being (*theosis*) is an event of the eschaton alone. The process which Paul names, from predestination to calling to justification to glorification (Rom. 8: 30), is summed up by Moltmann thus:

¹³⁷ Müller-Fahrenholz, *Kingdom and Power*, 205.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 206.

(A)s God's image human beings conform to the presence of the Creator in his creation, and as God's children they conform to the presence of God's grace; but when the glory of God enters creation, they will become like God, and transfigured into his appearance...The eschatological becoming-one-with-God of human beings (*theosis*) is inherent in the concept of 'seeing', for the seeing face to face and the seeing him as he is transforms the seer into the One seen and allows him to participate in the divine life and beauty. Participation in the divine nature and conformity to God...are the marks of the promised glorification of human beings. The God-likeness that belongs to creation in the beginning becomes God-sonship and daughterhood in the messianic fellowship with the Son, and out of the two springs the transfiguration of human beings in the glory of the new creation.¹³⁹

I quote this passage at length because it demonstrates the basic imbalance in Moltmann's theology. He does not explain the meaning of predestination or calling or justification. There is a "God-likeness" that belongs to creation in the beginning which makes glorification possible. Human beings are a part of this. The middle phase is conforming to the presence of God's grace, presumably meaning Christ. Does conforming mean to accept Christ as the messiah? The last phase is glorification. The glory of God appears to be withheld from creation until the end times. There are no clear indications of process between any of these three states. Moltmann skips over the beginning and the middle to weight his "process" in the end. If there is any process at all, it is confined to the eschatological end times. In this process, the emphasis is on God's saving actions and the glorification in the eschaton. In summary, our hope is in the future and in our faith in God. For Moltmann, this hope and faith in God, in the promise of the resurrection of the dead and the transfiguration of all creation, is enough. He writes,

Only the love which passionately affirms life understands the relevance of this hope, because it is through that this love is liberated from the fear of death and the fear of losing its own self. The

¹³⁹ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 228-9.

resurrection hope makes people ready to love their lives in love wholly...It does not withdraw the human soul from bodily, sensory life; it ensouls this life with unending joy.¹⁴⁰

God's love for us is the basis for our hope. Hope in this future is accompanied by joy and our own love for life. Because we are created in God's image God will glorify humanity in the end times. Meanwhile, we take up the cross of existence by proclaiming Christ and following his path. The Spirit is also with us in our suffering and gives us the strength to challenge the injustice and inhumanity all around us. Existence is weighted with sin, both personal and institutional. God's immanent transcendence is not an ontic but an eschatological presence. There is some sense of the possibilities of spiritual growth in the individual but transformation at a bodily level is a part of the future. The ultimate power of transformation lies in the eschaton in the hands of the Creator.

Conclusion

There is much to be said for Moltmann's 'thorough scholarship, creative insights, and prophetic energy.'¹⁴¹ Moltmann engages with the theology of the day as well as biblical exegesis and historical theology. *Theology of Hope* was an inspirational text for many. His later pneumatology has also inspired many with its grounding of the Spirit in creation. He highlights a daily experience of the Spirit by which he means 'an awareness of God in, with and beneath the experience of life, which gives us assurance of God's fellowship, friendship and love.'¹⁴² This turn to the Spirit has given Moltmann's theology a more positive basis because the Spirit is the one who conveys God's love to us. Over the course of his lifetime, Moltmann's main theme has been a consistent emphasis on an eschatological framework. The

¹⁴⁰ Moltmann, *Coming of God*, 66.

God of the future beckons. Moltmann's faith in the God of the future remains his greatest strength.

There have also been major shifts. His earlier dualistic notions of God and creation were dropped in favour of a transcendent/immanent God. An eschatological dualism remains but the dualism of creation moves into God. His later theology is an attempt to rework concepts of history and creation into an inclusive model of God. He has done this by subsuming them into God's history. History now has importance because God has joined with creation through Christ's passion and suffers with creation until the end times. Bauckham believes that Moltmann is the contemporary theologian who has 'most successfully transcended the dominant (theological and non-theological) paradigm of reality as human history...and attempted to enter theologically into the reciprocity of human history and the rest of nature as the history of God's creation.'¹⁴³ However, we have also noted that the problem with this theocentric picture is that it fails to give much meaning or credence to human history. The relationship between God and the world, or more precisely, God and humanity, is still fundamentally at odds. Indeed, creation, or the natural world, has its own impetus and appears to operate on a healthy basis as long as humanity leaves it alone. Thus, the importance of the sabbath as a day of rest. Rather than suffering *with* creation then, God "suffers" humanity until the end times.

If Moltmann has successfully integrated God into the world, he has been less successful at integrating the world into God. When approaching the world from a worldly angle, there has been no fundamental change in Moltmann's

¹⁴¹ French, "Returning to Creation," 86.

¹⁴² Moltmann, *Spirit of Life*, 17.

¹⁴³ Richard Bauckham, "Jürgen Moltmann," in *The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology in the Twentieth Century*, ed. David F. Ford (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing, 1997), 223.

eschatological outlook. Even if humanity is now persuaded that looking after planet earth is in their best short term interests, the end results will still be the same: God will fix it all up in the end times. There is no fundamental purpose for human existence, or even human effort. Our hope is in God alone. Despite the perversion and disastrous nature of humankind, God will save us. Humanity can (and must) have faith in this God who loves us. If one is searching for a *reason* for God's love of humanity, one will not find it in Moltmann's theology. Yet God's love is the ultimate basis of Moltmann's hope. However, is the picture of an ultimate transformation of the world in the future by God enough to give us hope and sustain us in this time and place? My thesis is that it is not. It is for this reason that I place an alternative theology next to Moltmann's. Moltmann offers many pictures and possibilities in his work without giving any kind of integrated system. Sergei Bulgakov aims to give such a synthesis in his sophiology. Because Bulgakov's system gives an integral and effective place to humanity in creation I will argue that it is a more effective theology of hope for the 21st century.

Part 2: An Eastern Perspective: Sergei Bulgakov and Sophia

Chapter 4 God in creation: Sophia and humanity

Introduction

We turn now to a different perspective on hope and meaning in the world. The following three chapters examine the work of Sergei Bulgakov (1871-1944), the Russian Orthodox priest and scholar. As stated in the Introduction, my intention in examining this particular eastern perspective is to introduce the theory of sophiology as a theology of hope. Bulgakov does not write about hope (надежда, *nadezhda*) in any great detail—in fact, hope is rarely mentioned. However, I will present Bulgakov’s sophiology as a *theology* of hope because it supports the definition of hope offered in this dissertation—that there is some correspondence between the human will to live and the world which supports and sustains life. Bulgakov’s understanding of Sophia, the Wisdom of God, is one which offers a different understanding of the role and purpose of humanity in creation from that encountered in Moltmann’s theology, and in this sophiology I find a basis for hope.

For Bulgakov, the basis for creation is a God of love and it is this love which permeates God’s creation. His faith in the God of love infuses his theology with hope. His faith in the ultimate goodness of creation is linked to God’s purpose, the abundant overflowing love which creates a world to share in God’s love. Humanity is made in God’s image and this is ontologically

significant for creation. Indeed, for Bulgakov, the world is created *for* humanity. Sophia may be understood as the bridge between the divine and human worlds, sharing aspects of each. Humanity has a personal relationship to the world and to God through Sophia. The world is immersed in a temporal process of becoming and there is a beginning, middle and an end to this process. For Bulgakov, the middle is no less important than the beginning or the end. Understanding the connectedness between the world and humanity in the context of God's great love for and faith in humanity is the basis for hope. Hope is both personal, giving each life particular meaning, and universal, hope for the future of humanity and the world. When humanity understands the basis of Wisdom of the world and experiences the hope that this worldview gives, hope becomes a motivation to live well and responsibly within the world.

In Moltmann's theology there appears to be little reason for existence as such and there is a time of waiting until the eschatological end. Yet, as we have seen, Moltmann's God is also a God of love and Moltmann's hope is based on faith in the God of love. I see the major difference between Moltmann's and Bulgakov's theologies in humanity's purpose in creation. Moltmann's humanity is seriously flawed, has no ontological purpose in the world yet is the cause of all the world's problems. Humanity's greatest hope is that God is trusted to act in the world on its behalf. Bulgakov's humanity is integral to the cosmos and is created to be the highest possible manifestation of God's love. Most importantly, humanity is God's co-worker in a process of theosis. Humanity works with the triune God in a process of transformation. Humanity is an important part of the world's readiness for transfiguration in the eschatological end. Like Moltmann, God is the ultimate power of transfiguration for Bulgakov, but unlike Moltmann, God is not the *only* source of transformation.

The issue of theodicy is also important because it raises questions of how a God of love can allow evil in the world. Bulgakov will also answer this question with love. God's love is always evident because love is the ontological reality of existence. The opposite of love is not evil because love has no opposite, it simply exists. Evil becomes an oppositional force within the good but it has no ontological reality. For this reason, the good must always be stronger than evil. The existence of evil in God's creation also means that it has a purpose, or at least that God (re)turns it to God's purpose. I have proposed that Christian hope is about meaning, and that this meaning must incorporate present existence. Hope is based on an understanding that all the elements of each person's life have significance. For Bulgakov, each human life is no less than a part of a process of cosmic transformation, but each element within that process is no less significant despite the grandness of the enterprise. His theology of Sophia allows such an interpretation of hope and meaning. For this reason, I present Bulgakov's theology as a theology of hope.

I will delineate the above elements of Bulgakov's systemic endeavour in the following three chapters.¹ These chapters, chapters 4–6, will chiasmatically mirror the themes in the previous three chapters and will be followed by Chapter 7, which compares the theologies of Moltmann and Bulgakov. Thus, the theme of Chapter 3, God in creation, is addressed in this chapter, Chapter 4, which will focus on Bulgakov's understanding of God's relationship to creation and humanity through Sophia. The subject of Chapter 2, the crucified God, is reflected in Chapter 5, which will examine Bulgakov's interpretation of Christ, particularly his understanding of the crucifixion and evil and their effect on Sophia and humanity. The last

¹ Some of the material in the following two chapters is a further development from my Honours thesis, Kerry George, "A Sophia of Substance: The Divine Ecology of Sergius Bulgakov" (Honours, Murdoch, 2004).

chapter in this set will interpret sophiology as a theology of hope, addressing Sophia's history, past, present and future, with particular reference to the work of the Spirit, and this follows the theme of Chapter 1, which examined Moltmann's theology of hope, and his pneumatology in Chapter 3.

A sophiology of creation: God's relationship to the world

As noted in the Introduction, Sophia is not unique to Russian theology and philosophy. Mikhail Sergeev demonstrates her centrality particularly in Russia's so-called "Silver Age" from the 1880's to 1930's but also in recent times.² In fact, Bulgakov writing during the Silver Age could not avoid sophiology. Sophia was both a literary-mystical image and a religious-philosophical concept. Bulgakov endeavoured to give Sophia a defined, systematic place within theology. In this task, he was following Nikolai Losskii who, according to Paul Valliere, shaped up 'sophiology by trimming away undisciplined, subjective romantic elements.'³ Despite the many writings on Sophia, she remains a complex and elusive entity. As Valliere also notes, 'the idea of Sophia—Holy Wisdom, or the Wisdom of God—is one of the least clarified concepts in modern religious thought, but not because it is rarely discussed.'⁴ Bulgakov attempted to systematize and clarify the concept of Sophia which he had inherited from Soloviev, Losskii, Florensky and others and he also added new and radical elements of his own. The most significant of these new elements is his understanding of Sophia as God's nature. It is Bulgakov's neo-Chalcedonian interpretation of the two natures, human and divine, and how they co-exist which forms the basis of how God is connected to creation through Sophia.

In a Christianity with a transcendent God, the problem is age old: how can divine and human meet? For Bulgakov, it is the existence of Jesus Christ alone that challenges the notion of a completely transcendent God: 'God is born with the world and within the world...Here begins the possibility of

² See Mikhail Sergeev, *Sophiology in Russian Orthodoxy: Solov'ev, Bulgakov, Losskii and Berdiaev* (Lewistown, New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 2006).

³ Paul Valliere in *Ibid.*, iv.

⁴ *Ibid.*, i.

defining God as being immanently-transcendent...'⁵ In his quest for a positive theology of the credal formulations of the fourth and fifth centuries, Bulgakov develops two broad areas – that concerning the understanding that God is one ousia (nature), three hypostases (persons) and that of the two natures, human and divine, existing in the one hypostasis of Jesus Christ. The Chalcedonian “problem” of divine-humanity is resolved through an understanding of ousia.⁶ The starting point for the idea of Divine-humanity is the possibility that the divine and human are not opposite but have something in common. For Bulgakov this is nature. The divine and the human share a sophian nature. The two natures expressed in the Creed in the person of Jesus Christ are, in fact, two expressions of the same nature of God.⁷ Bulgakov begins his analysis with the divine, examining the transcendent God. He takes a literal interpretation of the understanding that God *has* a nature. God possesses something that is *other* than the three persons. The trinitarian God is three hypostases, or persons: the Father, the Son and the Spirit, with one ousia, or nature.

Some clarification is necessary on Bulgakov’s understanding of the terms ousia and hypostasis. The ousia of God – named by Bulgakov as Sophia – is the linkage between the absolute and the immanent God. Part of the difficulties of the early debates in Christianity occurred because of the introduction of nonbiblical terms words such as *ousia*, *phusis*, *hypostasis*, and *prosōpon*. Not only were the terms non-biblical but there was no consensus

⁵ Sergei Bulgakov, *Svet Neverchernii. Sozertssaniia I Umozreniia (the Light Which Does Not Fade. Contemplations and Speculations*, Moscow, 1917 ed. (Westmead: Gregg International Publishers Limited, 1971), 93. Cited in Sergeev, *Sophiology*, 100.

⁶ That is, the problem of the union of the human and divine natures in the person of Christ: Sergius Bulgakov, *The Holy Grail and the Eucharist*, trans. Boris Jakim (Hudson: Lindisfarne Books, 1997), 143.

⁷ For the Chalcedon Creed, see J. Stevenson, ed., *Creed, Councils and Controversies: Documents Illustrating the History of the Church Ad 337-461*, revised with additional documents by W. H. C. Frend ed. (London: SPCK, 1989), 351.

on what they meant. The terms *ousia* and *hypostasis*, for example, were even used interchangeably.⁸ These two particular terms become mainstays in Bulgakov's work with *ousia* used to describe the nature of being and *hypostasis* used to describe the person or spirit of being. The *hypostasis* is the "I" and the *ousia* is the descriptive nature of the individuality described by Bulgakov as the "theme."⁹ According to Bulgakov, the understanding of nature developed in the early theology of the Church Fathers was used principally for the doctrine of the Trinity to establish the connection of the three persons.¹⁰ God has *one* nature. Bulgakov takes the additional step of personalizing this connection in Sophia. God has one nature and this nature is Sophia.

But Sophia is more than God's nature – she is the basis of creation. Bulgakov believes that the Church Fathers' understanding of the nature that connects the Trinity should have then been applied to understanding God's relationship to creation.¹¹ For Bulgakov, the connection between God and the world begins with the sharing of God's nature and this begins with the creation of Sophia from out of this nature. The divine nature is both *ousia* and Sophia: 'both represent the same nature of God in relation to the Creator himself (*ousia*) or the creature (Sophia).'¹² Sophia has to be part of *ousia* but *ousia* is more than Sophia. In Bulgakov's later theology it is, however, difficult to distinguish God's *ousia* from the divine Sophia because Sophia is the absolute content of God's life.¹³ Vasilii Zenkovsky calls this sophiological

⁸ For example, Athanasius writes '*Hypostasis* is the same as *ousia*, signifying nothing other than being itself.' *Ep. Ad Afr.* 4. in Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 247.

⁹ Bulgakov, *Bride*, 96.

¹⁰ See Sergeev, *Sophiology*, 101.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 106.

¹² *Ibid.*, 107.

¹³ Bulgakov, *Bride*, 125.

monism,¹⁴ but Bulgakov maintains the radical nature of God's connectedness to creation in Sophia.

In his earlier theology Bulgakov uses the problematic language of a fourth hypostatic element in God. Here he is supporting Pavel Florensky. For Florensky, Sophia is a fourth hypostatic element: she has being but is not a fourth person of the Trinity. He understands Sophia as the foundation and unity of creation but remaining distinct from the Creator. Bulgakov attempts to systematically develop Florensky's efforts to place sophiology within Orthodox theology. To do this, Bulgakov returns to the Fathers and supports St Augustine's synthesis of Sophia into the whole Trinity.¹⁵ Wisdom resides in the whole Godhead, not just in the person of Christ. Wisdom is more than an attribute, however; she is the nature of the Godhead and forms a unique relationship with each person of the Trinity. Sophia discloses different aspects of each person of Trinity according to creation itself, as described below. In order to clarify Sophia's relationship to God Bulgakov employs a further term here: ипостасность (*ipostasnost'*), variously translated as "hypostaseity,"¹⁶ "hypostasizedness"¹⁷ and "hypostaticity."¹⁸ Hypostaticity is a quality of the divine Sophia. She is not a hypostasis separate from God; she is a hypostatic principle, and able to

¹⁴ See Vasilii Zenkovsky, *A History of Russian Philosophy*, Vol. II, trans. George L. Kline (New York: Columbia University Press, 1953), 908. See also Sergeev, *Sophiology*, 104.

¹⁵ Augustine, *De Trinitate*, 7.3.6: 'The Father is wisdom, the Son is wisdom, and the Holy Spirit is wisdom, and together they are not three wisdoms but one wisdom.' Cited in *Ibid.*, 47.

¹⁶ Rowan Williams, "Introduction to *the Lamb of God: On the Divine Humanity*," in *Towards a Russian Political Theology*, ed. Rowan Williams (Edinburgh: T&T Clark Ltd, 1999), 165.

¹⁷ Bulgakov, *Bride*, xvi.

¹⁸ Anastassy Brandon Gallaher and Irina Kukota, "Protopresbyter Sergii Bulgakov: Hypostasis and Hypostaticity: Scholia to *the Unfading Light*," *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 49, no. 1-2 (2005): 14.

receive love and give love in return.¹⁹ This is an important distinction because it allows a separation between God and Sophia—they are not the same being—yet Sophia is *in* God.

This concept may be further clarified by differentiating Sophia from God in terms of God's essence of love. If *ousia* is the "theme" of God then this theme is love. The three persons share this nature of love. Love 'is not a quality or an attribute, or predicate, but rather the very essence of God. In this divine Love each hypostasis gives itself in love and finds itself in the other hypostases.'²⁰ Love unites the persons. The nature of love is superabundance and a desire to share that love with another or others. Therefore, although the love of the Trinity is complete in itself in the Godhead, it is a quality of love to 'diffuse itself.'²¹ The love of God overflows to find itself within a vehicle of utter receptivity. God as "Subject" creates an "Object" to experience God's love. From out of the Subject of God arises an Object, which Bulgakov names as Sophia. She is God's *love of Love*.²² Rowan Williams expresses it thus:

The divine triunity, God-as-love, complete in itself, sufficient to itself, the eternal divine actuality, substantive love, posits (in the metaphysical sense) an object for this divine love beyond itself; it loves this object and pours into it the lifegiving power of the trihypostatic love itself.²³

Sophia arises from God's nature, from love. Because she is the perfect expression of God's love, God's desire to give love fully is mirrored in

¹⁹ Sergei Bulgakov, "Hypostasis and Hypostaticity: Scholia to *the Unfading Light*," *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 49, no. 1-2 (2005): 29-30.

²⁰ Bulgakov, *Svet Neverchernii*, 211. Essence of God = существо Божие (*sushestvo Bozhie*).

Cited in Tataryn, "New Look," 319.

²¹ Bulgakov, *Wisdom*, 39.

²² Она есть *любовь Любви*' (Ona est' *liubov' ljubvi*) in Bulgakov, *Svet Neverchernii*, 212. Original italics.

²³ Rowan Williams, "Introduction to *the Unfading Light*," in *Towards a Russian Political Theology*, ed. Rowan Williams (Edinburgh: T&T Clark Ltd, 1999), 134.

Sophia. She receives the love that comes from the three Persons and returns it completely, emptying herself in turn. A continuous cycle of love is formed from the kenotic impulse to give love. Williams also notes: Sophia 'as the eternal object of divine trinitarian love reflects the divine nature, its eternal ground, so faithfully that we can speak of Sophia within God.'²⁴ Sophia is within God yet she also has an identity. She 'is hypostatized by the three persons and, in this sense, has being – the divine Sophia. Thus, God has a trihypostatic hypostasis and a nature, the three persons united by Sophia.'²⁵ She is not a hypostatic being but she has the characteristics of hypostaticity.

Bulgakov further distinguishes a divine and a creaturely manifestation of Sophia. It is from the divine Sophia, from God's nature, substantial love, that creation is formed. As God is one being with three persons, so too, creation is one being, Sophia, with, in this instance, a multiplicity of persons. Creation is 'the first principle of the new, created plurality of hypostases; the multiplicity of hypostases (human and angelic) is its consequence, a multiplicity existing in sophianic relation to the divine.'²⁶ The basis of this creation in Sophia means that creation is no less than the sum total of all possibilities to freely experience God's love.

Although the language is complex, Bulgakov is doing no more than personalizing God's nature using the biblical figure of Wisdom, already personalized in the Wisdom literature of the Hebrew Bible.²⁷ As in Proverbs, Bulgakov gives Wisdom an integral part both in her relationship to God and in the formation of creation. Thus, Sophia is not internal to the divine world but, from God's grace, Sophia is granted access, and then is 'able to reveal the mysteries of the Godhead in its depths, and to rejoice, to "play" in God's

²⁴ Ibid., 127-8.

²⁵ Bulgakov, *Bride*, 47.

²⁶ Williams, "Unfading Light," 135.

²⁷ For biblical understandings of Wisdom, see above, 38f

presence.’²⁸ This idea parallels the thought of Florensky: Wisdom-Sophia ‘is not consubstantial to the Trinity but “admitted within divine life through divine condescension.”’²⁹ One can also see Florensky’s influence on Bulgakov as he describes Sophia’s connection to God through love: Sophia is ‘not love but only *enters into* the communion of Love, *is allowed to enter into* this communion by the unexpressed, unfathomable, unthinkable Divine humility.’³⁰ It is from Sophia, from God’s nature of love, that creation is then formed. With his sophiology Bulgakov attempts to explain God’s intimate relationship to creation: creation is formed from God’s very nature, from Sophia, out of and because of God’s love.³¹

What has been described here is the divine Sophia, from out of whom the creaturely Sophia, the world, will be created. The creaturely mode of Sophia is creation as mythically described in Genesis, with its relativity and its multiplicity. The world is posited outside the Absolute as self-sufficient and relative. Creation is a creative sacrifice of love. It is ‘the sacrifice by the Absolute of Its absoluteness, a sacrifice which is caused by nobody and nothing.’³² The purpose of creation is to freely experience God’s love. In the act of creation, from the principle of love’s abundance, God gives Sophia an independence of being. This is the corporeal, or creaturely, Sophia. “In the beginning” (Genesis 1: 1) is not a temporal state but an ontological state. The divine Sophia is submerged into the multiplicity, temporality and relativity

²⁸ Sergei Bulgakov, "The Unfading Light," in *Towards a Russian Political Theology*, ed. Rowan Williams (Edinburgh: T&T Clark Ltd, 1999), 135. "To play": *играеть (igraet')*. See Prov. 8: 22-31 for Sophia’s pre-creation and the idea of “play.”

²⁹ Pavel Florensky, *The Pillar and Foundation of Truth (Stolp I utverzhdienie istiny)*, Moscow, 1914: *La colonne et le fondement de la verite*, trans. Constantin Andronikof, (Lausanne, 1975), 227. Cited in John Meyendorff, "Creation in the History of Orthodox Theology," *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 27 (1983): 31.

³⁰ Pavel Florenskii, *Stolp I Utverzhdienie Istiny - Opyt Pravoslavnoi Teoditsei V Dvenadtsati Pos'makh*, trans. Mikhail Sergeev (Moscow: Pravda, 1990), 329. Cited in Sergeev, *Sophiology*, 94.

³¹ For a detailed exposition of creation, see Bulgakov, *Bride*, 38-55.

³² Bulgakov, *Svet Neverchernii*, 159. Cited in Sergeev, *Sophiology*, 101.

of particular being. This sophian mode is the creaturely Sophia in a state of potential, of “not-yet.” The purpose of this creaturely mode is also based in love. Love is only possible in relation, as witnessed in the primary ideal of love in the Trinity. As the divine Sophia shares in this love so, too, does the creaturely Sophia. For Bulgakov, the different manifestations of love—love as Trinity, love of Sophia and love of the creaturely Sophia—contain all the possibilities of love. Bulgakov asserts that it is impossible for the world not to have been created, and it is impossible for the world to have been created in any other way. There is only one world and it contains all the potential of God’s possibilities that it possibly can. God “needs” the world in a certain sense to realise all the possibilities of love:

But it is by the *necessity* of love, which cannot *not* love, and which realises in itself the *identity and fusion of freedom and necessity*. For love is essentially *free*, but its freedom is not arbitrary. It is determined by an internal structure, a 'law' of love. *This is why creation and relatedness to creation are an integral part of the very idea of God*. They cannot be rejected as contingent, non-essential, as if they might or might not have existed.³³

The act of creation is not just a manifestation of divine might but also a sacrifice of divine love in Bulgakov’s theology of divine kenosis. The whole Trinity, not just the Son, ‘stands in a kenotic relationship to the world.’³⁴ The creation of the world is ‘a revelation of the trinitarian life, so that the world’s life is shown to be established on the same (sophianic) foundation as God’s.’³⁵ Thus, there is a triune expression of divine Sophia in creation. The threefold God has one nature, one ousia, named by Bulgakov as Sophia. Yet, for Bulgakov, the quality of threefoldness in God is also reflected in Sophia,

³³ Sergei Bulgakov, "The Lamb of God: On the Divine Humanity," in *Towards a Russian Political Theology*, ed. Rowan Williams (Edinburgh: T&T Clark Ltd, 1999), 185. Original emphases.

³⁴ Valliere, *Modern Russian Theology*, 331.

³⁵ Williams, "'Lamb of God'," 169.

giving rise to three different expressions within the unity of Sophia. Sophia, as God's world, contains all that the three hypostases give to her so that she is formed from the three unique expressions of the Persons of the Trinity. Sophia, as Wisdom, has most often been associated with the Son, the second hypostasis, yet this was not a universal patristic position. Irenaeus, for example, identifies the Spirit with Sophia, and Athanasius argues that the Son is the Father's Sophia.³⁶ For Bulgakov, Sophia's essential nature, as receptor, has three different expressions as she receives love from each of the hypostases of the Godhead, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Because it is the triune God that creates the world, Bulgakov distinguishes between the actions of each Person of the Godhead in creation and how they manifest in the divine Sophia. The Father God is the Creator, who creates the world by the Word and Holy Spirit, his "hands" according to patristic tradition.³⁷ For Bulgakov, the qualities of the first hypostasis are divine fatherhood, outpouring and substantiality.³⁸ The first aspect, fatherhood, is related to the beginning of creation as an act of will. The Father is 'the hypostatic Creator of the world, that Divine I that addresses the world with the creative word: let there be all things.'³⁹ Creation is an act of the Father's will from his own Personhood, here qualified as Fatherhood. He addresses the divine Sophia, his own substance and world, and gives to her a new mode of being, the created world, the creaturely Sophia. Sophia is the "the beginning" of creation. "The beginning" is not a temporal category but an

³⁶ For some of the patristic positions on Sophia, see Louth, "Wisdom and the Russians," 176. See also Matthews, *Sophia*, 135f, Schipflinger, *Sophia-Maria*, 76. Augustine, who identifies Sophia exclusively with the Logos, also wrote extensively about Sophia, and it is interesting to note that he, too, distinguishes between "Uncreated Wisdom" and "Created Wisdom." See Augustine, *Liber Meditationum*, XIX, PL 40, 915.

³⁷ See Bulgakov, *Comforter*, 190.

³⁸ Bulgakov, "Unfading Light," 133. "Divine fatherhood, outpouring, substantiality": божественное Отцовство, субстанціальность, исходъ (bozhestvennoe Ottsovstvo, substantsial'nost', iskhod'), Bulgakov, *Svet Neverchernii*, 211.

³⁹ Bulgakov, *Comforter*, 191.

ontological category. Barbara Newman describes the distinction between the Father and Sophia:

Although the world was created '*in the beginning,*' in Sophia, it was created *by* the personal will of God. Fr. Bulgakov thus distinguishes between personal or '*hypostatic,*' and natural or '*sophianic*' revelation. While Sophia is the world's ontological ground, God the Father is its Creator, and the Son and the Holy Spirit, in the patristic phrase, serve as His '*hands.*'⁴⁰

It is this relationship which also establishes the difference between God and the world. The creation of the world '*is not an inner self-positing of Divinity, which is God in the Holy Trinity, but a certain work of God...*'⁴¹ God and the world are not synonymous. The category that '*preserves the positive connections between God and the world and the ontological distance between them*' is creator and createdness.⁴² The Father God is the creator of the world.

Bulgakov rejects the Aristotelian-Thomistic doctrine of God as prime mover or first cause because '*the idea of the prime mover and first cause contains a contradiction that Aristotle and his Christian followers evade sophistically, by speaking of an unmoved mover or an uncaused cause.*'⁴³ Bulgakov's critique of Aquinas' first cause is that neither God nor the human being has freedom – in Tataryn's words: '*once [God] had set the world in motion...everything was simply the consequence of what went before.*'⁴⁴ However, Bulgakov may not be entirely fair in his critique. Aquinas, in fact, does have an understanding of free will in both God and in the human

⁴⁰ Barbara Newman, "Sergius Bulgakov and the Theology of Divine Wisdom," *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 22 (1978): 54. Original emphases.

⁴¹ Bulgakov, *Lamb of God*, 128. "Work of God": дело Божие, *delo Bozhie*, Sergei Bulgakov, *Agnets Bozhii: O Bogochelovechestve, Chast' I* (Paris: YMCA Press, 1933), 150.

⁴² Bulgakov, *Bride*, 36.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 34. Original emphases.

⁴⁴ Tataryn, "New Look," 321. See Bulgakov, *Bride*, 221f.

being. Creation is an act of God's will out of freedom and not through any necessity of God's nature.⁴⁵ Robert Slesinski considers that Bulgakov reduces the notion of causality to mechanical causality alone and yet can not himself avoid the idea of creation as some form of causality.⁴⁶ Indeed, the prototypes within creation ensure that there is a process in creation from germinal to ideal forms (see following pages).

The connection between God's grace and the human will for Aquinas can also be interpreted more kindly. For Aquinas, the human will is so damaged by the Fall that God uses divine grace to heal the will and turn the human being towards God.⁴⁷ As Aidan Nichols points out, however, this is not God despising our freedom (as Bulgakov seems to think) but God acting 'to release the spontaneity of our wills, to renew our freedom from within.'⁴⁸ The drive of our freedom is first of all in the will and this needs to be unblocked. This is not so very different from Bulgakov's notion of freedom, which also belongs in the sphere of divine/human relationships. Christ stands at the door and knocks and if the human being opens the door, then Christ "will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me" (Rev. 3: 20).⁴⁹

Returning to Bulgakov's trinitarian creation, the second quality of the Father God is outpouring. Bulgakov states, 'there is the sheer impulse of self-giving, the life of God as "Father," emptying himself in letting the Other be, just as he does in the generation of the Son.'⁵⁰ The Other is the divine

⁴⁵ Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a.19.3-4.

⁴⁶ Robert Slesinski, "Bulgakov on Sophia," *Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 59, no. 3-4 (2007): 142-3.

⁴⁷ See, for example Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae 9, 6 (on God as cause of human will) and 2a2ae, 6, 1 (on God's grace).

⁴⁸ Aidan Nichols, *Wisdom from Above: A Primer in the Theology of Father Sergei Bulgakov* (Leominster: Gracewing, 2005), 74.

⁴⁹ See Bulgakov, *Bride*, 244-49. See also, Nichols, *Wisdom from Above*, 68-9.

⁵⁰ Williams, "'Lamb of God'," 169.

Sophia released into creaturely being. It is an action of kenotic love. The Father's kenosis in creation 'consists in this going out of Himself, in which He becomes God for the world and enters into a relation with it as the Absolute-Relative.'⁵¹ Indeed, for Bulgakov, this is who God is – the creator of the world who is the Father of the world, in intimate relationship with the world. The Absolute who is beyond the world is in the apophatic realm for humanity, the unnamed essence of Gregory Palamas.⁵² God is the name given to us in revelation to describe this relationship, God of the world, the Absolute who chooses to become Absolute-Relative.

Substantiality is the third quality of the Father. The sophianic expression of the Father is the primal ousia, the substance of God before its revelation in the dual working of Son and Spirit. For Bulgakov, there can be nothing extra-divine, nothing outside of God. Indeed, there is no such thing as οὐκ ὄν: 'There is only God, and outside of and apart from God there is nothing, just as there is not even any "outside of" or "apart from" ...'⁵³ The created world is formed from the very substance of God – the divine Sophia. It is the Father who calls creation into being from his sophianic substance. He kenotically gives his substance to the world as an act of will and as an act of love. This creation from God's substance constitutes one of the positive connections between God and the world. This substance, which Bulgakov calls the Ousia-Sophia is the foundation of creation. In Genesis 1, it is written that "In the beginning . . . the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep." (1: 1-2). The darkness here, according to Bulgakov, is 'the transcendental unfathomability of the divine

⁵¹ Bulgakov, *Lamb of God*, 129. "Absolute-Relative": Абсолютно-Относительное, Absolutno-Otnositel'noe, Bulgakov, *Agnets Bozhii*, 151.

⁵² See Bulgakov, *Lamb of God*, 122, f/n 2. Gregory Palamas says that 'the Super-essential is nameless,' (Συγγράματα vol. 1, ch. 31, trans. N. Gendle) in Duncan Reid, *Energies of the Spirit: Trinitarian Models in Eastern Orthodox and Western Theology* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 2.

⁵³ Bulgakov, *Lamb of God*, 124-5.

Ousia-Sophia.⁵⁴ The earth is no less than the eternal divine Sophia. God creates 'the world from out of Himself, out of His essence,'⁵⁵ from the Ousia-Sophia.

This ousia, as God's world, is not an empty slate. It is the foundation for the acts of creation that follow. In the continuation of Genesis 1, Bulgakov sees this creation of the world as a "secondary" creation: the created Sophia formed from the divine Ousia-Sophia. The creaturely Sophia is a special mode of being of the divine Sophia. In the creaturely Sophia 'the entire fullness of creaturely being already exists in its foundation, pre-exists ontologically'⁵⁶ in the divine Sophia. Genesis 1: 2-27 records the calling forth of creaturely being from the ousia, the earth. God summons the earth to bring forth plants and animals (Gen. 1: 11-12, 20, 24) and the earth does so from the fullness that already exists in the divine Sophia. As we shall see, the *form* of the contents of the divine Sophia comes from the Logos.

The Spirit and the Son also have a specific relationship to the divine Sophia in creation. The Father creates hypostatically, that is, in his Person, but Bulgakov asserts that the Son and Spirit participate in creation sophianically 'through the self-revelation in Sophia, who is the self-revelation of the Father in the Holy Trinity, the divine world.'⁵⁷ The qualities of the Spirit given to Sophia are reality, life and beauty. The Spirit does not act hypostatically, as the Holy Spirit, but sophianically as the Spirit of God: "the Spirit of God swept over the face of the waters" (Gen. 1: 2b). In the economy of salvation, the Spirit will form a different hypostatic relationship with creation through Jesus Christ but in the initial creation the Spirit imparts her qualities only.

⁵⁴Bulgakov, *Bride*, 63.

⁵⁵ Bulgakov, *Lamb of God*, 126. "Out of His essence": ИЗЪ СВОЕГО ЕСТЕСТВА (iz'' Svoego estestva), Bulgakov, *Agnets Bozhii*, 148.

⁵⁶ Bulgakov, *Bride*, 64.

⁵⁷ Bulgakov, *Comforter*, 191.

Thus, “and it was so” (Gen. 1: 7, 9, 11,15, 24, 30) refers to the reality of creation. From out of the sophianic substance of the world, life arises. And the statement that it was “good” (Gen. 1: 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31) attests to both beauty and joy. The Spirit remains sophianically in the world as beauty, as that ‘which urges forward and completes the world on its way to perfect relation with God.’⁵⁸ That is to say, it is not the hypostatic Holy Spirit that is united with the world’s substance, but the action of the Spirit in founding the world with reality, life and beauty. The Spirit is also the Creator’s joy in the whole of creation.⁵⁹

As does Moltmann, Bulgakov points to a maternal aspect of the Spirit here. The Father calls creation into being and the Spirit answers the call by giving reality to the world, giving the world a form and being. The Spirit is Mother. The Spirit ‘manifests its maternal character in the revelation of Sophia during the creation of the world: it manifests itself as the maternal womb in which the forms of this world are conceived.’⁶⁰ The Spirit as Mother joins the Father of creation to birth the world. Here Bulgakov ‘takes the patristic theme of the divine image (Gen. 1: 27) as a hint of divine androgyny.’⁶¹ It is worth noting that translators of Bulgakov’s works into English employ the masculine pronoun for Spirit. Although this is grammatically correct—spirit (дух, *dukh*) is a masculine noun)—Barbara Newman believes that Bulgakov’s understanding of the Spirit working in the world is feminine.⁶² I agree and prefer to follow the sense of the feminine nature of the Spirit by employing feminine pronouns in relation to both the Spirit and Sophia.

⁵⁸ Williams, “Lamb of God,” 169.

⁵⁹ Bulgakov, *Lamb of God*, 129.

⁶⁰Bulgakov, *Comforter*, 194.

⁶¹ Newman, “Bulgakov and Wisdom,” 51.

⁶² Ibid.

The Spirit as “womb” also points to an aspect that is closely connected to spirit’s relationship to matter. Spirituality forms a body for itself and, in turn, spirit is given form by corporeality. Spirit ‘is the union of an act of self-awareness, conscious independent existence, with the “nature” of which it is conscious.’⁶³ Thus, spirit needs a body for consciousness. It is the Spirit who forms the body of the world, the creaturely Sophia, out of the divine Sophia, God’s nature. This body is not to be thought of as ‘flesh that suppresses and shuts off the life of the spirit.’⁶⁴ Rather, the perfect body consists of a substance that is ‘the image and self-revelation of the spirit,’⁶⁵ a spiritual/substantial body. This same body is the foundation of the world.

The Son has ‘the quality of distinctness, the power to structure and order.’⁶⁶

In creation, the actions of the Son follow the actions of the Father and Spirit. The order of creation is Father, Spirit and Son. Like the Spirit, the Son works sophianically in creation, which will be discussed in the next chapter. The Son as Other demonstrates the sacrificial nature of the Son. The Son, ‘the Lamb of God, is pre-eternally “sacrificed” in the creation of the world.’⁶⁷ The Father’s outpouring is the sending of the Son, the eternally begotten Word. This action of the Father towards the Son is based in love. Bulgakov asserts,

There is the sheer impulse of self-giving, the life of God as ‘Father,’ emptying himself in letting the Other be, just as he does in the generation of the Son. But this in turn means that the Other always

⁶³ Williams, “Lamb of God,” 165.

⁶⁴ Bulgakov, *Holy Grail and Eucharist*, 128.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Bulgakov, “Unfading Light,” 133.

⁶⁷ Bulgakov, *Lamb of God*, 129. “Pre-eternally “sacrificed””: превечно «закалаеся», prevechno “zakalaesia,” Bulgakov, *Agnets Bozhii*, 151.

has the form of the Son for the Father; it cannot be but that he is at the heart of creation's otherness.⁶⁸

The Son as Logos also 'comprises the ideal content of Sophia.'⁶⁹ In the Logos, or Word, Bulgakov distinguishes between he who speaks and what is spoken. The 'words of the Word. . . [are] certain intelligible essences, which can best be described as, like the Platonic ideas, ideal and real at the same time, and endowed with the power of life.'⁷⁰ Sophia is the words of the Word. These words then reveal the very substance of God, his ousia, the Wisdom of the divine world. This, too, is an interrelationship of love: the love of the hypostatic Word for his Word of words—for Sophia. The divine Sophia receives this ideal content from the Logos and this becomes the sum of possibilities for a creation in becoming, for the creaturely Sophia. The prototypes existing in God's world, Sophia, are given expression in creation. Bulgakov follows some patristic thinking in the principle of prototypes as arising from within God.⁷¹ The divine world contains the prototype of the creaturely world. John of Damascus writes, 'For images and examples of all that shall be created by God are simply his thought in him of these objects...in his counsel we see traced out and represented what he has foreordained; this is his thought of each such object.'⁷² The Son, as Logos, thus provides the distinctive content of creation, the prototypes of God's world. For Bulgakov, this is the meaning of "All things were made by him and without him was not any thing made that was made" (Jn. 1: 3). This does not mean that the Word is the creator but that the Word is the

⁶⁸ Williams, "Lamb of God," 169.

⁶⁹ Bulgakov, *Wisdom*, 45.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁷¹ Bulgakov cites as examples: Athanasius, Pseudo-Dionysius, John of Damascus, Maximus the Confessor, Gregory of Nyssa, Augustine and Gregory Nazianzen. See *Ibid.*, 64-5. See also Sergei Bulgakov, *Kupina Neopalimaya* (Paris: 1927), excursus III, 261.

⁷² St. John of Damascus, *In Defence of the Holy Icons against Gainsayers*: I, X; III, XIX. Cited in Bulgakov, *Wisdom*, 64, f/n 7.

'fundamental content of the creation called into being by the Father.'⁷³ Bulgakov takes the additional step of ascribing the realization of this content in time to the medium of Sophia.

We can summarize the relationship of the triune God to creation: the Father creates the world by the Holy Spirit and by the Son, as they are manifested in Sophia. In the language of Genesis 1, "Let there be" refers to the Father's will and "and it was so" refers to the sophianic working of the Spirit and Word. Genesis attests to two aspects of creation. The earth as a "formless void" is already in existence, is, indeed, the divine Sophia. From out of the divine Sophia the Creator brings forth the creaturely Sophia. The creation of the world, the creaturely Sophia, is formed from the divine Sophia, God's Ousia, Substance and World. The divine Sophia is given to temporality but in the process loses none of her divine attributes. The divine Sophia now 'exists in a dual mode: in her own mode, which belongs to her in eternity; and in the creaturely mode, as the world.'⁷⁴ Nichols believes that the idea of Bulgakov's Sophia

is invaluable, since it enables us to say that, in creating the world, God does not produce a reality which stands over against him. If he did so, he would cease to be Absolute. For the Absolute, of its very nature, must constitute the reality of everything else that is.⁷⁵

Bulgakov's vision is gnostic, understood in a broader sense as 'speculation about intermediaries between the Creator and the creature.'⁷⁶ In this sense, theologians have questioned the need for Sophia at all within the realm of dogmatic theology, even beyond the charges of heresy in the "Sophia

⁷³ Bulgakov, *Comforter*, 191.

⁷⁴ Bulgakov, *Bride*, 46.

⁷⁵ Aidan Nichols, "Bulgakov and Sophiology," *Sobornost* 13 (1992): 27.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*: 25.

affair."⁷⁷ Does the world need a mediator other than Christ? Frederick Copleston in his assessment of Bulgakov's Sophia has argued that

it does not seem obvious that the concept of creation is substantially clarified by introducing the idea of an intermediary being. Nor is it clear, in my opinion, that in treating of the spiritualization of humanity the theologian cannot get on well enough with the doctrines of the Incarnation and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.⁷⁸

John O'Donnell agrees that sophiology is not needed to validate the trinitarian foundation of the world.⁷⁹ For O'Donnell, following Hans Urs von Balthasar, creation does not exist outside of the Trinity but in the infinite love between the Father and Son, held open and bridged by the Holy Spirit. Valliere concedes that Sophia may not enhance the concept of spiritualization of humanity but Bulgakov *is* unique in his concept of humanization of the spiritual.⁸⁰ Bulgakov's sophiology is a theology of Athanasius' famous maxim: 'God became a human being so that human beings may become God.'⁸¹ Humanization of the spiritual means that humanity reflects its Logos, the Word of God, in its free, creative power, transforming the world. Sophia is the agency of creativity. Valliere says that 'one may call the fairy of creativity by another name if Sophia is disliked for some reason; but then the quarrel is about names, not substance.'⁸²

I think Bulgakov's sophiology gives a positive, systematic theology to the possibility of human meeting divine and how that manifests in creation. The question of how Christ enters into creation has been addressed by theologians perhaps at the expense of how humanity enters the divine. For

⁷⁷ For reference to the "Sophia Affair," see Introduction, 36.

⁷⁸ Frederic Copleston, *Russian Religious Philosophy* (Notre Dame, Indiana: Search Press, 1988), 98. Cited in Valliere, *Modern Russian Theology*, 306.

⁷⁹ John O'Donnell, "The Trinitarian Panentheism of Sergej Bulgakov," *Gregorianum* 76, no. 1 (1995): 44.

⁸⁰ Valliere, *Modern Russian Theology*, 307.

⁸¹ Athanasius, *On the Incarnation* 54:3, PG 25:192B.

⁸² Valliere, *Modern Russian Theology*, 307.

Bulgakov, the world is connected to God in its very substance, in its sophian nature. Human and divine nature shares the same sophian substance and for this reason the person of Christ can enter into the world and humanity and the world can be divinized, can enter God. Indeed, the uniqueness and importance of Sophia lies with this bridging principle between God and the world. In his early work Bulgakov speaks of Sophia as existing 'between God and the world, Creator and creation being [herself] neither the one nor the other but something completely peculiar, simultaneously connecting and separating the one and the other.'⁸³ Rowan Williams notes that Sophia is a way of speaking about the non-arbitrariness of this relation between God and the world because God and the world share a sophianic foundation.⁸⁴ For Myroslaw Tataryn, Bulgakov's sophiology is about God's love encompassing what is not God—creation—without compromising God.⁸⁵ Because humanity is formed from Sophia, humanity is also a part of God and of God's love.

Bulgakov devotes much theology in the support of his unique hypothesis because it is the basis for him of God's connection to, yet distinction from, creation. The Western tradition since Duns Scotus has seen creation as the result of God's will, not God's essence, or nature. The Eastern tradition also supports creation from God's will. Bulgakov upholds the notion that creation is created by the personal will of God, but he adds that creation is formed *from* God's very nature, from Sophia.⁸⁶ Bulgakov thus distinguishes between personal "hypostatic" and natural "sophianic" revelation. God's personal revelation arises from God's will and results in a revelation of

⁸³ Bulgakov, *Svet Neverchernii*, 186. Cited in Sergeev, *Sophiology*, 101.

⁸⁴ Williams, "'Lamb of God'," 169.

⁸⁵ Tataryn, "New Look," 319.

⁸⁶ For Bulgakov's reading of patristic theology in terms of God's will and nature, see Bulgakov, *Bride*, 15-33. Bulgakov also identifies an unnamed sophiology in Aquinas, see Bulgakov, *Bride*, 19-32.

God's nature. As Barbara Newman notes, 'The paradox of distinction-in-unity, which lies at the heart of trinitarian and christological dogma, also marks this doctrine of creation.'⁸⁷ Mikhail Sergeev highlights Bulgakov's consistency in his efforts to portray an organic sense of universality together with particularity.⁸⁸

However, Bulgakov's efforts to introduce Sophia into the Trinity have also been challenged within the Orthodox tradition. His contemporary, Georges Florovsky, proposes that there is an infinite distance between God's nature and natural creation.⁸⁹ The difference between Creator and created is the difference between creating (a bringing into being from "outside") and begetting (producing from the same substance). God creates out of nothing, not out of God's essence. In Russian theology there have been two main streams in the 20th century. For Rowan Williams, the debate has been between those who have, broadly speaking, followed Vladimir Soloviev and those who have repudiated sophiology in favour of a more traditional and Church-based style.⁹⁰ Many of Bulgakov's ideas of Sophia are developed from Vladimir Soloviev's work: the idea of Sophia as the creative love of God become the ideal substance of creation; Sophia as the meaning and truth of creation; Sophia as the spirit of creation, as its ideal and its beauty; Sophia as the Body of Christ and the Church; and Sophia as the body and soul of humanity.⁹¹ Soloviev's concept of Divine-humanity, noted in the Introduction (p. 27), of the Logos with Sophia (the world soul) is also

⁸⁷ Newman, "Bulgakov and Wisdom," 53.

⁸⁸ Sergeev, *Sophiology*, 104.

⁸⁹ Georges Florovsky, *Creation and Redemption: The Collected Works Vol. III*. (Belmont, MA: Nordland Publishing Company, 1976), 46. Cited in *Ibid.*, 120.

⁹⁰ Rowan Williams, "Eastern Orthodox Theology," in *The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology in the Twentieth Century*, ed. David F. Ford (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing, 1997), 501.

⁹¹ For a succinct introduction to Soloviev's religious metaphysics, see the Editor's Introduction, Soloviev, *Divine Humanity*, x-xv.

integral. Florovsky spearheaded the repudiation of sophiology and is representative of the second stream. For Florovsky, the eternal idea of creation is in God but is not creation itself.

The line between negative and positive theology is drawn following a different interpretation of Gregory Palamas' distinction between God's essence (or nature), that which is inaccessible and unknowable to creation, from God's energies, the trinitarian manifestations of economy.⁹² The basis of the problem is in how God communicates with creation, or, in the words of Peter, how we become "participants of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1: 4). How does God remain distinct from creation while also offering divine union? For Vladimir Lossky, like Florovsky, God communicates through God's energies not from God's essential nature.⁹³ Bulgakov's theology of God's nature can be seen as quite modern (mostly in a western sense) in his interpretation of the "nothing" of creation as something within God. Creation is a substantial part of God, anticipating the later theologies of creation of Moltmann (from *God in Creation* on), Thomas Berry, Sally McFague, and others.⁹⁴

The balance between positive and negative theology is firmly weighted in the positive, kataphatic realm for Bulgakov. He believes that knowledge of God is to be found in the world. Bulgakov defends his kataphatic theology and considers that both positive and negative theology is necessary. He describes himself as 'neo-Chalcedonian,'⁹⁵ and he believes the challenge for modern theologians is to engage positively with the credal dogma that could

⁹² Gregory Palamas, *Capita Physica, Theologica, Moralia Et Practica*, 69, P.G., 1169 C. See Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, trans. Members of the fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius, 1957 English translation ed. (London: James Clarke & Co. Ltd, 1944), 70-1.

⁹³ Lossky, *Mystical Theology*, 70.

⁹⁴ See Thomas Berry, *The Dream of the Earth* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1990). Sallie McFague, *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993).

⁹⁵ Bulgakov, *Holy Grail and Eucharist*, 143.

only be expressed in negative terms in the fifth century.⁹⁶ Whereas dogma is 'an inspiration from the Holy Spirit...theology is the work of human thought illuminated by faith and grace.'⁹⁷ Dogma has an immutable core but its philosophical perception changes as thought and contexts change. The challenge for each generation is to understand anew its inherited dogma. The concern to safeguard the divinity of Christ, which led the church Fathers to express God's relationship with the world in terms of otherness, is countered today by the need to understand God's positive connection with the world, or, expressed differently, Christ's humanity. We still need the boundary of apophatic theology as a necessary corrective to anthropomorphism, 'the assertion that the human knowledge of God is perfectly adequate,'⁹⁸ but our understanding of the boundary has changed. For Bulgakov, 'the NO of apophatic theology is necessarily connected with a certain kataphatic YES.'⁹⁹ Kataphatic theology can talk about God because God is a transcendent *and* an immanent being. In the revelation of this immanence we know that the divine and human natures can coexist in Jesus Christ, therefore the divine nature is not foreign to us.

Sophia is not only the positive connection between God and the world. What is also important is that Sophia has being in herself. Sophia is not an abstract emanation of God's nature but a personal nature. God's nature is personal. Bulgakov has been critiqued for a tendency to 'confuse personhood and nature.'¹⁰⁰ He has been accused of reducing God's connection to the world with an impersonal entity, that is, nature rather than

⁹⁶ "...without confusion, without change, without division, without separation..." For the full Chalcedonian Creed, see Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 339-40.

⁹⁷ Bulgakov, *Holy Grail and Eucharist*, 143.

⁹⁸ Bulgakov, *Comforter*, 362.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 360. Original emphases. Bulgakov examines the apophatic tradition from Plato to Jacob Boehme and details his own kataphatic theology in Bulgakov, *Svet Neverchernii*.

¹⁰⁰ Losskii, V. *Spor o Sofii: 'Dokladnaia Zapiska' prot. S. Bulgakova I smysl Ukaza Moskovskoi Patriarkhii*. Paris, 1936, 82. Cited in Valliere, *Modern Russian Theology*, 389.

person. Yet, for Bulgakov, Sophia is far from impersonal. Bernice Glatzer Rosenthal understands Bulgakov's Sophia as 'a subjective, personal, world-forming principle.'¹⁰¹ Personhood, God's nature, must be personal. The relationship between God and Sophia is the macrocosmic reflection of the relationship between God and the human being. One could imagine, perhaps, concentric spheres, beginning with a human being (or all of humanity), enclosed by Sophia and finally, enclosed by God. A wonderful image of this is given in Hildegard of Bingen's second vision.¹⁰² Here Sophia is shown as the Cosmiarcha and co-creator of the world and humanity. Sophia does not displace the Trinity or Christ or the human being but is an intrinsic part of creation.

The next section explores the nature of humanity and its connection with the world. Sophia's connection with Christ and the Church will be examined in the following chapter. This chapter thus far has introduced the ideal of creation: the divine Sophia as God's nature which then becomes the basis of creation, complete with multiplicity and relativity, created to experience God's love. The basis of this connection means that the Creator is closely connected to creation. However, the world also has a relative independence. Now we will further examine the creaturely Sophia in her independent form. The purpose of this section is to understand the mechanics of existence, beginning with the natural world and concluding with the integral place of humanity within that natural world. Humanity's position as God's hypostatic representative in creation means that humanity's every action affects world evolution. Human beings are created to be the bearers of

¹⁰¹ Bernice Glatzer Rosenthal, "The Nature and Function of Sophia in Sergei Bulgakov's Prerevolutionary Thought," in *Russian Religious Thought*, ed. Judith Deutsch & Gustafson Kornblatt, Richard F. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996), 160.

¹⁰² Hildegard of Bingen, *Book of Divine Works*, Otto Mueller Verlag, Salzburg. Also illustrated in Schipflinger, *Sophia-Maria*, 111.

God's love to the very ends of the cosmos through ages of time and space. Although humanity has sunken into material existence, it retains its link to its divine origins through Sophia. It is Sophia who helps humanity onward in a process of remembering and re-creating its human world. Such knowledge, I suggest, is a helpful antidote to any suggestion of meaninglessness or powerlessness in a modern worldview.

Creaturely Sophia

Sophia as the principle of mediation holds within herself the newly created dichotomies of existence: she is divine and creaturely, uncreated and created, heaven and earth, and contains both chaos and order. The creation of the creaturely Sophia expands the possibilities for the experiencing of God's love even further into a multihypostatic world. However, the oneness that the divine Sophia has with God is lost in this new state of relativity. The creaturely Sophia is a less than an ideal form of the divine Sophia, a 'diminution,'¹⁰³ because she is unrevealed in full as yet. The creaturely Sophia is a state of potential, of "not-yet." She contains both chaos and the principle of order within herself so that the full potential of creation can be revealed as chaos is transformed into order. Chaos is a state typifying a lack of unity. It is a neutral force, neither separating nor connecting.¹⁰⁴ Yet it is a force of abundant life, filling the world with a countless diversity of life forms, animal and vegetable, in different states of life.¹⁰⁵ Creatureliness is

the loss of the Divine Sophia's 'integrity' through her submergence in the multiplicity, temporality, and relativity of particular being. Because of this, the world's sophianicity loses the clarity and self-

¹⁰³ Bulgakov, *Bride*, 79.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., 80. The notion of evil in the world, which is not neutral, will be discussed in the following chapter.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., 79.

evidentness of its manifestation; the chaotic element, raised by cosmic storms, its waves thrashing furiously, is unleashed.¹⁰⁶

Despite this cosmic chaos the world retains an ordered structure. The principle of order is inherent in Sophia as prototypes, Plato's "ideas-energies." The creaturely Sophia contains all the divine prototypes of the world within her being, the "words of the Word." A prototype ontologically precedes its being in the world and remains in the divine Sophia as the ideal form of that being. The main trait of these prototypes of creaturely being is that, in a sense, they are *not* created, but have a divine, eternal being proper to them. This is the uncreated heaven, the glory of God. But these prototypes, or ideas, can also be considered as *created* by God as the prototypes of the world *before* creation in the divine Sophia. They ontologically precede creation but are connected with it. This is the heaven of creation: "In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1: 1).¹⁰⁷

This uncreated/created dichotomy is observable in the distinction between eternity and temporality in the divine and the creaturely Sophia. The divine Sophia, the glory of God, is the eternal "heaven," containing all the prototypes of the world. The earth is eternally created also but has a temporal manifestation. The eternity of heaven and earth is not the same as God's eternity. For Bulgakov, there are two modes of eternity.

The first is the eternity of the unchangeable, immobile, divine peace, fullness, absoluteness, integral wisdom, *aeternitas*. The second is creaturely eternity, *aeviternitas*, infinity, not "bad" or contentless infinity, but good infinity, for full of content and creative.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 17. Original emphasis.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 56.

The two modes are linked so that God's eternity is revealed in God's revelation to creation. Creaturely eternity means that all the prototypes of the world have their life, their immortality, in this eternity. Thus, eternal life, as in Bulgakov's understanding of "in the beginning," requires an ontological basis rather than a chronological one.¹⁰⁹

The prototypes within the divine Sophia are given earthly existence in the creaturely Sophia. Prototypes are manifested in creation as genera: 'And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds"' (Gen. 1:24a).¹¹⁰ Plants and animals are created after their "kind" or genus. Bulgakov looks to Plato's 'world of ideas [to explain] the metaphysical basis for the hereditary character of life in general and human life in particular; heredity executes by biological means the task set by ideas-energies.'¹¹¹ Prototypes, the "ideas-energies," contain the hereditary basis for reproducing within a genus. Heredity is 'the empirical expression of a prototype, of a unitary nature.'¹¹² Bulgakov sees the evolution of species as progression towards their already existent prototypes and this will be discussed further in the following chapter.

The creaturely Sophia is the body and soul of the world but she is not spiritual in herself. She has a natural existence as a being which is alive and organized on many different levels according to biological processes of life.¹¹³ We have noted these biological processes. Sophia is the organizing principle inherent in these processes, maintaining order in her capacity as the body and soul of the created world. Bulgakov calls soul 'the substance of

¹⁰⁹ See *Ibid.*, 469.

¹¹⁰ Translation from *Holy Bible, New International Version*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973).

¹¹¹ Bulgakov, *Philosophy*, 138. Bulgakov sees in ancient philosophy and religion an authentic attestation to the sophianicity of the world, which has entered in part into Christian theology. For Bulgakov's views on the sophianic philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, see Bulgakov, *Bride*, 8-15.

¹¹² Bulgakov, *Bride*, 182.

¹¹³ See Bulgakov, *Lamb of God*, 145.

the world.'¹¹⁴ It is God's living substance, Sophia-Ousia, translated into creaturely existence, "flesh." There is self-transformation of the natural world at the level of body and soul. This transformation can occur because the world is founded on Wisdom. The creaturely Sophia in her submergence into temporal existence does not completely lose her connection with her ideal state in the divine Sophia. As body and soul of the world she retains a unity, a certain self-aware sensuality. Sophia as the natural world has her 'own persuasiveness and authenticity, [her] own thought and beauty.'¹¹⁵ Sophia retains a consciousness of her divine origins at the level of soul, a consciousness that extends to her material, bodily manifestation. For Bulgakov, all 'earthly realities are grounded in an ideal reality that is also a kind of eternally self-aware *materiality*, since there is no thought without matter and concrete action.'¹¹⁶ In Bulgakov's understanding of corporeality, bodiliness, or nature, is the necessary ground for consciousness. At a level of body and soul, Sophia has self-awareness. Bulgakov describes this as divine providence. Divine providence in the natural world is the divine power within the world that is the source of the world's order. Creation 'has its own divinity, so to speak, which is the creaturely Sophia.'¹¹⁷ The world acquires an identity in creation and 'receives an independence to follow its destinies.'¹¹⁸ Rosenthal also interprets Bulgakov's Sophia as an active force and although 'the empirical world is fragmented and broken, it cannot totally tear itself away from its cosmic harmony.'¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴ Bulgakov, *Bride*, 424.

¹¹⁵ Bulgakov, *Lamb of God*, 151.

¹¹⁶ Williams, "Unfading Light," 128. Original emphasis. "Materiality": материальности, (material'nosti), Bulgakov, *Svet Neverchernii*, 242.

¹¹⁷ Bulgakov, *Bride*, 196.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 197.

¹¹⁹ Rosenthal, "Nature and Function," 161.

Bulgakov uses Soloviev's terminology of world soul to describe the creaturely Sophia.¹²⁰ The world soul unites the world but Sophia also becomes the source of the multiple soul existence for all ensouled animals, including humanity. Thus, the soul 'belongs to the divided multi-unity that has fallen from the state of integrity and that the soul unites.'¹²¹ The nature of soul as a multi-unity is seen in individual existence. Every living being that is part of a genus conforms to certain particularities of its genus but each form is also unique, an individual. There is no generic being which fully represents its ideal form. Therefore, this represents a certain limitedness to individuality in that each form remains separate from the whole. This is a necessary state of creatureliness—it is becoming, it is "not-yet." The movement in time for creation is from the limitedness of psychic (soul) and individual bodily existence towards the fullness of spiritual and personal existence. It is through association with hypostatic spirit that the world can be raised to spiritual and personal existence. The world 'cannot accomplish this passage from the psychic to the spiritual by its own powers.'¹²² However, the world soul is a living being, and is able, in and through humanity, to associate itself with the life of spirit.¹²³ Thus, as the creaturely Sophia, the world soul has the capacity to be hypostatic, to be 'a world of agents and subjects.'¹²⁴

We have noted that the creaturely Sophia is a natural body, that is, body and soul organized as a natural world. Yet a life of body and soul is divided and limited because no one form of a genus fully represents its ideal form, its prototype. There is limitedness to individuality in that each form remains

¹²⁰ Bulgakov, *Bride*, 79f.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 80.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 425.

¹²³ See Bulgakov, *Lamb of God*, 151.

¹²⁴ Williams, "'Lamb of God'," 166.

separate from the whole. To overcome this limitation the soul consciousness of the world, of the creaturely Sophia, needs a principle of hypostatic, or personal, spiritual consciousness to evolve. This principle is humanity. We observed that in the divine world Sophia is hypostatized by the Persons of the Trinity. In the created world, it is humanity that is created to be the hypostatic centre of the world, to mirror the relationship between Godhead and Sophia. Humanity is the place of the personal and the spiritual in the world. Now we can examine the creation of humanity and its relationship to the creaturely Sophia. Through this relationship, we will come to Bulgakov's understanding of humanity as a microcosm of the world. This is an important aspect of this dissertation on hope because humanity proves to be central to the world and its evolution. If hope resides in the wager that there is some correspondence between humanity and the world then Bulgakov's theology of the created world is, indeed, a theology of hope.

Humanity

Humanity, according to Bulgakov is 'the representative of all creation, including in itself all the fullness, a microcosm, a world in little, according to the expression of the Fathers.'¹²⁵ Humanity is an image of God in two specific ways: in terms of personhood and in relational terms. Thus, the human being is a twofold creation, with a hypostasis and with a nature. Human beings are hypostases given a sophianic nature from the world. Humanity is both a part of yet distinct from the created world just as Sophia is a part of yet distinct from the Trinity. We will examine this twofold structure further, beginning with the natural aspect that humanity shares with creation.

Humanity is formed from the dust of creation (cf. Gen 2:7). In its biological aspect humanity follows the laws of the creaturely Sophia. Thus, in its sophianic nature, humanity is a prototype, encapsulated in the divine Sophia, to which all human beings conform. Although in humanity there are multiple expressions of hypostatic persons they all belong to a prototype, which Bulgakov calls "Adam." For Bulgakov, 'what makes an individual human is not the individual principle but his expression of that which is common to all of humanity.'¹²⁶ As with all species, the empirical life of each human being is a part of meta-empirical prototype, Adam. Each individual reflects this Adamic prototype and 'partakes of a larger humanity, regardless of how long s/he lives, how much or how little s/he is able to experience his or her empirical life, or which corner of the world kaleidoscope is revealed to him or her.'¹²⁷ The empirical life of each human being contributes to the meta-empirical Adam. Bulgakov writes, 'it seems to me that only the

¹²⁵ Bulgakov, *Wisdom*, 77.

¹²⁶ Bulgakov, *Philosophy*, 139.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

acknowledgment of a prior unified humanity—a metaphysical forefather, Adam—can explain the characteristic connection of the individual and the all-human in the human personality.¹²⁸ Adam exists meta-empirically and it is possible for this integral humanity to determine itself in relation to the world and to God. Thus, humanity conforms to its bodily and psychic existence as a prototype in Sophia. It is this ontological unity that makes both original sin and universal salvation possible.¹²⁹

Humanity's *hypostatic* existence resides in personhood. According to Bulgakov, humanity is distinguished from the rest of creation by its hypostatic being. Humanity is formed in the image of God. As Tataryn suggests, this is 'a profoundly positive statement about the potential for human participation in divinity: participation in the uniqueness of God, the hypostatic nature of the Godhead.'¹³⁰ God as the divine "I" imparts hypostatic being, an "I," to humanity. This is the uncreated aspect of human beings, received 'at the time of their creation by the breath of the spirit of God...their Ego, in which, and through which alone, their humanity lives.'¹³¹ Human beings receive a human spirit. A human being is a hypostasis, an ego, granted at creation, in which human nature (the creaturely Sophia) exists.

We have noted above that God's hypostatic involvement in creation has been in the Father's act of will, a calling forth of creation out of the divine Sophia. But here in the creation of humanity God adds a 'wholly new and original'¹³² factor to creation. Bulgakov writes, 'what we have here is God's

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 140. More on original sin and universal salvation in the following chapters.

¹³⁰ Tataryn, "New Look," 329-30.

¹³¹ Bulgakov, *Wisdom*, 79.

¹³² Bulgakov, *Bride*, 175.

direct hypostatic participation in the communication of His image to man.¹³³ Creation, according to Bulgakov, is a givenness: 'its ontological foundation, the creaturely world, is wholly determined, from beginning to end.'¹³⁴ The world is created in its fullness but it can only unfold according to the inbuilt Wisdom of the world "according to its kind." Humanity is also subject to a certain givenness but it is distinguished from creation by its hypostatic life. In this sense, humanity is an *addition* to the world and distinct from the world in this aspect.

The characteristic of hypostatic being is self-determination, seen in freedom and creativity within the limits of its nature and practised in relationship. This freedom is not the absolute freedom of God but a creaturely freedom 'expressed as an infinite series of different possibilities.'¹³⁵ Freedom

always introduces something *new*, which is synonymous with creativity. But this new thing is not absolutely new. It is not creativity out of nothing, but is determined within the general limits of the proto-images of being in the Divine Sophia.¹³⁶

Humanity's freedom is a freedom *within* the world, working in the created order, a free re-creation. This freedom involves relationship – a working with, a transforming of, a creating out of. To be a person is to be in relationship. God as Persons imparts personhood to humanity: 'the image of God reveals itself, above all, in personhood, which is the beginning of creativity and freedom.'¹³⁷ The image of God for humanity is also 'the image of the Holy Trinity, which is hypostatically multiple in consubstantiality.'¹³⁸ The Godhead, which is perfect relationship in three Persons, confers the

¹³³ Ibid., 67.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 139.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 135.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 136. Original emphasis.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 147. Cited in Tataryn, "New Look," 330.

¹³⁸ Bulgakov, *Bride*, 185.

potentiality of personal relationship upon humanity, the revelation of love through communion.

It is interesting to note that, for Bulgakov, perfect relationship is to be found in this original humanity, which is created male and female. In Genesis 1:24, God says “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness.” Bulgakov understands the plural referent for God, the “us”, to refer to the three persons of the Trinity. But therein lies a great mystery: the God that is *triune* creates humankind in a *duality* – “male and female he created them” (Gen. 1: 27b). In what way, then, is humanity created here in the image of God? We have seen that, for Bulgakov, creation is a threefold deed of the Father, the Son and the Spirit. The hypostasis of the Father remains transcendent to creation. The Son, however, as Logos or “heavenly man”, is the prototype, or proto-image, for Adam. This allows for the ‘humanization of the Logos,’¹³⁹ the incarnation into (a male) Jesus Christ. The third hypostasis, in turn, has relationship with the female because of the Spirit’s descent upon (but not incarnation into) Mary, ‘the second Eve.’¹⁴⁰ Bulgakov is careful not to reverse this proposition – the Logos and the Spirit are not the male and female hypostases within the Godhead. Nevertheless, ‘in translation into the language of creation or with reference to man, the qualities of the second and third hypostases correspond to, are analogous to, are parallel to (but by no means identical to) the male and female principles in it.’¹⁴¹ For humanity to be created male and female means, then, that the masculine and feminine principles are present in God, correlating to the Son and the Spirit. It also means there are two kinds of persons in humanity. Humanity is not an abstract “it”; humanity is male and female.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 90.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 91.

In Bulgakov's thought this signifies that all 'humankind in the male image is the one hypostasis of Christ, is Christ, [while all] humankind in the female image is the hypostasis of the Holy Spirit.'¹⁴² While possibly problematic in its gender assumptions, this statement can also be read as one of equality of the sexes since the Son and the Spirit share equal divinity.¹⁴³ The Son and the Spirit, too, work as a dyad—both are essential in their hypostatic difference. However, Bulgakov is influenced by a neoplatonic understanding of archetypal masculine and feminine principles, previously expounded upon by Soloviev.¹⁴⁴ The Spirit is essentially receptive while the Logos '*operates or accomplishes*.'¹⁴⁵ Bulgakov then posits a hierarchical relationship between male and female humanity. Brenda Meehan, writing from a feminist perspective, mitigates the potential gender problematic by suggesting that, for Bulgakov, 'both the masculine and feminine principles [are] present in humankind and, though in varying degrees, in each individual human being, just as both [are] present in the prototype of Divine-humanity.'¹⁴⁶ An additional problem to the male/female dichotomy is, however, signalled by Rosenthal, who suggests that Bulgakov's association of the feminine with the passive presents an ambiguity within Sophia, 'passive with respect to the Logos but an active world-forming principle all the same.'¹⁴⁷

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 97.

¹⁴³ 'The equal divinity (of the Son and the Spirit is linked) to the equal necessity and irreplaceability of the hypostases in the divine self-revelation of the Father': Bulgakov, *Comforter*, 178.

¹⁴⁴ See Meehan, "Wisdom/Sophia," 155-8.

¹⁴⁵ Bulgakov, *Bride*, 99. Original emphasis.

¹⁴⁶ Meehan, "Wisdom/Sophia," 159. More on the idea of Divine Humanity in the next chapter.

¹⁴⁷ Rosenthal, "Nature and Function," 171. Rosenthal (168-72) gives a summary of Bulgakov's sympathetic treatment of gender issues, including a reading of the Fall that exonerates Eve of intentional wrongdoing and blames Adam who, as the first created, should have known better!

Conclusion

I have presented Bulgakov's understanding of the trinitarian God as a God of Persons in relationship. I then examined the connection between God and the world and the ontological difference between Creator and created. God is the world's Creator. For Bulgakov the similarities and differences between Creator and created are also the similarities and differences between the divine and the creaturely modes of Sophia. The world is no less than God's own nature, Sophia, given to temporality to experience God's love in boundless multiplicity. God loves this world, formed from God's very substance, with the same love that is shared within the triune Godhead. God gives creation an independence to achieve its potential while giving the world a foundation in Godhead's very nature, in Sophia. The divine Sophia forms the positive connection between God and the world. In the divine Sophia, God unites the world with God's own divine life. In the Trinity, the Father works hypostatically to call creation into being. The Spirit answers the call of the Father and births the world into reality, continuing to abide in the world qualitatively as life and beauty. The Son also works sophianically in creation by giving the world its ideal content, Sophia: the words of the Word. God is intimately connected to creation through Sophia. The addition of Sophia as a mediating principle to other theories of creation allows for a world which is both independent in its processes and absolutely connected to God.

The divine Sophia of God exists in a dual mode: as divine Sophia and as creaturely Sophia. The two modes form the one Sophia, with the creaturely Sophia in a process of realizing the full potential and possibilities given to creation. Humanity is a hypostatic creation given to the creaturely Sophia to realize these possibilities. Humanity is the ego of the world, of Sophia, its body and soul. This is the ideal of creation, of humanity and the world.

How this changes, mythically described in Genesis 2-3, is the subject of the following chapter, "Christ, Sophia and Evil." What is important in this chapter is to note the positive nature of creation. The world has its basis in goodness. Sophia is the living being of creation and the nature of the cosmos. She is a description of the wholeness and unity of the world. Nonetheless, the processes within Sophia allow for change and transformation. Indeed, the *purpose* of the creaturely Sophia is to allow for this change, with humanity created to be the active agents of transforming the creaturely Sophia. The divine Sophia is both the original unity and ideal of the world, and the being within creation who leads humanity forward to this ideal. Humanity, formed with its sophian nature, is given the world in order to fulfil all possibilities to freely experience God's love. Because love is only possible in relationship, in giving, then the task before humanity is to understand and experience love in relationship. Humanity is called to mirror the Godhead in its relationship to Sophia, in love.

Chapter 5 Christ, Sophia and Evil

Introduction

What happened to God's perfect world of creation, and why? After all, it is not at all obvious that the world is based in goodness, as Bulgakov asserts. Or, if we acknowledge the beauty and wonder of the natural world, it is not obvious that humanity itself has its basis in goodness. Quite the opposite. The issue of theodicy addresses the existence of God together with the presence of evil and suffering, either human or natural in origin, i.e. war, murder, even "natural" death, as well as drought, floods, and other natural disasters. In this chapter, Bulgakov's understanding of evil and its presence in the world will be examined. As will be described, for Bulgakov evil enters the world because of humanity and the angelic world and causes a terrible imbalance in the created order. Evil is more than the chaos of creation. Yet evil can never be greater or stronger than the good of creation. Christ's incarnation and resurrection ensures that the imbalance in the world will not overcome humanity and the world. Christ overcomes the evil present in the structures of human nature. He does not, however, overcome personal sin. There is still a necessary process of redemption in the continuing spiritualization of the world until the end times. Humanity is—and has always been—the place of this transformation and works with Christ and the Spirit in this process. If Bulgakov's arguments are convincing then this would support my thesis of hope. There is hope because there is a purpose to human existence. Humanity is important to the world, indeed, integral to the world, and its collective actions are a part of the world's evolution. There has been a rupture in the connection between God and the world; nevertheless, the rupture is slowly but surely healing, through the presence

of Christ and the Spirit, and through the continuing sophianization of the cosmos. Hope lies in God's goodness and love that is the basis of creation. Hope also lies in realizing humanity's purpose, and in knowing the strength that has been given to it by Christ. Faith is maintained in this understanding, despite appearances to the contrary, and faith supports hope in the present and in the future.

The chapter will begin with Bulgakov's understanding of the "Fall," the rupture between the human and divine worlds, examining the nature of evil and its effect on creation. It will then examine the role of Jesus Christ in the restoration of the image of Divine-humanity through the incarnation, death, resurrection and ascension. Christ joins with humanity and ensures the continuing presence of the Word and the Holy Spirit since Pentecost in the process of the spiritualization, or humanization (sophianization) of the cosmos. This knowledge is the basis of faith. Even without faith it is the basis for Bulgakov of a certain reality: the strengthening presence of Christ and the Spirit in the world, joined with the destiny of humankind. The last section examines humanity's task, with the getting of Wisdom and the conforming to Christ through obedience of the will.

Humanity and the Fall

In the previous chapter Bulgakov's theology of creation was introduced. God created the perfect world. God created the world out of the Godhead's divine nature, Sophia, and God created humanity to be the consciousness, or ego, of the world. Humanity was created to know God, to love God and to realize God in the world. Humanity was given body and soul from the world, from Sophia, and ego consciousness from God's hypostatic being. Humanity was different from the rest of creation in that it was given freedom to realize its task and its potential. Now I will examine this theology of creation further to include the "Fall" of humanity and the world.

The story of creation in Genesis 1-3 is the mythic representation of the beginning of the natural world and humanity. For Bulgakov, the biblical story is not to be thought of as historical or empirical, but as meta-history. A myth 'in the *positive* sense of this concept, is a story, expressed in a language not proper to the empirical domain, about what lies beyond this domain, about what belongs to the meta-empirical domain and meta-history.'¹ What can be found in the measurable, material world does not exhaust all possibilities of the life of the world. Indeed, the basis of the material world is contained within a higher reality, a meta-reality. Thus, the story of creation in Genesis points to this higher reality yet can only be expressed in the language of this world. The first account of creation, the six days, is not to be taken literally but does represent for Bulgakov a natural hierarchy of nature leading up to the creation of humanity. It demonstrates the phylogenesis of humanity, because humanity includes all the forms of being within itself.

¹ Bulgakov, *Bride*, 170.

However, in this beginning, humanity has not yet embraced its proper relationship to these forms of being in the natural world. Adamic humanity is placed *next* to its nature, to the creaturely Sophia, to embark upon its task of humanizing the world, of bringing all forms of being to consciousness through its own being. Bulgakov speaks of 'the Edenic economy as the selfless loving effort of man to apprehend and to perfect nature, to reveal its sophic character.'² In the language of Genesis, humanity is set to have "dominion" over the world (Gen. 1:28). This means that humanity is 'the *logos* of the world, the one who realises it, as cosmos, as a work of art.'³ Humanity is a microcosm of the divine world. The great Artist has created the cosmos as a work of art and placed humanity within the cosmos as a reflection of the love and joy of creation.⁴ Humanity is enjoined to create within this world as its *logos*. Adamic humanity in its entirety is the ego consciousness of the world just as the triune God is the ego consciousness of its own nature, the divine Sophia. Humanity is given freedom in its undertaking, in its journey.

What is described in the account of Adam and Eve in Genesis 3 represents what happens to the world as a result of this freedom. Humanity has been placed in the world to *know* the world, to re-create the world, which is also to remember.⁵ Humanity cannot create out of nothing but must use the materials from the existing world. The perfect world has been given to humanity to reveal the sophianicity of the world, to work towards open communion with God in a process of becoming. Two paths are open to humanity in realizing this task of re-creation and actualization. One path is

² Bulgakov, *Philosophy*, 154.

³ Bulgakov, "Lamb of God," 212.

⁴ Bulgakov, *Lamb of God*, 129.

⁵ Bulgakov (*Philosophy of Economy*, 145) takes Plato's idea here that 'knowledge is really remembrance.' See, for example, Plato, *Meno* 86 a-b; *Phaedo* 73b.

a direct acceptance of God's will, growing in increasing conformity as nature is given full transparency by the action of the human spirit.⁶ In this path there is still the possibility of mistake or error because of the freedom of humanity, but error is not yet sin. The second path is 'the path of *relative* good through the overcoming of its negations,'⁷ that is, the path of good and evil. This is the path chosen by humanity, which has drastic consequences for both the human and the natural worlds. This path results in the absolute heightening of the oppositions in creation. Evil enters the world.

Evil is not created by God. Evil does not arise from out of God's being, or from out of Sophia, from out of the nothing from which creation is formed. For Bulgakov, '[e]vil is not a substance but a *state* of creaturely being.'⁸ It has no actual existence in itself but causes the oppositional relativity of the world—the world of good *and* evil. According to Bulgakov, the philosophers of antiquity, the church fathers, and the scholastic theologians all agree that evil does not exist as an independent principle.⁹ Evil has no *ontological* existence. It is 'a parasite of being; it arises in being as its sickness; its gets its strength from being.'¹⁰ It is a product of creaturely being and arises in time. It begins in time just as it will end in time. Evil asserts its (temporary) rule over the "nothing." This force of nonbeing becomes dominant in the world bringing about a catastrophic imbalance between humanity and nature. The neutrality of chaos, the "not-yet," becomes a sheer force of materiality, impenetrable to the spirit. Because of the Fall, the shadows of the "not-yet" become the darkness that overcomes (cf. John 1: 5).

⁶ See Bulgakov, *Bride*, 151.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 188. Original emphasis.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 147.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 153.

¹¹ Celia Deane-Drummond calls this state of being “shadow sophia.” Shadow sophia ‘expresses the dark possibility of evil in the world.’¹² What is unique in Bulgakov’s view for her is the distinction between the divine Sophia and the shadow side of the creaturely Sophia so that evil has no ontological existence in God.

Evil, however, does originate in the spiritual world in the first angelic challenge to God’s sovereignty. The “prince of this world,” who is not a god but a rebellious creature, has a reign on earth correlative with the temporal existence of the world. Humanity joins with Satan in its initial rebellion. Humanity challenges God and rejects its proper destiny. However, Bulgakov does not see humanity’s rebellion as evil in intent but as a misunderstanding. Freedom is given to humanity but humanity misunderstands what freedom means. Myroslaw Tataryn describes it thus:

It was only God’s freedom which was truly absolute - absoluteness did not lie in power, but in freedom. Human freedom, being created and part of a contingent world, was limited and dependent. Adam’s (and humanity’s) unwillingness to recognize this contingency and limitedness lay at the root of original sin.’¹³

Humanity rebels against givenness and fails to see that creatureliness is a union of freedom *and* givenness. To create in the creaturely world does not mean that the creature can change its nature to become anything it wants. In its fallen state, humanity remains itself but ‘turned inside out.’¹⁴ Givenness becomes the predominant characteristic of both humanity and the world.

The world is not a dualism of good and evil. The world is created good. Good and evil arise only as ontological poles within the creaturely Sophia

¹¹ Christ is “the light [that] shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.” (Jn. 1: 5)

¹² Deane-Drummond, “Shadow Sophia.” URL, 6.

¹³ Tataryn, “New Look,” 321. Bulgakov also uses the Augustinian terminology of original sin. See Bulgakov, *Bride*, 164.

¹⁴ Bulgakov, *Bride*, 155.

for a period of time. However, because humanity is created to be the hypostatic centre of the world, all existence is affected by this event. The Fall 'appeared as a *religious catastrophe*. Direct and genuine communion with God, as experienced by our first parents in paradise, ended. For the world and for humanity God became distant "transcendent."¹⁵ Now there is an 'ontological abyss'¹⁶ between the creaturely Sophia and her divine counterpart. The sophianic quality of nature is hidden more deeply and closed off.¹⁷ Humanity no longer has a balanced relationship to nature. Nature is deprived of its hypostatic centre and humanity is subject to the weight and power of the forces of natural chaos. Because the hypostasis of world is "blindfolded," nature loses its centre. Nature is 'left to its own powers and to the instinct of the world soul, in its sophianic wisdom but also in its nonhypostatic blindness.'¹⁸ The task of revealing the sophianicity of the world is made so much more difficult because the strength of nature is now greater than the hypostatic strength of humanity. Humanity becomes subjected to the chaotic forces of nature.

Death enters the world. Death is a direct consequence of this imbalance between the human spirit and its nature. The substance of the world experiences a "darkening," a fall into material existence. Inner disharmony 'results in a disordering of the relations of man to his own body, which has become the body of death, owing to the insufficient power of the human spirit to master it.'¹⁹ God does not create death but death enters the world.²⁰ Death is the quality of matter that is impenetrable to spirit. The Fall results

¹⁵ Bulgakov, in Tataryn, "New Look," 322. Original quote in Bulgakov, *Svet Neverchernii*. Original emphasis.

¹⁶ Bulgakov, *Bride*, 160.

¹⁷ See Bulgakov, *Lamb of God*, 145.

¹⁸ Bulgakov, *Bride*, 189.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ See Ibid., 149.

in the inability of humanity to spiritualize the substance of the world. Because we are “all in Adam” (cf. 1 Cor. 15: 22), all of humanity and the world experiences the consequences of the Fall. Sin becomes ‘a *hereditary illness* to all nature and to all human beings’²¹ and death is the consequence of this.

In contrast to Satan, however, the knowledge of evil for humanity is also the beginning of the introduction of good, ‘a new, special awakening of the principle that constitutes the positive essence of man’s being.’²² The goal for humanity remains the same, only the means has changed. Humanity’s desire for divinity is proper but the path is now the path of oppositions: good and evil, life and death, spirit and matter. Humanity’s task is now one of attaining a different form of knowledge and transformation. Evil or death or matter are merely darkened forms of a higher reality, of the good, of life, of the spirit. There are not two realities, or a duality in existence: there is only one whole, one Sophia.

Bulgakov believes that certain forms of western theology have exaggerated the power of sin in the world. In Luther’s doctrine of the *seroum arbitrium*, he sees a belief in the complete loss of the image of God in the human being, meaning that humanity is powerless to do the good.²³ In Orthodox and Catholic doctrine, however, he sees a belief in the *weakening*, and not total loss, of human freedom. This difference could be a crucial difference in the basis of the theological anthropologies of Moltmann and Bulgakov. Moltmann supports the understanding that evil is introduced into the world through humanity. However, Moltmann’s Reformed background possibly influences his belief that humanity has little power to affect its own

²¹ Ibid., 183. Original emphasis.

²² Ibid., 163.

²³ Ibid., 190.

destiny.²⁴ Humanity must look to God for redemption in the end times. Bulgakov believes that God's intention in creation is to create free hypostatic beings in God's image and that all possibilities are placed into that creation. God not only foresees the possibility of the Fall, God institutes the economy of salvation in the very beginning. In other words, humanity's task remains unchanged and the possibility of completing this task is ensured in the divine plan. For Bulgakov, in creation God 'gives everything for the deification of the world and its salvation; there is nothing that is not given.'²⁵ The Fall is not determined, according to Bulgakov, yet God's offer of salvation is rooted in the very act of creation and God's plan is ready for such a possibility.²⁶ The divine plan entails the incarnation of the Logos into a human person, forming the ultimate divine/human union.

The Incarnation

Christ's incarnation is pre-eternally predestined, and would have occurred regardless of the Fall because it is necessary for the final outcome, '*so that he may gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth* (Eph. 1: 10).'²⁷ Because of the Fall, the incarnation gains a soteriological purpose but remains pre-destined, decided before the foundations of the world. Christ's incarnation is an integral part of God's plan, which has the goal of reconciliation of the world to God's self, but with human freedom and out of God's love. God gives everything to the world for this, but it is up to humanity to fulfil its own destiny. As well as this, it is

²⁴ For a synopsis of the power of sin that is a fundamental of Moltmann's Reformed thought see, for example, Lyle Dabney, *Jürgen Moltmann and John Wesley's Third Article* (Wesley Center for Applied Theology, 2009 [cited March 2 2009]); available from http://wesley.nnu.edu/wesleyan_theology/theojrnl/26-30/29-09.htm.

²⁵ Bulgakov, *Lamb of God*, 171-2.

²⁶ For this idea, see *Ibid.*, 171.

²⁷ Pavel Igunnov, "Christology: On the Development of the Ontological Meaning of the Divine Incarnation in the Theology of Archpriest Sergy Bulgakov," *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* 10 (1989): 67. Cf. Eph. 1:10. Original emphasis.

not possible to imagine that a God of love would set an unattainable goal before the creation of God's own making. For these reasons, the effects of evil can never be stronger than the good.

Bulgakov distinguishes between original sin (ἁμαρτημα, *hamartāma*) and personal sin (παράπτωμα, *paraptōmata*). Original sin is the consequence of the Fall and affects the very fabric of existence. It is an hereditary illness that affects all. Personal sin arises after the Fall. It is the empirical or historical expression of individual existence after the expulsion from Eden. Each person by agreeing to enter the world affected by the Fall becomes a personal expression of sin, in varying modes and intensity.²⁸ Thus, the whole is affected because each person is a part of the Adamic prototype. The power of original sin is overcome by Christ's deed on Golgotha. It is 'completely, ontologically wiped away by the new Adam, whereas [personal sin] is a living bridge between the old Adam and the new Adam in the acquisition of the gift of redemption by human freedom.'²⁹ This bridge is to be understood in the sense of the *place* of transformation from one state to another. This bridge is Sophia.³⁰ Once again, this is not a dualistic model. As Pavel Igumnov explains, 'There is no need for any ontological bridge between the Creator and creation because Christ is "the deepest foundation, the most intimate essence of man"; He has become absolutely immanent to man and, through him, to the world.'³¹

Christ restores the balance between God and Sophia. But, for Bulgakov, God does not do anything that is against the natural working of the world. The world is a whole. The original sin of the old Adam has a quantitative

²⁸ Bulgakov, *Bride*, 184.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 188. Cf. 1 Cor. 15: 45: "'The first man, Adam, became a living being;' the last Adam became a life-giving spirit."

³⁰ For Sophia as ontological bridge, see Bulgakov, *Lamb of God*, 220.

³¹ Igumnov, "Christology," 66. Additional quote from Bulgakov, *Filosofiya Khozyaistva* (Philosophy of Economy), Moscow, 1912, 339.

influence on humanity's freedom, for it multiplies its dependence on nature. This dependence on nature remains as well as the effects of personal sin. Because of this, there is still a historical process which humanity is working through towards its own freely accepted fullness in Christ, a process of assuming its sophian nature. Bulgakov writes, '[o]nly through a long and laborious process does [humanity] escape from this slavery.'³² Sophia is the living bridge which must be crossed towards freely chosen redemption. In the following section on sophian humanity, we will elaborate what this process entails.

To understand how Christ restores the balance between God and the world, we need to return to the concept of Divine-humanity, *Bogochelovechestvo*. Divine-humanity encompasses both the humanity of God, seen in the Logos as the Son of Man, and the divinity of the human being, made in God's image. The Logos is the proto-image of humanity, humanity's true image in God. The fact that the Word is made flesh should be, according to Bulgakov, accepted 'in the full measure of its content – theologically, cosmically, anthropologically, Christologically and soteriologically.'³³ In Bulgakov's assessment of patristic theology, he believes that the church fathers did not address what the human essence meant for the divine world.³⁴ The question was posed by Leontius of Byzantine and Pseudo-Dionysius and taken up by John of Damascus but remains a christological problem. How does the human essence of Jesus influence the divine essence?

For Bulgakov, the incarnation is not an action of God that is imposed upon the world. It is possible because of the identity between the Logos and humanity in both their natures and in their hypostatic being. The hypostasis

³² Bulgakov, *Bride*, 191.

³³ Bulgakov, in Igumnov, "Christology," 67. Original quote in Sergei Bulgakov, *Agnets Bozhii* (The Lamb of God), Paris, 1933, 195. This translation: Pavel Igumnov.

³⁴ Bulgakov, *Lamb of God*, 73.

of the Logos is 'the Divine Man.'³⁵ This means that humanity has its divine image in God: the Son of God is also the Son of Man.³⁶ The Logos is Humanity in God, and it is this identity between the Logos and created humanity that allows the Logos to incarnate hypostatically into a human person. Igumnov calls this an 'extremely original and unexpected conclusion.'³⁷ Valliere, however, says that it is 'seriousness' about the humanity of God that distinguishes Bulgakov's dogmatics from patristic dogmatics³⁸:

When Bulgakov postulates a world in God, he does not mean a world with the human or personal element filtered out [B]ogochelovechestvo, the eternal humanity of God [is the] profound link between divinity and humanity in the creation of human beings and in the incarnation 'signifies not just the divinity of human beings but also a kind of humanness (*chelovechnost'*) in God. God's world, or Sophia, is a humanized world.³⁹

It is the humanity of God that allows the Son to become 'the representative human being on earth.'⁴⁰ The Son's 'all-humanity in His proper hypostasis is directly analogous to Adam's all-humanity in his hypostasis.'⁴¹ This hypostasis is the Logos and the Logos incarnates into a human person to unite his nature with human nature, both hypostatically and naturally 'bringing with Himself His own divine life, or divine nature, into this entity.'⁴² This is the union of the two natures, human and divine in the one hypostasis.

³⁵ Bulgakov, in Igumnov, "Christology," 69. Original quote in Bulgakov, *Agnets Bozhii*, 137.

³⁶ Bulgakov connects these two names in his concept of Divine-humanity. See Bulgakov, *Wisdom*, 89.

³⁷ Igumnov, "Christology," 69.

³⁸ Valliere, *Modern Russian Theology*, 307.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 335-6.

⁴⁰ Bulgakov, *Wisdom*, 79.

⁴¹ Bulgakov, *Bride*, 187.

⁴² Bulgakov, in Igumnov, "Christology," 68. Original quote in Bulgakov, *Agnets Bozhii*, 222.

We have discussed previously the connection between the divine Sophia and the creaturely Sophia as the nature of God from which creation is formed (Chapter 4, 169). When assessed christologically, Bulgakov's presupposition is that there must be an ontological prerequisite for Christ's incarnation in the flesh. There must be an aptitude in the human being to receive the divine Word. Bulgakov states that the union of natures without separation 'presupposes their original conformity. And we discover this conformity in interpreting the two natures in Christ as the two forms of the one Wisdom of God.'⁴³ The divine nature of Christ and human nature are not 'alien' but 'two kinds of existence of the same Wisdom of God.'⁴⁴ Sophia is one nature in two modes: Christ unites his divine nature, the divine Sophia, with the corporeal Sophia of his human nature. By his hypostatic union, Christ restores the damaged nature of the creaturely Sophia to its original glory, and, as the first fruits (1 Cor. 15: 23), restores the possibility of humanity also being in right relationship with its nature. Human nature 'is healed by the Incarnation inwardly, organically, by a new creation of it, as it were, a creation that will be revealed in its power and glory beneath a "new heaven" on a "new earth."' ⁴⁵

It is the entire incarnation of Christ, including the death, resurrection and ascension, that heals and restores the image of God in humanity. Humanity has deviated from its image of God in the Fall by immersing itself into the soul and body of the world before it has the strength of spirit to incorporate them properly. The imbalance between spirit and body and soul means death enters the world. Christ's redemptive feat is the overcoming of the powers of death of the flesh, allowing, henceforth, the continuing

⁴³ Bulgakov, *Wisdom*, 95.

⁴⁴ Bulgakov, in Tataryn, "New Look," 334. Original quote in Sergius Bulgakov, "Social Teaching in Modern Russian Orthodox Theology," *Diakonia* 20, no. 3 (1986): 122.

⁴⁵ Bulgakov, *Holy Grail and Eucharist*, 58.

spiritualization of matter in the body. Bulgakov emphasizes the humanness, and yet universality, of Jesus Christ in this soteriological task. The new Adam must take on the form of the old Adam completely in order to restore it. Christ must fully incarnate into a human being, a person in a particular time and place. Christ lives a fully human life and his divine will is never used to overpower his human nature. He lives from the measure of his humanness. The struggle against the inertia of the flesh by the human Christ Jesus is, therefore, a real struggle. The temptations are real temptations, and received in the measure of his humanity, because the new Adam has to follow the path of the old Adam, working to conform his human will to the obedience of the Father. The sufferings and the feelings of forsakenness during the Passion are real experiences.

Bulgakov believes it is the principle of kenosis which underlies the whole ministry of Christ. Indeed, Paul Gavriilyuk demonstrates that kenoticism is central not only to Bulgakov's doctrine of creation, as we have seen, but also to his Christology and his trinitarian theology.⁴⁶ He believes that Bulgakov's contribution to kenotic theory has been a largely neglected aspect of his theology. For Bulgakov, Christ empties himself of his divine power and assumes the human form of Jesus. The divine in Christ never overpowers the human freedom or will of its human self but undertakes a voluntary self-limitation until the human essence is healed. Because of this self-limitation, Christ needs to be sent by the Father.⁴⁷ Thus, the Father is the determining principle in the entire ministry of the Son and the Spirit (who is also sent by the Father), and the principle of obedience is uppermost in redressing the initial disobedience of the first Adamic humanity. In the economy of

⁴⁶ See Paul L. Gavriilyuk, "The Kenotic Theology of Sergius Bulgakov," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 58 (2005): 251-69.

⁴⁷ Bulgakov, *Lamb of God*, 306.

salvation, Christ obeys his Father's will, accepting the path of incarnation which will lead towards the death on the cross.

For Bulgakov it is important that Christ, who Bulgakov calls the God-man (Богочеловекъ, *Bogocheloveke*⁴⁸), is neither God nor a human being but a complex hypostasis of both. This hypostasis is only possible because the Logos is the image of the heavenly human being. The Logos assumes the likeness of his creaturely form.⁴⁹ The ontological bridge that allows this to occur is, once again, Sophia. The two natures of Christ are two forms of the one Sophia. The creaturely Sophia, or human nature, is a likeness of its true image, the divine Sophia. Christ takes on the likeness of the human form but never loses his own divine image in the economy of salvation. Christ is two natures in one hypostasis. This hypostasis must feel like one person and enjoy a unity of life (единство жизни, *edinstvo zhizni*).⁵⁰ Bulgakov treads closely to a form of Apollinarianism by maintaining that the divine hypostasis of Christ replaces the human hypostasis in the one hypostasis of the God-man.⁵¹ However, this is not a violation of the human hypostasis because the human hypostasis of Adam is the creaturely form of the divine hypostasis of the Logos. Rowan Williams also points out that Bulgakov's insistence that there is a union of spirit and nature in the one person of Jesus Christ meets the formal conditions for human subjectivity in the God-man.⁵² Christ is both God *and* human.

⁴⁸ See Bulgakov, *Agnets Bozhii*, 205.

⁴⁹ On image and likeness, see Bulgakov, *Lamb of God*, 205. Christ assumes the likeness (*homoïomati*) of flesh, not flesh taken from Adam's fallen state.

⁵⁰ Bulgakov, *Agnets Bozhii*, 249.

⁵¹ Bulgakov, *Lamb of God*, 188. For Bulgakov's defence against Apollinarianism, see Bulgakov, *Agnets Bozhii*, 212-14. This has been excluded from the English translation in Bulgakov, *Lamb of God*.

⁵² See Williams, "'Lamb of God'," 171.

Bulgakov supports the 6th Ecumenical Council in its naming of two wills in Christ. He uses an analogy, picturing the divine and human wills woven together like two strands into a single rope. Thus, Christ as 'the single theanthropic person wills by a single act of will, even though this comes from a double source in his divine and human essences.'⁵³ Yet there is concurrently a process whereby the human will increasingly conforms to obedience of the divine will. In his human life, Christ is aware of his own divinity only 'to the extent that his human essence could receive and contain that divinity.'⁵⁴ Through kenosis there is a voluntary process of suppressing his divine will which allows this fully human experience. Christ, as God-man, 'co-lives, co-suffers, and is co-present'⁵⁵ with his humanity. As Aidan Nichols suggests, the life of a human being is a process of coming to consciousness of one's relation to the divine. So, too, the life of Jesus Christ is a process of coming to increasing consciousness of his divinity as the Son of God.⁵⁶

The passion of Christ is a testimony to the kenotic suppression of his divinity. Divinity is incompatible with sin and so Christ must completely empty himself of his divinity to take sin into his being. Christ takes upon himself the sin from the human essence that he has assumed.⁵⁷ The struggle of the flesh intensifies towards the end of his human life, witnessed in the events of Gethsemane and Golgotha. Yet the God-man is not just the human individuality of Jesus but also the New Adam. In the Passion, Christ experiences qualitative sin into his whole being. Because there is no ontological limitation to his being, Christ is the universal or cosmic

⁵³ Bulgakov, *Agnets Bozhii*, 274. Cited in Nichols, *Wisdom from Above*, 108.

⁵⁴ Nichols, *Wisdom from Above*, 105. Original emphasis.

⁵⁵ Bulgakov, *Lamb of God*, 348. "co-lives, co-suffers, co-present": со-живетъ, со-страждетъ, со-присутствуетъ (co-zhivet', co-strazhdet', co-prisutstvuet'), Bulgakov, *Agnets Bozhii*, 378.

⁵⁶ See Nichols, *Wisdom from Above*, 104.

⁵⁷ Bulgakov, *Lamb of God*, 352.

foundation of the human being (as microcosm) and takes all human conditions of suffering into his being.⁵⁸ In his sacrificial role, 'the God-man fully suffers the *equivalent* of the punishment for universal human sin.'⁵⁹ Therefore, since that time, anyone who approaches Christ in any time or place 'will experience and find in this sorrow [their] own sin experienced and redeemed by the sufferings of the God-Man.'⁶⁰ Because of Christ's assumption of sin into his being, this suffering is for all time: Christ still suffers today when anyone sins. Like Moltmann, Bulgakov also speaks of the suffering of the Father. It is love of the Father and the Son that is 'co-offered in sacrifice for the sin of the world and thus co-participates in the suffering of the cross.'⁶¹ The Father is part of the agony of the cross but the whole economy of salvation is necessary in this form so that sin could be overcome. Sin must be lived out in its human form and then destroyed. *How* sin is taken on remains a mystery.⁶² The mystery of the time between the death and resurrection of Christ is shrouded in this mystery. The divine cannot die but the divine and human work together in this time to overcome the death forces in the material human body.

One of the great insights of Christianity for Bulgakov is that it not only speaks of the salvation of the soul but also of the glorification of the body.⁶³ Christ is, above all, the Saviour of the body, expressed by Paul as the church (cf. Eph. 5: 23⁶⁴). Bulgakov rejects any position that opposes body and spirit. In the crucifixion, Christ's body, together with the blood and water from the piercing of his side, joins with the earth and gives an undying corporeality to

⁵⁸ Aidan Nichols also describes this universality in Nichols, *Wisdom from Above*, 94-5.

⁵⁹ Bulgakov, *Lamb of God*, 361.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 359.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 353.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 354.

⁶³ 'Christianity accords to the body a positive and absolute significance.' Bulgakov, "Unfading Light," 141. "Body": тѣлу (*telu*), Bulgakov, *Svet Neverchernii*, 248.

⁶⁴ "Christ is the head of the church, the body of which he is the Saviour." (Eph. 5: 23b)

the whole cosmos. The humanity of Christ 'invisibly lives in the world and is inwardly transfiguring the world toward a new heaven and a new earth.'⁶⁵ This connection makes the process of transmutation possible not only in the sacrament of communion but also in the body of the world. Through the Resurrection and Ascension, Christ abides in the earth 'essentially and really'⁶⁶ as the power of transformation. Christ's 'high priestly ministry is completed in heaven,'⁶⁷ in the Ascension. For Bulgakov, heaven *is* the created aspect of the Divine Sophia. When God creates heaven, this is 'the hypostasized ideas of creation, the heavenly "project" of the latter, which can be understood only with reference to the *world*, or the "earth."⁶⁸ Heaven is 'complete and self-sufficient,'⁶⁹ the model of the perfect earth. Christ reunites the bond between heaven and earth, between the creaturely Sophia with her ideal, divine form. Thus, Christ abides on earth and in heaven, holding the heavenly and earthly worlds together in his one Person.

Rosenthal comments that Bulgakov envisions 'the entire world as "one corporeality and one body." Whether this body is that of Sophia, or of Christ, or of both united at the end of time, is not clear.'⁷⁰ This is an interesting comment. Because of the fluidity of the sophiological enterprise any one of these three positions is possible. Christ is the prototype of Divine-humanity, and thus he can be understood as the body of the world. Sophia, however, is the content of the world, the words of the Word, the 'all-organism of ideas . . . pre-eternal Humanity.'⁷¹ As the content of creation,

⁶⁵ Bulgakov, *Holy Grail and Eucharist*, 45.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁶⁷ Bulgakov, *Comforter*, 256. For a thorough examination of this idea, see Bulgakov, *Lamb of God*, 388-400.

⁶⁸ Bulgakov, *Comforter*, 190. Original emphasis.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Rosenthal, "Nature and Function," 167.

⁷¹ Bulgakov, in Igumnov, "Christology," 69. Original quote in Bulgakov, *Agnets Bozhii*, 136. "Pre-eternal Humanity" is a concept taken from Soloviev's work.

Sophia can also be understood as the body of the world. Finally, body is not possible without spirit, so Christ together with his divine nature, Sophia, form the body of the world. Christ can be thought of as the head and Sophia as the body of Christ, his nature, his divine corporeality. As mentioned in Chapter 4 (p. 168), Hildegard pictured Christ within Sophia in her second vision, yet one can just as easily imagine Sophia within Christ. As Robert Slesinski suggests, such sophian polyvalency readily makes for confusion when trying to elucidate the relation between God and creation.⁷²

Nonetheless, in Bulgakov's concept of Divine-humanity he aims for a positive theology of the Chalcedonian Creed that acknowledges Christ in two natures, human and divine, 'without confusion, without change, without division, without separation.'⁷³ Divine-humanity is the humanity of God and the divine in humanity. However Christ and Sophia are imagined, Christ's deed restores the connection between the heavenly and earthly worlds, between the divine and the creaturely Sophia. Christ overcomes the power of original sin and restores the divine image in humanity. The incarnation 'was an act of the new and final creation of the world'⁷⁴ which had been harmed in its nature. Igumnov points out that it is the ontological principle that dominates over the moral one in Bulgakov's determinations on God's plan for salvation.⁷⁵ Humanity is a part of the being and becoming of the world. To fulfil this task, human beings need to become conscious co-workers with Christ, to conform to the human proto-image in Christ. Humanity begins, through a process in time, to reveal the world's sophianicity, the mystery and wisdom of the body. Each person is a part of

⁷² Slesinski, "Bulgakov on Sophia," 131-2.

⁷³ Stevenson, ed., *Creeds*, 351.

⁷⁴ Bulgakov, in Igumnov, "Christology," 66. Original: Bulgakov, *Svet Neverchernii*, 336. (Translation: P. Igumnov).

⁷⁵ See Igumnov, "Christology," 70.

this process, and each individual may be moved to hope by understanding the plan.

Sophian Humanity – Conforming to Christ

Humanity is on a path of revealing the world's sophianicity, the wisdom of creation. True wisdom is to be found in understanding the world around us, of what it means to conform to Christ, to be in Christ. The first part of wisdom is to understand what it means to be human. Humanity as a hypostasis of body, soul and spirit is given freedom. Our Adamic ancestors misunderstood the nature of creaturely freedom. Dominion does not mean having the knowledge and power of God. True freedom is 'divine-human cooperation.'⁷⁶ In the resurrection, Christ's human will conforms to the divine will, just as his human nature conforms to his divine nature. The world, the creaturely Sophia, reflects 'an established divine ordering'⁷⁷ and the goal of creation and humanity is 'cooperation with divinity or obedience to this fundamental inter-relatedness and dependence.'⁷⁸ This goal reflects the very premise of this dissertation: that there is a fundamental relationship between the human will to live and the world that supports it. Humanity is to follow Christ in Christ's complete transparency between will and nature, Sophia.

Humanity is a microcosm. For humanity, the outer world is intimately connected to our inner world. Although there has been a sundering, our goal is to overcome the separation until nature conforms to our wills, until our sophian nature is completely transparent. It is God's will for the world is that all possibilities of love are actualized. It is humanity that has the task to transform the world, to work with Christ's powers of transformation

⁷⁶ Tataryn, "New Look," 325.

⁷⁷ Ibid.: 327.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

within the world so that it truly reflects God's love. We learn to 'struggle with the world out of love for the world.'⁷⁹ We are not separate from the world. Humanity is reminded of the first principle of ecology: 'that all natural phenomena are ultimately interconnected.'⁸⁰ This interconnection is seen in the physical universe. Bulgakov uses the analogy of an organism to demonstrate interconnectedness:

The unity of the universe, the physical communism of being, means that, physically, everything finds itself in everything else, every atom is connected with the entire universe; or, if we compare the universe to an organism, we can say that everything enters into the makeup of the world body.⁸¹

Indeed, it is this unity and interconnection that enables transformation to take place on the level of cosmos right down to the atomic level. Every action, positive or negative, affects the world. Bulgakov sees the unity of the world as the ontological basis for synergism, the interaction of God with humanity.⁸² The perichoresis that is at the heart of the relationships between the three persons of the Trinity is the highest model for humanity. Perichoresis 'expresses the fullness and unity of that life, at once divine and human, which Christ now lives, and which is to be extended, in the final fulfilment, to the whole world, the whole of Divine-humanity.'⁸³ Humanity is destined for a fully conscious, perichoretic existence.

The complete content of the world, the words of the Word, has been given to creation by God. The cosmos is a "closed" system. God rested on the

⁷⁹ Sergei Bulgakov, "The Wisdom of God," in *A Bulgakov Anthology*, ed. James Pain and Nicolas Zernov (London: SPCK, 1976), 152.

⁸⁰ Leonardo Boff, *Holy Trinity, Perfect Community* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 2000), 16, cited in Graham Buxton, "A Perichoretic View of Creation: Approaching Biodiversity from the Perspectives of Trinitarian Theology and Contemporary Physics," *Interface: A Forum of Theology in the World* 7, no. 1 (2004): 111.

⁸¹ Bulgakov, *Philosophy*, 96.

⁸² Bulgakov, *Bride*, 202-4.

⁸³ Bulgakov, *Wisdom*, 94.

seventh day “from all the work that he had done in creation” (Gen. 2:3). The relationship between the heavenly and the earthly states is retained on this level and maintains a sense of unity. It is this unity that allows any transformation within the many forms of the world to take place and so add to Sophia’s transformation as a whole being. Difference is also preserved in this new world order. As in God, who is three distinct persons in one nature, so also in the world with a multi-unity of persons in nature. Union does not blur the distinction of difference. The world and humankind constitute ‘an organic symphony of diversity, which resounds both in the whole, in the world soul, and in every creature.’⁸⁴ As Thomas Aquinas suggests: ‘the whole universe together participates in the divine goodness more perfectly, and represents it better than any single creature whatever.’⁸⁵ Each part is necessary to make the perfect whole.

The notion of deification, the assimilation of all creatures to God, is an intrinsic part of Bulgakov’s theology. Anthony Baker proposes that Bulgakov (and Schelling) are unique in their revival of the traditional Christian doctrine of the path of transcendent perfection, or deification. Baker traces the history of this doctrine which he believes ended its tenure as a central position in theology with Nicholas of Cusa.⁸⁶ Bulgakov’s ontology of perfection allows both the divine to be active in the human and the human to be active in the divine in a divine/human *poesis*. Some correspondence can be found with Alfred North Whitehead’s process theology in which God creates an interdependent and interrelated world with all processes and potentialities built into the whole. Process thought

⁸⁴ Bulgakov, *Bride*, 440.

⁸⁵ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a.47.1. Cited in Denis Edwards, "The Diversity of Life and the Trinity," *Interface: A Forum for Theology and the World* 7 (2004): 97.

⁸⁶ See Anthony D. Baker, "Making Perfection: An Experiment in Theological Ontology" (University of Virginia, 2004), 112-52.

conceives of the world as an organic whole moving in a purposeful way towards the gaining of values thus taking 'the human experience of being mind and body and possessing creativity as a clue to the whole nature of reality.'⁸⁷ God "persuades" rather than coerces creatures with love, towards an ultimate goal of beauty and maximum satisfaction. God is at once transcendent and immanent, independent in God's primordial nature yet, because God also absorbs the effects of the world into God's self, God is also 'the fellow-sufferer who understands.'⁸⁸ Divine and human interact purposefully, yet, for Whitehead, becoming is understood by change and event rather than a metaphysical transformation of substance. Bulgakov's notion of deification shares the principle of the organic whole but includes a transformation of substance.

Humanity is an integral part of the cosmos but it is also unique in its freedom. With freedom comes a responsibility for one's way of being or becoming. For Bulgakov, "Wisdom has built her house." (Prov. 9: 1) 'Oikos, the Greek word for house, is the root word for economy. Bulgakov speaks of a sophic economy that is an ordering of the world, a creating out of the world. However, the nature of the world is both chaotic and ordered. The chaotic state of the empirical world is the result of a falling away from the sophic world in its complete and absolute harmony, where everything finds itself in everything else and ultimately in God.'⁸⁹ Humanity's task is to restore the Edenic harmony of the created world. In the nature of human creativity, human beings are not all-powerful, they cannot create out of nothing. Humanity must create out of the world. The full measure of

⁸⁷ Paul S. Fiddes, "Process Theology," in *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Modern Christian Thought*, ed. Alister E. McGrath (Oxford, England; Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1993), 473.

⁸⁸ Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, 2nd ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1967), 532. Cited in Fiddes, "Process Theology," 473.

⁸⁹ Bulgakov, *Philosophy*, 150.

human freedom in this sophic economy is found in following God's will, "thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Mt. 6: 10).⁹⁰ Freedom is found in love and love is only found in communion. This perception is echoed by John Zizioulas: 'it is communion that makes things be: nothing exists without it, not even God.'⁹¹ Bulgakov suggests that "self-love" is a contradiction in terms, and it is a symptom of isolation as well as blindness to the reality of the world's foundation of love.⁹²

This world is a human world. The responsibility for care of the world is in human hands. Notions of both dominion and anthropocentrism have been problematic in the way humanity's relationship to the world has been perceived and acted upon. However, both concepts can be reclaimed in a positive sense. Colin Gunton maintains that we 'should not be afraid to appropriate the notion of dominion . . . in terms of a re-establishing and perfecting of the dominion given to the first human creatures.'⁹³ Dominion does not mean domination. We live in a world of divine providence but the spiritual world does not have the hands to be the agents of re-creating. The creation, too, "waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God" (Rom. 8: 19). Paul links this revelation with "the redemption of our bodies" (Rom. 8: 23) and it is this transforming of body that is our task, a transforming of the world of matter into a spiritual body that is fully transparent to the spirit. Dominion signals a restoring of the balance in the world between humanity and nature, with responsibility residing in humanity. For Bulgakov,

⁹⁰ Cited in Bulgakov, *Bride*, 192.

⁹¹ John D. Zizioulas, *Being in Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1993). Cited in Edwards, "The Diversity of Life and the Trinity," 99.

⁹² Bulgakov examines "self-love" in contradistinction to God's love in Bulgakov, *Bride*, 156-7.

⁹³ Colin E. Gunton, *Christ and Creation* (Carlisle, California: Paternoster Press, 1992), 19.

[t]his body of ours is not separated or isolated from the world. Rather, it is connected with it, for the world is the peripheral body of man. This change is not a physical but a metaphysical act: the substance of the world is brought into a new state by the Holy Spirit.⁹⁴

The transfiguration of the world in the end time, achieved through the agency of the Spirit, will be addressed in the next chapter. However, it is important to note here humanity's role in the world. Humanity is part of a gradual transformation that works with the Spirit, moving forward to meet the end times.

Bulgakov's notion of a human-centred world is at odds with a modern worldview that sees humanity as just one more life form, neither more nor less important than any other. The first principle of the deep ecology movement, for example, states: '[t]he well-being and flourishing of human and nonhuman life on Earth have value in themselves (synonyms: intrinsic value, inherent value). These values are independent of the usefulness of the nonhuman world for human purposes.'⁹⁵ The fourth principle recommends a reduction of the human population so that nonhuman life can flourish. There is no denying that the balance in the natural world is seriously disturbed by human practices and most probably because human beings have measured the outer world in terms of its "usefulness." However, I do not imagine that Bulgakov would see the lessening of the human population as a solution. While supporting the principle of intrinsic worth for all of life, Bulgakov sees the outer world itself as an intrinsic part of the human being. The human problem is that we have forgotten our connection to the natural world. The growing environmental consciousness may at least point to a

⁹⁴ Bulgakov, *Bride*, 425.

⁹⁵ Arne Naess and George Sessions created 8 principles for deep ecology, see Arne Naess and George Sessions, *Foundation for Deep Ecology: Deep Ecology Platform* (2008 [cited December 12 2008]); available from <http://www.deepecology.org/platform.htm>.

remembering of some intrinsic truth of the connectedness of all, even if the suggestion of the world as human might still be viewed as negatively anthropomorphic to many.

Henryk Skolimowski comments that the modern idea of anti-anthropocentrism itself 'has been cherished unanalysed, and, therefore, has tended to be treated as a sacred cow.'⁹⁶ In fact, as he points out, we cannot move outside a human viewpoint, even if we endeavour to make claims on behalf of other species. Indeed, it is our humanity that allows us to do this: 'taking responsibility for all is (paradoxically) an expression of our anthropocentrism.'⁹⁷ In Bulgakov's sophiology, this is no paradox because the world *is* a part of humanity. The concept of a human-centred cosmos proposed by Bulgakov does not have to be viewed as a form of destructive anthropocentrism but can be understood positively in terms of humanity's responsibility for its own world. Human destiny and the natural world are conjoined, to be transfigured in their joint materiality, as espoused by the Orthodox doctrine of theosis. Biblical passages, such as Rom. 8: 18-25 and Col. 1: 15-20, intimate the link between humanity and nature. Although western commentators mostly hesitate at the principle of theosis, some within the area of environmental ethics have supposed that Christian humanism and an active care for the environment can be important partners.⁹⁸

For Bulgakov, human history is cosmic history. Evolution stands with history as part of the gradual transformation of the cosmos. As with Moltmann, history is a cosmic category, but Bulgakov views history as a

⁹⁶ Henryk Skolimowski, "The Dogma of Anti-Anthropocentrism and Ecophilosophy," *Environmental Ethics* 6, no. 3 (1984): 284.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*: 285.

⁹⁸ See, for example, Thomas Sieger Derr, *Environmental Ethics and Christian Humanism*, ed. Max L. Stackhouse, vol. 2, *Abingdon Press Studies in Christian Ethics and Economic Life* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989).

divine/human interaction, not just as Christ's history. For Bulgakov, 'the task of the cosmic and historical process is to expand the flame of life, so that it penetrates, warms, illuminates all of creation.'⁹⁹ History is part of the sophic process, part of divine providence in the world. Divine providence is also found in God's direct relation to humankind, attested to in the history of revelation.¹⁰⁰ This process is the ongoing sophianization of creation. The relationship of God to humankind is not an unnatural one, but part of the very fabric of the world. Bulgakov's vision is a positive one. In what Rosenthal calls a 'mystical version of Hegel's dialectic,'¹⁰¹ the world becomes a living organic whole through the direction of Sophia's providential guidance.

The world as cosmos and the empirical world, Sophia and humanity, maintain a living interaction . . . Sophia, partaking of the cosmic activity of the Logos, endows the world with divine forces, raises it from chaos to cosmos. Nature always perceives her reflection in man, just as man, despite his faults, always perceives his own reflection in Sophia. Through her he takes in and reflects in nature the wise rays of the divine Logos; through him nature becomes sophic.¹⁰²

Bulgakov's vision of the sophic world and humanity's place within it is a positive one. It is hopeful. Barbara Newman calls this a 'cosmic optimism.'¹⁰³ The question remains, does the world truly reflect the beneficence of a sophianic conception of the world? Celia Deane-Drummond wonders whether 'there is sufficient consideration given to evil present in the universe.'¹⁰⁴ It is a 'problem of reconciling the cosmism of sophiological faith with the anti-cosmic phenomena in the world, such as

⁹⁹ Bulgakov, *Philosophy*, 148.

¹⁰⁰ See Bulgakov, *Bride*, 201-4.

¹⁰¹ Rosenthal, "Nature and Function," 160.

¹⁰² Bulgakov, *Philosophy*, 145.

¹⁰³ Newman, "Bulgakov and Wisdom," 61.

¹⁰⁴ Deane-Drummond, "Sophia: Feminine Face of God," 18.

disorder, evil, sin and finitude.¹⁰⁵ Such reconciliation may be more difficult to achieve as we move into the 21st century yet this is a very important challenge. It is a matter of perspective, which may or may not be more distorted by the ready access to worldwide events presented to us by the media. Is the evil greater than the good? Bulgakov says “no,” and suggests that this is the basis of Christian faith: belief in the good. I suggest that the key word here is faith. Deane-Drummond mentions sophiological faith. Bulgakov lived in a time of revolution, war and exile. Despite this, or even because of it, his faith in God and Sophia was strong. Bulgakov’s favourite biblical phrase is “The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come.” And let everyone that hears say, “Come”...“Amen. Come, Lord Jesus” (Rev. 22: 17, 20).¹⁰⁶ Bulgakov’s hope for the future never wavered. The Bride is sophian humanity joined with the Spirit and waiting with joyful expectation for the consummate union with Christ.

Although the foundation of the world is good, this is not to suggest that there are no consequences for sins committed in Bulgakov’s understanding of theodicy. There are consequences yet sin may also be part of the road to love through repentance. In his sermon of the Last Judgment, Bulgakov intimates a direct relationship between God’s love, sin and forgiveness: ‘the greater the fall of the penitent, the heavier the sin, the greater the joy of [God’s] forgiving love, the greater the love itself...’¹⁰⁷ This points to an unfathomable paradox that the greater the evil committed the greater the possibility of repentance and love: “But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little.” (Lk. 7: 47). However, every person is a mixture of good and evil, and there are opportunities for repentance and pardon in this life, as

¹⁰⁵ Valliere, *Modern Russian Theology*, 263.

¹⁰⁶ For example, Bulgakov ends both *Bride* and his essay on the Holy Grail with this passage. See Bulgakov, *Bride*, 526. Bulgakov, *Holy Grail and Eucharist*, 61.

¹⁰⁷ Sergei Bulgakov, "Sermon for the Sunday of the Last Judgement," *Sourozh* 3 (1981): 1.

well as the end times. No one is completely good and no one can know how God sees us: we must guard against the arrogance that assumes we know when we are doing God's work (cf. Mt. 7: 22). Our highest aim, after loving God, is to love our neighbour. In the Last Judgment, according to Bulgakov, Christ

will not question us about a burden too heavy for us to bear, one which we cannot lift without the grace of God. He will ask us about our charitable deeds towards our neighbour, about our *willingness* to love, about our *desire* to love.¹⁰⁸

It is the intention that is important—even if we have not been able to love, if we have at least performed charitable deeds then the judgment will be less harsh. One does not have to be a Christian, of course, to do good deeds and to love one's neighbour but, according to Bulgakov, all deeds of love are done in the love of Christ whether one is aware of it or not. Every human being is held in the humanity of Christ.¹⁰⁹ If one has consciously encountered Christ in this life, however, there is a mandate to live consciously by faith, hope and love in Christ's name.

For Bulgakov, God's justice is inscribed into the very world: every thought and deed is recorded 'on the tables of our hearts and in the eternal memory of the world.'¹¹⁰ As we shall investigate more closely in the following chapter on eschatology, every person will have to address his or her actions, weighed up against the model of true humanity, Christ. Through the incarnation, Christ is present in the world and all eyes will be opened in the Last Judgment. Forgiveness cannot simply wipe away sinful deeds but the consequences will have to be faced. In his earlier theology Bulgakov

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.: 4-5.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.: 6.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.: 2.

considers that eternal damnation is a possibility.¹¹¹ The threat of hell, however, is not to create fear in us but is to be thought of in terms of love, as a call to repentance and to love one another in order to be worthy of eternal life. In his later theology, as discussed in the next chapter, Bulgakov rejects eternal damnation and presents the final judgment as a process of disclosure and purging all that cannot be reconciled to Christ, with all of humanity and the world eventually brought into the kingdom of God. The need for repentance in this life is not lessened in this theology—it will ease the purging process that all will experience.

Bulgakov's sophian worldview gives a purpose to humanity and a purpose to the world around us. It is Sophia who holds the world's memory. Humanity and the world are intimately connected to God through Sophia. Arguably, Bulgakov's whole sophiology is about how the God of creation maintains relationship with God's own creation. God does not create evil. God does not create the possibilities for good and evil: they arise within creatures. All humanity is created in love and this love is free: 'it is given and actualized by freedom.'¹¹² But creaturely love cannot be demanded. Creaturely love for God 'must be realized in time, in becoming. If divine love is unchanging and eternal, creaturely love is characterized by increase and decrease.'¹¹³ The world has a history because human beings have freedom, and the world is therefore a process in time. Humanity may still appear to be far from its goal but we can only "hope for what we do not see [and] we wait for it with patience" (Rom. 8: 25). Thus, Bulgakov retains his positive vision of the world:

Humanity is and always remains the unifying centre of the world in the eternal harmony and beauty of the cosmos created by God. The

¹¹¹ See, for example, from 1925, *Ibid.*: 2-3.

¹¹² Bulgakov, *Bride*, 156.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

empirical world is immersed in process, in time and space, in history, and as such is imperfect and disharmonious; yet, like humanity itself, it is never wholly separated from a higher metaphysical reality, from the divine Sophia that ever soars above the world, illuminating it through reason, through beauty, through . . . economy and culture.¹¹⁴

Conclusion

Bulgakov's faith in God gives him a positive referential and whatever happens in the world cannot undermine this. He does not address the issue of theodicy in any great detail because, in a sense, it is not an issue for him. Full theodicy will be revealed in the Parousia: God "will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more..." (Rev. 21: 4).¹¹⁵ Bulgakov experienced pain and suffering, the death of loved ones, revolution, exile and war. But for him this is a part of the human condition in process. It is a part of the blindness that entered the world with original sin. Original sin is the deviation of humanity from the path of union with God, but it is only a deviation, not an unredeemable end. Bulgakov does not consider this deviation as evil in intent, yet through humanity's wilfulness, evil enters the world and the balance between chaos and order is lost. Chaos dominates the forces of nature and overcomes the ability of humanity to govern and transform them. The natural world becomes a body of death. Yet all of this is a part of a much greater picture. In Bulgakov's worldview he presents a cosmic picture of the world which has its foundation in goodness. Nothing that happens in the world can overcome or defeat this ontological basis of the good.

Humanity is created to be the logos of the world, of the creaturely Sophia.

In the beginning, the world is a balance of chaos and order and humanity's

¹¹⁴ Bulgakov, *Philosophy*, 145.

¹¹⁵ See Bulgakov, *Bride*, 524. Bulgakov's eschatology will be addressed in the next chapter.

role is to transform the chaos into transparency in a process over time. The grace of God gives the unimaginable gift of freedom to humanity yet God also anticipates the possibility of original sin. Christ's incarnation is predestined, part of the salvific plan of the reconciliation of God with the world. The incarnation is possible because of the ontological similarity between divine and human nature, two forms of the one Sophia. Christ is Divine-humanity and in the incarnation Christ reunites the heavenly and earthly world in his one divine person. Christ becomes a real presence in the world, the first fruits of the new heaven and earth. Through the resurrection Christ overcomes the evil present in the world and redeems the Adamic prototype of humanity in its nature. Christ (and the Spirit) then accompanies humankind on its path of the continuing sophianization of the world, as the power of transformation of the body of the world.

Christ does not wipe away all sin. The personal sin that is empirically contained within Adamic humanity is the responsibility of each human being who transgresses. Because all human activity has an effect on the world, the world is still subject to the consequences of human sin. History is the process of the sophianization of the world but within this process is a working to redeem the sin of humanity. The darkness is strong but Christ is stronger. Most importantly, the goal given to humanity—to reveal all forms of God's love in the sophianicity of the cosmos—is within human capabilities. Hope is found in the bigger picture: in the goodness of creation

and in God's love. Bulgakov offers a picture of the interconnectedness of all within Sophia. Sin has its effect but all positive actions also have an effect. Love, harmony and beauty are stronger forces than hate, discord and cruelty. They have the power, together with Christ and the Spirit, of transformation. Humanity also works with the substances of the earth in a process of sacramental transmutation, preparing the world for the transfiguration of the end times.

The next and final chapter on Bulgakov's theology focuses on the role of the Holy Spirit. We have examined Bulgakov's model of the triune God in God's self and in creation. Sophia is God's divine nature given a temporal expression in creation as the creaturely Sophia. Christ and the Spirit work sophianically in creation, birthing the world in its reality and its entirety. Christ's incarnation into the world is the beginning of a new creation, that is, of a new possibility for a damaged creation. The sending of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost is an intrinsic part of this new creation. Christ and the Spirit now work hypostatically, out of their being, in creation, and this aspect will now be investigated. Like Moltmann, Bulgakov's theology is eschatological. It is faith in God and hope in the promise of the kingdom of God that strengthens and supports the Christian life at all times. Prayer for the indwelling of the Spirit, for inspiration, is a fundamental necessity in the new creation, which began at Pentecost. The Spirit is the being who conveys all that is beautiful and good to humanity and to the world. Consciousness

of the Spirit's place in the world as the Comforter is also an important part of Bulgakov's affirmative worldview. Christ and the Spirit have joined with creation and suffer with the whole of creation in absolute empathy.

Chapter 6 A theology of hope? The Spirit, Sophia and the future

Introduction

Bulgakov's vision of the sophic world and humanity's place within it is optimistic. This chapter will examine Bulgakov's vision for the future and how such optimism may be justified. It is interesting to note that the word "hope" rarely occurs in Bulgakov's extensive body of work and yet all his words are infused with optimism. He holds no doubts for the future kingdom of God when all will be in all. It is, above all, the work of and faith in the Holy Spirit, working with Christ, that engenders Bulgakov's optimism and this chapter will examine the Spirit's role in the cosmos. We have previously noted in Chapter 4 that the Spirit has a significant role in creation.¹ Bulgakov distinguishes between hypostatic and sophianic actions of the Spirit. The Spirit acts sophianically in creation to reveal the reality, life and beauty of Sophia. It is the Spirit who forms the body of the world, the creaturely Sophia, out of the divine Sophia, God's nature. The world is a spiritual body—body and spirit are not separate entities. Spirit, in this sophianic sense, is, as also noted, 'the union of an act of self-awareness, conscious independent existence, with the "nature" of which it is conscious.'² The body can be, in its highest form, an image and self-revelation of the spirit. In Chapter 5 we observed the effects of evil entering the world through the self-determination of the human being. The Fall brought about an unbalanced relationship between matter and spirit, and

¹ Chapter 4, 208.

² Williams, "'Lamb of God'," 165. See also Chapter 4, 210.

the purpose of the incarnation of Christ was to redress this imbalance, restore the image of Divine-humanity, and work with humanity in its role within cosmic evolution. It is through Christ that the Spirit also works in the world.

The Spirit has continued to act sophianically within the world since creation, but has a new role since the incarnation, which this chapter will examine. In this new role, the Spirit now acts hypostatically as the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity, in a dynamic union with Christ. The Spirit holds back from her fullness until the eschaton to allow humanity to fulfil its own role in creation as the spiritual hypostatic beings that will bring consciousness to the cosmos, to the creaturely Sophia. The Spirit, however, aids the human spirit with inspiration and continues her role in the sanctification of matter until the final glorification of the world.

For Bulgakov, the world is a mirror of the divine world.³ It is necessary, therefore, to understand what the divine world is so that humanity can more and more faithfully reflect the ideals within the divine world. In terms of this dissertation, such knowledge leads to empowerment and to hope. The more an individual feels that his or her life is important and integral to the world, the more positive and hopeful one is likely to be and the more able one is to work positively in the world.⁴ This chapter will examine the dynamics of the triune God more fully and particularly explore Bulgakov's pneumatology. Bulgakov suggests that pneumatology has been a problematic area in understanding the Spirit's divinity and relationship to the world ever since the beginnings of Christian theology. The church

³ Bulgakov, *Comforter*, 356. See also Chapter 4, 229, for humanity as a microcosm of divine world.

⁴ Research findings in the field of positive psychology support this relationship between hope and positive action. See, for example, David M. Buss, "The Evolution of Happiness," *American Psychologist* 55, no. 1 (2000), Barry Schwartz, "Self-Determination," *American Psychologist* 55, no. 1 (2000), Snyder, "Hope and Optimism."

fathers proclaimed Christ's equi-divinity within the Trinity so that an economy of salvation was possible. The Spirit's equi-divinity is also an important concept for the Spirit's salvific function in the world. Bulgakov distinguishes between the Spirit's actions within the immanent Trinity and within the economic Trinity to overcome some of the problems in historical pneumatology. The importance of the Spirit is manifold, not only because she is one of three persons of the Trinity but most importantly because she is the helper and healer of humankind. The Spirit has also joined with humanity in its pain and suffering and is the Comforter of humanity.

This chapter is in three sections. The first section considers Bulgakov's understanding of the place of the Spirit in the immanent Trinity. Bulgakov's defence of the equi-divinity of the Spirit leads to the Spirit's salvific capability in the economy of salvation. The second section concerns the Spirit's role in the economy of salvation, working with Christ and humanity in a new way since Pentecost. The final section looks at the anticipated future of humanity and the world, including the time of judgment and the eschatological end. The conclusion summarizes this pneumatology and eschatology but also places them in the context of Bulgakov's whole sophiological enterprise. With this completed picture of Bulgakov's worldview, I present my rationale for proposing Bulgakov's sophiology as a theology of hope.

The Place of the Spirit

Pneumatology has been a comparatively under-represented area in Christian theology although there has been renewed interest in the Spirit since the latter part of the twentieth century. Yet historical pneumatology, although modest, has had the power to change the face of the church. In particular, the *filioque* addition to the Nicene Creed in the 11th century contributed to the final split between the east and the west, and continues to be part of that

division. Vladimir Lossky asserts that ‘the question of the procession of the Holy Spirit has been (whether one likes it or not), the one dogmatic reason for the separation between East and West.’⁵ Bulgakov’s pneumatology proposes a new way of viewing the place of the Spirit both within the immanent God and within the economy of salvation. His proposal supports the equi-divinity of the Spirit in God, and steers a path away from what he sees as the subordinate tendencies inherent in most pneumatologies. The importance of this theology is that it places the Spirit within the Trinity as an intrinsic and essential Person and this, in turn, gives power and authority to the Spirit’s role in the salvation of the world.

For Bulgakov, the Spirit completes the perfection of the immanent God as one of the three persons of God. The immanent God is defined by its very trinitarian nature, by the ‘inner necessity and perfection of the number three.’⁶ God is not just three Persons, God is a world: not one, not two, but three. Or rather, because God is three, God is a world. Threeness does not mean three gods in one. Nor does three refer to a numerical property or to an order in the sense of first, second and third. Threeness means a trinitarian relationship between three distinct entities, that is, Persons or hypostases. There is no disjunctive or conjunctive “and” between the Persons. God is the interrelationship ‘which is trine and integral in all Its definitions.’⁷ The first hypostasis, the Father, is defined by relationship with *both* the Son *and* the Holy Spirit, and so also with the second and third hypostases. All ‘the hypostases are equally eternal, equally divine, and

⁵ Lossky, Vladimir, “La Procession du Saint Esprit dans la doctrine trinitaire orthodoxe,” (Paris, 1948); published in English in *In the Image and Likeness of God* (New York: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1984), 71-98. Cited in Boris Bobrinskoy, *The Mystery of the Trinity: Trinitarian Experience and Vision in the Biblical and Patristic Tradition*, trans. Anthony P. Gythiel (Crestwood, New York: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1999), 293.

⁶ Bulgakov, *Comforter*, 56.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 57.

equally important.⁸ This interrelationship is defined by perichoresis, by the circle of love that moves between them. Thus, God is 'three Persons, Who exist for us as such, Who are distinct in prayer, in life, in thought, but Who are never separated from one another and transformed into *three*.'⁹ Bulgakov sees a fundamental weakness in Cappadocian theology which, in its articulation of three hypostases united in one essence, tends towards an impersonalism in God. Because the three persons are united by nature alone God is 'only the divine *It*, not the trihypostatic *I*, the divine triunity.'¹⁰ However, this tendency can be countered by balancing 'a unity in nature, [with] a unity of Personhood, a trihypostatic One.'¹¹ There is a unity of personhood in God as well as a unity of nature, a three-centred union. Bulgakov, in his positive pneumatology, restores the Spirit as person to equi-divinity and personhood in the triune God.

Nor should the use of ordinal indicators – first, second and third – imply the subordination of the second and third person of the Trinity. Bulgakov suggests that it is the problem of the origin of the Son and the Spirit that has produced a theology which tends towards subordination not equi-divinity. For Bulgakov, each Person of the Trinity cannot be determined in terms of a beginning. Threeness in God is eternal. In a unique and brilliant argument, Bulgakov counters 1500 years of church dogmatics which has defined the Persons of the Trinity in terms of origin. He traces the history of trinitarian doctrine, from the early church to modern times, in an effort to understand the division between the eastern and western church. The *filioque* clause officially added to the Nicene Creed by the western church in the 11th century was an attempt to clarify the relationship between the three Persons

⁸ Ibid., 69.

⁹ Ibid., 55. Original emphasis.

¹⁰ Ibid., 32. Original emphasis.

¹¹ Delicata, "Comforter and Divine-Humanity," 7.

of the Trinity. What it did was divide east and west.¹² The east emphasized, and continues to emphasize, the monarchy of the Father. The Father is the cause of both the Son and the Spirit, who originate from the Father. The west emphasized, and continues to emphasize, the relationship of the Father and Son, and sees the Spirit as proceeding from the Father *and* the Son. For Bulgakov, however, *both* east and west have a problematic starting point. He believes the fundamental question of origin is misplaced. Origin and cause are only appropriate categories in the empirical world. In the Trinity's immanent world, the three Persons exist eternally and must be understood not on their origin, which does not exist, but on the basis of their concrete self-definition, that is, through their difference in unity.

According to Bulgakov, the difficulties of using origin as the starting point for establishing relationship within the trinitarian God have dogged Christianity since the fourth century. When Christianity became the state church of the Roman Empire, the emperor Constantine sought to establish doctrinal certainty. The councils of Nicaea in 325CE and of Constantinople in 381CE formulated the Nicene Creed, which became the "Symbol of Faith" for the Church. At stake was the divinity of both the Son and the Holy Spirit against interpretations which appeared to show the Son and/or the Spirit in subordinate positions to the Father. Subordinationism was seen to be a threat to the promise of salvation through the Son. The Creed, therefore, asserted the oneness of God in essence and the threefold equi-divinity of Father, Son and Spirit. The Creed states that the Son is begotten of the Father and the Spirit proceeds from the Father.¹³ Bulgakov claims that there

¹² There are many accounts of the *filioque* controversy. See, for example, Bobrinsky, *Mystery of the Trinity*, 279-94, Lukas Vischer, ed., *Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ: Ecumenical Reflections on the Filioque Controversy* (London, Geneva: SPCK, World Council of Churches, 1981).

¹³ For the Creeds of the Council of Chalcedon, see Norris, ed., *Christological Controversy*, 155-59.

appeared to be little argument at the time about these statements of relationship. The early church fathers obviously believed that these statements clarified the earlier Creed and were sufficient to show the equal divinity of the Son and the Spirit with the Father thus overcoming the various forms of subordinationism of the time. However, disagreements over subsequent theologies of the credal statements eventually sundered Christianity into east and west.

In Bulgakov's thought, as we have noted, the problem has its roots in interpreting the credal statements as statements of origin and this was already evident in the theology of fourth century. The idea of the Father as uncaused and the Son and Holy Spirit as caused from the Father has its beginnings in the thought of St Basil the Great.¹⁴ This idea was accepted uncritically by later theologians as self-evident whereas Bulgakov points out that 'there is no concept more difficult to understand.'¹⁵ It is causal origination which becomes the centre of dispute in the east-west polemics of the ninth century. The only question is whether the Spirit originates from the Father or the Son or both. The end result is the addition of the *filioque* clause to the Creed by the west in the 11th century. For the west, the Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son. For the east, the original creed suffices: the Spirit proceeds from the Father. The polemics surrounding the *filioque* are, however, much more than doctrinal struggles. With the fall of Byzantium and the rise of the papacy the *filioque* becomes representative of the power struggle between east and west. Despite a lack of a uniform patristic doctrine of the procession of the Holy Spirit, western and eastern

¹⁴ See, for example, Basil of Caesarea, *Against Eunomius*, beginning of Book 3. Basil understands that the Son and Spirit are equal to the Father in being and glory but subordinate in position.

¹⁵ Bulgakov, *Comforter*, 133.

interpretations become mutual grounds for heresy, which sees the final split within the church in the 12th century.

While Bulgakov goes into great detail with the intricacies of the historical debate,¹⁶ the important point for him remains that the *terms* for the debate are themselves the problem. The persons, or hypostases, of the Trinity do not originate but are eternal. Their trinitarian relationship is eternal also. The second important point that Bulgakov is making is that the three persons are not defined by their nature alone, that is, by their relationships to one another. The Father is not just the Father because of the Son's generation and the Spirit should not be defined only in as a procession from the Father (or to the Son as well in Catholic theology). Dyadic interrelationships are sundered by such monolithic definitions of Persons. Each Person has a relationship to the other two Persons as well as a trinitarian relationship.¹⁷ Bulgakov's point is that *procession* does not mean *production*. He detects a christocentric bias in western theology which allows it to understand the sending of the Spirit as originating in the Son. Instead, he posits an important binary relationship between the Son and the Spirit: 'the Church is the Body of Christ, living by the Holy Spirit.'¹⁸ Although there is, indeed, a biblical mandate for the sending of the Spirit, the actions of the second and third Persons still need to be held in dyadic equilibrium.

Boris Bobrinskoy points out that Bulgakov represents one of three positions on the *filioque* controversy in Orthodoxy.¹⁹ For Bulgakov there is no dogmatic basis for the *filioque* – it is a theologoumenon, an opinion only. He can see no grounds for the dispute, nor can he see any reason for the schism. A second Orthodox position maintains the absolute distinction between the

¹⁶ See *Ibid.*, 75-124.

¹⁷ See *Ibid.*, 128-9.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 132.

¹⁹ Bobrinskoy, *Mystery of the Trinity*, 291.

Orthodox and Catholic standpoints while a third position agrees that there is an important distinction yet seeks to elucidate a common aspect. Representing this third position, Bulgakov's contemporary, Vladimir Lossky, turns to Gregory Palamas' distinction between the essence and energies of God to clarify the problem. In terms of the economic Trinity, as Bulgakov also affirms, there is, in fact, no disagreement between east and west about the sending of the Spirit through the Son. For Lossky, this economic manifestation is made possible through God's energies. However, God's essence remains unknowable and incommunicable to creation.²⁰ If this distinction is maintained, then a creative opening into the *filioque* question is possible. In one sense, Bulgakov is making a similar point: God is not to be defined by God's economic manifestation. More recently, a dialogue between Orthodox and Catholic theologians has also acknowledged that there is no real impediment to reconciliation of the churches on the question of the *filioque*. One of the recommendations of the recent North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation is that 'Orthodox and Catholic theologians distinguish more clearly between the divinity and hypostatic identity of the Holy Spirit (which is a received dogma of our Churches) and the manner of the Spirit's origin, which still awaits full and final ecumenical resolution.'²¹ This is precisely Bulgakov's point some seventy years earlier! Following V. Bolotov, Bulgakov asserts that the *filioque* 'does not constitute an *impedimentum dirimens* (an obstacle that divides) for the reunification of the divided church.'²²

²⁰ Lossky, *Mystical Theology*, 70.

²¹ See recommendation 3 of the North American Orthodox-Catholic Consultation in *The Filioque: A Church-Dividing Issue?* October 25, 2003. Source: The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. <http://www.usccb.org/seia/filioque.shtml> (accessed November 3, 2008).

²² Bulgakov, *Comforter*, 130. V. Bolotov (1853-1900) was one of the founders of the school of Church history at the St. Petersburg Theological Academy.

Bulgakov's own distinction between the hypostatic and sophianic manifestations of the Spirit (apparently not taken into account in the more recent dialogue above) is an attempt to clarify the Spirit's identity both within the immanent God and within the economic Trinity. The importance of this pneumatology, and the reason that the *filioque* has remained a contentious issue, is that the Spirit is shown to have equi-divinity in the triune God, and therefore, an efficacious and salvific place in the economy of salvation. The following section examines Bulgakov's positive theology of the Spirit. Because of the one-sided focus on the *filioque* Bulgakov believes that no positive theology of the Holy Spirit has arisen in the whole 1500 years of pneumatology. This has led to a 'spiritual vacuum'²³ in both east and west. Nadia Delicata suggests that the result of this vacuum is a modern wave of Christianity 'that seeks a naïve return to the primitive Church, to a Christianity before orthodoxy, before structure, even before liturgy – quite simply, a return to Pentecost.'²⁴ Bulgakov's response to this vacuum is also a return to Pentecost, yet one that is theologically both constructive and instructive. He prefigures the renewed interest in pneumatology of recent years, and offers his own theologoumenon, based on the hypostatic identity of the Holy Spirit in her economic manifestation to the world.

The Work of the Spirit

The difficulties in understanding the hypostatic identity of the Holy Spirit begin with the fluidity of the word "spirit" in the Bible. For Bulgakov there is a difference between *spirit*, the *spirit of God* and the *Holy Spirit*. The first term, *spirit*, refers to the nature of the whole Trinity, of God and therefore refers to the spiritual nature of the whole Trinity: the Father is spirit, the Son

²³ Delicata, "Comforter and Divine-Humanity," 3.

²⁴ Ibid.

is spirit, the Spirit is spirit. Indeed, this is another argument in favour of divine unity in nature as personal. We have noted that in the created world, spirit needs a hypostasis for personal consciousness and a nature for self-revelation.²⁵ God's nature is love so, by analogy, Delicata maintains that 'we can confidently posit that God is not only Persons/Person who is/are self-conscious, but that love is the being of God and God's self-revelation.'²⁶ God is love and love is relationship therefore God must always be constituted by 'community and not monism, even in God's uniqueness as the divine absolute subject.'²⁷ The difference in Trinity exists because 'love requires mutuality and distinctiveness: hence each hypostasis loves differently, loves particularly, and the divine Persons are not interchangeable.'²⁸ It is here that threeness is shown in both its perfection and its necessity. For the Father and Son to have a relationship and still be hypostatic there must be something "other" than these two Persons. This something is the Holy Spirit. This is what Bulgakov means by the determination of the Trinity by definition and not by cause. The Father is the Father because he is the 'image of Paternal sacrificial love.'²⁹ The Son is the image of this sacrificial love, the kenotic love of the Father. The Spirit is Love itself, revealing the very nature and content of the Father-Son relationship. The primary role of the Holy Spirit within the triune God is as the hypostatic love of the Father and Son. In this way, hypostasis and ousia, or nature, acquire a completely transparent and self-revelatory character. They are not the same but in the Absolute God there is 'no extrahypostatic nature and no extranatural hypostatizedness.'³⁰ It is only in this economic relationship that ordinal

²⁵ See also, Bulgakov, *Comforter*, 61.

²⁶ Delicata, "Comforter and Divine-Humanity," 9.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.: 10.

²⁹ Bulgakov, *Comforter*, 138.

³⁰ Ibid., 65.

numbers apply. The Father is the first hypostasis because he is the source. The Son is the second hypostasis because he is the revelation of the Father. The Holy Spirit completes the self-revelation of God as the one who reveals. All three hypostases are absolutely necessary in this revelation and, although there is an order in process and completion, “third” does not mean lesser than “first” or “second.” Each Person and each relationship is essential for the sharing of love, therefore threeness also is essential for love. Love and spirit, in turn, are the essence of the triune God.

The other biblical terms mentioned, the *spirit of God* and the *Holy Spirit*, are, according to Bulgakov, both terms that refer to the third person of the Trinity. The spirit of God is a term used in the Hebrew Bible and Bulgakov understands this to refer mainly to the sophianic work of the Holy Spirit. In contrast, the hypostatic manifestation of the Holy Spirit indicates a new relationship to the world ushered in with Christ’s incarnation. Thus, Bulgakov divides the work of the Holy Spirit into a sophianic and a hypostatic manifestation, paralleled by how the Spirit is spoken about in the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament. The sophianic aspect, previously summarized in Chapter 5, is the Spirit’s work in bringing reality, life and beauty to creation, and the Spirit here is referred to as the spirit of God. This is the Spirit’s sophianic and non-hypostatic work in creation. When the spirit of God sweeps “over the face of the waters” (Gen. 1: 2), this symbolically describes the initial action of the Holy Spirit in bringing form out of the nothing, out of Sophia. The divine Sophia is the spiritual principle of God yet she has also been given a certain autonomy as the creaturely Sophia. The connection of the Holy Spirit to creation is as the manifesting and revealing Spirit of creation. The Holy Spirit does not incarnate, as it were, into creation, but works sophianically, to use Bulgakov’s terminology. The Spirit works both within the triune God and “outside” God in creation. Thus, ‘the *direct* revelation of the hypostatic God

to creatures, of the divine Sophia to creation, is an action of the Holy Spirit (“grace”); and this revelation has as its content the Word, Who in Himself shows the Father.’³¹ This is Bulgakov’s trinitarian doctrine of creation. Bulgakov calls the Holy Spirit’s part in creation “natural grace.” The natural grace of the Holy Spirit constitutes the foundation of the being of creation and ‘exists in the very *flesh* of the world, in the matter of the world.’³² The spiritual basis of creation is the precondition for its sanctification.

The Spirit’s relationship with creation since the beginning is a kind of kenosis, signifying a certain “holding back” and marked by the relative incompleteness of a world in becoming. The Spirit gives life and form to creation but allows for a creative process within creation that will move in time until the final transfiguration. The Spirit also accompanies the path of humankind, and the Spirit’s presence is noted in some texts of the Hebrew Bible, usually in reference to the prophets and in relationship to God as the spirit of God (for example, Num. 24:2; Mic. 3:8; Ezek. 39:29). For Bulgakov, the gifts of the Spirit accompany Israel as part of an economy of salvation for all humankind. Israel is the source of Mary, the “mother of God”, but he notes that the universal nature of salvation is ‘perfectly clear from the historical and prophetic books of the Old Testament.’³³

For Bulgakov, the trinitarian nature of God is not obvious in the Hebrew Bible because the Son and the Spirit are working sophianically not hypostatically. Bulgakov detects veiled allusions to the Trinity, and thus the identity of the Holy Spirit, in the Hebrew Bible, but it is only in the New Testament that ‘we have a clear revelation of the Holy Trinity and of Its three distinct hypostases: the incarnate Son revealed together with Himself

³¹ Ibid., 155. Original emphasis.

³² Ibid., 220.

³³ Ibid., 233.

also the Father, as well as the Holy Spirit as the hypostatic Paternal love reposing upon Him.³⁴ The New Testament is testament to the new, hypostatic working of the Holy Spirit, signified in part by the new reference to the spirit of God as the Holy Spirit. Bulgakov sees the best pneumatology within St John's gospel. The prologue is a witness to the triune God and to the Spirit's work in creation and also to the Spirit's connection to the Word. The "life" of the Word is a reference to the Spirit as is the glory beheld in the Word. "In him was life; and the life was the light of humanity." (Jn. 1: 4) The life and the light are the Spirit. "And we beheld his glory." (Jn. 1: 14) The glory of the Word is no less than the Holy Spirit. This is confirmed in the baptism when the Spirit descends from heaven (Jn. 1: 32) and gives the Word the power to baptize with the Holy Spirit (Jn. 1: 33). For Bulgakov, then, the prologue is not just about the second hypostasis, the Word, but attests to the whole Trinity and includes its own pneumatology, although this 'is expressed almost tacitly, in a mere breath, as it were.'³⁵

This condensed theology of the Prologue is a witness to the economic role of the Holy Spirit in both creation and in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. With the incarnation, the Holy Spirit embarks upon a new hypostatic relationship with creation, and this can be seen in the more overtly trinitarian descriptions of God in the New Testament. The Spirit accompanies the life of Jesus from the annunciation through to the baptism. With the baptism the Spirit descends onto Jesus. For Bulgakov, this Dyad of Word and Spirit has been inseparable in their work since creation but here it forms a new relationship. It is only through the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus that the dual relationship of the Word to the Spirit becomes a Pentecost

³⁴ Ibid., 159. Bulgakov interprets some Hebrew Bible texts for their reference to one of the three persons through the lens of the New Testament; for example, Gen. 6: 3; Isa. 6: 3; Ps. 2: 7; Ps. 110:1-4.

³⁵ Ibid., 162.

available to the whole of the creation. Jesus Christ sends another Comforter to humankind and creation. The Father, distanced from creation through the Fall, is now brought to a new relationship with creation by the Son and the Spirit working together. The Spirit continues to work kenotically within creation but now also joins *hypostatically* with the evolution of the cosmos towards the end times. The Spirit continues its kenosis post-resurrection, in its “holding back” from the final transfiguration but through the Ascension of Christ the Spirit has a new hypostatic relationship to the world. Because Christ joins his own destiny with the evolution of humankind, in the redeeming of the old Adam, so, too, must the Spirit. Christ “sends” the Spirit to humankind at the completion of the Ascension process, that is, at Pentecost. The union of Christ and the Spirit with the divine Sophia is the restoration of the complete archetype for humanity, that is, Divine-humanity’s archetype or prototype in the divine Sophia. Jesus Christ is the “first fruits” of the new creation, the union of the divine and human natures, the union of the creaturely and divine Sophia. The first fruits requires the union of the Spirit with Christ in creation. Thus, the Spirit is sent to work dyadically within the cosmos with Christ. The union then gives humanity the power to work towards its true image in God.

We have noted that the material world has a spiritual basis. The fulfilment of matter’s receptivity to spirit is ‘the creaturely descent of the Spirit, Her kenosis in creation.’³⁶ We have addressed the economic work of the Logos in the world in the previous chapter. This picture remains incomplete without the complementary work of the Spirit. The Logos and the Spirit work as an inseparable Dyad.

³⁶ Ibid., 221.

What is radical in Bulgakov's pneumatology is the Spirit's mutual descent with the Logos in the economic working of the Trinity. Fullness is in the world but only 'the *measure* proper to unfullness, which is inevitable for creation with its "evolution" and growth.'³⁷ This is the free work of humanity. The opposition between spiritual and natural man (as expressed, for example, in Rom. 8: 1) is overcome by Christ: 'In the Pentecost, Christ's humanity becomes a reality by the Holy Spirit.'³⁸ The Spirit's descent 'unites heaven with earth, erects a ladder between them.'³⁹ The Spirit of creation is united with the hypostatic Holy Spirit in Christ. This shift in the dyadic working of the Christ and the Spirit is revealed in the New Testament by the fact that sanctification is sometimes shown to be an action by the Spirit (for example, Rom. 15: 16; 1 Cor. 6: 11, 2 Thess. 2: 13) and sometimes by Christ (for example, 1 Cor. 1: 30; Eph. 5: 26; Heb. 2: 11). For Bulgakov, this demonstrates their inseparable unity.

The primary importance of this positive pneumatology is revealed when we return to Bulgakov's proposal that the world is a mirror of the divine world. As we have noted, Bulgakov first champions the position of the Holy Spirit within the Trinity as equi-divine, dialoguing with, in his view, 1500 years of problematic pneumatology. The divine world is seen to be perfect in its threeness. This threefold relationship is then given as the supreme example for the creaturely world, where humanity is given the opportunity to come into right relationship with its own human world. This is the divine relationship of love, a mirror of the relationship of love within the triune God. Threeness is an important process which the world is only just beginning to understand and reflect. Dualistic thinking deals in opposites: black/white, hot/cold, high/low, male/female, objective/subjective, and so

³⁷ Ibid., 220.

³⁸ Ibid., 298.

³⁹ Ibid., 255.

on. Theological oppositions also arise from this thinking—body/spirit, heaven/earth, apophatic/kataphatic—made even more problematic by the privileging of one side of the opposition, heaven and spirit as superior to earth and body, for example. Triadic thinking, on the other hand, adds an important place of transformation, a place of the in between. The world is, indeed, made up of heaven and earth but heaven and earth are not opposites. Heaven contains the ideal prototypes of earth. The world is in a process of evolution or transformation. Transformation understands the “lesser” to be part of the “greater.” Earth is an aspect of heaven, and body is a part of spirit. In a sense, there has been a sundering of heaven and earth and body and spirit but there is no possibility of a real sundering from God. Sophian theory embraces wholeness and the creaturely Sophia is the place of the in between, the place where apparent dualities meet.

Bulgakov rejects what he sees as the neo-Kantian distinction of subject and object in western philosophy. He turns to Friedrich Schelling’s *Naturphilosophie*, with its ‘identity of subject and object and the understanding of nature as a living, growing organism.’⁴⁰ Bulgakov rejects the subjective idealism formulated by Kant and developed further by Johann Fichte because of their absolute subject/object distinction.⁴¹ According to Bulgakov, in Fichte’s system of the *Ich-philosophie*, ‘the world becomes merely the boundary of the I, is posited as *non-I*, and in this sense is the creation of the I.’⁴² In this self-assertion of the subject against the world, Bulgakov finds no mutual relations *between* subject and object. He sees delusions of grandeur in such a human-centred epistemology and wants to broaden the determination of the subject ‘beyond the boundaries of

⁴⁰ Bulgakov, *Philosophy*, 83.

⁴¹ For Bulgakov’s critique of Kant and Fichte, see *Ibid.*, 78-85.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 81. See, for example, J. G. Fichte, "Grundlage Der Gesamten Wissenschaftslehre (Foundations of a General Theory of Science)," *Werke* 1, no. Berlin reprint, 1971 (1794).

immanent consciousness.⁴³ He turns to Schelling's philosophical theory of identity to explain how the subject/object distinction is a phase in an evolution of the world and human consciousness. Schelling writes: 'Nature must be the visible spirit, and the spirit must be invisible nature. Thus the problem of how nature is possible outside ourselves is resolved here, in the absolute identity of the spirit within us and nature outside of us.'⁴⁴ The two poles of subject/object or nature/spirit are in reality part of a primordial unity so that any distinction made is relative and 'comes about in the process of nature's self-development and self-definition.'⁴⁵ This nature philosophy means that there is an intimate relationship between the human spirit and the world of nature. In Bulgakov's terminology they form the one Sophia and allow the possibility of the in between.

The in between is a place of transformation but it can also be a place of balance between dichotomies. What becomes important is recognizing the place of the in between and finding the balance. The Buddhist practice of the middle path has this understanding of equanimity. Hans-Werner Schroeder, a Christian Community priest, talks of "necessary evil," and of the need to find the balance between the two extremes of evil. Evil has two faces, not one. One aspect of evil would like to pull us away from our work in and with the world. This is the platonic concept of the earth as bad and all bodily parts and functions of the human person as inferior or evil. This "luciferic" thinking has influenced Christianity in damning sexuality and any enjoyment in the world itself. The other aspect of evil would like to draw us into the world too much. This is materialistic, "satanic" thinking that tells us that the earth is all there is, with no place for spirit. Schroeder

⁴³ Bulgakov, *Philosophy*, 85.

⁴⁴ In *Ibid.* Original reference: Friedrich Schelling, "Ideen Zur Philosophie Der Natur (Towards a Philosophy of Nature)," *Werke* 1 (1979): 152.

⁴⁵ Bulgakov, *Philosophy*, 86.

points out that good is the middle path between the two types of evil: 'There are two characteristically different errors and temptations that threaten us, between which we must constantly find our way.'⁴⁶ The middle path treads the way between the two extremes. Already Aristotle in the *Nichomachian Ethics* (2.2) shows that virtue is the middle point between two aberrations. A proper sense of self 'holds the middle ground between arrogance and self-disparagement; a healthy emotional state between effusive warmth and cold heartedness,'⁴⁷ and so on. For Schroeder, the two extremes are necessary because we come to selfhood through the oppositions and dichotomies of the world.

Bulgakov, too, understands the "necessity" of evil. The snake in the Garden of Eden 'is a symbol of divine tolerance and patience toward evil, whose arena of action is God's creation.'⁴⁸ In creation, 'each positive form of being is opposed by an anti-form.'⁴⁹ The creative tension that arises is that same arena where the human being 'realizes the possibilities of tasks proper to him, his latent and slumbering word.'⁵⁰ The domain of creativity is within the sphere of possibilities within the divine Sophia. It is not mere repetition. This, too, is made possible through inspiration from the world around us, the creaturely Sophia. Through working in the world, the human being 'feels himself to be one with the world soul; in him is awakened the "cosmic sense" of world unity.'⁵¹ In this work resides the possibility of transformation where the oppositions of creation are transformed into a new creation. Catherine Evtuhov describes this transformation as Bulgakov's

⁴⁶ Hans-Werner Schroeder, *Necessary Evil: Origins and Purposes*, trans. James H. Hinds (Edinburgh: Floris Books, 2005), 18.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁴⁸ Bulgakov, *Comforter*, 206.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 209.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 213.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

“spirit of synthesis,” where the natural world is transformed into a new cultural world.⁵² The basis of this transformation (or re-creation) is based on the ideals present in Sophia, the Divine Wisdom. Here Bulgakov challenges both Nietzsche and Kant. As Evtuhov describes, ‘human creativity is not a result of chance, manipulated by a superman, nor is it the “nothing, creating from nothing” implicit in Kant’s fictive epistemological subject.’⁵³ Human creativity works towards the proper or ideal forms in Sophia, each of which has a negative form. The anti-form can thus be seen as a “necessary evil.”

Another challenge to dualistic thinking is found in postmodernism, resulting, however, in an opposite yet equally problematic equation. Instead of either/or, there is neither/nor. The subject/object dichotomy founders because the subject can never be fully removed from the environment. In other words, our position can only be subjective because we are framed by our own point of reference. In the thought of philosopher Michel Foucault, the postmodern subject is powerless to remove him or herself from his or her own discourse and is “constructed” from societal discourse. Discourse is not ‘the majestically unfolding manifestation of a thinking, knowing, speaking subject, but, on the contrary, a totality, in which the dispersion of the subject and [his/her] discontinuity with [himself/herself] may be determined.’⁵⁴ The discourses created within each historical time and place are the only framework of existence and one cannot get beyond discourse—there is no transcendent subject, no God, not even a psychologically distinct subject. Applied to scientific experimentation the same thinking challenges the “objective” observer. Thomas Kuhn demonstrates that science is not objective but has an historical context which depends on the acceptance or

⁵² Evtuhov, *Cross & Sickle*, 177.

⁵³ Ibid. See Bulgakov, *Philosophy*, 127-29,38-41.

⁵⁴ Michel Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 60. See also

rejection of the paradigms of the day.⁵⁵ The “observer effect” also considers the possibility that the act of observing makes on the phenomenon being observed.

The postmodern challenge is an extreme position on the power and authority of the individual yet perhaps it offers a healthy corrective to the modern (that is, Enlightenment) subject. The modern subject was defined by its distinction from the environment and for its selfhood, Descartes’ “I think, therefore I am.” The postmodern idea that the subject is completely proscribed by its environment can be taken to an extreme position where the human subject is powerless to effect any change. However, more recent applications of this thinking has a less negative connotation. From a theological or ecological stance we may recognize that we are completely part of the world. We are not separate from the world. Martin Buber would agree. His understanding of humanity’s task and destiny in the world has been summarized ‘as the realisation of [a person’s] true humanity in terms of genuine relation.’⁵⁶ Treating the world as the other, the *It*, makes a life in the spirit impossible. Spirit is ‘not in the *I*, but between *I* and *Thou*.’⁵⁷ However, both Buber and Bulgakov recognize the process that is symbolized by “the knowledge of good and evil.” Although the boundary between subject and object is fluid, there is still a distinction between persons or between person and world. For Buber, the oppositions inherent in existence have the purpose of human soul transformation, by bringing humanity to self-awareness and then to the greater awareness of the divine Thou.⁵⁸ For

⁵⁵ Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 3rd ed. (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

⁵⁶ R. G. Smith, *Martin Buber* (London: Carey Kingsgate Press Ltd, 1966), 15.

⁵⁷ Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, trans. Ronald Gregory Smith, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1959), 39.

⁵⁸ Martin Buber, *Good and Evil*, trans. Ronald Gregory Smith Michael Bullock (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952), 87.

Bulgakov, as we have noted above, the subject/object distinction remains as a process of cultural transformation until there is, as Evtuhov describes it, a 'supreme synthesis of consciousness and being, the ideal and the real.'⁵⁹

In this synthesis of the real and unreal Bulgakov follows Soloviev in his understanding of the justification of the good through a threefold expression of love. If the human being is the middle place of transformation there is an ascending love whose object is God, an equalising love between human beings, and a descending love that acts upon material nature, bringing all within the fullness of the absolute good.⁶⁰

Bulgakov's natural theology supports some of the more recent scientific challenges to atomistic thinking. The natural world, with its own patterns and cycles and events, has been understood as seemingly independently of the human world, and thus objectified. There is, however, growing evidence that this is not the case. Humanity affects the natural world with its collective actions, perhaps even in its unconsciousness. Humanity's actions also appear to be affecting climate change. The problem may lie in this sense of isolation that humanity has from the natural world—the world has been understood as "other." Bulgakov's sophiology challenges this thinking but in present times a growing shift of consciousness in diverse disciplines is also challenging this understanding. David Bohm's quantum theory of the implicate order, for example, suggests that reality is an undivided wholeness.⁶¹ From a philosophical reading of quantum physics, he proposes that humanity's problematic and destructive sense of separation and otherness is a result of the failure to perceive this reality. If the self is experienced as separate then it works to maintain its distinction in relation to

⁵⁹ Evtuhov, *Cross & Sickle*, 135.

⁶⁰ See Soloviev, *Justification of the Good*, 474.

⁶¹ See, for example, David Bohm, *Wholeness and the Implicate Order* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), Introduction.

what is outside of it, be it another person, a group, nature, and so on. Bohm considers that this mode of thinking leads to 'the widespread and pervasive distinctions between people (race, nation, family, profession, etc., etc.) which are now preventing [hu]mankind from working together for the common good.'⁶²

It is more than likely that the problem, then, lies in our understanding, in our failure to perceive the place of humanity in the world, either in the modern and pre-modern understanding of dichotomies or in the postmodern loss of the subject. The answer, once again, lies in the in between. Humanity is the place of subjectivity in the world *and* it is a part of the natural world. We have eaten of the tree of good and evil and we must walk the path within the dichotomies of existence. We are formed in the image of God in our selfhood *and* we are part of the natural world. The two sides belong together. What is more, there is a merging of the two, 'unconfusedly, unalterably, undividedly, inseparably'⁶³ until we become as our protoimage in Christ, with a nature completely transparent to the spirit. The world, according to Bulgakov, does have a certain objectivity, a natural existence, until humanity can fully hypostasize the world. Humanity is on the evolutionary path of humanizing the cosmos. It can only do this in relationship not in isolation, by recognizing togetherness rather than otherness.

In Bulgakov's theology the principle of threeness is an important component in the human evolution of the cosmos. In any relationship there is a threefold quality, whereby the reality of the world (the Father principle) is revealed through a working of the Son and the Spirit. The Father is the source, the Son is the content of the Father and the Spirit unites the two and

⁶² Ibid., xi.

⁶³ Norris, ed., *Christological Controversy*, 159.

reveals them. The Son has provided the structure and content of creation, the 'seminal logoses,' and this is revealed through the work of the Spirit. For creation, the hypostatic principle is multiple. Each person is part of the new Adam, yet each human person works towards his or her own self-fulfilment. This is achieved, in part, through sanctification and inspiration, both processes of revelation and consecration through the mutual work of the Spirit with humanity. Humanity learns to reveal the reality of the cosmos in its true transparency of love through the process of the interpenetration of matter and spirit.

Sanctification, according to Bulgakov, is the ability to 'receive and retain the action of the Holy Spirit.'⁶⁴ It is the communication of the grace of the Holy Spirit. Sanctification of and in the world is only possible because of the general spiritual receptivity of the world. For Bulgakov, sanctification of all elements in the created world is possible because of its basis in the divine Sophia. Like receives like, and matter has a spiritual basis. Matter is merely 'the condition of *fallen* substance.'⁶⁵ However, the Holy Spirit has 'poured forth into the world in the Pentecost and abides in the world, bestow[ing] upon the world the power to be transfigured and resurrected.'⁶⁶ The creaturely Sophia receives sanctification, so that 'the action of grace is equated here merely with the interaction between a higher plane and a lower one and the influence of the corresponding higher hierarchies.'⁶⁷ Sophia enables this interaction because she is 'both divine (pleroma) and creaturely (becoming); both in God (divine nature) and in creation (created nature); both transparent (love perfectly and divinely revealed) and opaque (love imperfectly revealed because of creaturely limitation and human

⁶⁴ Bulgakov, *Comforter*, 221.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 347.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 221.

sinfulness).⁶⁸ Sophia is the in between or, as Celia Deane-Drummond suggests, the boundary of order and chaos.⁶⁹

Bulgakov is clear that matter and spirit are not opposed. Spirit is the *power* of matter. In the initial creation, in which humanity is created after other material manifestations, humanity is separate from its nature but given the task to acquire “dominion” over nature. This is making what is “not I” the hypostatic I-ness of humanity. The not I is part of the creaturely proto-matter of Sophia and so proto-matter is not alien to spirit. Sophia, through the consciousness of humanity, can be made fully transparent. The original “earth” is formed from the divine Sophia by the Holy Spirit, and thus is alive and forms a part of Adamic humanity. The Spirit accompanies humanity in its process of the sanctification of the earth as a process of divine-human cooperation. There is no “dead” matter, only matter that can be enlivened. Matter loses ‘its inertia and impenetrability...It stops being unconscious and becomes conscious.’⁷⁰ This explains why substances can be the conduits for spiritual gifts, as in the sacramental substances.

The Holy Spirit works in creation in the process of sanctification but also works directly with the human spirit in inspiration. Inspiration is part of humanity’s deification, a “communication of properties” or perichoresis between the Spirit and the human spirit. It is part of the human capacity to be able to receive divine revelation. The human spirit ‘is not closed off; it is permeable and transparent for different inspirations.’⁷¹ Inspiration is a divine-human act, but it is not the work of the Spirit to replace or overcome or overshadow the human spirit. Divine-humanity is realized here in the world. Inspiration is possible both from the natural world and through

⁶⁸ Delicata 12

⁶⁹ See Deane-Drummond, *Creation through Wisdom*, 245.

⁷⁰ Bulgakov, *Comforter*, 346.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 224.

grace. Inspiration from the beauty and wonder of the natural world is possible because the world itself has been formed from the sophianic action of the Spirit. With right feeling towards the world, with inspiration, the human person 'feels himself to be one with the world soul; in him is awakened the "cosmic sense" of world unity...'⁷² Bulgakov considers inspiration through grace to be the action not of the sophianic action of the Spirit but the *hypostatic* Spirit. Even so, the grace of the Spirit 'does not coerce, but comes to man in response to his efforts, just as man cannot surpass his creaturely measure if he is not carried above it by a superhuman, supernatural force.'⁷³ In humanity's striving, human depths are revealed: the human being 'tests and realizes the possibilities of tasks proper to him, his latent and slumbering word.'⁷⁴ Humanity's economic and creative works are only possible through this divine-human relationship. The content of creation, the Logos, is revealed to humanity by the Spirit through human striving.

Of course, even the most inspired thoughts are human and therefore fallible. Because this interaction with the Logos and the Spirit is not one-sided or mechanical, there can also be non-cooperation or resistance. There is also the danger that what is considered as inspiration does not come from the grace of the Holy Spirit. Since the Fall the spiritual world is largely closed off from humanity, and discernment is difficult. The human spirit is also 'open to the pre-human and nonhuman world.'⁷⁵ This includes not only the animal world and the angelic world but the demonic world. The fallen spirits have considerable power and we are warned against them (for

⁷² Ibid., 213.

⁷³ Ibid., 222.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 213.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 224.

example, Eph. 6: 11-12⁷⁶). Discernment is often simulated by sanctimoniousness and ignorance, and Bulgakov warns against ‘false spiritual knowledge [which] covers hardness of heart, darkness of mind, and laziness of thought.’⁷⁷ With such complex and mutually antagonistic influences of the spiritual world, of light and dark, discernment becomes a skill to be honed. Even against such warnings, however, Bulgakov remains optimistic. Fallen creation still ‘retains the capacity to receive [direct] divine influences.’⁷⁸ Divine influences are manifold. They are bestowed in the sacraments of the church, in the transformation of substances or the sanctification of matter. We have the help of guardian angels and the angelic world. Moreover, creation is maintained by the very being of the Holy Spirit in its life and being. This divine life is the Spirit’s gift and integral to Divine-humanity and therefore humanity.

There is an even greater compatibility to be seen between the life and being of the Holy Spirit and humanity. Compatibility has already been foregrounded in the church’s Chalcedonian theology, in the dual nature of Christ, inseparable in two natures, both divine and human. For Bulgakov this compatibility is in the *ousia*, the *sophian* nature. Christ has two natures, but humanity has only one, its own human nature. The human being remains human, but becomes transparent for the action of the divine nature. Each individuality contributes to the whole of humanity in a kind of complex “communism” of being.⁷⁹ Every human person is ‘a *generic* being

⁷⁶ Eph. 6: 11-12: “Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”

⁷⁷ Bulgakov, *Comforter*, 225.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 226.

⁷⁹ See Chapter 5, 264, for Bulgakov’s description of the unity of the universe as a physical communism of being. Cf. Bulgakov, *Philosophy*, 96.

who is intended to be in spiritual contact with beings similar to him.⁸⁰ This is the movement of the 'not "I"' in the gracious death of the personal "I." A special form of Divine-humanity, the person of Christ, the higher "I," is the goal in the evolution of humanity towards transforming its lower creaturely nature into its divine nature.

This spiritual compatibility with the person of Christ is understood to be a working of the Holy Spirit. Spiritual compatibility lies in humanity's hypostatic determination. Humanity is created in the image of God, and this image is a dual reflection of God's personhood and nature. Humanity's natural life is seen in 'psycho-corporeal existence,'⁸¹ that is, body and soul, the creaturely Sophia. Humanity's personhood is determined by its spiritual life. Humanity has received 'a spark of Divinity [which is] the personal principle.'⁸² This divine life can become 'a reality by the power and action of the grace of the Holy Spirit.'⁸³ The divine life is achieved, as we have noted earlier, through the dual processes of sanctification and inspiration. Just as Divine-humanity is adopted by God in the descent of the Spirit so, too, are we children of God: 'The being clothed in Christ, which is accomplished by the Holy Spirit, is at the same time adoption by God.'⁸⁴ We have received the kernel of Divine-humanity and we are in an evolutionary process moving towards the eschaton when all will be in all. This adoption is possible because of humanity's compatibility with these divine elements of the Spirit and Word present within it.

Ever since the Fall, there has been sophianicity and anti-sophianicity in existence. There is nothing outside of this, nothing extra- or non-sophianic.

⁸⁰ Bulgakov, *Comforter*, 224.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 300.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 301.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 298.

Humanity's mutual task is the overcoming of this division so that clear sophianicity becomes the nature of the cosmos. The world 'has become a *mirror* of the divine world; its images are not illusory, however, but really exist.'⁸⁵ This is the task and goal of creation; we are "gods by grace" to mirror faithfully the divine world of the Trinity. Humanity mirrors the Trinity's multi-unity 'that they may all be one.'⁸⁶ We cannot fall out of this multi-unity. We are all in Adam. Adam has a duality of a sinless state and self-determination but the Old Adam has not been annulled. 'It is precisely this original hypostatic *multi-unity* of man, with one nature, that enables us to understand the fact that the Logos assumed the human nature ("flesh") fully without diminishing it or doing violence to it.'⁸⁷ The matter of the world experienced a fundamental change when it became the flesh of Christ. The Holy Spirit 'spiritualized the matter of Christ's flesh [corresponding] to the victory over death and to the state of the *spiritual* body in its glorification.'⁸⁸ This meant that 'the *entire* human essence in its ontological kernel was assumed and saved by Christ.'⁸⁹ From Pentecost onwards, humanity works in time with the power of Christ and the Spirit, nurturing the kernel into a fully spiritualized body, into the divine Sophia. Thus, the complete sophianicity of the end times will mean the sanctification of all matter. All will be "in Christ."

This section has examined the Holy Spirit's role with Christ in the economy of salvation. The Spirit is the Love of the Trinity, the essential third person who enables love to flow, who is indeed, hypostatic Love. In creation, the Spirit is the principle of not only love but also of life, beauty and reality. The

⁸⁵ Ibid., 356.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 186.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 185.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 346-7. Original emphasis

⁸⁹ Ibid., 347.

Spirit manifests and reveals, and is present as grace in the world. Because the world has a spiritual basis, it is receptive to the Spirit. The Spirit works hypostatically within creation since Pentecost as an inseparable dyad with Christ. With the descent of the Spirit, a union is formed between heaven and earth, spirit and matter, allowing the continuing spiritualization of matter in the world. The Spirit's tools are inspiration and sanctification, allowing perichoresis with the human spirit. Yet the Spirit does not coerce and so the human being must be open to the promptings of the Spirit while guarding against sanctimoniousness and ignorance.

Eschatology

Now I will examine Bulgakov's eschatology with a view to linking this to present humanity and present day hope. The Holy Spirit is the agency through which the transfiguration of the world in the end time is achieved. This transfiguration is not a physical but a metaphysical act: the substance of the world is brought into a new state by the Holy Spirit.⁹⁰ We will examine this eschatology and then explore the connection between the present and the eschatological future. In Chapter 1, Moltmann's eschaton was seen to be an inevitable act of God seemingly unrelated to human endeavour. For Bulgakov, there is a historical process of divine/human cooperation, moving towards the eschaton, including a time of judgment. Yet the eschaton is also inevitable for Bulgakov and all will be saved. I will examine what this means for the principle of free will and for my thesis of hope. If the eschaton is inevitable, then hope could seem unnecessary. Is there any purpose to human endeavour if God intervenes to save all in the end times? Or, conversely, because we are "under sin," is God's intervention a reassuring hope that, despite our sinfulness, we will all be saved? I suggest that both

⁹⁰ Bulgakov, *Bride*, 425.

these scenarios give little reason for human life itself. I propose a third way forward, supported by Bulgakov's theology: an historical process of divine-human cooperation that meets the God of the future and gives real, ontological purpose to human life. Hope then resides in purposeful existence.

As with much of Bulgakov's theology his eschatology is both unique and constructive. In Paul Gavriilyuk's view, 'Bulgakov's eschatological vision is unsurpassed in its breadth in Russian thought...'⁹¹ Bulgakov anticipates the later interest in eschatology begun by Moltmann in the 1960's. He believes that the church has ignored eschatology and '*has not established a single universally obligatory dogmatic definition in the domain of eschatology,*'⁹² except for the brief credal statement, "He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and His kingdom will have no end." For Bulgakov, 'the "last times" have already begun.'⁹³ This process of divine-human cooperation began with the incarnation and will be fulfilled in the future times. The Pentecost is the accomplishment of Divine-humanity, the establishing of the model for divine-human cooperation, the working of the Holy Spirit with humanity to prepare the world for its future glory. As we have noted, the Pentecost itself is the beginning of this process, which continues until the whole cosmos is glorified. The Pentecost remains unfinished until the parousia, yet, through the ascension, the work of Christ 'remains unfathomably and antinomically linked to the times and seasons of this world, whose duration is now fixed: It extends from the Ascension to the parousia.'⁹⁴ Although one cannot know the exact duration of this

⁹¹ Paul L. Gavriilyuk, "Universal Salvation in the Eschatology of Sergius Bulgakov," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 57, no. 1 (2006): 111.

⁹² Bulgakov, *Bride*, 379. Original emphasis.

⁹³ Bulgakov, *Comforter*, 353.

⁹⁴ Bulgakov, *Bride*, 393.

timeline, Bulgakov champions a co-working with Christ, an accompanying human, historical movement preparing the world for its transfiguration. The end of this process is biblically marked by judgment and separation before the descent of a new heaven and a new earth. However, Bulgakov's reading of Revelation, which understands judgment as an internal judgment, also allows for universal salvation and glorification.

In Bulgakov's thought, hope is enveloped in the complete trust and faith in the processes set in place by God. Like Moltmann, Bulgakov is certain of God's promise of the final glory.

One can say that the fate of the world has already been decided - in the sense of its final salvation and transfiguration. A supramundane force is already present in the world, sufficient to save and transfigure it . . . It is a true *mystery*, which is accomplished in the world and in history, but not without tragic opposition . . . the mystery of sin and of the flesh is being enacted there.⁹⁵

What is uncertain, then, is the movement towards that "fate." The history of the world, including its suffering, is all part of the mystery of existence, but the mystery of the sin and flesh is a part of the self-determination of humanity. God joins with humanity and this, too, is a part of the mystery. Bulgakov writes that the 'sacrifice of this love consists in the fact that God must suffer the world with its imperfection, without destroying its proper self-determination.'⁹⁶ The Holy Spirit 'descended to make humanity Christ's, to actualize the salvation of the world, brought by the Saviour.'⁹⁷ It is the process of Divine-humanity. Again: the world 'must be brought to a state where it can receive the coming of the God-Man in glory and where

⁹⁵ Bulgakov, *Comforter*, 347.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 352.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 349. Original emphasis.

God will be all in all.'⁹⁸ The question is not whether this *will* happen but *how* it will happen.

For Bulgakov, the end times cannot be an external act of God. God does not impose any action upon the world that is alien to it. The end of this world and its transfiguration are depicted 'both as God's action upon the world *and* as the ripe fruit of the world's life.'⁹⁹ It is a twofold process. The end times will happen only through divine-human cooperation, when humanity joins fully with its nature, with Sophia, and mirrors the Divine-humanity faithfully. It is Bulgakov's understanding of the second part of this process which sets his eschatology apart. Humanity's actions in the world are integral to the "ripening" of the world, of the preparation of the world for glorification. There is a strong sense of world history and of the right time for its fruition. Human beings are the co-workers of the Spirit and of Christ in the work of bringing the world to a state where God will be all in all. According to Bulgakov all that has been accomplished in human history is an integral part of the new Jerusalem. The new Jerusalem of Revelation is based on the measure of the human and angelic worlds and 'contains the sum-total of universal history as well as the matter of the creaturely world.'¹⁰⁰ It 'contains the principles of the natural world and the synthesis of human creative activity in history. It is already the meta-cosmos, which in meta-history raises the achievements of this age to the highest level.'¹⁰¹ Gavriilyuk proposes that this principle of synergism was Bulgakov's response to 'a traditional concept of resurrection and judgment as acts of God brought upon largely passive creatures.'¹⁰² For Bulgakov, the end of the

⁹⁸ Ibid., 350.

⁹⁹ Bulgakov, *Bride*, 319. My emphasis.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 521.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 523.

¹⁰² Gavriilyuk, "Universal Salvation," 116.

world is also the completion of creation, and all that has been achieved by and transformed by humanity will be an integral part of that.

The final act of the divine/human process towards the meta-cosmos is depicted in biblical literature as the parousia of Christ accompanied by a time of destruction and of judgment. For Bulgakov, the parousia and judgment are simultaneous events, and occur within time, signified as the "end times." Once humanity has achieved its highest state of readiness there is a process of judgment. Judgment is an inward encounter. The human being's self-determination is a sum total of all his or her experiences, and judgment concerns what that person has or has not done, as recorded in the "book of life." There is no place for predetermination in Bulgakov's eschatology because of the freedom of this self-determination, nor is there any escaping from the process of purification either. The judgment and separation 'consist in the fact that every human being will be placed before his own eternal image in Christ, that is, before Christ. And in the light of this image, he will see his own reality, and this comparison will be the judgment.'¹⁰³ This is the experience of "hell," the consciousness of how one has not measured up to the image of Christ, 'the consciousness of the sin of against love.'¹⁰⁴ Everything that is not in conformity to this image 'falls into the outer darkness, into nonbeing.'¹⁰⁵ Judgment cannot be avoided, nor is simple forgiveness by God possible:

God's love, it must be said, is also His justice. God's love consumes in fire and rejects what is unworthy, while being revealed in this rejection...One must reject every pusillanimous, sentimental hope that the evil committed by a human being and therefore present in him can simply be forgiven, as if ignored at the tribunal of justice. God does not tolerate sin, and its simple forgiveness is ontologically

¹⁰³ Bulgakov, *Bride*, 457.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 475.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 463.

impossible...Once committed, a sin must be lived through to the end...¹⁰⁶

The “chaff” may be burned away but each human being will be saved in Bulgakov’s belief in universal salvation and resurrection. The purpose of judgment is one of purification in readiness for glorification. No one is “lost” forever. By interpreting judgment as an inner process, “judgment” texts can be understood as part of this universal preparation. The separation of the sheep from the goats, for example, in the judgment text of Matthew 25: 31-45, is seen as ‘a horizontal division, which passes through *all* humankind, not a vertical one, which would separate into two mutually impenetrable parts.’¹⁰⁷ The idea of “eternal damnation,” as in the above judgment text, must be understood dynamically as a qualitative category and as part of the nature of being, or becoming. The torments of hell, or the stage of self-judgment, are a spiritual state, part of the ‘constant creative movement in which [the creaturely] spirit’s life is expressed.’¹⁰⁸ Eternal life is a path, giving rise to the fundamental antimonic postulate of eschatology: ‘the eternal life of incorruptibility and glory can coexist with eternal death and perdition. Both, to different degrees, are included in being.’¹⁰⁹ These distinctions between heaven and hell exist only in our earthly condition, in our becoming. Bulgakov adds a qualifying statement that beyond this the ‘mystery of the life of the future age surpasses our understanding.’¹¹⁰

Because there have been no dogmatic statements about eschatology Bulgakov argues for a universalism that had only been a minority position in the patristic period. He uses the ideas of Origen and Gregory of Nyssa, as well as his contemporary, Florensky, to support judgment as an ontological

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 475-6.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 515. Original emphasis.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 479.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 477.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 476.

category rather than a moral category.¹¹¹ Moreover, humanity cannot commit ontological suicide. It is not within humanity's power to cease to exist or to destroy the basis of existence. His argument is also tempered with faith in God's love, which does not allow Bulgakov to countenance the eternal damnation of any being, not even Satan.¹¹² Any interpretation of biblical or patristic texts 'must be determined by placing it in the context of the *entire* Christian teaching.'¹¹³ Thus, Bulgakov counters any idea of the rejection of sinners with the biblical teachings of God's love and forgiveness. The parable of the lost sheep declares that 'it is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should be lost' (Mt. 18: 14). The suffering of Christ for and in humanity before judgment will not stop with the parousia. Christ does not deprive sinners of his love. Indeed, we are all sinners in the final judgment (with the exception of Mary, mother of Jesus¹¹⁴). All Christian and biblical teaching is to be viewed as words of God's love, even the fire of judgment.

The purpose of judgment is so that the image of God in each human being is made pure and therefore able to be glorified. The Spirit accompanies this process since the first Pentecost but she will not fully descend until the process is complete. For Bulgakov, the descent of the Spirit is 'completely analogous to the descent from heaven of the Logos.'¹¹⁵ For now, the Spirit remains faceless to some extent, hidden under images of wind and fire (see, for example, Acts 2: 2-3). In the fullness of time, humanity will have full, personal awareness of the Spirit. The impersonal imagery and action of Spirit will be revealed as personal. Bulgakov asks, will this mean that there

¹¹¹ See Gavriilyuk 116-17.

¹¹² For Satan's redemption, see Bulgakov, *Bride*, 510.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 514. Original emphasis.

¹¹⁴ See *Ibid.*, 409-13. In Orthodox theology, Mary, as the mother of God, has already ascended to heaven.

¹¹⁵ Bulgakov, *Comforter*, 267.

is 'the manifestation of the Countenance of the Third hypostasis'?¹¹⁶ This cannot be answered. It is a great mystery but, for Bulgakov, we already have some sense of the 'Beauty-Holiness'¹¹⁷ within the cosmos. We can *feel* this mystery within the world even if we cannot perceive it directly with our senses. But there will come a time when we do see "face to face." In the fullness of time, when love has truly enveloped the world, the world will fully experience the gifts of the Spirit.

The general classification of sin for all humanity is a problem of theodicy. Surely a baby who dies at birth, for example, has not committed any sin. In answer to this problem, Bulgakov returns to the picture of humanity in its entirety. We are all "under sin" in terms of our material bodies yet each life is unique and also contributes to the meta-Adam. There is a qualitative and quantitative difference in the experience of each soul. Heaven and earth is 'a summation of life not only in its fullness and complexity but also in its diversity of forms.'¹¹⁸ For Bulgakov it is no coincidence that Christ speaks of *many* mansions in his Father's house. The relation between image and likeness may thus be 'in mutual harmony'¹¹⁹ suggesting that judgment in the sense of the burning away of the chaff does not apply to the souls who have not committed any personal sin.

After the purification of the parousia and judgment, in the fullness of time, the world becomes the new Jerusalem. The new Jerusalem is not a new creation. The imagery of Revelation makes it clear that the new Jerusalem is based on the materials of the earthly world (see the description in Rev. 21. 18-21). The whole world now becomes God's temple as the kingdom of love. Humanity enters a new phase in its existence but this is not a static

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 279.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 280.

¹¹⁸ Bulgakov, *Bride*, 465.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 474.

existence in some kind of timeless eternity. Bulgakov suggests that even in the future age 'the life of creation continues in time, remains a becoming, and is accompanied by growth, by ascent from glory to glory "in infinite life."'120 Divine eternity is proper only to God signifying that God cannot be wholly encompassed by creation. The creaturely eternity of the new Jerusalem is the beginning of a new relationship with time. Eternity in the future signifies knowing God in the world, eternity in time. This was the foundation upon which God created the world, so that the world would know God as its divine foundation. This was the task given to humanity. The fall, however, 'caused an essential change: it broke man's direct connection with eternity and cast his life wholly into temporality.'121 The knowledge of God, the experience of heaven, was cut off for humanity. Humanity became an inhabitant of the earthly world alone, measuring itself by the elements of the world. The experience of heaven, or eternity, 'became the achievements of just a few chosen ones, in brief moments of their lives.'122 The distance between heaven and earth was overcome by Christ in the Pentecost with the union of the two natures, divine and human. The parousia is the culmination of Pentecost with all of humanity now experiencing the bridge between heaven and earth.

The parousia, the coming in glory, is God's definitive action directed toward the sophianization of the world. In Sophia, God becomes the immediate and dominant reality for the world and humanity. *All* human beings who are resurrected in incorruptibility and glory recognize themselves in Christ and, by the Holy Spirit, come to know themselves in their sophianicity, in the glory prepared for them in Christ before the foundation of the world.¹²³

¹²⁰ Ibid., 471.

¹²¹ Ibid., 472.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

The experience of incorruptibility and deathlessness and direct experience of God is the creaturely eternity of the future, when God will be all in all.

Of course, Bulgakov's theology is a Christian one. The new Jerusalem is the Church, the Bride of the Lamb. The Church is a spiritual organism yet also one with a historical form.¹²⁴ As a spiritual body it is unified by the Spirit. Bulgakov's contemporary, Nicholas Afanasiev, retrieves Tertullian's expression: *Ecclesia Spiritus Sancti*, the Church of the Holy Spirit, to express the primary place of the Spirit's activity.¹²⁵ In its earthly form it varies in form according to its historical time and cannot have a quantitative universal form. In any particular time, the Church is guided by dogma and tradition, which can arise in the local church as much as in an ecumenical council. Indeed, the tradition of a local church can become universal in time.¹²⁶ This is possible because of the divine nature and activity of the Church brought about by the constant presence and work of the Holy Spirit.¹²⁷ Afanasiev proposes that because the Church is one in the Spirit, the Church has an internal, catholic universality. What is done in one church is done in all and no church can separate itself from any other. The character of the local church should be 'absolutely devoid of any isolation and provincialism.'¹²⁸

Although part of this emphasis on the local may be attributed to ambivalent attitudes towards the Moscow Patriarchate at this time,¹²⁹ the ontological

¹²⁴ Sergei Bulgakov, "The Church as Tradition," *The Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* 12 (1989): 64.

¹²⁵ Nicholas Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, trans. Vitaly Permiakov, Edited with an introduction by Michael Plekon, Foreword by Rowan Williams ed. (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 1.

¹²⁶ Sergei Bulgakov, "Holy Scripture and Holy Tradition," *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* 1 (1990): 72.

¹²⁷ See Michael Plekon, in Afanasiev, *Church of Holy Spirit*, xvii.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹²⁹ Anthony Baker calls Bulgakov's position "ambiguous" in regard to the authority of the Moscow Patriarchate, although Bulgakov eventually rejected the association of the

place which Bulgakov gives to the Church is in keeping with his theological outlook. As John Chryssavgis comments, for an Orthodox person 'the entire world is the Church.'¹³⁰ Thus, for Bulgakov, the Church is a synonym for Sophia. The divine Sophia is the invisible archetype of the historical form of the church as the creaturely Sophia, the body of the world. As Anthony Baker writes, 'the unity of divinity and humanity will be fully revealed when the form of the earthly becomes indistinguishable from the heavenly, when the New Jerusalem descends.'¹³¹ The new Jerusalem is essentially connected to the historical church: '[t]he historical concreteness that belongs to phenomenal being is not a deficiency but a necessary mode of being, without which it would disappear into nothingness.'¹³² The historical, empirical world is necessary for the eschatological world. The Church is 'a synergism uniting heaven with earth,'¹³³ the vehicle for transformation, whether one encounters the Church in one's historical life or only in the end times.

A theology of hope?

We come now to the end of the exposition of Bulgakov's theology. His sophiology is complex and difficult to summarize. The uniqueness of his sophiology may be better served by comparing and contrasting it with an alternative theology, which is the endeavour of the following chapter. In this chapter, we have completed a survey of Bulgakov's trinitarian theology by particularly noting the role of the Holy Spirit. His defense of the equidivinity of the Spirit rests in the essential hypostatic place of the Spirit as one

Patriarchate with the Soviet state and placed himself under the direct authority of the Greek church. See Baker, "Making Perfection", 229-30.

¹³⁰ John Chryssavgis, "The Greek Orthodox Clergyman in Australia - a Personal Insight," in *Religion and Ethnic Identity: An Australian Study*, ed. A. W. Ata (Richmond, Victoria: Spectrum, 1988), 154.

¹³¹ Baker, "Making Perfection", 231.

¹³² Bulgakov, *Bride*, 270.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

of the three persons in the immanent Trinity, all without origin or cause. God in itself cannot be defined by its economic manifestation. However, because of the Spirit's equi-divinity, she plays an equally important role with the Son in the economy of salvation. Bulgakov then distinguishes the economic manifestation of God: the relationship of the Persons to creation. The incarnation of the second Person into earthly existence creates a new relationship between God and the world. The early biblical writings are about this new relationship. In the economic Trinity, Bulgakov honours his eastern roots by assigning monarchy to the Father, who sends the Son and the Spirit (through the Son) to redeem and renew creation. In John 15:26, Jesus speaks of sending the Spirit from the Father: 'When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf.' Bulgakov emphasizes the dyadic work of the Son and Spirit together since Pentecost. The Spirit descends into creation, making Christ's humanity a reality. The healing of this Divine-humanity is the union between the heavenly and earthly prototype of humanity, between the divine and creaturely Sophia. The Spirit forms the bridge between heaven and earth. The Spirit continues to work kenotically, holding back the fullness of the final transfiguration of the world, but remains in the world as a sanctifying, inspiring and healing presence, helping humanity attain to its highest state.

Bulgakov not only has a high Christology he has a high anthropology. The end times will result in the complete humanization of the cosmos because humanity is 'the essence, or nature, of the world.'¹³⁴ There is a strong feeling for the goodness of the world and the goodness of God. The world is created good and good will always prevails over evil: 'sin and sickness cannot abolish in man the image of God, which constitutes the foundation of

¹³⁴ Ibid., 320.

his being. But neither can they abolish beauty in nature.¹³⁵ Beauty can become good or evil in human freedom. The life of nature has a dual character of light and darkness, an abyss, because of the falling away of humanity. In the inertia of nature, humanity is subject to the elements. Christ has overcome the 'Pan' of nature but nature, the creaturely Sophia, remains unfinished. This transfiguration comes from the Spirit. Thus, the 'power of being and life, which is also the power of beauty, will not cease in the world, despite passive and active resistance, inertia, and outright evil.'¹³⁶ Despite the evil, Bulgakov maintains that the Spirit cannot be defeated. The Spirit works with the human spirit to reveal the beauty in nature, which is the human world.

God's love for the world is the cornerstone of our faith and hope in the future. Bulgakov's theology highlights the unity of the world and this unity is expressed in God's love. When one suffers, all suffer. The universality of Christ's sacrifice extends to all people and all things. Bulgakov, in one of his few usages of the word "hope," speaks of the Christian hope which is inalienable from our faith because of its basis in the power of the Holy Spirit to gather and resurrect the angelic-human world.¹³⁷ The Holy Spirit will continue her work 'of healing and restoration as long as that which is unhealed and unrestored remains.'¹³⁸ We trust in the power and the glory and the love of the triune God to work with humanity into the future.

Humanity, created in God's image, is integral to the world. Since the resurrection and the joining of the divine and human natures, divine-human cooperation ensures that the history of the world and humankind is an integral part of this process. One may find little evidence for love in the

¹³⁵ Bulgakov, *Comforter*, 205.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 207.

¹³⁷ Bulgakov, *Bride*, 518.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 515.

world but the new commandment of love, love for others beyond one's self, has obstacles set before it in the state of sin that humanity is within. "Soul work," using the human faculties of sympathy and antipathy, is needed to work through the dichotomies of material existence. In understanding the difficulties of others, we hope that empathy may arise. Love and trust in humanity must join with love and faith in God. For Bulgakov,

One cannot love God without loving man—first of all, in the God-man Himself, in His holy humanity, as well as in His personal humanity, that is, in the Mother of God; and then in the saints, in His Church, the body of Christ and the temple of the Holy Spirit. Further, one cannot love humanity while separating it from the world; one cannot love it apart from the world. To love the saved world is therefore to contemplate God's works, to see the revelation of God in the world.¹³⁹

It is for this reason that I see Bulgakov's sophiology as a theology of hope. His sophiology gives humanity a part in God and also an essential part in the world's very fabric. He restores faith in Christian humanism, that humanity with the whole of creation is destined for glory. He gives a reason for loving both humanity and the world. Both are a revelation of God's loving work. Not only is the commandment to love one another central to this theology, but also a love of the world. The world reveals God. The world is Sophia, part of God's very being, but also a part of humanity. It is our world and we are responsible for it. But it is a divine/human world, based in goodness. Humanity cannot commit ontological suicide. Its very substance is divine, and Christ and the Spirit are present as the Comforters of worldly existence. Their transformative power of healing is working in the world, helping humanity to fulfil its destiny of revealing the sophianicity of the world.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 520.

Chapter 7 Moltmann and Bulgakov: convergence and divergence

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to compare and contrast the theologies of Jürgen Moltmann and Sergei Bulgakov. This will be followed by the concluding chapter which places these theologies within my own thesis of hope. My own thesis of hope examines the idea that a belief in meaningful, purposeful human existence is necessary for the kind of hope that motivates humanity to work creatively and positively on the earth in the present time. Meaningful existence for humanity is underscored by meaningful existence for the whole cosmos. This chapter will summarize the theologies of Moltmann and Bulgakov in terms of their own particular constructions of meaningful existence within a framework of hope. The three sections examine the theologies of Father, Son and Spirit to elicit the similarities and differences in Moltmann's and Bulgakov's worldviews. The first section, God in creation, compares the theologies of creation examined in Chapter 3 (on Moltmann) and Chapter 4 (on Bulgakov), and looks particularly at the interplay between the divine and human worlds. The second section on christology compares Chapters 2 and 5 and explores Christ's mission as well as theodicy in the face of evil. The third section compares the respective pneumatologies discussed in Chapters 3 and 6 and also examines the eschatologies of Chapters 1 and 6, reflecting on hope both now and in the future. The three areas of comparison will be summarized in the conclusion of the chapter, entitled convergence and divergence. This section will also interpret the basis of hope for both theologians. Although Bulgakov does not have an explicit theology of hope I will take the elements of his theology

that have been discussed and place them within the framework of hope defined above. This implicit theology of hope will then be compared with Moltmann's explicit theology of hope. Both theologies of hope have important contributions to make towards understanding hope in the world. However, my overall conclusion is that the meaning and purpose of humanity in Bulgakov's sophianic system contributes to a worldview that is a more effective basis for hope than Moltmann's theology of hope.

God in Creation

In Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 I examined Moltmann's and Bulgakov's respective theologies of the trinitarian God's relationship to creation. One of the fundamental theological questions concerns the divinity of the created world or, in other words, how God is related to creation. This is of critical importance if we are seeking meaning and purpose to humanity's existence. I will now compare the two responses to this question which were examined in the chapters above. There are more similarities than differences in their theologies of the immanent God although the differences are significant for my thesis of hope. Moltmann merges the principles of transcendence and immanence in understanding love, freedom and necessity as synonymous in God. Bulgakov agrees. Both theologians examine creation from a trinitarian perspective as a united work from the three persons of the Trinity. Both Moltmann and Bulgakov support a cosmic model of heaven and earth. In Moltmann's theology heaven is God's dwelling place. Heaven contains all the creative possibilities for the world and earth becomes the created potentialities. In Bulgakov's model the divine Sophia is heaven, the potential of the earth, which is the creaturely Sophia. Both share an understanding of humanity formed in both the image of God and the image of the world but there are significant differences in what this means for each theologian. Ultimately, it is the difference in the meaning and purpose of

humanity that divides the theologies of Moltmann and Bulgakov. Bulgakov's humanity is the *reason* for the world while Moltmann's humanity is just one life form of many, although the most destructive one.

We begin with the similarities between Moltmann and Bulgakov, which are to be found in God's connection to the godself's creation. Both Moltmann and Bulgakov see creation as intimately connected to God. Because the triune God is understood to be the highest model for human relationships they both speculate on the inner structure of God. In God's relationship to humanity, that is, God's economic manifestation, God is three persons, Father, Son and Spirit. In Moltmann's trinitarian creation, the Father is the creating origin, the Son is the shaping origin and the Spirit is the life-giving origin.¹ This is similar to Bulgakov's theology where the Father is the transcendental principle and primal will, the source of being and love. The Son fully reveals the content of the Father, the image of the Father's glory. The Holy Spirit actualizes this content with the Father's love and is the life of the world.²

Moltmann and Bulgakov are in agreement that creation is an act of God's will *from* out of God's nature of love. Both agree that freedom, love and necessity are synonymous in God. God chooses to share the triune love with a creation of God's making because that is the nature of love. In a sense God cannot help but make creation. For Moltmann, God 'cannot but love the world eternally.'³ Bulgakov develops this theme extensively: freedom and necessity are not oppositions in God.⁴ God creates from the overflowing abundance of love that flows between the three persons of the Trinity. God's desire to share this love is born from a kind of necessity of the nature of love:

¹ Chapter 3.

² Chapter 4, 203-210

³ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 85.

⁴ Chapter 4.

love must create more love. Love forms the basis of creation, which Bulgakov names Sophia.

In their efforts to demonstrate God's connectedness to creation both Moltmann and Bulgakov struggle to maintain any sense of separation. Moltmann even supposes that the transcendent God is also the in-dwelling immanent God.⁵ The eternal God's connection to temporal creation is explored by both Moltmann and Bulgakov. Moltmann distinguishes between the temporality of creation and its eternal future in terms of God's indwelling. The difference between the beginning and the end is the difference in the presence of God within creation. In the beginning, God sets an independent creation in motion. Through the resurrection God joins with the heaven of creation until the eschaton when God joins fully with creation. This "final" eternity is 'the fullness of time, not timelessness. If the beginning of creation is also the beginning of time, then time begins with the future out of which the present comes into being.'⁶ Moltmann does not specify the dynamics of the transition from temporal to eternal creation beyond his assertion that the eternal God can and will fully unite with God's creation. Creation, both temporal and eternal, is an act of God's will in two parts.

Bulgakov is more explicit in his exploration of the relation of time and eternity in God and creation.⁷ Bulgakov rejects the idea of the origin of the world in time before which nothing existed. The temporal, creaturely Sophia is formed from the divine Sophia who exists eternally as God's nature. From Bulgakov's viewpoint, God eternally creates the earth but this creaturely eternity is not the same as God's eternity: 'In God and for God, all is eternal, all belongs to eternity. But, in the life of creation, all is necessarily

⁵ Chapter 3. See also Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 15.

⁶ Moltmann, *Coming of God*, 264-5. Also Chapter 3.

⁷ Chapter 4.

united with the temporality of creation.’⁸ Bulgakov refutes the Thomistic notion of creation as causality, as a series of causes and effects from a beginning point in time. Rather, time does not have a beginning. Time flows. Time is a measure of temporality located *within* eternity. “In the beginning” does not refer to time but to the institution of temporality within Sophia. “The beginning” is an ontological category, not a temporal one. Creation is defined thematically, ‘according to the themes of their creative realization.’⁹ Everything in creation has an eternal form in the divine Sophia awaiting its fulfilment in the course of time. The importance of this is that the eternal, immutable, omnipotent God is still connected to the eternal in creation. Creaturely eternity embraces a temporal mode of becoming and is a part of, but also different from, God’s eternity.

Through the understanding that creation is an act of God’s will both theologians attempt to avoid doctrines of emanation. Moltmann and Bulgakov both examine the history of creation theology and particularly address the doctrine of *non de Deo, sed ex nihilo* (not from God, but out of nothing). Moltmann proposes that, since Augustine, Christian theology has separated God’s inner life, the divine relationships within the Trinity, from God’s outer life, creation. This has resulted in the understanding that God is separate from creation and that creation is therefore everything that God is not. Both Moltmann and Bulgakov see the “nothing” as *inside* God. The first act of creation is this setting aside of the nothing. For Moltmann, God makes room for creation by ‘withdrawing his presence and his power.’¹⁰ This is an act of self-limitation and it is a space of non-God, non-being. From out of this self-limitation within God, God wills creation. This space of nothing allows for the possibility of becoming yet also contains the possibility of the

⁸ Bulgakov, *Bride*, 59.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 56.

¹⁰ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 87.

hell of annihilation through the creature's own self-limitations or self-isolations. This separation protects God from a pantheistic connection to creation—creation is both “inside” and “outside” of God. Because Moltmann attempts to combine traditional doctrines of decree with doctrines of emanation his creation theology is not consistent. While Moltmann sometimes sees creation as the space of non-God he also speaks of creation as made from God's supreme substance.¹¹

Bulgakov's theory of the nothing is similar in that the setting aside of a place for creation is a limitation on God's part but the nothing is an essential part of God, the divine Sophia.¹² God forms creation out of the divine Sophia and this is an act of limitation on God's nature, on Sophia. Both Moltmann and Bulgakov agree that there is no absolute negation of being (nothing outside of God) but only a relative negation of being *inside* God. This negative space (Bulgakov's chaos) allows for a process of becoming in time and space, a space in which God may be *experienced* as absent or non-existent. This is a necessary postulate for human freedom. Bulgakov's sophiology allows a more nuanced separation of the transcendent God from creation. Creation is Sophia, but Sophia is formed from God's nature. The immanence of God within creation is both natural (sophian) and personal (humanity formed in the image of God). The mission of Christ to heal the damaged nature of the world in time also takes God's immanence to a new level.¹³

The result of these theologies of creation is that everything is in God while, at the same time, God is greater than the totality of creation. As Aidan Nichols suggests, this is the meaning of the Absolute God: ‘the Absolute, of

¹¹ Ibid., 85.

¹² Chapter 4.

¹³ Chapter 4.

its very nature, must constitute the reality of everything else that is.¹⁴ This is a panentheistic stance: the world is in God, God is God of this world, and God is with us and for us. The question may be asked, does there need to be a separation between God and the world? One argument against pantheism, where God is the totality of being, is that there can be no overriding, omnipotent being in control. This results in a Gaia-like pantheism where the mechanisms for world maintenance and evolution are part of the fabric of the cosmos. God is effectively changed by whatever is happening in the cosmos. Panentheism, the belief that God's being penetrates the world, has a similar understanding while giving a transcendent, immutable God the power to influence world events. Moltmann and Bulgakov do not challenge the Christian theology of the past two thousand years which maintains God's separation at some level from creation and both theologians support a notion of panentheism. The definition of Absolute perhaps reaches the limits of human language, however, do we really need to protect God from the world? Perhaps the Absolute not only constitutes the reality of all that is, this experience of God may *be* all that is. Moltmann seems to tread this path when he says that the God who is transcendent in relation to the world and the God who is immanent in the world 'are one and the same God.'¹⁵ Transcendence is a relative term: 'our understanding of transcendence is always dependent on our experience of some reality as immanence...There is no dichotomy between immanence and transcendence. There is only a distinction and a relationship in the experience of "the boundary."¹⁶ In any case it is in the realms of theory. From a human point of view, as Moltmann points out, the economic manifestation of God is all that really need concern

¹⁴ Nichols, "Bulgakov and Sophiology," 27.

¹⁵ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 15.

¹⁶ Moltmann, *Future of Creation*, 1. The boundary is Paul Tillich's term. See also Chapter 3.

us and in this regard God is with us and manifests a particular relationship with the cosmos.

Moltmann's and Bulgakov's theologies of creation have much in common. They both present a vista of creation as an act of the triune God's love with God immanent in the world, either dwelling in heaven (Moltmann) or connected through a shared sophian nature (Bulgakov). The second section in both chapters on God in creation examined God's relationship to the godself's human creation. Both understand humanity as made in the image of God and the image of nature yet what this means differs for each theologian. Moltmann uses the idea of social analogy while Bulgakov uses the concept of microcosm.

Moltmann offers several suggestions of what it means for humanity to be made in the image of God.¹⁷ As God's image, humanity corresponds to God in God's essence, which is love. This element in creation is created to recognize God as Creator and creation as God's creation. Humanity is created to love God. Humanity learns to love God by recognizing God's deeds in the world, that is, through Christ's sacrifice and the Spirit's pervasive presence in creation. Humanity represents God on earth. Humanity learns to love by mirroring the perfect relationality of the triune God. Likeness to God can only be lived in community, and humanity aims to mirror the perfect trinitarian model of perichoresis. More specifically, we aim to follow the Spirit's trinitarian role. The Spirit at once unifies yet points away from herself towards the Son and the Father.¹⁸ The Spirit is the principle of both immanence and self-differentiation. The Spirit's work in creation is in an evolution towards complexity. The greatest complexity

¹⁷ Chapter 3.

¹⁸ Moltmann uses the pronoun "himself" for the Spirit but I have chosen to continue my use of the feminine pronoun for the Spirit in this chapter and the conclusion.

resides within humanity in its own evolution through both self-transcendence (immanence) and self-preservation (self-differentiation). The goal is a new spiritual revelation of creation. Spirit is not divided from the world, it unifies the world. Spirit corresponds with the whole unified structure of body and soul. According to Moltmann, the ecological crisis in the world today is due to alienation of the human being from the physical world, beginning with the human being's own body. Humanity has lost sight of the divine in creation, of the Spirit in nature and, therefore, body.

Moltmann continues proposing that conscious knowledge of God is the mandate for humanity. This is possible because human beings are both created in the image of God (*imago Dei*) and in the image of the world (*imago mundi*). The natural knowledge of God is experienced directly through the testimony of the human conscience and indirectly by observing the outer world. Because the Spirit is in everything, everything has meaning and purpose. A reflection of the paradisaic knowledge of God exists in the world, which also reflects the glory that is to come. It is *this* world which 'is destined to be revealed in its eternal transfiguration.'¹⁹ For Moltmann, however, *theological naturalis* 'confers wisdom, but it does not confer salvation or blessedness.'²⁰ This comes solely from the revelation of God in Jesus Christ through scripture. The knowledge of God in the world is a correlation between an understanding of the outer and the inner, between understanding the world and self-understanding, including revelation. Using the principles of the *Gestalt* Moltmann proposes that humanity in the image of God is composed of the total pattern of the whole lived life, including the interaction of body and soul, and inner and outer experiences.

¹⁹ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 63.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 57.

Bulgakov's anthropology is similar to Moltmann's yet more detailed with regard to *imago Dei* and *imago mundi* in humankind. Humanity is formed in the image of God in its hypostatic "I" and in its sophianic nature. Humanity is unique within creation because it is a special, hypostatic or personal principle within creation. The human person is spirit, body and soul. The spirit is the divine spark from God, the personal aspect of each person. Body and soul together form the nature of each person, collectively called the creaturely Sophia. Just as God is a being of hypostatic persons with a nature (the divine Sophia), so, too, the human being is a hypostatic being with its own nature, the creaturely Sophia. Humanity moves towards a perfect, transparent relationship between hypostasis and nature, thus mirroring the divine relationship of love, also exemplified by the relationship of God to Sophia. For this purpose the whole of creation, the creaturely Sophia, is given to humanity as nature. Bulgakov sees humanity as the pinnacle of creation created to "keep" the earth, that is, to join fully and consciously with nature. Collectively humanity is Adam and the entire sum of each person's experiences contributes to the whole Adam. Furthermore, humanity is given freedom to know God as the basis of all existence by learning to recognize the divine in all of creation through its conscious spirit (I or ego). This is Bulgakov's picture of ideal creation prior to the Fall. The break between spirit and nature began with the Fall and it is here that human history in its current material manifestation has its beginnings. Humanity is helped in its task by the hypostatic work of Christ and the Holy Spirit since the Pentecost, as we will review in the following sections.

Humanity is made in the image of both God and the world in the theologies of Moltmann and Bulgakov. Humanity formed in the image of God is a social analogy for Moltmann: humanity learns to love by mirroring the trinitarian relationship of love. Humanity formed in the image of God is a

principle of personhood for Bulgakov. Humanity receives its ego from God. Moltmann's human spirit as the principle of self-differentiation may be a similar principle. However, humanity formed in the image of the world has a very different meaning for both. Both propose that a natural knowledge of God can be found in the world. This is a reflection of the Spirit in creation for Moltmann. In Bulgakov's thought the outer world is not separate from the inner world of the human spirit.²¹ They are two parts of a whole.

Moltmann certainly enjoins humanity to act responsibly towards the earth but he also sees humanity as one more life form and he can even envisage a time when humanity has disappeared from the planet altogether.²² Moltmann experienced a radical transformation when he began his theology of creation in the 1980's. As we observed in Chapter 3, the radical distinction in Moltmann's theology between God and humanity, or God and the world, began to blur. The world was no longer condemned to pass away as the very antithesis of divinity. The world now needed saving. Humanity's alienation from the world was now seen in a negative light. Indeed, the way towards understanding was from a contextual viewpoint. Better understanding was to be found in assessing relationships, humanity within its environment. The divine model given to us for this purpose was the trinitarian model of perichoresis. Threeness in mutual relationship moves beyond the egotism of the individual or the couple. Bulgakov shares a similar understanding of the trinitarian model of perichoretic love and the importance of threeness in God. However, humanity made in the image of God and the image of the world is a reflection of the relationship structure of the world. Humanity mirrors God's relationship to Sophia. Humanity is the

²¹ Chapter 4.

²² See Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 197.

meaning of the world and its task is to form perfect relationship with its own sophian nature.

Christology: Theodicy in the Face of Evil

The theologies of creation discussed above share a sense of the world's importance for God. They also share a trinitarian perspective of God's importance for humanity as a divine model of perichoretic love. In chapters 2 and 5 of the thesis I examined the respective christologies of Moltmann and Bulgakov. Humanity is formed in the image of God and the world but both theologians also explore what it means for humanity to be formed in the image of Christ, with very different outcomes. Moltmann holds to his social analogy and considers the particularity of the life of Jesus with human persons enjoined to follow Jesus' example of a life challenging injustice. Moltmann's focus on the crucifixion addresses the issue of theodicy and the presence of evil and suffering in the world. The Father and the Spirit suffer with Christ. The resurrection is an eschatological victory over suffering and death and a sign of God's promise for the future and final victory. God identifies with the godforsaken by raising Jesus and the model of Christian praxis is also to identify with the godless and forsaken. The church must be a political model of resistance to the alienation and oppression in the world. In Bulgakov's model Christ is the divine prototype of the human being. A human misunderstanding of freedom creates the Fall resulting in a great imbalance between humanity and its nature. The chaos of creation becomes the shadow of evil and death enters the world. Humanity becomes alienated from its nature and weighed down by matter. However, the original aptitude between the divine nature and human nature makes it possible for the Son of God to incarnate and become the Son of Man. The incarnation is necessary to redeem humanity's prototype so that humanity continues its path towards actualization.

Moltmann is unique in combining theologies of eschatology and the cross. In Moltmann's thought the cross is the centre of all Christian theology. It is a defining point in God's trinitarian history and it is an act of God. Moltmann suggests that if God is love then God must also be able to suffer. The suffering of Christ is matched by the suffering of the Father. In a very personal trinitarian picture, God the grieving Father abandons his Son to a death on the cross. Christ identified with the godless and was abandoned on the cross. However, God is also shown to champion the godless because he resurrected Jesus. From out of the Father's grief and his love for his Son arises a new future and life in the Spirit. Thus, the crucifixion is a trinitarian event. Moltmann offers a challenge to the credal doctrine of two separate natures in Christ. He proposes we must give up the distinction between God in himself and God for us so that 'the nature of God would have to be the human history of Christ and not a divine 'nature' separate from [humanity].'²³ Through Christ, God takes all the evil and suffering in the world and transforms it into God's self. John Jaeger, in his analysis of Moltmann's theology, states that 'by bringing nothingness into [God's] own being and history, God began a process of eliminating all transitoriness and nothingness.'²⁴ Through God's redemptive love all of creation is integrated into the very being of God and will be completely redeemed in the end times.

Bulgakov maintains that the crucifixion is a trinitarian event *and* an event of co-humanity. He speaks of the co-crucifixion of the Father, Son and Spirit and the mutual suffering of love.²⁵ Christ is also Divine-humanity, the prototype of humanity. It is this prototype that Christ acts to redeem in the economy of salvation through the crucifixion and resurrection, culminating

²³ Moltmann, *Crucified God*, 239.

²⁴ Jaeger, "Problem of Evil," 9.

²⁵ Bulgakov, *Lamb of God*, 353. Also Chapter 5.

in Pentecost. Bulgakov's emphasis is on a cosmic perspective of divine-humanity. Sin is a hereditary illness which can only be healed through Christ's deed on earth. Bulgakov also wrestles with the credal affirmation of Christ in two natures. In his comprehensive review of patristic theology²⁶ Bulgakov suggests that although the parameters for debate on the relationship between the divine and human worlds were set in the Chalcedonian Creed, the need for further theological debate was (and continues to be) indispensable. Bulgakov's christology offers his own *theologoumenon* on what it means for Christ to be both divine and human. What is wholly human is also wholly divine in that divine-humanity is an essential part of God. The divine-humanity within God is the Logos, the eternally begotten Son, who is the prototype of all humanity, of the meta-empirical Adam. The difference between the divine nature and the human nature lies in the difference between the divine and the creaturely Sophia. As we have noted above, the properties of time and space within the creaturely eternity are different from God's eternity. The divine Sophia is the eternal, unchanging nature of God whereas the creaturely Sophia is immersed in becoming.

The different interpretations of Christ's work affect its meaning for human salvation. In Moltmann's theology the crucifixion is not salvific. It is understood as representative suffering based on grace rather than a sacrificial expiation of sins. Moltmann proposes that God's abandonment of Christ, resulting in the forsakenness of Jesus, arouses a love which cannot be indifferent. We follow Christ in both his kenosis and his suffering. The love that comes from the identification with Christ's suffering leads humanity beyond ideas of personal salvation towards active participation in concrete political and social conflicts. When a person follows Christ's example of

²⁶ See *Ibid.*, 1-88.

kenosis it leads to encounters with resistance, opposition and contradiction. Christ's deed then does not have a salvific purpose. Salvation is a function of the eschaton.

Bulgakov conforms to a more traditional interpretation of Christ's deed as a sacrificial expiation of sin. Humanity's mythic choice of the path of good and evil resulted in a tremendous imbalance between humanity and its sophian nature. Instead of humanity working with its nature it was overpowered by the chaotic element within nature. Sin became a hereditary illness in the whole of creation. The substance of the world became impenetrable to spirit. The divinity of the world was hidden from humanity. Consequently, Christ's ministry on earth was necessary to restore the damaged nature of the creaturely Sophia and it restored the possibility of humanity also being in right relationship with its nature. This was not an act of God's imposition. Christ's ability to assume "flesh" has, as we have noted above, its ontological prerequisite in the original conformity of the divine and human natures. In his assumption of the flesh Christ qualitatively takes on the full weight of the sins of the world.²⁷ Its purpose is not to remove human freedom but to restore the possibility of humanity coming into right relationship with its nature. This is the salvific purpose of the events of Golgotha: humanity can now continue with its original goal—to reveal the world's sophianicity, its source in God's love, in freedom. For this reason, the Christ event is a turning point in time.

Moltmann and Bulgakov approach the issue of theodicy and the presence of evil in the world from different standpoints. Moltmann views the cross, like the anomaly of evil in the world, as a contradiction: he who is righteous suffers an unrighteous death. This dialectic principle of knowledge is the

²⁷ Chapter 5.

only way to answer theodicy and evil in the world – that there is, in fact, no answer. Evil has come into the world through humanity but Moltmann does not excuse it nor explain why there is so much pain and evil needing transformation. Moltmann avoids any defence of evil: ‘we cannot go beyond the fact of evil, for which no reason can be given.’²⁸ He rejects any philosophy that proposes evil as necessary for the sake of good. Yet Moltmann certainly takes the effects of evil seriously. Indeed, the scales are weighted in favour of evil. Moltmann is against the ‘tendency for the resurrection to take supremacy over the cross, for the exaltation to acquire ascendancy over the humiliation, and for the joy of God to have more weight than his pain.’²⁹ Despite his eschatological certainty, Moltmann proposes ‘steadfast resistance against evil in its various forms.’³⁰ This may have no transformative effect but it is part of the Christian path of following Christ.

Because human history with its evil excesses is incomprehensible Moltmann centres his theology from a God perspective. In a new, trinitarian act God joins with creation because of the evil in the world. The cross is the centre of all theology because God joins with creation and takes upon godself all the evil and suffering in the world, transforming it into God’s own history. The parousia is God’s answer to the history of the world: God will transform the world. There will be an eschatological victory over all forms of evil.

Bulgakov’s answer to theodicy and the evil in the world resides with both his theology of creation and the Fall and his understanding of human free will.³¹ In Bulgakov’s theology of creation the world was created “good.” The nothing from which creation is formed is originally a state of neutral chaos. This is the “not-yet” as humanity is given temporal existence to move

²⁸ Moltmann, *Future of Creation*, 77.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 95.

³⁰ Jaeger, "Problem of Evil," 11.

³¹ Chapter 5.

forward in time and bring the chaos of nature into conformity with spirit. The force of nonbeing becomes dominant in the world and becomes a sheer force of materiality, impenetrable to the spirit. Evil itself is a 'phantom of nonbeing.'³² Through the incarnation Christ overcomes the power of the original Adamic sin. This returns to humanity the possibility of conformity, of transparency in spirit and nature, of right relationship. Human beings remain temporal beings of free will and continue a process in time towards right relationship. This freedom means that human beings must make their own choices and suffer the consequences of those decisions. A historical process is still taking place within which humanity works towards its goal. Individual sin continues to have a quantitative effect on the world. The goal for humanity is to learn that true freedom is divine-human cooperation. Human beings are not greater than God. The world is divinely ordered and humanity learns to creatively work in the world out of love for the world. Humanity is the agency of transformation working with Christ and the Spirit to reflect all the modes of God's love in creation. Because of the world's foundation of goodness the good will prevail over evil.

Michael Meerson suggests that for both Moltmann and Bulgakov, 'the image of God dying on the cross for humanity's sake is the response of the God of love to the suffering in the world...'³³ The fundamental difference between the theologies of Bulgakov and Moltmann lies in the salvific role of the crucifixion. The crucifixion is not salvific in Moltmann's theology because he does not have a theology of the theosis of human nature in time. In Bulgakov's model, while not a strict process theology, humanity is a part of a gradual theosis in time. God and humanity are co-workers in this transformative process. Moltmann, on the other hand, gives God full power

³² Bulgakov, *Bride*, 147.

³³ Meerson, *Trinity of Love*, 182.

to overcome evil in the parousia. History is God's history. It begins with the resurrection of Christ which creates the possibility for the eschatological kingdom of God. Christ is a hidden presence in the world until God's transformation of all of creation in the end times from its lower state to a future form of glory. Human history is transitory and we must hope in a God who 'snatches all that is transitory and fragmentary into his loving fullness in order to put right what has never achieved its rights.'³⁴ Meanwhile, human history is given the task of active resistance to evil until that time. There is the necessity to struggle for freedom but human actions do not have any transformative effect in the world. Human history does not contribute to the transformation of the world in the eschaton.

The Holy Spirit and Eschatology

In this final section a review of the trinitarian worldviews of Moltmann and Bulgakov is completed by a comparison of their pneumatologies together with eschatological hope. Both pneumatologies are important for the emphasis given to the work of the Spirit both now and in the future. Awareness of the Spirit's action will be seen to be an important adjunct to hope both now and in the future. In the trinitarian God, however, understanding the working of the Spirit has always been difficult and pneumatology has not been given the theological weight it deserves. Both Moltmann and Bulgakov participate in a revived interest in the Spirit. We have addressed how the Spirit works as the conduit of love in the Trinity. Now we examine how these two theologians understand the Spirit's connection with creation in time. This will include the "face" of the Spirit, how the Spirit works with Christ in creation, and how the Spirit informs the human spirit. The following comparison is taken from the pneumatologies

³⁴ Müller-Fahrenholz, *Kingdom and Power*, 205.

outlined in Chapters 3 and 6 of the thesis with some crossover from Chapter 4 on Bulgakov's theology of creation.

The concept of the Spirit as a person of the Trinity is a difficult one to visualize because the Spirit is "faceless." The biblical images associated with the Spirit are non-human: fire, breath, the dove. And yet according to both Moltmann and Bulgakov, relationality is the basis of existence. In Bulgakov's model the Spirit is the basis of existence and for Moltmann the Spirit is in all things. It is therefore important to have some *feel* for the Spirit, some sense of our human connection to the Spirit, and relationality is easier if one has a picture of what one is relating to. Bulgakov postulates that the face of the Spirit may be revealed to us in the end times. In addition, both theologians develop a theology of the Spirit as mother. For Bulgakov, the Father calls creation into being and the Spirit answers the call by giving reality to the world, by giving the world a form and being. The Spirit is Mother.³⁵ The Spirit 'manifests its maternal character in the revelation of Sophia during the creation of the world: it manifests itself as the maternal womb in which the forms of this world are conceived.'³⁶ The Spirit as Mother joins the Father of creation to birth the world. Moltmann's use of the feminine *Shekinah* from the Hebrew Bible as Holy Spirit supports the understanding of early Christian communities which spoke of the Spirit of God as mother.

Creation itself is pictured in images of a mother giving birth. Moltmann sees creation as a creative letting-be, to be seen more in motherly than fatherly categories. For Bulgakov, the Spirit as "womb" points to an aspect that is closely connected to spirit's relationship to matter. The antithesis between body and spirit is discarded by both theologians. In Bulgakov's thought,

³⁵ Chapter 4.

³⁶Bulgakov, *Comforter*, 194.

spirituality forms a body for itself and, in turn, spirit is given form by corporeality. We also noted that spirit 'is the union of an act of self-awareness, conscious independent existence, with the "nature" of which it is conscious.'³⁷ It is the Spirit who forms the body of the world, the creaturely Sophia, out of the divine Sophia, God's nature. This is Spirit-Sophia: the union of spirit and body. This body is not to be thought of as 'flesh that suppresses and shuts off the life of the spirit.'³⁸ Rather, the perfect body consists of a substance that is 'the image and self-revelation of the spirit,'³⁹ a spiritual/substantial body. This same body is the foundation of the world.

Both theologians identify the human spirit with the Holy Spirit. In Bulgakov's model of divine-human cooperation the Holy Spirit also works with humanity to prepare the world for its future glory through both inspiration and sanctification. The Spirit joins fully with the world at Pentecost but, in a different form of kenosis to Christ, "holds back" the full power of glorification until the end times. In Bulgakov's theology, the dyad of Christ and Spirit working inseparably in creation since the Pentecost is unique. The Spirit's equal importance with Christ is a fundamental basis of Bulgakov's hope both now and for the future. The Spirit is linked fundamentally to the world in its creation as the power of reality. The Holy Spirit actualizes the content of the world, the divine prototypes, with and through the Father's love. The whole of creation has this spiritual, sophianic basis. This is the sanctified cosmos, set in the process of becoming fully sanctified through the actions of both God and humanity in divine-human cooperation. The human spirit is a special instance of creation, the "divine spark" of God. Inspiration from the Holy Spirit is possible because of perichoresis between the divine Spirit and the human spirit.

³⁷ Williams, "Lamb of God," 165.

³⁸ Bulgakov, *Holy Grail and Eucharist*, 128.

³⁹Ibid.

Moltmann often uses Spirit and spirit interchangeably.⁴⁰ He describes the possibility of theosis in the eschaton is because of the identification between Spirit and the human spirit. In addition, Moltmann understands the Spirit as the life-giving origin of the world. Because the Spirit is in everything, everything has meaning and a purpose. Here, Moltmann reclaims the body that he denied in his early theology. He speaks of a progressive revelation of the Spirit. As we noted above, humanity is made in the image of God *and* in the image of world. There is a natural knowledge of God available through conscience and through observing the outer world, a reflection of the paradisaical world to come. Spiritual growth for humanity is possible through the trials of existence. With faith and hope, we offer active resistance and opposition to the evils of the world. The movement of the human spirit is 'onwards—not upwards.'⁴¹ We cannot transform present reality but we keep moving forward towards the new reality promised to us. There is no principle of gradual theosis, of transformation of substance, in Moltmann's theology. For humanity there is only the possibility of spiritual growth. Indeed, God 'stands opposed to (*entgegen-steht*) the human spirit'⁴² so that we may have the freedom to choose obedience. Just as Jesus obeyed his Father, so we choose to obey God. This obedience opens the possibility for transformation at a spiritual level. We learn that all of life's experiences contribute to the *Gestalt*, the total pattern of the whole lived life, the interaction of body and soul, inner and outer experiences. Acceptance of the whole life, with all of its suffering and joy, is one of the mainstays for Moltmann's hope. Suffering makes us stronger so that the human spirit can move forward.

⁴⁰ Chapter 4.

⁴¹ Moltmann, *Hope*, 118.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 120.

In his later theology Moltmann appears to move closer to a theology of wholeness. Transformation is observable in the physical environment. The idea that suffering makes us stronger comes directly from nature, the idea of the "survival of the fittest." Systems become stronger through struggle and natural selection. Following these principles simpler systems become more complex. Moltmann suggests there is an evolution towards complexity with the greatest complexity found in humanity. Yet Moltmann, like Bulgakov, proposes that we must start from the whole. The holistic and perichoretic principles in creation are because of the Spirit. Beyond humanity the Spirit is the highest model of complexity and is therefore the model for humanity and the world. The goal for creation is a new revelation. The Spirit unifies but also points away from herself towards the Son and the Father. Humanity works through the principles of self-transcendence and self-preservation towards this new revelation.

Despite the possibility of spiritual growth, Moltmann sees any human transformation in the physical outer environment as a negative intervention. Humanity's personal growth should not be at the expense of the environment. Non-intervention in nature is preferable, learning to be "at rest" instead of busy "doing." The theological basis for this in Moltmann's theology is the principle of the sabbath. The sabbath is the pinnacle of creation because it is the day of God's rest. Humanity's destructive relationship to the environment is due to the alienation of the body. We have lost sight of the Spirit in nature and body, and so our actions in the world can only be detrimental. Moltmann has no equivalent notion to Bulgakov's economy of labour where humanity works positively and creatively to transform the physical world. In Moltmann's thought the self-transformation of the natural environment is "natural" and therefore good. Within this context, humanity can only help the environment by refraining from any interference with nature's own processes of natural selection.

The advantage of Bulgakov's theological enterprise is that it is a comprehensive, integrated system. This means that humanity has a structural place in creation. Humanity's deeds and actions, both positive and negative, affect the whole of creation. The world is the creaturely Sophia, the creaturely nature of the human being. Humanity has been created, in Bulgakov's system, to work with its creaturely nature towards the ideal of relationship—God's relationship to Sophia. The human being is a microcosm of God's macrocosm. Humanity has been gifted with creativity (limited only by its creaturely nature) and is given the ability to self-posit. The human "I" can find itself through its nature, through its creaturely world. This world is a self-contained system, composed of an ever-changing balance of chaos and order. Humanity in its own self-determination tipped the scales in favour of chaos with the Fall. An intervention by God through Christ's incarnation, death and resurrection was necessary to overcome the resultant powers of death within the human prototype. Yet Bulgakov even hesitates to name this action as "intervention." Rather, Christ's incarnation was pre-ordained or at the very least part of a plan for a possible eventuality. Bulgakov's humanity is instrumental in creating order out of chaos, in bringing clarity to the unconsciousness of the creaturely Sophia. The creaturely Sophia is soul and flesh, the materiality of existence. Humanity brings the consciousness of its "I," its spirit, to Sophia. This is the human task: a 'stable equilibrium between spirit and flesh can only be found by man himself, by his actuality.'⁴³ Within the cosmos, humanity is part of a great historical and cosmological timeline. Yet the cosmos also lies within a greater system yet—that of the triune God. God in both person and nature joins with creation. Since the Pentecost, Christ and the Spirit work with the

⁴³ Bulgakov, *Lamb of God*, 145. "actuality": актуальностью, aktual'nost'yu, Bulgakov, *Agnets Bozhii*, 167.

human spirit towards a “fullness in time” when all will be in Christ in full transparency of spirit. All of Bulgakov’s work is filled with this principle of divine-human cooperation. Humanity may be self-determining but it is also given the perfect world with which to achieve proper self-determination. God may suffer with the world, but God also shares the love and joy of existence with the world also. The end times are a part of this twofold cooperation, a combination of God’s action and a culmination of the ripe fruits of human creative effort. The church as the “bride of the lamb” is part of this cosmic picture, working with both physical and spiritual modes of transformation in the eucharist and prayer. Because God is with us and for us Bulgakov maintains a positive vision of both the present and the future. Hope is formed by faith in God’s biblical word to us and by the experiences of material existence. We have the joys and sorrows of existence yet we have existence itself, the creaturely Sophia who is a veil of the Divine Sophia. Behind the veil of material existence we may experience the beauty and reality of divinity. The world is a God-given source of our joys *and* of our sorrows. Our faith is at the same time our hope.

Both Moltmann and Bulgakov have worked extensively on the Trinity. Both theologians have turned to the Spirit after completing books on christology. The Spirit is understood to complement the work of Christ in salvation history. On the one hand, Moltmann’s turn to the Spirit participates in the general renewal of theological interest in pneumatology. He challenges the body/spirit dichotomy with a concept of an inspirited cosmos, grounded in an ecological concept of the cosmos. The Spirit works with the human spirit at the frontier of existence, helping humanity shoulder the cross of Christ and engage with the injustices of the present time. But ultimately, our hope remains with God. On the other hand, Bulgakov posits a dyad of Christ and the Spirit working conjointly with humanity to achieve humanity’s self-determination, that is, to find its proper relationship to Sophia. There is a

progressive revelation and spiritualization of the cosmos until the end times in Bulgakov's theology. Consequently, hope is based in God's promise to us, but also in the positive basis of creation. Humanity was part of God's good creation and we may hope that humanity is worthy to be a part of God's progressive revelation. Our hope is with God *and* humanity.

Convergence and Divergence

Many similarities and some differences between the theologies of Moltmann and Bulgakov have already been noted in the above three sections. This concluding section will draw together some of these points and give a summary of convergence and divergence between these two worldviews. More particularly this summary will be situated within the definition of hope of this thesis. By using the framework of meaningful and purposeful human existence I will determine that an implicit theology of hope can be found in Bulgakov's work. Moreover, this implicit theology of hope has a different basis of meaning than Moltmann's explicit theology of hope. In the conclusion of the final chapter the implications of this difference for a theology of hope relevant for the 21st century will be discussed.

The many convergences between these two theologians from east and west are perhaps surprising but several reasons may be suggested for the concurrences. Bulgakov appears to me to be a man ahead of his times and, indeed, his work is now receiving a burgeoning of interest. It testifies to a kind of Christian universality in his work that it has sparked interest among people from east and west alike. Bulgakov also promoted ecumenism and was influenced by western philosophical ideas.⁴⁴ Moltmann, on the other hand, is a man of his times, writing about hope in the 60's, the politics of suffering in the 70's and ecology in the 80's. Indeed, it is Moltmann's

⁴⁴ Introduction.

intention to be recognized as a committed man of his day and to dialogue with the issues of the times.⁴⁵ Because Bulgakov appears to anticipate these times, points of intersection are not difficult to find, particularly in both ecological theologies of creation. Added to this, Moltmann's tendency to offer several theologies on any one theme means that some of his ideas are bound to find points of intersection with disparate theological views.

Both Moltmann and Bulgakov describe God by perichoresis as the mutual, non-hierarchical community of the three persons. God's relationship of love is the highest model for humanity. Indeed, love is the basis of creation. Because of love, God's freedom and necessity are the same. God's immanence in creation is central to both theologians. Bulgakov discusses this in more detail, describing this immanence in both hypostatic and sophianic formula. Christ and the Holy Spirit work hypostatically within the created world since the Pentecost to aid human self-determination. God's own nature, the divine Sophia forms the basis of creation, and so the creaturely Sophia (and therefore humanity) is also an aspect of divine immanence. In contrast, Moltmann seems to discard any sense of separation between God and creation at all: 'God has made (godself) in need of redemption through human beings,'⁴⁶ meaning that God has joined fully with creation. The Spirit is the medium for the rebirth of the cosmos in the end times.

Both Moltmann and Bulgakov have been accused of saying too much about God. Bulgakov's kataphatic theology goes against the more apophatic tendencies of Orthodox theology. Bulgakov defends his position: theology can talk about God because God is a transcendent *and* an immanent being. In the revelation of this immanence we know that the divine and human

⁴⁵ Introduction.

⁴⁶ Moltmann, *Coming of God*, 333.

natures can coexist in Jesus Christ, therefore the divine nature is not foreign to us. Moltmann also defends his positive stance against his critics but says his theology should always be understood as a quest rather than dogmatic utterance. Moltmann prefers the idea of dialogue and “suggestion.”⁴⁷

Nevertheless for both theologians we can speak about God because there is a natural knowledge of God to be perceived in the natural world. ‘The *frame of reference* for the *perceivable world* is its fundamental knowability. To put it in biblical terms: there is a divine wisdom in all things.’⁴⁸ This wisdom is the structure of the world determined by the Logos. Thus, ‘every scientific discovery discovers something of this wise rationality.’⁴⁹ But it is through the fear and love of God that we respect all living things, and learn the difference between knowledge and wisdom. Knowledge has the power of destructiveness whereas wisdom always has reverence for life.

Despite Moltmann’s circumscriptions the problem of the unequal emphasis on God’s view remains in his theology. In *The Coming of God*, in the section entitled “Interactions between divine and human activity,” he examines three aspects of this activity all from God’s point of view.⁵⁰ God allows the world to affect God’s self through self-restriction and a process of trinitarian glorification. Moltmann does not discuss the nature of divine-human collaboration. In fact we cannot depend on the acts of human beings in the process of sanctification and glorification at all. Only ‘trust in the indwelling *Shekinah* of the holy God himself, and its wanderings with us, offers a well-founded hope for the final redemption of God and of human beings by God.’⁵¹ While it is legitimate to have little faith or hope in humanity

⁴⁷ See Moltmann, *Experiences in Theology*, xiv-xvii.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 338-9. Original emphases.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 339.

⁵⁰ Moltmann, *Coming of God*, 330-36.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 334.

Moltmann's theocentric proclamations can easily sound didactic and assured. Turn to almost any page in any of Moltmann's extensive works and God, or a person of the Trinity, will figure as the subject of a sentence. "God has revealed..." "God's glory is the goal..." "The Spirit fills creation..." "God suffers..." and so on. To make such statements is the nature of systematic theology; nevertheless, a balance is needed between such positive assertions and qualifying ones.

A similar criticism has been made about Bulgakov with his kataphatic theology. Vladimir Lossky, for example, is appalled by the 'holy audacity'⁵² of Bulgakov's treatment of the divine Mystery. Although both theologians have much to say about God Bulgakov balances this tendency with his extensive writing on humanity and the world. The main divergence between Bulgakov and Moltmann is in their understanding of humanity's place in creation and of what humanity means for God. The basis for this begins with their interpretations of *imago Christi*. As we have noted, Bulgakov sees Christ as the prototype of humanity. This cosmic perspective of divine-humanity means that humanity is a very part of God. God creates humanity out of God's own nature, Sophia, giving humanity hypostatic being following the prototype of Christ. Creation is a twofold structure of humanity with its nature, the creaturely Sophia. Over the aeons of history humanity works to illuminate and reveal nature so that, "as it is in heaven (the ideal prototypes) so also on the earth." Bulgakov's anthropocentric picture places humanity at the forefront of change, co-workers with Christ and the Spirit. This is Bulgakov's interpretation of theosis, the deification of the cosmos as a process of divine-human cooperation.

⁵² Vladimir Lossky in Newman, "Bulgakov and Wisdom," 42-3. Original quote from Lossky, *Mystical Theology*, 80-1.

In Moltmann's own examination of Eastern Orthodox theology he finds a docetic element in this process of the deification of the cosmos. He writes, 'Orthodox theology has never made as rigorous a distinction between person and nature as has modern Western theology.'⁵³ He quotes D. Staniloae (*Orthodoxe Dogmatik I*, 294): "According to our belief, every human person is in a certain sense a hypostasis of the whole of cosmic nature, though of course always in close association with other created beings."⁵⁴ The positive aspect of this for Moltmann is that because of the hypostatic bond between person and nature then 'if the person is redeemed, transfigured and deified, nature is redeemed, transfigured and deified too.'⁵⁵ However Moltmann believes that Orthodox theology needed to take the further step and define the whole cosmos as *imago Dei*, God's image. Then to be in the image of God is 'not something that divides human beings from non-human nature. It is the very thing that binds them hypostatically to all the living and the whole cosmos.'⁵⁶ Moltmann's criticism is that 'the deification of cosmos is not thought of as being a new creation of heaven and earth. It is seen as a spiritualization of the cosmos and its interpenetration by the radiance of the Spirit. That lends an element of docetism to the doctrine of cosmic deification held by the Orthodox churches, and to their spirituality.'⁵⁷

Bulgakov is not always representative of Orthodox thought; however, he confirms Staniloae's understanding of the union of hypostasis and nature. Nature and hypostasis *are* equally necessary components of body. And nature is a very part of God. Thus, Bulgakov *does* take the step of confirming

⁵³ Moltmann, *Coming of God*, 273.

⁵⁴ In *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 274.

the cosmos as God's image. However, progressive spiritualization does not have to be docetic. Indeed, it is an important way of making sense of human embodiment and cosmic history. The principle of becoming requires time and process. While Moltmann acknowledges that the new heaven and earth have some relationship to this earth he does not elaborate what this may be. Bulgakov's theology can be seen as an attempt to explain this relationship as progressive spiritualization completed at some future time when the human fruit's of labour have ripened sufficiently. There is no imposition of God's will in this process. Creation was created in its entirety with everything needed for this eventuality in place. Humanity's free will was the indeterminate part of the equation resulting in the great imbalance between humanity and nature of the Fall. Part of salvation history therefore included Christ's incarnation. Bulgakov's Christ does suffer and die on the cross to overcome the effects of sin on earth. But through this deed Christ, humanity's prototype, becomes absolutely immanent to humanity and through humanity, to the world. This is not docetism.

For Bulgakov, the ontological principle dominates over the moral principle. Moltmann, too, in his later work also examines a kind of eschatological ecology and understands Christ to be 'a hidden presence in the earth.'⁵⁸ Using the theology of Johann Beck, Moltmann's predecessor at Tübingen, he proposes that it is *this* earth which 'is the real and sensorily experienceable promise of *the new earth*.'⁵⁹ He suggests a concept of mutual interpenetration that 'makes it possible to preserve both the unity and the difference of what is diverse in kind: God and human being, heaven and earth, person and nature, the spiritual and the sensuous.'⁶⁰ Although this may sound like a process of theosis it is not. The key word is "promise." What we experience

⁵⁸ Ibid., 279.

⁵⁹ Ibid. Original emphasis.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 278.

now is promise for the future, and this is the basis of hope. It is God who will transform the world in the future, not humanity. For Moltmann, humanity in Christ's image remains a predominately social (or moral) principle. Humanity conforms to Christ's image in following his human deeds and in remembering his suffering. Our hope lies in God's resurrection of his Son, image of the godlessness of the world. If God resurrects the one who was godforsaken and humiliated so God will make good the promise of the resurrection of the dead in the end times.

In terms of my thesis on hope, this anthropological difference between Bulgakov and Moltmann is of critical importance. On the one hand, Bulgakov believes that humanity contributes to and has a great responsibility for the transformation of the earth. Humanity is a co-worker with God. On the other hand, Moltmann proposes that humanity *should* take greater responsibility for the earth but his hope lies in God's eschatological promise of transformation in the future. There is no doubt humanity should take responsibility for the earth but I suggest that there is no real motivation to do so in a theology of hope that gives God the only power of transformation in the world. A new understanding of human purpose may be necessary to inspire a hope that will motivate humanity to move out of its lethargy and depression and act with greater consciousness. I believe that a sense of *individual* purpose will help motivate each person towards change. A theory of wholeness that incorporates change is the first step. If hope is based on the belief that there is some correspondence between the human will to live and the world which supports and sustains life then Bulgakov's theology is, indeed, a theology of hope. In the aspects of his worldview that we have examined here, there is an intimate correspondence between human life and the world. Indeed, human life has significance for the sanctification of the cosmos.

The following conclusion will discuss the implications that such a theology of hope may have. I will give an outline of my own theology of hope, presenting what I understand to be the necessary factors for engendering hope in life now, in the 21st century. My hope is that from theory, praxis arises that brings what is in the head and the heart into the hands and the feet.

Conclusion

At the beginning of this dissertation I suggested that hope is based on the wager that there is some correspondence between the human will to live and the world which supports and sustains life, sometimes against all evidence to the contrary. I suggested that it is necessary to cultivate hope so that one has the courage and the will to live and work positively in the world. Hope is needed as an antidote to despair and a sense of meaninglessness in life. I proposed that each person can be an architect of hope, taking what is needed to construct a sense of meaning and purpose in one's life. If the definition of hope given above is correct then the most important structural element in one's worldview of hope is that there is some connection between the human person and the world. Since I am seeking a Christian worldview a *theology* of hope would also need to encompass a connection between God, humanity and the world.

I have examined the worldviews of Jürgen Moltmann and Sergei Bulgakov from this perspective of hope. I particularly examined their theologies for the connections between God, the world and humanity. In the previous chapter I noted similarities in perspective as well as differences. I proposed that Bulgakov has an implicit theology of hope. I would now like to outline my own theology of hope using the building blocks of Moltmann's and Bulgakov's theologies. I offer these insights as a work in progress towards challenging the notions of chance in existence and the insignificance of human life present in some scientific and postmodern worldviews. I suggest that the theology of hope that I present here may be a more useful springboard of hope for life in the 21st century than some of the worldviews that we have inherited from the 20th century.

The foundation for my theology of hope is Bulgakov's sophiology because it is a complete system of connectedness between God, humanity and the world. More than this, humanity has a meaning and a purpose in the world. Bulgakov, finding wisdom in a great diversity of sources, constructs a cosmic timeline for the world. Human history has a beginning and a long process in time and what has happened in the past also has significance for the future. Hope is not just to be found in the future (as in Moltmann's theology of hope) hope may be found in the foundation of creation. The path is also important on this timeline, as people are understood to be agents of creativity, change and transformation. Bulgakov's sophiology is a theology of hope because it reclaims human significance and agency in the world as a positive part of the world. On this basis, I will now summarize the broad outlines of this system with reference to the areas previously discussed in this thesis.

Bulgakov begins with the source of our existence, the triune God. God is love in three persons, united in a perichoretic relationship of love. The world is a result of God's love and a mirror of God's love. The world is good. The very structure of the world is also a mirror of the divine world. It is created from God's substance of love, from Sophia, and given reality by the Spirit and structure by the Son. The world is created to realise all the abundant possibilities of God's love. For this purpose God creates a hypostatic principle within creation. Humanity receives its spirit or ego from the personhood of the Trinity and its nature from God's nature, the divine Sophia. Humanity is a microcosm of God's relationship to the godself's nature, Sophia. Thus the world of creation is a human world, consisting of hypostatic humanity and its sophian nature. This means that there is an identity between the spirit perceived inside a human being and nature outside so that both are part of a unity that is Sophia.

The original sophian creation is a state of neutral chaos. This is the “not-yet.” Humanity is set next to its nature to come to full actualization in time and in freedom. In the original creation, nature is transparent to the human spirit. Humanity is given temporal existence to move forward in time and bring the chaos of nature into conformity with spirit. However, humanity misunderstands the principle of freedom and this has disastrous consequences. With the Fall the force of nonbeing becomes dominant in the world and becomes a sheer force of materiality, impenetrable to the spirit. The chaos of creation becomes the shadow of evil and death enters the world. Humanity becomes alienated from its nature and weighed down by matter. However, the original affinity between the divine nature and human nature makes it possible for the Son of God to incarnate and become the Son of Man. Humanness exists in God prior to creation. This is a key insight in Bulgakov’s theology. Christ is the divine prototype of the human being and the incarnation is necessary to redeem humanity’s prototype so that humanity continues its path towards actualization.

Consequently, through the incarnation Christ overcomes the power of the original Adamic sin. This returns to humanity the possibility of conformity, of transparency in spirit and nature, of right relationship. Human beings remain temporal beings of free will and continue a process in time towards right relationship. This means for Bulgakov that humanity must learn that true freedom is divine-human cooperation. Human beings are not greater than God. The world is divinely ordered and humanity learns to creatively work in the world out of love for the world. Humanity is the agency of transformation, working with Christ and the Spirit to reflect all the modes of God’s love in creation. The Spirit and Christ work as an inseparable dyad in the world since Pentecost. The final transfiguration of the eschaton is a work of the Spirit but the human spirit can also receive the Spirit’s gifts of sanctification and inspiration in its own journey in the world. Here

humanity participates in the process of sanctification—theosis—until the future time when the world is ready to receive the full glory of Christ, Divine-humanity. Salvation is assured but there is a time of judgment when any sin committed will be experienced in Christ's presence and measured against the image of Christ. The purpose of this time of judgment is for purification in readiness for the final glorification so that God will be all in all. The existence of this time of judgment in Bulgakov's theology is an important aspect of theodicy.

These are the broad brushstrokes of Bulgakov's worldview, giving the structure for a theology of hope. It is a theology of hope because it gives an intimate connection between God, the world and humanity. It gives purpose and meaning to human existence. Bulgakov's sophian model is one of unity and interconnection. Every atom is connected with the entire cosmos. Every action affects the world. Human beings are central to the world and are the all-important agents of change in the world. Change does not refer to a process of making something out of what it is not. Rather, it refers to a process of revelation, of revealing the true nature of the world. Bulgakov speaks of re-creation or even remembering, a process of revealing the spiritual nature of the physical world. The human life is about forming right relationship with Sophia.

A theology of hope needs to give hope in one's life now. Therefore, in outlining my own theology of hope I must be able to identify the practical implications of this sophian framework. What does forming right relationship with Sophia mean for Christian praxis today? The key word here is relationship. Instead of the self-contained individual of the Enlightenment I propose that a concept of persons within a personal world is a more constructive basis for understanding right relationship. The perception that the outer world is separate and "other" is an illusion of

materialistic thinking. This has not always been so. Moltmann gives a précis of the many cultures and religion throughout history that have experienced the earth as Mother.¹ We can also understand Sophia as another name for the feminine presence in the world. What may be helpful for a Christian perspective is that Bulgakov brings the concept of world mother into Christian theology. The outer feminine nature of the world is a part of our inner nature. Our world is a personal world. This understanding may help one to dissolve the apparent boundaries between inner and outer in all the perceived oppositions in the world.

What this means for Christian praxis is that the basis for relationships is commonality rather than otherness. This includes the solidarity of Moltmann's praxis, empathizing with the suffering of another. This common ground of life should affect the way we think and the way we act in the world. The need for a sustainable way of life is becoming more apparent. To redress the imbalance of materialism I believe a worldview could even embrace more than sustainability—it could move beyond the principle of maintenance to the principle of giving *more* than one takes. This could be the aspiration in all relationships, both in the "natural" world of the environment and in the personal world of human relationships.

Both Bulgakov and Moltmann recognize that the world is not as it should be. As we have seen Moltmann's response is to see the natural world of the environment as good and human intervention in the environment as damaging. He suggests learning to be "at rest" with nature. Bulgakov also recognizes the effects of sin on the world and that the balance between humanity and the creaturely Sophia is seriously disturbed. Bulgakov nonetheless proposes an economy of human labour working *with* nature.

¹ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 298-302.

The metaphysical ideal of the divine Sophia guides humanity in this labour of raising the world from chaos to cosmos.² The concept of human interaction with the environment, however, is sensitive within social and environmental ethics and ecotheology. The problem with Christian concepts of human labour is that nature is “other” and open for human manipulation.³ Bulgakov’s understanding of the relationship between humanity and nature is not based in manipulation or even human superiority over nature. Humanity and nature are two parts of a whole. Nature is not “other” and the redemption of nature can only occur with the redemption of humanity. These aspects of Bulgakov’s theology would be a worthy subject for future research. They reclaim a useful humanistic (or personal) dimension which I suggest need to be heard in the current ecotheological debates.

Human praxis in the natural world can also inform human relationships. Relationships are not about persons as “other” and therefore seen as objects of manipulation or usefulness. Moltmann and Bulgakov point to the relationality and mutuality between the three persons of the Trinity as the highest model of love for humanity. For Bulgakov, this relationship also manifests itself in God’s love overflowing to create another centre of love, Sophia. The love of God for Sophia and of Sophia for God is also a model for human love and this is realized in its highest earthly form in human relationships. A beautiful expression of this may be heard in Paul’s hymn to love in the marriage service: ‘And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of all is love’ (1 Cor. 13: 13). These words express the

² Chapter 5, 277.

³ See, for example, Peter Scott, "Nature, Technology and the Rule of God: (En)Countering the Disgracing of Nature," in *Re-Ordering Nature: Theology, Society and the New Genetics*, ed. Celia Deane-Drummond, Bronislaw Szerszynski, and Robin Grove-White (London/New York: T&T Clark Ltd, 2003), 283.

mutuality of faith, hope and love, meaning that these attributes can only be expressed in relationship, whether human or divine.

Such a path of faith, hope and love may seem misguided or unrealistic in the scenarios with which I began this dissertation. How does one sustain hope in the face of worldwide media coverage that presents a daily dose of war, famine, environmental disaster and every evil imaginable? Humanity's ability to be destructive is well-documented. Less publicised is humanity's ability to be constructive. In the face of the negative images in the media it is important to bring balance by seeking more positive pictures. Some of the most encouraging findings of my research into hope came from the field of behavioural psychology. A large-scale study of well-being discovered that, on the whole, most people's outlook in life was positive.⁴ Yet far from being delusional, most self-reports of happiness are thought to be 'reasonably reliable over time, despite changing life circumstances.'⁵ Other studies show that happiness is not essentially linked to materialism. The growing affluence of the last four decades in North America, Europe and Japan has not been accompanied by increased happiness.⁶ After a certain level of economic comfort has been met, the greatest factor in well-being concerns personal relationships: 'a mountain of data reveal that most people are happier when attached than when unattached.'⁷ Despite popular myth this is as much the case for women as for men. Other major contributors to

⁴ Myers, "Happy People," 56-7. See D. G. Myers and E. Diener, "The Pursuit of Happiness," *Scientific American* 274 (1996), Myers, "Happy People," 54-6. The study surveyed 1.1 million people across 45 nations, endeavouring to represent most of humanity, and discovered that from a scale of zero (very unhappy or completely dissatisfied with life) to ten (very happy or completely satisfied with life), the average response was 6.75.

⁵ Myers, "Happy People," 57. See E. Diener, "Assessing Subjective Well-Being: Progress and Opportunities," *Social Indicators Research* 31 (1994).

⁶ Myers, "Happy People," 61. See R. Easterlin, "Will Raising the Incomes of All Increase the Happiness of All?," *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization* 27 (1995).

⁷ Myers, "Happy People," 62. A study of 20,800 people in 19 countries confirmed the marriage-happiness correlation. See A. Mastekaasa, "Marital Status, Distress, and Well-Being: An International Comparison," *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 5 (1994).

happiness include good social support, close friendships, a sense of belonging and faith.⁸ These studies indicate that life on a small scale rather than a “newsworthy” scale is often more positive than negative. Perhaps the world is a happier and more constructive place than we are led to believe. If one cannot sustain a sense of hope for the greater world returning to a personal perspective may be a positive move. The importance of relationships and of faith signposted in the above studies also supports my own thesis of hope.

The main element of Bulgakov’s sophiology that I have described in my own theology of hope is that of the personal world as the basis of all relationships. In a personal world there is no “other”: there are only possibilities for relationship. I have suggested that giving more than one takes is a healthy basis for any relationship both environmental and personal. I have also promoted involvement and interaction within the world as a positive human trait. Indeed, this is the purpose of humanity in Bulgakov’s sophiology.

I define a theology of hope as one which makes sense of the present as a path towards a meaningful and enlightened future. Therefore, the major focus in this dissertation has sought to understand humanity’s place in the cosmos. Bulgakov’s theology returns humanity to its place as the agency of change and transformation in the cosmos, revealing the inherent wisdom, or sophianicity of creation. On the one hand, there is a positive transformation of substance, of the physical, seen in the eucharist and in artistic and creative endeavours of humanity. On the other hand, Bulgakov alludes to the positive and transformative power of prayer. Theology about God is also a speaking to God. Although the importance of prayer and worship to both

⁸ Myers, "Happy People," 62-5.

Moltmann and Bulgakov has not been described in any detail in this thesis, it is of fundamental importance to both. Human knowing has its limits. Müller-Fahrenholz comments that when Moltmann faces the “ungraspability” of God he ‘moves from wanting to understand to worship.’⁹ The great mystery of God leads to wonder, praise and prayer. Above all, God is the source of our hope. This thesis has emphasized human endeavour but that is only because a positive theology of human endeavour has been missing from discussions of Christian anthropology. I suggest research into the concept of a personal world would help dissolve the currently perceived boundary between environmental ethics and Christian humanism.¹⁰

The principle of human transformation as divine-human cooperation in its many forms is the tenet of my thesis. What is outside us is a reflection of what is inside, it is a very part of us. For this reason we can begin to change the way in which we interact with our own world. Each microcosm is an important part of the macrocosm. We cannot change the whole world but we can change our personal world. Each overcoming of the chaos is important. The challenge for each person in the 21st century is to build a *sustainable* worldview, or even a framework that gives more than it takes. I suggest that recognizing Sophia who is a part of our very self can be an important step to treading more lightly on the earth. The *homo viator* is on a journey to God and the journey can teach us to recognize the divine in the world so that we may also be ready when we meet God “face to face.” On this journey I do not believe that faith in the God of the future is enough to sustain us. I believe that it is time to renew our hope in humanity, knowing

⁹ Müller-Fahrenholz, *Kingdom and Power*, 199.

¹⁰ See, for example, James A. Nash, "In Flagrant Dissent: An Environmentalist's Contentions," in *Environmental Ethics and Christian Humanism* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 107.

the faith God has in us and knowing that humanity is created for the highest possible spiritual destiny. It is in our lives with others that we learn how to love God. Faith, hope and love for and in God is the basis of our faith, hope and love for and in humanity. If God has faith in us, so we can have faith in humanity. If God loves us, so we, too, can have love for humanity. And if God has the highest hopes for the beings created in God's image then we must trust God and hope for humanity also. In this picture of the world each person is important. So we can be architects of hope, for ourselves, for our neighbour and for the world. We begin with hope in our own lives, knowing that it is through our own strivings that we contribute to our own good and the greater good. And this is a reason to hope.

Bibliography of Works Cited

- Adorno, T. W.. *Negative Dialektik*, 1966.
- Afanasiev, Nicholas. *The Church of the Holy Spirit*. Translated by Vitaly Permiakov. Edited with an introduction by Michael Plekon, Foreword by Rowan Williams ed. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007.
- Althaus, Paul. *The Theology of Martin Luther*. Translated by Robert C. Schultz. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966.
- Aquinas, Thomas. *Summa Theologiae, Volume 33: Hope (2a2æ. 17-22)*. Translated by W. J. Hill. 60 vols. Vol. 33, *Summa Theologiae*. London: Blackfriars, 1966.
- Arjakovsky, Antoine. *The Sophiology of Father Sergius Bulgakov and Contemporary Western Theology*, 2001 [cited February 22 2006]. Available from <http://www.geocities.com/sbulgakovsociety.SVTQArjakovskyEssay1060204.doc>.
- Attfeld, D. G. "Can God Be Crucified? A Discussion of J. Moltmann." *Scottish Journal of Theology* 30, no. 1 (1977): 47-57.
- Augustine. *Augustine of Hippo: Selected Writings*. Translated by Mary T. Clark. Edited by John Farina, *Classics of Western Spirituality*. New York: Paulist Press, 1984.
- . *Saint Augustine's Enchiridion*. Translated by Ernest Evans. London: S.P.C.K., 1953.
- Baker, Anthony D. "Making Perfection: An Experiment in Theological Ontology." University of Virginia, 2004.
- Barth, Karl. *Church Dogmatics*. Vol. 3.
- . *Der Römerbrief*. Translated by The Epistle to the Romans English translation by E. C. Hoskyns, 1933. 2nd ed, 1922.
- Basil. *On the Holy Spirit*.
- Bauckham, Richard. "Jürgen Moltmann." In *The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology in the Twentieth Century*, edited by David F. Ford, 209-24. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing, 1997.
- . *Moltmann: Messianic Theology in the Making*. Basingstoke, Hants, UK: Marshall Pickering, 1987.

- . "Moltmanns Eschatologie Des Kreuzes." In *Diskussion Über Jürgen Moltmanns Buch »Der Gekreuzigte Gott«*, edited by M. Welker, 44-54. Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1979.
- . "Moltmann's *Theology of Hope* Revisited." *Scottish Journal of Theology* 42, no. 2 (1989): 199-214.
- . *The Theology of Jürgen Moltmann*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995.
- . "Time and Eternity." In *God Will Be All in All: The Eschatology of Jürgen Moltmann*, edited by Richard Bauckham, 155-226. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999.
- Berry, Thomas. *The Dream of the Earth*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1990.
- Bloch, Ernst. *The Principle of Hope*. Translated by Neville Plaice, Stephen Plaice and Paul Knight. Paperback ed. Three vols. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1995.
- Bobrinskoy, Boris. *The Mystery of the Trinity: Trinitarian Experience and Vision in the Biblical and Patristic Tradition*. Translated by Anthony P. Gythiel. Crestwood, New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1999.
- Bohm, David. *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980.
- Braaten, Carl E. "The Crucified God." *Journal of Religion* 56, no. 1 (1976): 113-21.
- Brunner, Emil. *Dogmatics Ii: The Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption*. London and Philadelphia: ET, 1952.
- Buber, Martin. *Good and Evil*. Translated by Ronald Gregory Smith Michael Bullock. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952.
- . *I and Thou*. Translated by Ronald Gregory Smith. 2nd ed. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1959.
- Bulgakov, Sergei. *Agnets Bozhii: O Bogochelovechestve, Chast' I*. Paris: YMCA Press, 1933.
- . *Avtobiographicheskie Zametki*. Paris, 1946.
- . "The Church as Tradition." *The Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* 12 (1989): 64-70.
- . "Holy Scripture and Holy Tradition." *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* 1 (1990): 70-74.
- . "Hypostasis and Hypostaticity: Scholia to *the Unfading Light*." *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 49, no. 1-2 (2005): 17-46.
- . *Kupina Neopalimaya*. Paris, 1927.
- . "The Lamb of God: On the Divine Humanity." In *Towards a Russian Political Theology*, edited by Rowan Williams, 183-227. Edinburgh: T&T Clark Ltd, 1999.

- . *Philosophy of Economy: The World as Household*. Translated by Catherine Evtuhov. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.
- . "Sermon for the Sunday of the Last Judgement." *Sourozh* 3 (1981): 1-7.
- . *Sophia, the Wisdom of God: An Outline of Sophiology*. Translated by Rev. Patrick Thompson, Rev. O. Fielding Clarke and Miss Xenia Braikevitch. Revised edition ed. Hudson, New York: Lindisfarne Press, 1993.
- . *Svet Neverchernii. Sozertssaniia I Umozreniia (the Light Which Does Not Fade. Contemplations and Speculations)*. Moscow, 1917 ed. Westmead: Gregg International Publishers Limited, 1971.
- . *Towards a Russian Political Theology*. Translated by Rowan Williams. Edinburgh: T&T Clark Ltd, 1999.
- . "The Unfading Light." In *Towards a Russian Political Theology*, edited by Rowan Williams, 133-61. Edinburgh: T&T Clark Ltd, 1999.
- . "The Wisdom of God." In *A Bulgakov Anthology*, edited by James Pain and Nicolas Zernov, 144-56. London: SPCK, 1976.
- Bulgakov, Sergius. *The Bride of the Lamb*. Translated by Boris Jakim. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2002.
- . *A Bulgakov Anthology*. Edited by James Pain & Nicolas Zernov. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1976.
- . *The Comforter*. Translated by Boris Jakim. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004.
- . *The Holy Grail and the Eucharist*. Translated by Boris Jakim. Hudson: Lindisfarne Books, 1997.
- . *The Lamb of God*. Translated by Boris Jakim. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008.
- . "Social Teaching in Modern Russian Orthodox Theology." *Diakonia* 20, no. 3 (1986).
- Bultmann, Rudolf. *Existence and Faith*. Selected, translated and introduced by Schubert M. Ogden ed. London: Collins, 1961.
- . *History and Eschatology: The Gifford Lectures*. Reprint, 1975 ed. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1957.
- . "The Understanding of Man and the World in the New Testament and in the Greek World." In *Essays Philosophical and Theological*. London and New York: ET, 1955.
- Buss, David M. "The Evolution of Happiness." *American Psychologist* 55, no. 1 (2000): 15-23.
- Buxton, Graham. "A Perichoretic View of Creation: Approaching Biodiversity from the Perspectives of Trinitarian Theology and Contemporary Physics." *Interface: A Forum of Theology in the World* 7, no. 1 (2004): 109-17.

- Cady, Susan, Marian Ronan, and Hal Taussig. *Wisdom's Feast: Sophia in Study and Celebration*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989.
- Chryssavgis, John. "The Greek Orthodox Clergyman in Australia - a Personal Insight." In *Religion and Ethnic Identity: An Australian Study*, edited by A. W. Ata, 152-66. Richmond, Victoria: Spectrum, 1988.
- Copleston, Frederic. *Russian Religious Philosophy*. Notre Dame, Indiana: Search Press, 1988.
- Crum, Winston F. "Sergius N. Bulgakov: From Marxism to Sophiology." *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (1983): 3-25.
- Dabney, Lyle. *Jürgen Moltmann and John Wesley's Third Article* Wesley Center for Applied Theology, 2009 [cited March 2 2009]. Available from http://wesley.mnu.edu/wesleyan_theology/theojrnl/26-30/29-09.htm.
- Deane-Drummond, Celia. *Creation through Wisdom*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000.
- . *Ecology in Jürgen Moltmann's Theology*. Vol. 75, *Text & Studies in Religion*. Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellen Press, Ltd, 1997.
- . "Shadow Sophia in Christological Perspective: The Evolution of Sin and the Redemption of Nature." *Theology and Science* 6, no. 1 (2008): 13-32.
- . "Sophia: The Feminine Face of God as a Metaphor for an Ecotheology." *Feminist Theology* 16 (1997): 11-31.
- Delicata, Nadia. "The Comforter and Divine-Humanity." *Theandros: An Online Journal of Orthodox Christian Theology and Philosophy* 5, no. 1 (2007): 32.
- Derr, Thomas Sieger. *Environmental Ethics and Christian Humanism*. Edited by Max L. Stackhouse. Vol. 2, *Abingdon Press Studies in Christian Ethics and Economic Life*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989.
- Diener, E. "Assessing Subjective Well-Being: Progress and Opportunities." *Social Indicators Research* 31 (1994): 103-57.
- Easterlin, R. "Will Raising the Incomes of All Increase the Happiness of All?" *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization* 27 (1995): 35-47.
- Edwards, Denis. "The Diversity of Life and the Trinity." *Interface: A Forum for Theology and the World* 7 (2004).
- Engelsman, Joan Chamberlain. "The Feminine Dimension of the Divine." Drew University, 1977.
- Evtuhov, Catherine. *The Cross and the Sickle: Sergei Bulgakov and the Fate of Russian Religious Philosophy, 1890-1920*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997.
- Fichte, J. G. "Grundlage Der Gesamten Wissenschaftslehre (Foundations of a General Theory of Science)." *Werke* 1, no. Berlin reprint, 1971 (1794): 279-80.

- Fiddes, Paul S. "Process Theology." In *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Modern Christian Thought*, edited by Alister E. McGrath, 472-76. Oxford, England; Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1993.
- Florenskii, Pavel. *Stolp I Utverzhdenie Istiny - Opyt Pravoslavnoi Teoditsei V Dvenadtsati Pos'makh*. Translated by Mikhail Sergeev. Moscow: Pravda, 1990.
- Foucault, Michel. *Archaeology of Knowledge*. Translated by A. M. Sheridan Smith. London and New York: Routledge, 2002.
- Fraser, Malcolm. "Torture Team: Human Rights, Lawyers, Interrogations and the 'War on Terror' - a Response to Philippe Sands." *Melbourne Journal of International Law* 9, no. 2 (2008): 381-90.
- French, William C. "Returning to Creation: Moltmann's Eschatology Naturalized." *Journal of Religion* 68, no. 1 (1988): 78-86.
- Gallaher, Anastassy Brandon, and Irina Kukota. "Protopresbyter Sergii Bulgakov: Hypostasis and Hypostaticity: Scholia to *the Unfading Light*." *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 49, no. 1-2 (2005): 5-15.
- Gavrilyuk, Paul L. "The Kenotic Theology of Sergius Bulgakov." *Scottish Journal of Theology* 58 (2005): 251-69.
- . "Universal Salvation in the Eschatology of Sergius Bulgakov." *The Journal of Theological Studies* 57, no. 1 (2006): 110-32.
- George, Kerry. "A Sophia of Substance: The Divine Ecology of Sergius Bulgakov." Honours, Murdoch, 2004.
- Gilkey, L. *Religion and the Scientific Future: Reflections on Myth, Science, and Theology*. New York: Harper, 1970.
- Gogarten, Friedrich. *Der Mensch Zwischen Gott Und Welt*. Heidelberg, 1956.
- Gorringe, Timothy. "Eschatology and Political Radicalism." In *God Will Be All in All: The Eschatology of Jürgen Moltmann*, edited by Richard Bauckham, 87-114. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999.
- Green, G. *Imagining God: Theology and the Religious Imagination*. New York: Harper, 1989.
- Gunton, Colin E. *Christ and Creation*. Carlisle, California: Paternoster Press, 1992.
- Gutiérrez, Gustavo. *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation*. Translated by and edited by Sister Caridad Inda and John Eagleson. London: SCM Press Ltd, 1974.
- Heschel, Abraham. *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man*. New York, 1951.
- Holden, R. R. "Hopelessness." In *Encyclopedia of Psychology*, edited by Raymond J. Corsini, 156. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1994.
- Hollick, Malcolm. *The Science of Oneness: A Worldview for the Twenty-First Century*. Winchester, New York: O Books, 2006.

- Holy Bible, New International Version*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973.
- The Holy Bible, the New Revised, Standard Version*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1989.
- Horkheimer, Max. *Die Sehnsucht Nach Dem Ganz Anderen*, 1970.
- . *Kritische Theorie I*.
- Igunnov, Pavel. "Christology: On the Development of the Ontological Meaning of the Divine Incarnation in the Theology of Archpriest Sergy Bulgakov." *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* 10 (1989): 64-71.
- Jaeger, John David. "Jürgen Moltmann and the Problem of Evil." *The Asbury Theological Journal* 53, no. 2 (1998): 5-14.
- Jasper, David. "The Limits of Formalism and the Theology of Hope: Ricouer, Moltmann and Dostoyevsky." *Journal of Literature and Theology* 1, no. 1 (1987): 1-10.
- Johnson, Elizabeth. *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse*. New York: Crossroad Publishing Co., 1992.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Religion with the Limits of Reason Alone*. Translated by Theodore M. Greene and Hoyt H. Hudson. New York: Harper & Row, 1960.
- Kasper, Walter. "Revolution in Gottesverständnis?" In *Diskussion Über Jürgen Moltmanns Buch »Der Gekreuzigte Gott«*, edited by M. Welker. Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1979.
- Kelly, J. N. D. *Early Christian Doctrines*. Third ed. London: Adam & Charles Black, 1965.
- Koenig, H. G. *Is Religion Good for Your Health? The Effects of Religion on Physical and Mental Illness*. Binghamton, N.Y.: Haworth Press, 1997.
- Kuhn, Thomas S. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. 3rd ed. Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1996.
- Lossky, Vladimir. *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*. Translated by Members of the fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius. 1957 English translation ed. London: James Clarke & Co. Ltd, 1944.
- Louth, Andrew. "Wisdom and the Russians: The Sophiology of Fr Sergei Bulgakov." In *Where Shall Wisdom Be Found? Wisdom in the Bible, the Church and the Contemporary World*, edited by Stephen C. Barton, 169-81. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999.
- Luther, Martin. *Table-Talk* (Translator: William Hazlitt) [eBook]. Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 2008 [cited June 2008]. Available from <http://www.netlibrary.com/prospiero.murdoch.edu.au/Reader/>.
- Marsch, W. D., ed. *Diskussion Über Die "Theologie Der Hoffnung" Von Jürgen Moltmann*. Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1967.

- Mastekaasa, A. "Marital Status, Distress, and Well-Being: An International Comparison." *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 5 (1994): 21-39.
- Matthews, Caitlin. *Sophia Goddess of Wisdom: The Divine Feminine from Black Goddess to World Soul*. Hammersmith, London: Thorsons, 1992.
- McFague, Sallie. *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993.
- McGrath, A. *Luther's Theology of the Cross*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1985.
- Meehan, Brenda. "Wisdom/Sophia, Russian Identity, and Western Feminist Theology." *Cross Currents* 46 (1996): 149-68.
- Meeks, M. Douglas. *God the Economist: The Doctrine of God and Political Economy*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989.
- Meerson, Michael A. *The Trinity of Love in Modern Russian Theology: The Love Paradigm and the Retrieval of Western Medieval Love Mysticism in Modern Russian Trinitarian Thought (from Solovyov to Bulgakov)*. Edited by Zachary Hayes, *Studies in Franciscanism*. Quincy, IL.: Franciscan Press, 1998.
- Meyendorff, John. "Creation in the History of Orthodox Theology." *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 27 (1983): 27-37.
- Moltmann, Jürgen. "Antwort Auf Der Kritik an »Der Gekreuzigte Gott«." In *Diskussion Über Jürgen Moltmanns Buch »Der Gekreuzigte Gott«*, edited by M. Welker, 166-90. Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1979.
- . "Antwort Auf Die Kritik Der »Theologie Der Hoffnung«." In *Diskussion Über Die »Theologie Der Hoffnung« Von Jürgen Moltmann*, edited by W. D. Marsch, 201-38. Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1967.
- . *A Broad Palace: An Autobiography*. Translated by Margaret Kohl. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008.
- . *The Church in the Power of the Holy Spirit*. Translated by Margaret Kohl. English ed. London: SCM Press Ltd, 1977.
- . *The Coming of God: Christian Eschatology*. Translated by Margaret Kohl. London: SCM Press Ltd, 1996.
- . *The Crucified God*. Translated by R. A. Wilson and John Bowden. London: SCM Press Ltd, 1974.
- . "'the Crucified God'." *Theology Today* 31 (1974): 6-18.
- . "The 'Crucified God': A Trinitarian Theology of the Cross." *Interpretation* 26 (1972): 278-99.
- . "»Dialektik, Die Umschlägt in Identität« - Was Ist Das? Zu Befürchtungen Walter Kaspars." In *Diskussion Über Jürgen Moltmanns Buch »Der Gekreuzigte Gott«*, 149-56. Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1979.
- . "Die Kategorie Novum in the Christlichen Theologie." In *Perspekiven Der Theologie: Gesammelte Aufsätze*. Munich: Kaiser, 1968.

- . *Experiences in Theology: Ways and Forms of Christian Theology*. Translated by Margaret Kohl. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000.
- . *The Experiment Hope*. Translated by translated and foreword by M. Douglas Meeks Edited. London: SCM Press, 1975.
- . *The Future of Creation*. Translated by Margaret Kohl. London: SCM Press Ltd, 1979.
- . *God in Creation: An Ecological Doctrine of Creation*. Translated by Margaret Kohl. English ed. London: SCM Press Ltd, 1985.
- . *Gott in Der Schöpfung: Ökologische Schöpfungslehre*. 3rd ed. Munich: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1987.
- . *Hope and Planning*. Translated by Margaret Clarkson. London: SCM Press Ltd, 1971.
- . *In the End-the Beginning: The Life of Hope*. Translated by Margaret Kohl. First Fortress Press ed. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004.
- . "Liberating and Anticipating the Future." In *Liberating Eschatology: Essays in Honor of Letty M. Russell*, edited by Margaret A. Farley and Serene Jones, 189-208. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999.
- . *Religion, Revolution, and the Future*. New York: Scribner's, 1969.
- . *The Source of Life: The Holy Spirit and the Theology of Life*. Translated by Margaret Kohl. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997.
- . *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation*. Translated by Margaret Kohl. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992.
- . *Theology of Hope*. Translated by James W. Leitch. London: SCM Press, 1967.
- . *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God : The Doctrine of God*. Translated by Margaret Kohl. London: SCM Press, 1981.
- . *The Way of Jesus Christ: Christology in Messianic Dimensions*. Translated by Margaret Kohl. London: SCM Press, 1990.
- . *Zukunft Der Schöpfung: Gesammelte Aufsätze*. Munich: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1977.
- , ed. *How I Have Changed: Reflections on Thirty Years of Theology*. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1997.
- Müller-Fahrenholz, Geiko. *The Kingdom and the Power: The Theology of Jürgen Moltmann*. Translated by John Bowden. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001.
- Myers, D. G., and E. Diener. "The Pursuit of Happiness." *Scientific American* 274 (1996): 54-6.
- Myers, David G. "The Funds, Friends, and Faith of Happy People." *American Psychologist* 55, no. 1 (2000): 56-67.

- Naess, Arne, and George Sessions. *Foundation for Deep Ecology: Deep Ecology Platform*, 2008 [cited December 12 2008]. Available from <http://www.deepecology.org/platform.htm>.
- Nash, James A. "In Flagrant Dissent: An Environmentalist's Contentions." In *Environmental Ethics and Christian Humanism*, 105-24. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996.
- Neusner, Jacob. "Paradigmatic Versus Historical Thinking: The Case of Rabbinic Judaism." *History and Theory* 36, no. 3 (1997): 353-77.
- Newman, Barbara. "Sergius Bulgakov and the Theology of Divine Wisdom." *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 22 (1978): 39-73.
- Nichols, Aidan. "Bulgakov and Sophiology." *Sobornost* 13 (1992): 17-32.
- . *Wisdom from Above: A Primer in the Theology of Father Sergei Bulgakov*. Leominster: Gracewing, 2005.
- Norris, Richard A., ed. *The Christological Controversy*. Edited by William G. Rusch, *Sources of Early Christian Thought*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980.
- O'Donnell, John. "The Trinitarian Panentheism of Sergej Bulgakov." *Gregorianum* 76, no. 1 (1995): 31-45.
- Otto, Randall E. "God and History in Jürgen Moltmann." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 35, no. 3 (1992): 375-88.
- . "The Resurrection in Jürgen Moltmann." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 35, no. 1 (1992): 81-90.
- Palamas, Gregory. *Capita Physica, Theologica, Moralia Et Practica*, 69, P.G., 1169 C.
- Pannenberg, Wolfhart. *Theology and the Kingdom of God*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1969.
- Park, Aaron Pyungchoon. "The Christian Hope According to Bultmann, Pannenberg, and Moltmann." *Westminster Theological Journal* 33, no. 2 (1971): 153-74.
- Perls, F. S., R. F. Hefferline, and P. Goodman. *Gestalttherapie. Lebensfreude Und Persönlichekeitsentfaltung*. Stuttgart, 1979.
- Peterson, Christopher. "The Future of Optimism." *American Psychologist* 55, no. 1 (2000): 44-55.
- Petrella, Ivan. *The Future of Liberation Theology: An Argument and Manifesto*. Aldershot, England/Burlington, USA: Ashgate, 2004.
- Petzold, H. *Die Neuen Körpertherapien*. 2nd ed. Stuttgart, 1980.
- Plekon, Michael. *Living Icons: Persons of Faith in the Eastern Church*. Foreword by Lawrence S. Cunningham ed. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002.

- . "Russian Theology and Theologians Revisited." *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 44 (2000): 409-19.
- Pyper, Hugh. "Book Review of "the Coming of God"." *Theology* 100, no. 794 (1997): 131-2.
- Rad, Gerhard von. *Old Testament Theology*. Translated by D.M.G. Stalker. 2 vols. Vol. 2. London: SCM Press, 1975.
- Rahner, Karl. *Theological Investigations*. Translated by Kevin Smyth. Vol. 4. Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1966.
- Reid, Duncan. *Energies of the Spirit: Trinitarian Models in Eastern Orthodox and Western Theology*. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997.
- Rosenthal, Bernice Glatzer. "The Nature and Function of Sophia in Sergei Bulgakov's Prerevolutionary Thought." In *Russian Religious Thought*, edited by Judith Deutsch & Gustafson Kornblatt, Richard F., 154-75. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996.
- Rosenzweig, Franz. *Der Stern Der Erlösung, Pt Iii, Book 1*. Heidelberg, 1959.
- Sauter, Gerhard. "Angewandte Eschatologie: Überlegungen Zu Jürgen Moltmanns "Theologie Der Hoffnung"." In *Diskussion Über Die "Theologie Der Hoffnung" Von Jürgen Moltmann*, edited by W. D. Marsch, 106-21. Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1967.
- Scanlon, Michael J. "Hope." In *The New Dictionary of Theology*, edited by Joseph Komonchak, Mary Collins and Dermot A. Lane, 492-98. Dublin: Gill & Macmillan Ltd, 1989.
- Schelling, Friedrich. "Ideen Zur Philosophie Der Natur (Towards a Philosophy of Nature)." *Werke* 1 (1979): 152.
- Schipflinger, Thomas. *Sophia-Maria: A Holistic Vision of Creation*. Translated by James Morgante. York Beach, Maine: Samuel Weiser, Inc, 1998.
- Schleiermacher, Friedrich. *The Christian Faith*. Translated by H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart. English translation of the Second German Edition ed. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1928.
- . "Sendschreiben an Dr. Lücke, as Introduction to *Der Christliche Glaube Nach Den Grundsätzen Der Evangelische Kirche*." *Bibliothek theologischer Klassiker* 13 (1889): 36.
- Schmemmann, Alexander. *Russian Theology: 1920-1972 - an Introductory Survey*, 1967 [cited 4/04 2004]. Available from <http://www.schmemmann.org/byhim/russiantheology.html>.
- Schroeder, Hans-Werner. *Necessary Evil: Origins and Purposes*. Translated by James H. Hinds. Edinburgh: Floris Books, 2005.
- Schroer, Silvia. *Wisdom Has Built Her House: Studies on the Figure of Sophia in the Bible*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2000.

- Schwartz, Barry. "Self-Determination." *American Psychologist* 55, no. 1 (2000): 79-88.
- Scott, Peter. "Nature, Technology and the Rule of God: (En)Countering the Disgracing of Nature." In *Re-Ordering Nature: Theology, Society and the New Genetics*, edited by Celia Deane-Drummond, Bronislaw Szerszynski and Robin Grove-White, 275-92. London/New York: T&T Clark Ltd, 2003.
- Sergeev, Mikhail. *Sophiology in Russian Orthodoxy: Solov'ev, Bulgakov, Loskii and Berdiaev*. Lewistown, New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 2006.
- Sergius Bulgakov Society* [cited March 1, 2009. Available from <http://www.geocities.com/sbulgakovsociety/>].
- Skolimowski, Henryk. "The Dogma of Anti-Anthropocentrism and Ecophilosophy." *Environmental Ethics* 6, no. 3 (1984): 283-88.
- Slesinski, Robert. "Bulgakov on Sophia." *Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 59, no. 3-4 (2007): 131-45.
- Smith, R. G. *Martin Buber*. London: Carey Kingsgate Press Ltd, 1966.
- Smith, S. M. "Theology of Hope." In *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, edited by Walter A. Elwell, 532-4. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1992.
- Snyder, C. R. "Hope and Optimism." In *Encyclopedia of Human Behavior*, edited by V. S. Ramachandran, 535-42. San Diego: Academic Press, Inc., 1994.
- Soloviev, Vladimir. *The Justification of the Good: An Essay on Moral Philosophy*. Translated by Nathalie A. Duddington. Edited by Stephen Graham, *Constable's Russian Library*. London: Constable and Company Ltd., 1918.
- . *Lectures on Divine Humanity*. Revised and edited by Boris Jakim ed. Hudson: Lindisfarne Press, 1995.
- Stevenson, J., ed. *Creed, Councils and Controversies: Documents Illustrating the History of the Church Ad 337-461*. revised with additional documents by W. H. C. Friend ed. London: SPCK, 1989.
- Stump, Eleonore. "Aquinas on the Sufferings of Job." In *Reasoned Faith: Essays in Philosophical Theology in Honor of Norman Kretzmann*, edited by Eleonore Stump, 328-57. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1993.
- Sturm, Douglas. "Praxis and Promise: On the Ethics of Political Theology." *Ethics* 92, no. 4 (1982): 733-50.
- Tataryn, Myroslaw. "Sergius Bulgakov (1871-1944): Time for a New Look." *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 42 (1998): 315-38.
- Taylor, Shelley E., Margaret E. Kemeny, Geoffrey M. Reed, Julianne E. Bower, and Tara L. Gruenewald. "Psychological Resources, Positive Illusions, and Health." *American Psychologist* 55, no. 1 (2000): 99-109.
- Teilhard de Chardin, Pierre. *Christianity and Evolution*. Translated by René Hague. London: Collins, 1971.

- Tillich, Paul. *Systematic Theology: Three Volumes in One*. The University of Chicago Press, 1967.
- Valliere, Paul. *Modern Russian Theology: Bukharev, Soloviev, Bulgakov - Orthodox Theology in a New Key*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000.
- . "The Paris School of Theology: Unity or Multiplicity?" Paper presented at the La Teologia ortodossa e l'Occidente nel XX secolo: Storia di un incontro, Seriate, Italy, October 30-31 2004.
- . "Sophiology as the Dialogue of Orthodoxy with Modern Civilization." In *Russian Religious Thought*, edited by Judith Deutsch Kornblatt & Richard F. Gustafson, 176-92. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996.
- Victorin-Vangerud, Nancy. "The Spirit's Struggle: Reconciliation in Moltmann's *Pneumatologia Crucis*." *Colloquium* 29, no. 2 (1997): 95-103.
- Vischer, Lukas, ed. *Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ: Ecumenical Reflections on the Filioque Controversy*. London, Geneva: SPCK, World Council of Churches, 1981.
- Whitehead, Alfred North. *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*. 2nd ed. New York: Macmillan, 1967.
- Williams, Rowan. "Eastern Orthodox Theology." In *The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology in the Twentieth Century*, edited by David F. Ford, 499-513. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing, 1997.
- . "Introduction to *the Lamb of God: On the Divine Humanity*." In *Towards a Russian Political Theology*, edited by Rowan Williams, 163-81. Edinburgh: T&T Clark Ltd, 1999.
- . "Introduction to *the Unfading Light*." In *Towards a Russian Political Theology*, edited by Rowan Williams, 113-31. Edinburgh: T&T Clark Ltd, 1999.
- Williams, Stephen N. "The Problem with Moltmann." *European Journal of Theology* 5, no. 2 (1996): 157-67.
- Young, Norman. "Hope, Faith and Action." In *Hope: Challenging the Culture of Despair*, edited by C Mostert, ? Hindmarsh: ATF Press, 2004.
- Zander, Lev. *Bog I Mir (God and the World)*. 2 vols. Paris, 1948.