

# **The Interdependent Light: A Quaker Theology of Reconciliation**

**by**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis brings the fields of Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation and Liberal Quaker theology into dialogue, and lays the foundation for developing an original Liberal Quaker reconciliation theology. This dialogue focuses specifically on the metaphorical language employed to describe the relationship of interdependence between humans and God, which both traditions hold as integral to their conceptions of human and divine existence.

Towards this pursuit, I provide an outline of the forms of reconciliation and Liberal Quaker theology used for the dialogue. This includes two main elements: a definition of the core concepts of each theology, including the main structural elements; and, a model of the human and their relationship with other humans, including the human person's relationship with God and the ways which these relationships are both broken and healed. This is necessary as Liberal Quaker theology is a diverse tradition, with numerous perspectives on the major concepts and how they are expressed and interpreted. This unique approach develops an original model of reconciliatory interdependence between humans and God that is rooted in both Christological and Universalist Liberal Quaker metaphorical and theological categories and utilises the Liberal Quaker language of God as interdependent Light towards a new theology.

## Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to Megan, my spouse, my bulwark, my best friend.

Of all earthly joys, thou art my choice.

Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for love is as strong as death, Its flashes are flashes of fire, a raging flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it. If one offered for love all the wealth of one's house, it would be utterly scorned.

Song of Solomon, 8:6-7

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- Megan: You are everything.

- God: I love you. Amen.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **1.1 Argument**

This thesis seeks to develop Liberal Quaker systematic theologies of division and interdependence through engaging in dialogue with Christian systematic theologies of division and interdependence, specifically within the framework of Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation. I argue that while Liberal Quaker theology has generally avoided systematisation, due to the existence of certain structural elements and perspectives within the tradition, there exist contrary elements within the tradition which leave space for the development of systematic theologies, albeit inherently reflecting the contextual particularities of the Liberal Quaker theological tradition. This has meant that Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation have generally ignored Liberal Quaker theology, and in particular its unique metaphorical theologies of interdependence. I argue that this lacuna creates an opportunity for developing a new, Liberal Quaker systematic theology of atonement and reconciliation.

This reflects two realities: 1) recent trends in Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation towards greater engagement with both minority theological perspectives within Christian theology – including Liberal Quaker theology – as well with non-Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation, and 2) the lack of any previous sustained dialogue between Liberal Quaker theologians and the wider Christian theological world, particularly Christian systematic theology. By translating Liberal Quaker theology into the systematic framework of Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation, both traditions can further dialogue on several levels: developing arenas of mutual engagement between Christian and Liberal Quaker

theology; opening new avenues for theological dialogue within Christianity and with non-Christian traditions; and finally, expanding the scope of theologies of atonement and reconciliation theology beyond their, heretofore, exclusively Christocentric roots. This dialogue will create new avenues for the further development of Liberal Quaker theology in specific, as well as with Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation in general.

In pursuit of these aims, I examine the specific systematic issues of interdependence and division from the perspective of both Christian and Liberal Quaker theologies of atonement and reconciliation. I chose these specific foci as they reflect the main theological foundation of Liberal Quaker theology: that each person has the presence of God within, expressed through the metaphorical construct of the Light, and can have direct experience of this relationship. This has determined the course of Liberal Quaker theology, reflecting its focus on the interdependence between God and humanity as well as on the ways this relationship gathers humans into interdependent relationship. I argue that any development of Liberal Quaker theology must thus engage with issues of division and interdependence. Therefore, this dissertation will focus on the most pertinent Christian theology of division and interdependence: theologies of atonement and reconciliation.

In the same vein, I examine the aspects of Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation which reflect the consequences of having a metaphorical construct of divine interdependence at the foundation of Liberal Quaker theology. These include the ways that humans create division amongst themselves, and the means that God employs to heal that division at both the human level and the Divine. In pursuit of this, I focus on these areas: atonement, human division and exclusion as hamartiology, and the metaphorical theologies of models of the interdependent God.

Reflecting Christian tradition, I begin with an examination of the crucifix, and the ways that Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation have explored theological responses to atonement which question the salvific necessity of violence for the divine/human relationship. This not only reflects the focus on examining theologies of interdependence which critique violent conflict, but also lays the foundation for examining the development of a number of different theological responses to the situation of human division and ethnic conflict.

These various responses flow from an underlying hamartiology: that human division, and its attendant exclusion of the 'Other', is a sin due to a theological anthropology of divine-human interdependence. I examine the multiplicity of ways theologians of conflict have also examined the process of 'othering' from the perspective of evil and sin, both on a structural and a personal level.

In response to theologies of violence, conflict, and division, Christian theologians have developed theologies of interdependence, with a specific focus on themes which have emerged in response to twentieth-century theologies of division: the relationship between human and divine within Christ, the role of the Spirit in divine/human interdependence, and metaphors for framing the divine/human relationship. The metaphor of interdependence is thus utilised to explain the means by which the Son and Spirit interact together to achieve the divine goal of reconciliation both within, and with, humanity. Towards this end, I focus on Pneumatology, with an emphasis on the role that the Spirit plays in the atonement and developing interdependence with humanity. This emphasis on Pneumatology, spirituality, and metaphorical theology also reflects the necessity of developing a dialogical framework with Liberal Quaker theology, which itself places significant importance on Spirit and metaphor.

I apply this same structure – atonement, hamartiologies of division, and the metaphorical theologies of models of the interdependent God – to Liberal Quaker theology, to argue that Liberal Quaker theology has similar visions of an interdependent God who seeks to unify and heal humanity. This includes developing a uniquely Liberal Quaker perspective on five areas: atonement theology, hamartiology and division, Christology (including the Incarnation and the relationship between Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit), the metaphorical interdependence theology of the Light, and a Liberal Quaker eschatology and spirituality of reconciliation. This perspective emphasises the experience of God as the primary means of not only being in relationship with God, but also the primary means of structuring an epistemological framework through which to comprehend the nature and work of the Divine.

I examine the broad theological diversity of the Liberal Quaker theological tradition, while arguing that it is valuable in that it provides multiple points of dialogue with Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation while also allowing for a wide variety of new avenues of exploration with extant reconciliation theologies and the creation of new ones. In my development of this theology, I base my argument upon theological content within the Swarthmore Lectures, annual lectures delivered for the benefit of Quakerism. I argue that the lectures are the longest sustained, with the widest breadth, theological conversation within Liberal Quakerism, and serve as the only intentional corpus of theological thought extant within the tradition. The rest of this chapter continues in four sections: Context; Literature Review; Sources; and Thesis Outline, prior to a chapter summary.

## **1.2 Context**

In this section, I examine, in turn, the context and broad outlines of the two traditions I bring into dialogue in this dissertation, theologies of atonement and reconciliation and British Liberal Quaker Theology. I explore the historical background of the traditions, with a specific focus on laying out the foundations I build upon through the rest of the dissertation.

### **1.2.a Nature of Theologies of Atonement and Reconciliation**

Atonement and reconciliation are complex terms, especially when it comes to Christian theology. Depending upon the context, these terms could refer to the atoning action of Christ on the Cross, bringing human and God back into relationship, or the developing tradition which seeks to bridge the divide between political reconciliation (and its secular peacemaking approach to human-human reconciliation) and Christian atonement theology (with its focus on the divine-human reconciliation and the role that the Incarnation, the Cross, and the Spirit all play in such reconciliation). The traditions developed around these terms have a number of components, which I describe below. I also discuss these concepts in further depth in chapter two. They also have a number of areas of overlap with Liberal Quaker thought, as Liberal Quakers have been involved in secular political reconciliation, and also have a focus on both human-human and divine-human interdependence. I lay out some potential overlaps with Liberal Quaker theology in chapter three.

#### **1.2.a.1 Historical Overview of Atonement Theologies**

Any theology of the atonement begins with the assumption that God desires relationship with humanity. This relationship was first understood to be a covenantal one, initiated by God and for the purpose of bringing about *shalom* on the earth. Christopher Marshall argues that the measure of the human-divine relationship lies in God's desire for *shalom*, the state of righteousness where the Creation is in harmony with God's will, and where peaceful 'all-rightness' exists for all within the community.<sup>1</sup> Perry Yoder suggests that *shalom* encapsulates the Biblical vision of salvation, justice, and peace. *Shalom* is a holistic vision, touching on a comprehensive physical sense of well-being and security, free from threat, with a truly balanced situation of justice for all in the creation where political oppression is absent, and where trust is possible due to pervasive presence of integrity at all levels of human dealings and complete absence of any form of deceit.<sup>2</sup> *Shalom* is arguably the state that the prophets continually call Israel to return to: a state of justice for all, where Israel is completely obedient to the will of God. The problem lies with Israel – the chosen people of God – for they keeps finding ways of separating themselves from the will of God, and instead choose to do actions which cause harm, suffering, and pain – especially for the most vulnerable in the nation.

The continual call of the prophets, as Snyder Belousek argues, is for Israel to heed the call of God to repent and return, and to be transformed into a people capable of the kind of relationship with God which would make *shalom* possible.<sup>3</sup> The prophets passionately remind Israel of its guilt, laying out how it continually breaks its relationship with God through its failure to obey and worship only God, and destroys the bonds of relationship amongst humans by

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<sup>1</sup> Christopher Marshall, *Beyond Retribution: A New Testament Vision for Justice, Crime, and Punishment* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 2001), 47-48.

<sup>2</sup> Perry Yoder, *Shalom: The Bible's Word for Salvation, Justice, and Peace: The Missing Peace in New Testament Theology and Ethics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 2006), 10.

<sup>3</sup> Darrin W. Snyder Belousek, *Atonement, Justice, and Peace: The Message of the Cross and the Mission of the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2012), 399.

failing to show mercy, justice, and love towards all people. Isaiah reminds Israel of the consequences of its guilt, and of God's right to punish Israel for its sinful actions, telling Israel that God 'will measure into their laps full repayment for their actions' (65:6-7). Yet, Isaiah holds out hope for Israel's redemption, promising that God will immediately forgive Israel should it repent and return, and redeem it from its state of alienation (65:8-10). This redemption will lead to a 'new creation', a beautiful vision of *shalom* laid out in 65:17-25 where all of the injustices, pain, suffering, power imbalances, hierarchies, and death will be swept away and all of creation will instead live without fear in community, together with God. *Shalom* is thus a state of comprehensive, and communal, peace, dependent upon the reconciliation of all of creation with God, and with each other.<sup>4</sup>

*Shalom* requires Israel to remain loyal to their covenantal relationship to God. This relationship is predicated upon Israelites living lives of justice and righteousness, where 'righteousness' involves the meeting of obligations each individual is responsible for due to their relationships with other people in the community.<sup>5</sup> The covenant relationship between humans and God is comprehensive, laying out both the kinds of relationships that each person is responsible to due to their place in society and the form that 'righteousness' will take for each individual. The Biblical vision of human personhood is one of communality, where the individual derives meaning, purpose, and in some sense 'existence', from their relationships with other humans and with God, and the attendant responsibility to show the kind of justice and love in their relationships that God shows to the individual.<sup>6</sup> Israel was thus expected to love others as God loves Israel, with the implication being that Israel should show love and justice as God showed Israel love and justice with the covenants of Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, and

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 513.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 61.

<sup>6</sup> Marshall, *Beyond Retribution*, 47.

Moses: promising to always provide for the needs of God's people, and to save them from slavery and death. The covenants demonstrate God's love for the poor and oppressed, and place upon Israel the responsibility to do the same.<sup>7</sup>

God's love has nothing to do with whether the poor or oppressed 'deserve' such treatment, however; the love is entirely due to the faithfulness that God shows to the covenant, and the command that Israel show such faithfulness as well.<sup>8</sup> The people of God are called upon to follow the entire part of covenant righteousness, including the call to reconciliation, due to the web of relationship which the covenant lays upon all of humanity. Snyder Belousek argues that the covenant commands the people of God to continually seek reconciliation due to the fact that they are the people of God. This reconciliation requires a shift from contractual relationships between members of society to covenantal relationships, where all are mutually interdependent.<sup>9</sup> South African reconciliation theologian William Johnson Everett argues that covenant relationships require a culture rooted in common practices, values, and a recognition of God's role in covenant building.<sup>10</sup> Fellow South African, Piet Miering concurs, stressing that forgiveness is the key practice in a Christian understanding of reconciliation, an unconditional forgiveness that releases the hold that the perpetrator has over the memories of the victim.<sup>11</sup> Humble acceptance of guilt, apology for harm caused, and forgiveness all must occur in order for any rebuilding of trust, renewed relationship, and thus reconciliation, to occur.<sup>12</sup> Liberation from

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<sup>7</sup> Snyder Belousek, *Atonement, Justice and Peace*, 466.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 465.

<sup>9</sup> John W. de Gruchy, *Reconciliation: Restoring Justice* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2002), 15.

<sup>10</sup> William Johnson Everett, 'Going Public, Building Covenants: Linking the TRC to Theology and the Church,' in *Facing the Truth: South African Faith Communities and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, eds. James Cochrane, John de Gruchy, and Stephen Martin (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1999), 153-163, at 160.

<sup>11</sup> Piet Meiring, 'The *Baruti* Versus the Lawyers: The Role of Religion in the TRC Process,' in *Looking Back Reaching Forward: Reflections on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa*, eds. Charles Villavicencio and Wilhelm Verwoerd (Cape Town, South Africa: University of Cape Town Press, 2000), 123-33, at 127.

<sup>12</sup> de Gruchy, *Reconciliation*, 189.



the evils of the past flows from a faith in God's desire for reconciliation amongst all of humanity.<sup>13</sup>

Theologians of the early church understood evil to exist on a cosmic scale. Evil was both a structural reality that was written into the foundation of human institutions and structures, as well as a cosmic reality where evil fought for control over human institutions.<sup>14</sup> Paul described this using various names, including 'forces of evil' or 'principalities and powers,' who all found their most complete embodiment in the evil which had enslaved humanity on earth into a servility to the earthly powers and authorities, the primary ones being those of Rome. Humans did not escape evil's clutches once they died, for they were instead captured and held in captivity in hell.<sup>15</sup> This reflected the Pauline concern that humans would be disconnected from Christ by failing to 'hold fast' to Christ and the power of his love to save humanity from exactly such a state of slavery.

The challenge, for Paul, lay with the fact that human institutions, the 'principalities and powers' (generally referred to in Christian theology as 'the Powers') were created for the good of humanity, and were thus necessary for the human survival and even thriving.<sup>16</sup> Any conflict with the Powers would thus be a conflict with the state and other institutions that humans depended upon. This vision of captivity to an 'evil' power would have fit the context of Roman imperial power, as would the concept of paying ransom to redeem slaves captured by Roman armies. Thus, Paul argues, humans cannot defeat the evil within the Powers, for they would find themselves fighting the very structures which have shaped them, and upon whom they depend.

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<sup>13</sup> This entire thread of covenant theology is written by Christian theologians to serve the needs of Christian theology. As a result, the use of covenant in Christian reconciliation theology reflects Christian perspectives on covenant in the Hebrew Bible.

<sup>14</sup> Snyder Belousek, *Atonement, Justice and Peace*, 529.

<sup>15</sup> J. Denny Weaver, *The Nonviolent Atonement* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001), 15.

<sup>16</sup> Snyder Belousek, *Atonement, Justice and Peace*, 620.

They thus need to be rescued by a force outside of the Powers, such as Jesus Christ. Christ, working at the cosmic level, is the only force which can conquer this evil. This conquest was achieved without the use of violence by Jesus, who however endured violence in his person and transformed that violence into defeat of the evil which sought to destroy him.

This context led early theologians to consider ways that Jesus' death could conquer the power of evil over the lives, and souls, of humans both in life and death, without outright destroying the human institutions that were obviously still extant. The focus shifted towards the evil of mortality itself, and to the fear of being enslaved to the evil once death arrived, while the institutions of life were defeated in that they were allowed to still exist, but were denied the ultimate victory over God at the end of time. This necessitated a focus on the Incarnation, where, by living a complete life including a violent death at the hands of the state, Jesus would conquer every human institution that enslaves humans, including death at the hands of the State.<sup>17</sup> This has received a contemporary examination in the work of Katherine Tanner, most especially: *Christ the Key and Jesus, Humanity, and the Trinity*.<sup>18</sup>

Irenaeus responded to this context by positing the 'ransom', or recapitulation theory of the Atonement, where God offers Jesus as a ransom for the souls of those in captivity in hell.<sup>19</sup> Once Jesus dies in a manner fitting the devil, as crucifixion could certainly be understood to be, and is the captive of Satan, then the souls would be freed.<sup>20</sup> A variation on this theme is the 'fish-hook' theory advanced by Gregory of Nyssa, where God offers Jesus as 'bait' for Satan to grab, to bring to hell. Once Satan is captured by the 'fish hook' lodged within the bait of Jesus,

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<sup>17</sup> Veli-Matti Karkkainen, *Christ and Reconciliation* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2013), 310.

<sup>18</sup> Katherine Tanner, *Christ the Key* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Katherine Tanner, *Jesus, Humanity, and the Trinity* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001).

<sup>19</sup> Karkkainen, *Christ and Reconciliation*, 308.

<sup>20</sup> Alister E. McGrath ed., *The Christian Theology Reader, Third Edition* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 343.

however, he is powerless to stop Jesus from freeing all souls currently held captive within hell. The result of both variations is that once Jesus is in hell, he can release all of the captives, and then be released himself when God brings him back to life again through the resurrection. Thus, by submitting himself to the fury and torture of the Powers, the Incarnate God-man may defeat them through his death and resurrection. This has been examined through a postcolonial perspective by Marion Grau.<sup>21</sup>

The Christus Victor has a high regard for the necessity to overcome the Powers, and grants Jesus, as Incarnation, the role to play in defeating them. This theory offers a tentative exposition of theosis, for as Incarnate Word, Jesus does save humanity from alienation from God and bring humanity, literally, back into close relationship with God. Yet, this vision requires that Jesus undergo some form of death imposed by the Powers, most likely the crucifixion, for as the most heinous torture and death imaginable, it would suit Satan. The rights of ransom granted to Satan, as well as the deception required on the part of God, have led many to question the morality of this approach. It therefore requires that the death be coupled to the resurrection.

What is understood as the ‘satisfaction’ theory of the atonement is actually a constellation of theories which all have as their common theme the idea that human sinfulness was so severe, and so offensive to God, that humanity would never be able to pay, or ‘satisfy’, the debt of honour, or of justice, to God.<sup>22</sup> In order to make satisfaction of honour, or to do justice, to the angry/offended/grieving Father God, another would be required to pay the debt/suffer the punishment on our behalf – one who would have the ability to satisfy the enormity of our sin.

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<sup>21</sup> Marion Grau, ‘Divine Commerce: A Postcolonial Christology for Times of Neo-colonial Enterprise’, in *Postcolonial Theologies: Divinity and Empire*, ed. Catherine Keller, Michael Nausner, and Mayra Rivera (St. Louis, MO: Chalice, 2004), 164-84.

<sup>22</sup> Snyder Belousek, *Atonement, Justice and Peace*, 375.

This substitution could be another being sacrificed on our behalf, or another enduring the lawful punishment in our stead.<sup>23</sup>

The most prominent, and one of the most early, of the satisfaction theories was expounded by Anselm of Canterbury in his book, *Cur Deus Homo?* His vision of satisfying the offended honour of the Lord is deeply rooted in his feudal context. He states in chapter thirteen that, ‘In the ordinary course of things, nothing is more intolerable than that a creature should deprive his Creator of due honor, and not repay that of which he deprives him’.<sup>24</sup> As this is untenable, God must claim back his honour either from the free gift of the sinner, or barring that, taking it from an unwilling giver.<sup>25</sup> Yet, as humanity is under the burden of such an enormous debt, that no matter that God demand it from humanity, humanity will never be able to pay it back. The only way for God to have his debt paid would be for God, in effect, to pay back Godself from a free gift of the Son to the Father. Thus, in order to appease an offended Father God, humanity must stand by and watch as Jesus submits himself to the most horrific suffering and death imaginable in order to ensure the full payment of the debt. This formula applies to penal substitution as well, with the debt of honour instead being the legal burden of the enormity of the ‘laws’ broken by human sinfulness. The language of debt, honour, and legal obligation all reflect Anselm’s context in Medieval Europe.<sup>26</sup>

From the perspective of several theologies of atonement and reconciliation developed in response to situations of conflict and peacemaking, which I examine below, the satisfaction theory is problematic at best. It in no way involves humanity in any form of transformation. Humans are idle bystanders as God pays off God's own debt. It assumes that Jesus was not

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<sup>23</sup> Karkkainen, *Christ and Reconciliation*, 309.

<sup>24</sup> Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo?* (London: Griffith, Farran, Okeden & Welsh, 1890), 27

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, 29.

<sup>26</sup> Lisa Sowle Cahill, *Global Justice, Christology, and Christian Ethics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 223.

telling the entire truth about God when he stressed the unimaginable enormity of God's forgiveness for human sin. It ignores the entirety of the Incarnation, instead stating that Jesus could have achieved his purpose of reconciliation by arriving on Earth at the exact moment of the beginning of his torture, and would have achieved his purpose just a few short hours later, at his death. There is no mention of any engagement with the Powers, nor seemingly any purpose behind Jesus' entire life. It seems to leave no room whatsoever for the resurrection. The substitution theory seems to state that, if Jesus is to in any way demonstrate how humanity is supposed to act towards God, that our lives consist of accepting suffering as the primary thrust of our existence. This would seem to lead to the somewhat contradictory claim that God not only seems to condone violence against humanity, God also uses violence to achieve peace and to effect reconciliation.

This would appear to be a significant flaw in the theory, one that Snyder Belousek, in particular, has noted. Snyder Belousek even devoted the lion's share of his recent work on reconciliation theology to discount the place that some Christian theologians grant satisfaction theory (with a special focus on the penal substitution theory) as the main atonement theology in Christian reconciliation theology.<sup>27</sup>

### **1.2.a.2 Theologies of Interdependence in Response to Conflict**

In the political realm, reconciliation has a very specific rooting in post-conflict situations, with a specific set of practices that emerge from and serve that context. In Christian theology reconciliation has a variety of meanings, in large part depending on the theological convictions about the nature of the human/divine relationship, and the differing theological anthropologies of

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<sup>27</sup> Snyder Belousek, *Atonement, Justice and Peace*, 83-368.

the theologians and/or their theological/ecclesial context. In this section, I provide an overview of this branch of reconciliation theology, with a special focus on the definitions and theorists which relate to questions of division and interdependence.

An important aspect of Christian post-conflict theologies of atonement and reconciliation to date is the narrative of the cross and the way that it establishes a framework for relationship between God and humans, which is then exemplary for human relationships.<sup>28</sup> Theological reflection on the cross provides the framework for humans to grasp the meaning and format for all levels of reconciliation, including political reconciliation.<sup>29</sup> Pentecostal theologian Veli-Matti Karkkainen develops a Christian reconciliation theology which brings together theological traditions and recent developments in political reconciliation focusing on ethnic violence. He argues that a theological response to political reconciliation is formed by the ways with which the Incarnation interacts with the human world, with a special focus on the key events of Christ's life, including birth, teaching, crucifixion, and resurrection.<sup>30</sup> This reflects a theme within evangelical Christianity, which claims that the Incarnation of Jesus Christ ultimately serves the purpose of saving humanity from the fate of separation from God.<sup>31</sup>

While agreeing with Karkkainen's emphasis on Christ as the main conduit for human reconciliation with God, Snyder Belousek places great emphasis on the interdependent elements of reconciliation. Reconciliation with God is unavoidably extended to humans, meaning that Christian reconciliation theology comprises both a 'vertical' component (human-divine reconciliation) and a 'horizontal' component (human-human), where the format and mechanics

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<sup>28</sup> de Gruchy, *Reconciliation*, 22. For the purposes of this section, reconciliation theology will imply 'Christian' reconciliation theology.

<sup>29</sup> Cahill, *Global Justice*, 70.

<sup>30</sup> Karkkainen, *Christ and Reconciliation*, 366.

<sup>31</sup> Leon Morris, *The Atonement: Its Meaning and Significance* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1983), 143.

of the former leaves an indelible mark on the latter.<sup>32</sup> Snyder Belousek argues that these two components exist at both individual and corporate levels: individuals are reconciled to God and to other humans *as individuals*; yet, these individual reconciliations occur inextricably within a wider web of corporate reconciliation where God reconciles all of humanity to Godself. This includes a framework within this corporate reconciliation for individual reconciliation.<sup>33</sup> Thus, in Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation human reconciliation cannot occur outside of the reconciliation with God.

Another prominent thread is the interplay between questions of division, difference, and violence, and answers of reconciling theological anthropologies of divine/human interdependence. The components of this vision are outlined along two axes: that of divine/divine interdependence, and human/divine interdependence. *Ubuntu* theology, a prominent strand of reconciliation theology which emerged in South Africa, views all of creation as interdependent.<sup>34</sup> This includes the human/human relationship, through the framework provided by God for creation through the interdependence of the Divine with the Divine, based upon the unity of action amongst the Trinity, with a focus on the relationships between the Incarnate Christ and the Holy Spirit. This framework establishes the reality of all existence, as reconciliation theology argues that the Divine is the foundation for all existence. Thus, as the Divine is interdependent with itself, all that is created by the Divine is interdependent with the Divine. These are not ideas unique to *Ubuntu* theology. Other theologians of atonement and reconciliation have developed a variety of visions of interdependence. Some include: Paul's vision of Christian reconciliation was inherently interdependent, where all of humanity was interdependent with God, and with each other, through their connection to each other in the Body

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<sup>32</sup> Snyder Belousek, *Atonement, Justice and Peace*, 521.

<sup>33</sup> de Gruchy, *Reconciliation*, 24.

<sup>34</sup> I examine *Ubuntu* in chapter two.

of Christ;<sup>35</sup> interdependence has corollaries in any communitarian culture;<sup>36</sup> and unity with God is a fundamental characteristic of authentic humanity, without which humanity would not be able to exist.

In their efforts to bring theology and political reconciliation into dialogue Karkkainen and Snyder Belousek are indebted to the work of South African reconciliation theologian John de Gruchy. De Gruchy places his work squarely in a Pauline vision of reconciliation, noting that the word ‘reconciliation’ stems from the use of the Latin word *reconciliatio* used to translate Paul's understanding of God's work of salvation through Jesus.<sup>37</sup> De Gruchy argues that all definitions of reconciliation share the root of ‘overcoming a relationship of enmity and alienation’. Reconciliation works on four levels: the theological, between God and humans; the interpersonal, between individual people; the social, between local, alienated communities; and the political, across an entire nation or region.<sup>38</sup> Each level carries its unique complexities, yet all are sequential processes with different goals for each level.<sup>39</sup> Reconciliation requires that classifications based on the ‘other’ are removed, and that new identities are created for all in a society, including those who had enjoyed privileged status.<sup>40</sup> Reconciliation is thus a comprehensive process, touching on every single aspect of the human-human and human-divine relationship.

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<sup>35</sup> Ralph P. Martin, *Reconciliation: A Study of Paul's Theology* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), 196.

<sup>36</sup> Cahill, *Global Justice*, 14.

<sup>37</sup> Karkkainen, *Christ and Reconciliation*, 175.

<sup>38</sup> de Gruchy, *Reconciliation*, 26.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid*, 27.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*, 30. Noted reconciliation practitioner John Paul Lederach expresses a similar point, arguing that reconciliation falls within three paradoxes: between dealing with a painful, divided past and charting an interdependent future; locating a place where the search for the truth about what occurred and the mercy to let the past go meet; and finally, where the accountability of justice and the common vision of peace can be held in creative tension. John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997), 31.



Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation meet political reconciliation at the point of examining the ‘other instinct’ in ethnic and identity conflict, where the identities in conflict are religious in nature.<sup>41</sup> Christian theologians of atonement and reconciliation argue that political reconciliation has much to gain from being in dialogue with theology, due to both the light that theology can shed on the nature of evil, and the nature of the ‘other instinct’ in human nature and human institutions. Daniel Philpott is a prominent political reconciliation theorist who has recently made this argument forcefully. Philpott argues that ignoring the role of religion in identity creation, identity conflict, and the healing of identity is both dangerous and foolish.<sup>42</sup> More than anything else, ignoring religion leads to an incomplete analysis of conflict, and a subsequently incomplete policy response which is most likely to end in failure.<sup>43</sup> I examine the ‘Other’ and the ‘othering’ process in greater detail in chapter two.

Karkkainen claims that reconciliation can only be understood from the perspective of the Trinity, with a special focus on the role that Jesus Christ and the Cross play in bringing about this totalising reconciliation between God and humans.<sup>44</sup> The common understanding amongst reconciliation theologians is that the Trinity not only provides a model for explaining the process of reconciliation, it also demonstrates the aspects of a fully realised reconciled relationship, where the Triune God is reconciled to Godself.<sup>45</sup> This reflects the reconciliation theology of Paul, who places great importance on the salvific power of the Body of Christ.<sup>46</sup> Reconciliation can be argued to be the main theme of Pauline theology, especially with relation to Paul’s

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<sup>41</sup> Snyder Belousek, *Atonement, Justice and Peace*, 577.

<sup>42</sup> Daniel Philpott, *Just and Unjust Peace: An Ethic of Political Reconciliation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 8.

<sup>43</sup> Snyder Belousek, *Atonement, Justice and Peace*, 579.

<sup>44</sup> Karkkainen, *Christ and Reconciliation*, 364.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*, 367.

<sup>46</sup> Martin, *Reconciliation*, 71.

emphasis on divine/human interdependence.<sup>47</sup> This interdependence is created through the Body of Christ – the Incarnation of God into human form – amongst humans and between humanity and God. This is especially true with the action of the crucifixion and the subsequent resurrection of Jesus’ physical body. Reflecting Paul, reconciliation theology focuses upon both the implications of Body of Christ and the elimination of the alienation of sin and categories of division and otherness.<sup>48</sup> This depends entirely upon Christ taking upon himself the burden of human sin and the separation from God which results from the structures and practices of the human failure to follow the will of God. This failure lies at the heart of the Pauline definition of ‘sin’.<sup>49</sup>

The core elements of reconciliation theology are continually re-evaluated in light of new realities and applied to unexpected contexts. This includes bringing into dialogue theologians from many different cultural and geographical settings and confessional traditions. These theologians might not describe themselves as ‘reconciliation theologians’, yet they engage in similar categories and strive to answer similar questions as those few theologians who would claim the title. In a sense, ‘reconciliation theology’ can be defined as a specific set of analytical tools which can be utilised in examining sin, evil, and separation in situations of conflict. I argue, therefore, that reconciliation theology has the special potential to provide valuable insight into the entire field of political theology. To work in reconciliation theology is to be constantly seeking to develop new areas where its analytical tools could be applied.

It is important to note at this stage, however, that while reconciliation theology has constructed its categories with a focus upon the Incarnation, it has also consistently recognised a

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 71. While reconciliation theology generally views reconciliation as one of the main themes of Paul’s approach to understanding the human-divine relationship, and the nature of humanity itself, Ralph Martin is notable amongst reconciliation theologians for his emphasis on reconciliation as the one, main theme of the Pauline corpus.

<sup>48</sup> Snyder Belousek, *Atonement, Justice and Peace*, 609.

<sup>49</sup> Cahill, *Global Justice*, 230.

minority tradition that places an equal emphasis on the Spirit's role in reconciliation. I explore this minority tradition in chapter two with the intention of establishing this tradition as the most proper one to engage in a dialogue with Liberal Quaker theology, and its focus on the Spirit.

### **1.2.b Nature of British Liberal Quaker Theology**

In this section, I provide an overview of the context of contemporary British Liberal Quaker theology, with a specific focus on the challenges and opportunities available for the systematic development of a Liberal Quaker reconciliation theology within this context. This includes a development of a format for such a theology. I then argue for the development of the Swarthmore Lectures as a valuable theological resource upon which to base such a theology. Finally, I chart where Liberal Quaker theology has intersected with reconciliation theology, with a special focus on the theology of Ham Sok-Han.

For the purposes of this chapter, and this dissertation, I am using the term 'Liberal Quaker' to describe the most prevalent expression of Quakerism in Britain: those Quakers who would consider themselves connected to Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM). Liberal Quakerism is not limited to BYM, nor to Britain. For the purposes of this dissertation, however, I will use 'Liberal Quakerism' as shorthand for describing the particular form of Liberal Quakerism expressed in BYM.

Liberal Quakerism, as a distinct and definable branch of worldwide Quakerism, has its roots in the application of liberal theology within Quaker thought in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Quakerism at that point was still mainly located within the United Kingdom and countries at one time connected to the British Empire, most particularly the United States. Due to the history of

settlement patterns of Quakers in the United States and the subsequent impact that time, geographical distance, and variety of other theological and cultural influences, Quakerism in the United States became quite diversified, leading to distinct and divergent branches with marked differences in theology and practice. These include several broad categories: Liberal, Conservative, Pastoral, Evangelical, and Pentecostal. While Quakerism in the UK developed a significant Evangelical focus in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the relatively small size of the British Quaker community, and subsequent lack of theological diversity, reined in the separations experienced in the United States. As a result, when the majority of British Quakers began ascribing to liberal theological positions in the late Nineteenth Century, the community of British Quakerism generally moved towards a consensus around those positions, leading to the development of a distinctly British Liberal Quakerism in the Twentieth Century.

As Liberal Quakers are the audience that my main research materials have been delivered and orientated towards (the Swarthmore Lectures are given during the annual proceedings of the Britain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends), I understand ‘Liberal Quakerism’ to mean those who attend meetings connected to BYM, and who are likely to engage with the Swarthmore Lectures as a matter of their engagement as Quakers. While I acknowledge that this is an imprecise term, it is still a useful category when considered from the perspective of the Swarthmore Lectures, as they are prepared with the intent of speaking to the concerns of Quakers in BYM.

Thus, ‘Liberal Quaker theology’ is the term used in this dissertation to refer, generally, to the theological categories and concepts which stem from the context of BYM, and which Swarthmore Lecturers respond to, and engage with. Swarthmore Lecturers rarely, if ever, explain what they mean when they use theological terms, thus demonstrating that they assume that they

are referring to a common understanding of the meaning of these terms, categories, and concepts. While this might not be the case – at least in the sense of a theological lexicon to which all British Quakers would wholeheartedly agree – for the sake of this dissertation, and as I am basing my work upon the understanding presented by the Swarthmore Lecturers, I will use the term ‘Liberal Quaker theology’ when I am referring to the tradition which the Swarthmore Lecturers are assuming when they refer to ‘Quaker theology’.<sup>50</sup>

Two correlative traits dominate the British Liberal Quaker approach to the development, and subsequent expression of, theological beliefs and statement: one, the negative dictum that British Quakers reject any theological statement or structure which resembles a ‘creed’, and two, the positive dictum that theological ‘truth’ is to be known ‘experimentally’, or through the interaction between the experience of individuals and the community in worship and the testing of these experiences in the lives of both individual Quakers and the community of Quakers. These two traits are laid out in the first two paragraphs of the introduction to *Quaker Faith and Practice*, the main unifying document for British Quakers.

*Quaker Faith and Practice* is the document which represents what are seen as the most authoritative beliefs of Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) and lays out the structure of worship, ecclesiology, and discipline for the meetings that comprise BYM. It is organised into 28 sections, revolving around themes of: administration (the format of meetings, the structure of committees in Britain Yearly Meeting, how membership is granted, financial matters, the format of assigning responsibility for pastoral care and oversight in Meeting for Worship, proper format for managing Quaker property), liturgics (format and beliefs behind funeral, marriage, and weekly worship meetings), belief (the nature of God, how God is experienced during worship, the

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<sup>50</sup> This definitional understanding of the correspondence between ‘Liberal Quaker Theology’ and ‘Quaker Theology’ is about 130 years old now, a situation cemented by the heralding of this understanding by the Swarthmore Lectures, which also affirmed the hegemony of the Liberal Quaker view of theology within Quaker theology generally.

approach of Friends to those of other faiths), and ethics (peace testimony, the proper conduct of personal relationships, the responsibility of Quakers to care for others and the creation, perspectives on how to live one's life reflecting Quaker values and concerns). Each section is comprised of multiple paragraph-long extracts from key writings by Quakers throughout the history of the Religious Society of Friends. Each extract is chosen based on its capacity to express something essential about the 'truth' of the Quaker experience.

The first trait is stated plainly, with the words, 'truth cannot be defined within a creed'. The second is developed through the emphasis on the interaction, and conversation, between the experiences and belief of the individual with those same of the community. The first paragraph references the informal nature of discipline within the community, where formal structures of managing belief and doctrine are replaced with 'advice and counsel, the encouragement of self-questioning, of hearing each other in humility and self-love'. These two traits are based upon the core theological conviction of British Quakers: that, as *Faith and Practice* claims, no one person (or ecclesial entity, one can assume) can 'ever adequately understand or express the truth about God'.<sup>51</sup>

Taken collectively, these statements lay out an approach to theology which is informal in its approach to the development of common theological ideas, valorises experience as the primary source for theological information and reflection, and is suspicious of attempts to either systematise the theological thought of British Quakers or to establish permanent and universally-binding structures of belief upon British Quakerism. Anyone seeking to develop a British Quaker theology must take into account this creative interplay between the experiences, context, and beliefs of both individuals and of the community. This interplay must be examined in light of the

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<sup>51</sup> Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain, *Quaker Faith and Practice* (London: Britain Yearly Meeting, 1994), 12.

rejection of claims to authority that other theological approaches allow, such as the inherent authority of time (as in, beliefs which have ‘stood the test of time’), Scripture, or the authoritative nature of ecclesial sponsorship (either through the structure of official doctrine or the valorising of the ideas of ecclesially-sanctioned theologians).<sup>52</sup>

### 1.2.b.1 'Continuing Revelation'

Liberal Quakerism has a construct known as ‘continuing revelation’, which refers to the belief that God is continuing to reveal aspects of God and God's truth to humanity, through human interactions with God. Continuing revelation is intimately connected with the Liberal Quaker construct of progressive revelation, which argues that with each successive revelation, God is revealing more about God, lending greater weight to the wisdom gained from latter revelations than from previous ones. Progressive revelation also demands that Liberal Quakers be open to the wisdom and perspective of other religious and secular traditions, as God might be revealed in a significant fashion through any pathway. This dynamic relationship to revelation ensures that Liberal Quaker theology is in a constant state of flux, with an openness to adaptation. This adaptability involves three main elements of ‘continuing revelation’: God’s revelation to humanity, the processes of theological change, and an openness to ‘sources of truth’

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<sup>52</sup> Carole Dale Spencer argues that while Liberal Quakers have a ‘wide diversity of belief, they are not without a ‘source of authority’. Spencer claims that that final authority rests with Britain Yearly Meeting, and the *Quaker Faith and Practice*. Carole Dale Spencer, ‘Quakers in Theological Context’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Quaker Studies*, eds. Stephen W. Angell and Pink Dandelion (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 141-57, at 156. This claim rests within the context of the Liberal Quaker business process, where any text written, or action taken, by BYM is made with the awareness that it is not definitive, permanent, or free from critique. This applies to *Quaker Faith in Practice*, which claims that Liberal Quakers are both individually and collectively ‘holders of a precious heritage of discoveries’, which, it can be assumed, were ‘discovered’ through experience. Yet, even these discoveries must be held onto somewhat lightly, as the Quaker ‘vision of the truth will, again and again, be amended’. Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain, *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 16. Thus, ‘authority’ for BYM is far less certain, and definitive, than it might be in other ecclesial structures which claim theological ‘authority’. I argue that as this ‘authority’ is built upon the collective experience of Liberal Quakerism, that ‘authority’ is still mainly with the experience of Liberal Quakers.

outside of the Christian tradition. I conclude the section with Quaker critiques of how 'continuing revelation' has been applied in Liberal Quaker thought and critique of the concept itself.

### ***God's Revelation***

Openness to God's continual revelation to humanity marks all of Liberal Quaker theological inquiry. The lecturers find that this concept is not something developed in its entirety by Liberal Quakers, but is rooted in the flush of innovative theological reflection created by the opportunity to read and interpret the Bible for oneself that came about due to the Reformation. Liberal Quakers are thus engaging in what they view as a valid theological enterprise. Liberal Quakers argue that this theological approach is as valid as other theological perspectives which valorise the Bible as the primary measure for assessing the validity of a new theological idea, and which find primary value in the carefully crafted theological doctrines of previous generations in that specific ecclesial community. Liberal Quakers value this openness to newness, seeing it as a courageous and creative enterprise that doesn't fear the possibility of radical change and growth as it is seen as rooted in God's good will for humanity.

The lecturers acknowledge that this is a minority perspective. Yet, they value the possibilities for radical, even 'rebellious' change in accepted theological paradigms that this open perspective provides. They feel that this is a prophetic act, something sorely needed in theology. The lecturers also acknowledge that this perspective has a flaw which, if left unchecked, could ultimately hamper the entire enterprise. The lecturers acknowledge that the Liberal Quaker emphasis on always seeking the new, rooted in the interplay between individual



experience and corporate discernment of that experience, could lead to a failure to come to any unity on essential elements of the new teaching that all Liberal Quakers will actually accept as binding. This is a particular concern when dealing with the Liberal Quaker ‘openness to other sources of truth’, reflecting the Universalist strain discussed in section 4.3. While this openness might allow for deep and meaningful engagement with the ways in which God is interacting with other religious communities, it might also challenge the ability for Liberal Quakers to find any meaningfully ‘Liberal Quaker’ engagement with the Divine, which would serve to draw the community of Liberal Quakers together. The new sources of truth could, in fact, prove to be as meaningful as the old sources, yet could wind up severing the connections between Liberal Quakers.

Liberal Quakers hold that God is continuously revealing Godself to humanity. This is a progressive revelation, in that the revelations of today have resonance for the contemporary moment, and might dispute, or advance, previous revelations; thus, these revelations are said to be ‘progressive’ in that they demonstrate a progressive movement towards a continuously more intimate and complete revelation of God. Russell Brain suggested that this concept has its roots in the Reformation, specifically in the excitement that was spawned by the acceptance of a right to private judgment on the interpretation of the Bible, as opposed to the communal authority of the Roman Catholic curia. This movement would allow humans the freedom to hear God more completely, without the potentially restrictive mediation of the curia. Brain argued that the intense power of this realisation sobered the leaders of the Reformation in Geneva, especially as it related to the rapid development of religious movements who sought to view the Bible through the lens of metaphor. This frightened Protestants away from any recognition of progressive revelation that was not read as a further interpretation of the Bible, limiting, Brain suggested, the

ability for Protestant theology to adapt to any situation or theory that did not have a parallel in the Bible.<sup>53</sup>

This willingness to be open to new revelations, especially those that relate to modern circumstances that might not have obvious parallels in the Biblical text, is presented as a strength of the Liberal Quaker approach. Creasey suggested that the Liberal Quaker emphasis on the direct experience of God ensures that Quakers do not fear any new theological idea. If an idea is tested alongside both past experience – in the form of tradition and Scripture, and present experience – in the form of Quaker worship and discipleship, and is found to be true, Liberal Quakers can then incorporate that idea into their theological structures of belief. However, if the idea is found wanting, Creasey argued, it is either discarded or tested further in order to glean some form of wisdom from it. Creasey affirmed that this entire process is performed for Liberal Quakers within the boundaries of revelation as the experience of God within both the individual and the community.<sup>54</sup>

Liberal Quakers acknowledge that they have a heritage of emphasising the potentially 'wild' influence that new revelation might have on their willingness to adhere to doctrine. In this vein, Priestland notes an epistle from Yorkshire in 1919 which stated that the Holy Spirit had not ceased to inspire, despite the settling of the New Testament canon.<sup>55</sup> He argues, however, that even an examination of the presentation of God in the Bible demonstrates that God is continually revealing new truths, and offering new perspectives. As Priestland states, the picture of God presented in Genesis is significantly different from that offered by Jeremiah, and both are very different from the perspective that the Gospels offer on God.<sup>56</sup> However, this is not to claim that

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<sup>53</sup> W. Russell Brain, *Man, Society, and Religion* (London: The Swarthmore Press, Ltd., 1944), 67.

<sup>54</sup> Creasey, *Bearing, or Friends and the New Reformation*, 28.

<sup>55</sup> Gerald Priestland, *Reasonable Uncertainty: A Quaker Approach to Doctrine* (London: Quaker Books, 1982), 15.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*, 38.

this process opens Liberal Quakers to simply following theological trends. Priestland suggests that the Liberal Quaker emphasis on silence and 'expectant waiting' in worship might actually be an unintended barrier against what he terms 'radical religious ideas' that could stem from an emphasis on progressive revelation.<sup>57</sup>

### *Processes of Change*

Liberal Quakers are a minority religious group, in that they are both demographically small and have few parallels with other religious traditions. Yet, they are ambivalent about both that status and about the role that such status plays in their approach to theological change. This is represented in the perspective of the lecturers to the issue of minority status, with one group claiming such a status and willingly accepting what minority status often entails, while another critiquing those elements especially in light of the often dynamic approach of minority traditions towards theological change. Generally, this dynamism involves an openness to theological change with an attendant willingness to either abandon, or at least adapt, both theological beliefs and the structures which are built upon such beliefs.

Barratt Brown was representative of the group embracing minority status and provided a framework for understanding Liberal Quakerism as a minority, especially in relation to processes of theological change. Brown suggested that minorities, including religious minorities such as Liberal Quakers, develop a rebellious temperament stemming from religious convictions that are prophetic, pushing against the established truth of the majority tradition. Brown argued that this 'rebellious' approach to religious belief and practice is prophetic due to the minority's willingness to see alternatives to current orthodoxy and to find value in the 'fresh upspringings of life' that

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 14.

emerge from unexpected areas and people.<sup>58</sup> Brown acknowledged that oftentimes these new revelations are difficult to understand and incorporate into current worldviews, even for many in the minority group. Brown insisted that these new revelations are often from God who demands our engagement. They can provide liberation from obsolete perspectives and methods and shed new illumination on perspectives that still have value.<sup>59</sup> Hughes made a similar argument about the necessity of revising theological structures in the face of new revelation. Hughes stated that it would be tantamount to ‘intellectual dishonesty’ to hold tight to old and obsolete doctrine in the face of new information and perspective. Doing so would cause Liberal Quakerism to lose out on vital opportunities to engage in a complete, and prophetic, way to new circumstances. Brown acknowledged the potential challenge with such an openness to newness, cautioning against turning a respect for the potential for new vitality that new revelation often brings into a dependence on the energy of enthusiasm, stating that groups must steer a course between enthusiasm and a ‘contented and timid’ insistence on adhering to tested, and potentially obsolete, methods.<sup>60</sup>

John Harvey offered a similar critique of minority groups, but from the perspective of the minority status limiting the ability of the group to have a diverse field of perspectives from which to draw when developing theology. Harvey suggested that many minority religious traditions are in danger, in that having a limited size might actually limit the ability of the group to have enough different perspectives and new revelations to achieve the critical mass necessary to effect theological change.<sup>61</sup> Conversely, Harvey argued that variety of perspective has never been a significant problem for Liberal Quakers. Instead, Harvey contended that Liberal Quakers

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<sup>58</sup> A. Barratt Brown, *Democratic Leadership* (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1938), 18.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*, 25.

<sup>60</sup> John A. Hughes, *The Light of Christ in a Pagan World* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1940), 52.

<sup>61</sup> John W. Harvey, *The Salt and the Leaven* (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1947), 31.

are in greater danger of not being able to come to any unity on essentials losing out on the benefits that being in a minority group could accord a group with such an emphasis on prophetic action.<sup>62</sup>

### ***Openness to Truth***

A common thread amongst Liberal Quakers, even of decidedly Christian leanings, is the acknowledgement that while the unity hoped for by Harvey would be of great benefit, much can still be gained through dialogue with other traditions, along with an openness to their potential for ‘truth’. Representative of the Christian Liberal Quaker perspective, Silcock suggested that Liberal Quakers can find much of value in non-Christian religions, especially in light of, and in repentance for, the spread of Christianity under the banner of converting ‘the heathen in his blindness’.<sup>63</sup> Dunstan took this one step further by invoking the language of duty, arguing that Liberal Quakers have a responsibility to be open to ‘new light from whatever source it comes’. He claimed that only this openness will fully equip Liberal Quakers to aid those who are searching for God and who have given up hope of finding answers within the Christian community.<sup>64</sup> This focus on seeking is rooted within the Quaker heritage, Dunstan argued, for this is the ministry that George Fox and the early Friends devoted their lives to.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid, 32.

<sup>63</sup> Harry T. Silcock, *Christ and the World's Unrest* (London: The Swarthmore Press, Ltd., 1927), 19. Similarly, Margaret Harvey suggested that this openness to the truth from other traditions is the logical outgrowth of the idea of continuing revelation: once a group is open to new revelation coming from any of its members, even revelation with the potential to dramatically change the theological perspective of the group, it is a logical next step to find new revelation within the wisdom of other traditions. Margaret M. Harvey, *The Law of Liberty* (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1942), 41.

<sup>64</sup> Edgar G. Dunstan, *Quakers and the Religious Quest* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1956), 11. This phrase was placed into the Book of Discipline in 1931, and has been maintained in subsequent editions, as well as the current edition of Faith and Practice.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, 15.

A common critique of this approach acknowledges the value of openness while insisting on openness being channeled towards the ultimate goal of greater connection with God. Hughes asserted that having a ministry to seekers does not grant Liberal Quakers leave to be on a continuous search themselves nor to accept such a search for the sake of a search.<sup>66</sup> Every spiritual seeker must have the goal of eventually finding God, or else they are seekers in search of the wrong thing. 'New light' is therefore a tool for aiding in the search of God and not the point of the search itself. Doncaster agreed, stating that the search must stem from a deep respect for the other tradition from whence may come 'new light'.<sup>67</sup> Being open to other sources of truth requires a recognition that as God is present in every person, other traditions may also be speaking a truth about the revelation and truth of God. It also requires that Quakers respect that other faith traditions have unique ways of speaking about the experience of God, which may only be fully understood in the context of that tradition.<sup>68</sup>

### *Critiques*

Continuing revelation is not without critics, however, especially from more explicitly Christocentric expressions of Quakerism. Paul Anderson, a theologian from the Evangelical Quaker tradition, typifies the critiques from that tradition in his concerns that Liberal Quakers privilege immediate revelation over Scripture and the body of Quaker revelation gathered over centuries.<sup>69</sup> He argues that Liberal Quakers must be more cautious in their approach to incorporating continuing revelation and its attendant theological openness. Anderson cautions

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>67</sup> Hugh Doncaster, *God in Every Man* (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1963), 52.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, 53.

<sup>69</sup> Paul Anderson, 'Continuing Revelation – Gospel or Heresy?', in *Good and Evil: Quaker Perspectives*, eds. Jackie Leach Scully and Pink Dandelion (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2007), 15-30, at 26.

Liberal Quakers to ensure that they develop strong means of testing leadings and subjecting them to strict scrutiny within the communal structure of the meeting. Anderson claims that Liberal Quakers tend to use the reality of divine guidance as an excuse for privileging immediate revelation and argues that progressive revelation does not mean that older revelation loses value as soon as newer revelation emerges.<sup>70</sup> Anderson is thus arguing for a more cautious approach towards accepting immediate revelations as stemming from the movement of the Spirit.<sup>71</sup> This approach insists on a greater level of testing newer revelation against older revelation that has been demonstrated to have significant value, including the Bible and the theological tradition.

The Swarthmore Lecturer Richenda Scott made a similar argument to Anderson, in terms of the necessity of using tradition to test the validity of leadings and of discerning whether they are continuing revelation. Scott insisted that tradition is a vital tool for Liberal Quakers to discern ethical standards of conduct to formulate theology.<sup>72</sup> Scott likened tradition to a vessel in which the history of a people is carried forward to the present. This vessel carries all of the lessons learned from the mistakes and successes of the past and the stories and heritage of the community. As such, tradition cannot simply be dismissed as useless, or as something which new revelation has evolved beyond. Scott acknowledged that tradition often involves viewpoints from the past that truly are outdated and unhelpful and that new revelation might be showing ways to advance beyond such tradition.<sup>73</sup> However, Scott insisted that tradition that is alive and engaged with current revelation can serve as an effective standard against which to measure new revelation, in a dynamic conversation.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 27.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, 28.

<sup>72</sup> Richenda C. Scott, *Tradition and Experience* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1964), 5.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid, 5.

### 1.2.b.2 Experiential Theology

Liberal Quakers insist that God can only be ‘known’ in any meaningful sense through the personal experience of the Divine.<sup>75</sup> This forms what could be termed an ‘empirical epistemology’, where theological statements about God must reflect the Liberal Quaker experience of God, both individually and communally.<sup>76</sup> This stance of ‘experiential epistemology’ is reflected in the hazy outlines of much of Liberal Quaker theology, where metaphor is a more effective theological tool than the precision of doctrine and where all ‘truth’ about God is open to continuous re-interpretation.<sup>77</sup> This aversion to establishing rigid doctrinal statements does not mean that Liberal Quakers deny the possibility of universal ‘truth’ about God, nor that such truth cannot be expressed on a human level.<sup>78</sup> Rather, Liberal Quakers shift the ‘proof’ of the ‘truth’ of its theology to the experience of God: if a theological construct can aid Liberal Quakers to experience God in a more complete manner and demonstrate that experience in a reformed life, the theological construct has been demonstrated to be ‘proven’.<sup>79</sup>

Richenda Scott describes ‘experience’ as comprised of two elements: the relationship that humans have with the ‘outer’, physical environment, which is mediated through the use of the

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<sup>75</sup> This is a core tenet of Liberal Quakerism. It is stated as such in the first passage in *Faith and Practice: Friends maintain that expressions of their faith must be related to personal experience*. This is repeated continuously through the Swarthmore Lectures, with Charles Carter being the best example of this line of thought: ‘What I have said so far is an assertion that the source of authority in religion is to be found through the experience of the individual’. Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain, *Quaker Faith and Practice* (London: Britain Yearly Meeting, 1994), 1.01; Charles F. Carter, *On Having a Sense of All Conditions* (London: The Swarthmore Press, Ltd., 1971), 3.

<sup>76</sup> George H. Gorman, *The Amazing Fact of Quaker Worship* (London: Friends Home Service Committee, 1973), 2.

<sup>77</sup> Alex Wildwood represents an expression of this perspective which is non-Christian: ‘I felt I was finally beginning to square the circle, to bring what I had experienced in diverse other places and forms: experiences of the Spirit in spontaneous rituals, in seasonal circles, in being real with one another and in simple acts of human kindness – with the faith and practice of the Quaker-Christian community which I had felt led amongst. For Hicks was pointing to an experience central to Quaker faith: not a *belief* in something external but an inner knowing; Truth not as a concept, an idea or a doctrine, but as a reality we experience’. Alex Wildwood, *A Faith to Call Our Own: Quaker Tradition in the Light of Contemporary Movements of the Spirit* (London: Quaker Home Service, 1999), 5.

<sup>78</sup> Priestland, *Reasonable Uncertainty*, 21.

<sup>79</sup> Silvanus P. Thompson, *The Quest for Truth* (London: Headley Brothers, 1915), 14.



physical senses and can be termed the material experience; and the relationship that humans have with the 'inner' environment of emotions, thoughts, and 'those frontiers of consciousness beyond words', which is mediated through the mind and spirit and can be said to be the emotional and spiritual experience. She argued that these two elements combine in a unified human experience of the body in space and the soul in God.<sup>80</sup> The human person is not simply receiving experience as a response to sensory and spiritual input, but the person is also actively interacting with their environment in a dialogic exchange. For Richenda Scott, this applied, by necessity, to the human experience of God.

Some lecturers emphasise the personal nature of the experience of God. Richenda Scott also asserted that the experience of God is an immediate and personal one, that does not require any outside mediator to establish the connection. She argued that due to the inherently subjective nature of human experience, no singular experience of God could be said to be either universally applicable to all people or authoritative over all other experiences.<sup>81</sup> Kenneth Barnes made a similar argument, emphasising that much of the critique that experiential religion faces comes from a valorisation of the intellectual, reasoned interpretation of what is inherently an a-rational experience. Barnes argued that the emotional and spiritual experience of God cannot be accurately expressed using verbal and intellectual means.<sup>82</sup>

This is not a universally accepted position, however. Silvanus Thompson critiqued the exclusive focus on the individual experience. He insisted that the 'personal experience' of God includes both the individual experience of God and the communal experience of God.<sup>83</sup> The

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<sup>80</sup> Scott, *Tradition and Experience*, 2.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 12. This is not a perspective unique to Scott; this is also common language amongst Liberal Quakers. Charles Carter stated, 'religious knowledge has existence or validity if it is not welling up in individual experience. No structure or church authority will maintain it then. In fact, the spiritual can be defined by the nature of our apprehension of it'. Carter, *On Having a Sense of All Conditions*, 3.

<sup>82</sup> Kenneth Barnes, *The Creative Imagination* (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1960), 9.

<sup>83</sup> Thompson, *The Quest for Truth*, 114.

communal experience of God occurs most often for Liberal Quakers in meeting for worship, but as Christine Davis notes, it can also occur in the community of a conversation, or in the community of offering love and service to another person.<sup>84</sup>

For some Liberal Quakers, this insistence on the unmediated experience of the Divine applies to the sacramental tradition as well. Rufus Jones emphasised the insistency of the human desire to experience God in a powerful, deeply connected fashion. Jones claimed that if presented with an option, the majority of people would choose to experience the presence of God unmediated through any other human interpretation of the experience.<sup>85</sup> His language reflected a long-standing Quaker aversion to physical sacraments as the mediated experience of God and the ordination of clergy to deliver such sacraments to the people.

Jones' easy dismissal of the sacramental tradition is not without its critics. George Gorman noted that many other Christian traditions have a clearer sense of their close communion with God than Gorman often felt.<sup>86</sup> Gerald Priestland suggests that the formal codes and doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church and Orthodox Church, and the manner with which those churches police the bounds of belief, have value for the maintenance of the teachings and values of a faith tradition in the face of societal and cultural change Priestland makes this argument as an element of a wider critique of the privatising of Liberal Quaker religious experience and the damage to the Christian aspects of the Liberal Quaker tradition. Priestland argues that this situation stems from the insistence on the primacy of individual subjective experiences in Liberal Quakerism, and the norm in Liberal Quakerism for each person to be entitled to their own individual experience preserved from critique by the community of the meeting.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Christine A. M. Davis, *Minding the Future* (London: Quaker Books, 2008), 24.

<sup>85</sup> Rufus Jones, *Quakerism: A Religion of Life* (London: Headley Brothers, 1908), 25.

<sup>86</sup> Gorman, *The Amazing Fact of Quaker Worship*, 69.

<sup>87</sup> Priestland, *Reasonable Uncertainty*, 21.

Richenda Scott cautioned that her insistence on individual experience does not mean that a person could not gain insight through another's interpretation of their individual experience.<sup>88</sup> The Liberal Quaker insistence on bringing all 'leadings' from God to the gathered community demonstrates the importance of not valorising the individual experience as the exclusive basis from which to make authoritative claims about God. While emphasising the importance of this approach, both for Liberal Quakers and throughout Christian history, Scott acknowledged that it can present challenges if an individual feels they experiences God in a vastly different fashion than the rest of the gathered community.<sup>89</sup> This can lead to the individual experience of the communal God separating people, thus introducing loneliness into what should be a shared and communal event.<sup>90</sup>

This is not to claim that British Liberal Quaker theology is developed in a structural vacuum; rather, that British Liberal Quakers place religious experience as the primary locus for theological reflection and development. One useful rubric for charting the different elements of theology is the Wesleyan Quadrilateral,<sup>91</sup> the idea that theological authority is developed in four main ways: Scripture (the Christian Bible), Tradition (the doctrinal statements of ecclesial structures, the creeds of the Ecumenical Councils, and theological 'schools' built upon the thought of certain theologians), Reason (the application of logic and human reasoning), and Experience (the religious experience of both individual humans and the a gathered community of individuals sharing a common religious experience). Protestant Christian tradition has placed the greatest emphasis on Scripture, while the Roman Catholic and Orthodox traditions have

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<sup>88</sup> Scott, *Tradition and Experience*, 12.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid*, 13.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid*, 24.

<sup>91</sup> This was first referred to by Albert C. Outler in his edited collection of Wesley's written works. Outler noted the existence of the other sources, yet stressed that they must all be read through the primary lens of Scripture. By treating the sources as equal partners, and by allowing experience to take priority over the other sources, I am adapting the concept of the Quadrilateral to my own theological purposes. Albert C. Outler ed., *John Wesley* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1964).

emphasised Scripture and Tradition as dialogue partners. While it can be argued that every Christian tradition uses all four elements in some fashion in the development of their theology, it is not common to place the greatest priority on religious experience, usually arguing that the inherently fragmentary and dynamic nature of experience makes it an unreliable foundation upon which to say anything certain and universal about God.<sup>92</sup> By thus viewing the other theological sources through the lens of religious experience, British Liberal Quakerism makes the claim that theology must be contextual, dynamic, non-universal, and developed through the dialogic interplay between the interpretation of the religious experience of individuals and the community.

As Rachel Muers notes, it is thus ‘highly unlikely’ that present-day British Liberal Quakers will ever develop a definitive work of Quaker systematic theology, which seeks to develop the ‘one’ British Quaker vision on the common theological questions of soteriology, Christology, hamartiology, and the like.<sup>93</sup> Individual Quakers might find answers to such questions that they find satisfactory, that fit within British Quaker theological frameworks, and even claim that some answers are more helpful than others; yet, these answers will always be open to re-interpretation and re-examination in the light of new experiences. This reflects the British Quaker rejection of creeds, which as Pink Dandelion notes, is actually more an acknowledgement by British Quakers of the dynamic nature of human experience, which precludes the establishment of any theological statement as authoritative.<sup>94</sup> Thus, if a belief can be changed in light of new evidence, at conceivably any time, any claim to authority would be meaningless. As any ecclesial theology (or, theology that speaks to needs of a religious community and arises from its experience of

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<sup>92</sup> Lonnie D. Kliever, ‘Experience-Religious’, in *New & Enlarged Handbook of Christian Theology*, eds. Donald W. Musser and Joseph L. Price (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003), 190-93, at 190.

<sup>93</sup> Rachel Muers, *Testimony: Quakerism and Theological Ethics* (London: SCM Press, 2015), 20.

<sup>94</sup> Pink Dandelion, *A Sociological Analysis of the Theology of the Quakers: The Silent Revolution* (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, Ltd., 1996), 151.

God) is arguably dependent on some texts or beliefs common to the community, this British Quaker aversion to granting authoritative status to any text or belief would preclude the development of anything resembling a 'British Quaker theology'. Instead, there would be as many 'British Quaker theologies' as there are British Quakers. As Dandelion notes, this is in fact the stance of most British Quakers towards the development of a British Quaker ecclesial theology.<sup>95</sup>

As Dandelion notes, however, this British Quaker aversion to ecclesial theology is contradicted by the existence of what is arguably a common ecclesial document which not only provides the 'orthodox' British Quaker approach to issues of administration and structure, but also provides an 'orthodox' set of perspectives on issues of theological belief and ethics: *Quaker Faith and Practice*.<sup>96</sup> This is not a controversial statement, for the book claims such an authority for itself.<sup>97</sup> If *Faith and Practice* is thus the 'authoritative' document for British Quakerism, it can be seen as the structural rubric upon which any British Quaker ecclesial theology can be built. The structure of the book, the manner through which ideas are developed, and even the themes emphasised in the book, all provide a framework for how British Quakers develop theology. I suggest that British Quaker ecclesial theology involves these elements: 1) bring faith and practice into interdependent relationship, so that ethics, church governance, and belief are all engaged in dialogue; 2) begin from the perspective of experience, both the individual and the community, placing the experience of multiple people across a wide range of chronological, ideological, geographical, and theological contexts in dialogue; 3) extract ideas and perspectives from these multiple sources and place them into dialogue with each other by grouping them into

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid, 147.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid, 151.

<sup>97</sup> Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain, *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 12.

themes that reflect the emphasis on the ‘lived practice’ of British Quakers;<sup>98</sup> 4) correlative to this, acknowledge the chronological context of each extract while also emphasising that the thematic context of the extracts is far more important in developing the conversation between extracts;<sup>99</sup> 5) emphasise that that theological truth can be found in sources not mentioned or included in the specific extracts included in the text;<sup>100</sup> 6) finally, insist that British Quaker theology always be in flux, and be willing to adapt ‘old’ language and ideas to ‘new’ experiences and contexts.<sup>101</sup> A prime example of this method involves Liberal Quaker use of metaphorical theology to construct models of God which reflect their experience.

### 1.2.b.3 Metaphorical Theology

Liberal Quakers often use metaphor in a creative attempt to explain their experience of God and the forms that God takes in their understanding as a result of that experience. The Light is one such central metaphor, yet Inner Seed, Inner Guide, Light of Christ, and Inner Light are also attempts to explain the Liberal Quaker experience of an immanent God who is concomitantly connected to all of creation. This use of images reflects the difficulty that Liberal Quakers often have in expressing the fullness of their experience of the Divine, Beth Allen argues, resulting in metaphors that might not work beyond specific circumstances, or for all people. This is not to argue against the use of such metaphorical language, however. Allen suggests that metaphorical language and models of God are necessary tools for framing the

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>99</sup> This is not specifically mentioned, yet can be seen by the arrangement of extracts within each section based upon their value for developing the theme of that section, without any obvious adherence to any type of chronological ordering. For example, the first four extracts listed in the book, in chapter two, are from 1967 (1994), 1890, 1973, and 1818. This pattern continues throughout the book.

<sup>100</sup> Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain, *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 15.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid, 16.

complexity of the experience of God, as long as they are vessels for moving human understanding towards the deeper reality of the God which was experienced and are not held to as definitive statements of the fullness of the reality of God.<sup>102</sup>

Brenda Clifft Heales and Chris Cook make a similar argument, stating that Liberal Quakers often hold very tightly to well-loved models of God that reflect deeply-held perceptions of Quaker values and beliefs which may not be entirely accurate or fully express a complex God.<sup>103</sup> Heales and Cook argue that this creates a God which only serves as a mirror to reflect Liberal Quakers and their values. As a corrective, Clifft and Cook argue for a willingness to consistently subject long-standing models to a process of review, holding them against the experience of both individual Quakers and the community to determine if they still speak to the reality of the experience.<sup>104</sup>

Peter Eccles accepts the necessity of retaining within Liberal Quakerism the language of a traditional Christian worldview with a perfect, omniscient God who created the world as a home for humanity and who granted humanity the stewardship of said creation mainly because it reflects an experience of God that is still extant amongst Liberal Quakers.<sup>105</sup> He insists, however, that the language should be re-evaluated from within the experience of a Liberal Quaker worldview, and potentially re-defined in order to better reflect that experience. One example that Eccles presents is the re-evaluation of the model of God as ‘designer’. Eccles states that the scientific worldview makes this model untenable, yet it does speak to the experience of God as an actively creative force within the universe. Therefore, Eccles applauds efforts at creatively re-imagining the relationship between science and theology, such as the spiritual energy of God

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<sup>102</sup> Beth Allen, *Ground and Spring: Foundations of Quaker Discipleship* (London: Quaker Books, 2007), 25.

<sup>103</sup> Brenda Clifft Heales and Chris Cook, *Images and Silence: The Future of Quaker Ministry* (London: Quaker Home Service, 1992), 80.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid*, 81.

<sup>105</sup> Peter J. Eccles, *The Presence in the Midst: Reflections on Discernment* (London: Quaker Books, 2009), 9.

which pervades all of creation described by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin in his book *The Phenomenon of Man*.<sup>106</sup>

Such a creative approach to developing models of God typifies Janet Scott's 1980 Swarthmore Lecture, and its overall project to re-envision traditional Christian language and models to fit her experience, to that point in her life, as a Universalist Quaker.<sup>107</sup> She considers different models of God that emerge from language, developing a number of models based on God as an object (noun), as a person (pronoun), as a characteristic (adjective), and finally as an action (verb).<sup>108</sup> Scott argues that envisioning God as an action is the most true to Quaker experience, especially as experience is itself an action, and something which is performed.

One of the most consistent models in Quaker theology is the language of 'Light'. The theological meaning of this language has not remained static across Quaker history, however. Henry Cadbury argued that while the early Quakers tended towards more explicitly Christological language in their constructions of the Light, the constructions themselves were still rather vague in terms of their theological content and meaning. This vagueness reflected the experiential theology which inspired the vision of God as Light.<sup>109</sup> Early Quakers did not understand the Light in terms of a constant, ever-present 'Inner Light', as many Liberal Quaker models of the Light claim. It did not act as a form of conscience or a guide, the presence of which a person could decide whether or not to recognize. It was more of a potential for actual union with God or Christ which, if attended to, could help the person attain a level of perfection where the person could resist temptation and thus did not sin.<sup>110</sup> The access to the divine Light

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid, 52.

<sup>107</sup> Janet Scott, *What Canst Thou Say? Towards a Quaker Theology* (London: The Swarthmore Press, Ltd., 1980), 63.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid, 76, 77, 78, 81.

<sup>109</sup> Henry J. Cadbury, *Quakerism and Early Christianity* (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1957), 38.

<sup>110</sup> Rosemary Moore, *The Light in their Consciences: Early Quakers in Britain, 1646-1666* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania University Press, 2000), 21.



lay dormant within a person until it was awakened by faith. It would then reveal sin, and work to purify the person through a process of sanctification, restoring the original, holy image of God within the person.<sup>111</sup>

As noted above, Liberal Quaker theology is still non-systematic and vague. This has the potential to influence Liberal Quaker visions of the Light, emphasising experience and metaphor as the main interpretive tools employed by Liberal Quakers to envision the Light and to construct theologies of the Light. In the history of Quaker theology, the term ‘Inward Light’ has a very specific meaning, relating to the Light of Christ which shines from God inward towards the person.<sup>112</sup> Reflecting the general Liberal Quaker trend towards a flexible and open approach to theological language, where even Quaker theological terms with a specific meaning began to shift and morph as Liberal Quakers struggled to explain their experience of God and used whatever tools were at their disposal, the early Quaker concept of ‘inward Light’ morphed into ‘Inner Light’, which carries a variety of theological meanings. The Light is thus an expansive term for the interdependence of God and humanity, and for the human experience of being in relationship with God that includes Christian and Universalist constructions. In chapter three I develop these concepts in greater depth, developing Liberal Quakers models of the Light that apply to both Christian and Universalist reconciliation theology. The power of the Liberal Quaker experience of God demands robust and multi-faceted models.

### 1.3 Literature Review

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<sup>111</sup> Carole Dale Spencer, ‘Early Quakers and Divine Liberation from the Universal Power of Sin’, in *Good and Evil: Quaker Perspectives*, eds. Jackie Leach Scully and Pink Dandelion (Hampshire, UK: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2007), 43-58, at 43.

<sup>112</sup> Edgar G. Dunstan, *Quakers and the Religious Quest* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1956), 25.

A challenge that faces any British Liberal Quaker ecclesial theology is the aforementioned dearth of works of sustained theological thought in British Quakerism.<sup>113</sup> Two notable exceptions include *Faith and Practice*, and what has longed been viewed as the main British Quaker contribution to systematic theology, the *Apology for the True Christian Divinity*, written by Robert Barclay in 1676.<sup>114</sup> The thematic element of British Liberal Quakerism, coupled with its emphasis on practice, has resulted in a tradition of weaving theology into works primarily focused on other areas, especially issues of ethics, politics, history, sociology, and the practice of being ‘Quakerly’ in the world. A notable example of this is the work of Dandelion. He has written a significant amount of the most recent work on British Liberal Quakerism, writing on the sociology, history, ecclesial practice, and spirituality of British Quakerism. While his work is often quite theological in nature, he has not yet written anything that can be seen as explicitly theological.<sup>115</sup>

Rachel Muers reflects this trend: in her book *Testimony*, she acknowledges that while she is not bereft of ‘dialogue partners’ in Quaker theology, not only is contemporary British Liberal Quakerism suspicious of explicitly ‘theological’ language, British Liberal Quaker theological language is rarely brought into dialogue with the wider tradition of Christian theology, its

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<sup>113</sup> A notable recent American Quaker attempt at a more comprehensive ‘Liberal Quaker’ theology is from the American Quaker, Margery Post Abbott, *To Be Broken and Tender: A Quaker Theology for Today* (Portland, OR: Western Friend/Friends Bulletin Corporation, 2010). Abbott follows the Liberal Quaker practice of building theology from the intersections of personal experience, theological reflection, and ethics. As Abbott is an American Quaker from North Pacific Yearly Meeting, and as her work is rooted in her spiritual experience, her work is thus rooted in her American context. As a result, it is not as applicable to the work of this thesis as other attempts at a comprehensive Liberal Quaker theology.

<sup>114</sup> Robert Barclay, *Apology for the True Christian Divinity* (Glenside, PA: Quaker Heritage Press, 2002). It was first written in Latin in 1676, with the English version published in 1678.

<sup>115</sup> Dandelion’s work has utilised theological categories and arguments to answer questions regarding the sociological makeup, or cultural frameworks of Liberal Quakerism, notably in *The Liturgies of Quakerism*, where he examined the structures and elements of Liberal Quaker ‘waiting worship’ from the perspective of liturgics. This included an overview examination of the differences between the liturgics of other Christian traditions and Liberal Quakerism, as well as a thorough examination of the liturgics of different Quaker communities. Yet, his conclusions focused on the historical and sociological implications of these comparisons, and not on the implications for a Liberal Quaker liturgical theology. Pink Dandelion, *The Liturgies of Quakerism* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2005).

language, and perspectives.<sup>116</sup> By way of contrast, American Quakers seem much more willing to engage in such theological bridge building. The most notable recent example is *Quakering Theology*, written by American Quaker theologian David Johns.<sup>117</sup> His main concern in this work is to engage in the kind of ecumenical conversations between Quaker theology and the wider Christian theological world that this dissertation is seeking to do, in that Christian theology can be made more ‘Quaker’. This involves translating Quaker concepts to Christian ones, and thus infuse Christian theology with Quaker distinctives and his understanding of the main concerns of Quaker theology. His work demonstrates that there is precedent for this kind of work, even as it does not specifically apply to the British Liberal Quaker context. His work is notable for its lack of a similar tradition in Britain, however.

This can be demonstrated through an examination of the most recent doctoral work which examined Quaker theological themes. While a few dissertations are not foolproof demonstrations of a definitive trend in British Quaker Liberal theological examination, a few notable examples demonstrate the potential cultural differences which can demonstrate a lack of sustained systematic theological engagement in British Liberal Quakerism. Yasuharu Nakano’s 2011 PhD dissertation, ‘Self and Other in the Theology of Robert Barclay’, examines the interplay between ‘self’ and ‘other’ through the lens of Robert Barclay’s views of ecclesiology, sin, and ethics (specifically in relation to the Peace Testimony), comparing these views with those of both Liberal Quakers and the wider Christian tradition. Nakano rooted it in the context of Japan, and the particular expression of Japanese Quakerism. Nakano made a point of comparing Barclay not only to the current context of Liberal Quakerism, but compared both Robert Barclay and Liberal

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<sup>116</sup> Muers, *Testimony*, 4-5.

<sup>117</sup> David L. Johns, *Quakering Theology: Essays on Worship, Tradition, and Christian Faith* (New York: Routledge, 2016).

Quakerism in light of Patristic, Reform, and Wesleyan theology.<sup>118</sup> By contrast, Rhiannon Grant's 2014 dissertation, 'Wittgensteinian Investigations of Contemporary Quaker Religious Language', examines British Liberal Quaker religious language, and the socio-cultural meanings in which they are rooted and which they then create within the religious culture of British Liberal Quakerism, in light of the philosophy of language meaning developed by Ludwig Wittgenstein.<sup>119</sup> While Grant's work does delve deep into the construction of religious meaning from the interplay between experience, language, and meaning, it does so with an exclusive focus on the writings of British Liberal Quakerism. Grant does not seek to examine the theological import of the language beyond how that import might inform the meaning of the language itself. There has not been any other recent work examining British Liberal Quakerism specifically through the lens of religious meaning or theology.

While Liberal Quaker thought has continuously engaged with the wide field of peacemaking approaches and philosophies, as one of the main elements of Liberal Quakerism is its significant emphasis on peace and peacemaking, neither reconciliation theologians nor Liberal Quakers have attempted to bring both fields into any sustained dialogue. This, however, is not the case with political peacemaking in general, and political reconciliation specifically. Liberal Quaker peacemakers have engaged with the categories of political reconciliation at great length, demonstrating how they have either employed these techniques in their peacemaking efforts, or how they have incorporated the theoretical foundations of political reconciliation in their peacemaking. These are the main themes of any work that has dealt with reconciliation and Quaker peacemaking: the development and application of the Quaker Peace Testimony, the role

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<sup>118</sup> Yasuharu Nakano, 'Self and Other in the Theology of Robert Barclay', PhD Dissertation, University of Birmingham, 2011.

<sup>119</sup> Rhiannon Emma Louise Grant, 'Wittgensteinian Investigations of Contemporary Quaker Religious Language', PhD Dissertation, University of Leeds, 2014.

that the Peace Testimony plays in the overarching Quaker ethical structure, and the intersections of both the Peace Testimony and Quaker ethics with those of political reconciliation and religious peacemaking in general. With the notable exception of Ham Sok-Han (who I explore in chapter three), any theology mentioned is done in the context of the Peace Testimony specifically, and in connection with the implications of the Quaker concept of divine immanence in peacemaking in general.

This is demonstrated most clearly through those Swarthmore Lectures which focus most specifically on the theory and practice of Quaker peacemaking, all of which emphasised reconciliation as one of, if not the most important, focuses of Quaker peacebuilding efforts. These lectures include: Wolf Mendl,<sup>120</sup> Adam Curle,<sup>121</sup> Sidney Bailey,<sup>122</sup> and Simon Fisher.<sup>123</sup> Yet, much of this work centres on the political and practical elements of peacemaking itself, and not the theological and ontological aspects that might inform or inspire Liberal Quaker peacemaking.

Quaker popular writing has engaged these themes as well, with a notable example of *Coming from the Silence: Quaker Peacemaking Initiatives in Northern Ireland, 1969-2007*, and edited work by Ann LeMare and Felicity McCartney.<sup>124</sup> It is the only work that has attempted to explain both the peacemaking practices employed by Quakers in Northern Ireland during the period of civil war in Northern Ireland known as the ‘Troubles’, and the theological/ethical reasons behind that work. The essay authors examined the unique context of the ‘Troubles’, and the impact that it had on Northern Irish Quaker thinking on the Peace testimony. The authors

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<sup>120</sup> Wolf Mendl, *Prophets and Reconcilers: Reflections on the Quaker Peace Testimony* (London: Friends Home Service, 1974).

<sup>121</sup> Adam Curle, *True Justice: Quaker Peace Makers and Peace Making* (London: Quaker Home Service, 1981).

<sup>122</sup> Sidney Bailey, *Peace is a Process* (London: Quaker Home Service, 1993).

<sup>123</sup> Simon Fisher, *Spirited Living: Waging Conflict, Building Peace* (London: Quaker Books, 2004).

<sup>124</sup> Ann LeMare and Felicity McCartney (eds.), *Coming from the Silence: Quaker Peacemaking Initiatives in Northern Ireland, 1969-2007* (Belfast, UK: Quaker Service, 2011).

argue that the situation created a uniquely Northern Irish theology of peace and peacemaking. Yet, they did not extend this analysis to the implications on reconciliation theology, or develop a conversation with reconciliation theology communities doing similar work in Northern Ireland, such as Corrymeela.<sup>125</sup>

This applies to Liberal Quaker academic writing as well. There are only two sustained academic examinations of the overlap between Quaker and political reconciliation peacemaking theory and practice. The first is Peni Connolly's 2013 Master's thesis, 'Building Relationships: Quaker Peacebuilding in a Pacific Context'.<sup>126</sup> Connolly introduces the religious beliefs underlying Quaker peacemaking work, in the service of demonstrating how the beliefs translate first into values, and then into specific peacebuilding practices. Connolly demonstrates the overlap between these practices and other systems of religious peacebuilding, by examining how these practices were enacted in the different contexts of Australia and Aotearoa, New Zealand. Again, Connolly does not examine the theological underpinnings of these beliefs in any systematic fashion, nor the potential theological implications. This demonstrates a significant gap in the literature.

The second is Gerard Guiton's published version of his doctoral dissertation, *The Growth and Development of Quaker Testimony, 1652-1661 and 1990-1994: Conflict, Non-Violence and Conciliation*.<sup>127</sup> His work is a dual-pronged work, examining the Quaker Peace Testimony in two distinct historical, and political, contexts: its initial development during the earliest periods of Quakerism in Yorkshire; and its adaptation to, and subsequent application in, peacemaking

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<sup>125</sup> I examine the development of reconciliation theology in Northern Ireland in two sections in this dissertation: a focus on sectarianism as sin in chapter two; a focus on theologies of 'rootedness' and 'place' in chapter three.

<sup>126</sup> Peni Connolly, 'Building Relationships: Quaker Peacebuilding in a Pacific Context', MA Thesis, University of Otago, 2013.

<sup>127</sup> Gerald Guiton, *The Growth and Development of Quaker Testimony, 1652-1661 and 1990-1994: Conflict, Non-Violence and Conciliation* (Lampeter, UK: The Edwin Mellen Press, Ltd., 2005).

efforts by Quakers in South Africa during the final days of the apartheid system. This is notable as it is the only sustained examination of Quaker peacemaking work in South Africa, specifically in a country known for its impact on the development of reconciliation theology.<sup>128</sup>

These writers all explored the role that peacemaking philosophies and techniques interacted with the Quaker Peace Testimony, and some even examined the role that political reconciliation philosophies and practices intersected with the Peace Testimony. Through their examination of the Peace Testimony, some explored Quaker peace theology in depth. These are the only writers who have sought to bring reconciliation and Liberal Quakerism into dialogue, and they all generally followed a similar pattern of placing peacemaking and reconciliation practice and philosophy in dialogue with Liberal Quaker peace theology and ethics. None examined reconciliation theology in dialogue with Liberal Quaker peace theology, nor did any examine these intersections in the same level of depth which this dissertation engages in, especially with relation to reconciliation and atonement theology. I argue that this dissertation thus fills a lacuna in both Christian theology and Liberal Quaker theology.

I contend, therefore, that there is space within British Liberal Quakerism for work in British Liberal Quaker ecclesial theology, which is explicitly theological in nature, and seeks to bring British Liberal Quaker theological language in dialogue with other Christian theological perspectives.<sup>129</sup> This theology would be crafted using the rubric established above, and reflecting

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<sup>128</sup> I examine the development of reconciliation theology in South Africa in two sections in this dissertation: a focus on racism as sin in chapter two; a focus on *Ubuntu* interdependence theologies in chapter three.

<sup>129</sup> As my thesis focuses on the theological possibilities present in the Swarthmore Lectures, which are delivered annually to the proceedings of Britain Yearly Meeting, I will focus on the theological thought of either British Quakers (who are overwhelmingly ‘Liberal’ in their approach to Quaker thought and practice), or on selected writings of those few American Quakers who have delivered Swarthmore Lectures. A notable recent American Quaker attempt at a more comprehensive ‘Liberal Quaker’ theology is from the American Quaker Margery Post Abbott: *To Be Broken and Tender: A Quaker Theology for Today* (Portland, OR: Western Friend/Friends Bulletin Corporation, 2010) Abbott follows the Liberal Quaker practice of building theology from the intersections of personal experience, theological reflection, and ethics. As Abbott is an American Quaker from North Pacific Yearly

the British Liberal Quaker openness to dialogue with ‘new’ voices, would utilise theological sources which have been arguably under-utilised in British Quaker ecclesial theology.<sup>130</sup> I claim that the Swarthmore Lectures, annual lectures delivered for the benefit of Quakerism, are not only under-utilised as theological sources, but that any theology built from them would effectively meet the six parameters set out above for building British Liberal Quaker ecclesial theology. In a tradition seemingly bereft of sustained systematic theological thought, the lectures are the most in-depth and sustained set of theological reflection that is extant in British Liberal Quakerism.

#### **1.4 Sources: Developing the Swarthmore Lectures as Theological Tools**

The Swarthmore Lectures were established by the Woodbrooke Extension Committee on 9 December 1907 as an ‘annual lecture on some subject relating to the message and work of the Society of Friends’. The Committee desired that the lectures fulfil two purposes. The lectures had to interpret the message and mission of British Liberal Quakers to British Liberal Quakers. Secondly, the lectures were intended to be a method of informing the wider public of the ‘spirit, the aims and fundamental principles’ of British Liberal Quakers. The Committee insisted that the

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Meeting, and as her work is rooted in her spiritual experience, her work is thus rooted in her American context. As a result, it is not as applicable to the work of this thesis as other attempts at a comprehensive Liberal Quaker theology.

<sup>130</sup> Outside of *Quaker Faith and Practice*, the book that establishes the accepted ecclesial practices of, and lays down the main theological and ethical teachings, of Britain Yearly Meeting, the only other avenue for speaking to the theological thought of Liberal Quakers a group, as opposed to individual Liberal Quakers, is the Swarthmore Lectures. As such, the Lectures have a habit of speaking, often in significant depth, to the spectrum of theological and ethical concerns of Liberal Quakers. Yet, few attempts have been made to utilise the Lectures as tools for developing Liberal Quaker theology, despite their significant potential for serving in such a capacity. In this chapter I propose a format for building a Liberal Quaker theology with categories that can dialogue with reconciliation theology: I will utilise the Lectures themselves as theological tools, following the format for Liberal Quaker theological thought developed in *Quaker Faith and Practice*. In subsequent chapters, I will develop these theological categories further, demonstrating how their dialogue with reconciliation theology can create a new hybrid, a Liberal Quaker reconciliation theology.



lecturers were completely responsible for any opinions that they expressed, meaning that the Committee would not censor any message delivered.<sup>131</sup>

This leaves any Quaker who delivers a lecture free to engage in any debate that they find most compelling, even to possibly disagree with the main thrust of British Liberal Quaker thought and to strive to convince British Liberal Quakers to alter their theological perspective and belief structures. The lectures thus impact British Liberal Quaker theology in two ways: as definitive statements of British Liberal Quaker theology, as it stands at that time; and as tools to develop British Liberal Quaker theology. This individual focus has a significant benefit for the development of British Liberal Quaker theology: it provides a sustained examination of specific topics which spurs dialogue within British Liberal Quakerism as a whole, potentially to such a degree that British Liberal Quakerism adapts its corporate understanding of certain core concepts in significant ways. This is very important for a religious tradition that places such significant import on the value of corporate discernment of the testimony of individuals.

The long history of the lectures, coupled with the freedom to explore any topic, has led to an eclectic array of topics covered across the span of the lectures. These topics fall into general themes, with a wide variety of sub-themes under each main theme. I argue that the main themes, and their sub-themes, include: Outlines of Quakerism (History, Visions of God, Meeting); British Liberal Quaker Theology (Narrative, the Bible, Doctrine, the Light, Christ, Holy Spirit, Christianity, Human Nature, Science/Reason); Spirituality (Faith, Silence, Beauty, Harmony); Testimonies (Testimony as Concept, Religion as Action and Practice, Reconciliation, Ethics, Trust, Humility, Compassion, Equality, Truth, Simplicity, Commercial Activity, Community, Peace); and the Quaker Role in Society (Education, the Prophetic, Justice, Authority, Civil Disobedience, Conflict/International Relations). Each sub-theme can be further subdivided, such

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<sup>131</sup> Jonathan Dale, *Beyond the Spirit of the Age* (London: Quaker Home Service, 1996), iii.

that the Swarthmore Lectures can be said to cover a significant swathe of the theological thought and history of British Liberal Quakerism. This breadth not only rivals that of the *Quaker Faith and Practice*, its depth is simply unmatched by any other series of writings in British Liberal Quakerism.

The multi-vocal format of the lectures also allows for dynamic growth in the corporate understanding of a diverse array of aspects of British Liberal Quaker practice and theology. One demonstration of the impact of the lectures in British Liberal Quakerism as a whole is the number of inclusions of passages from the lectures within the current edition of *Quaker Faith and Practice*, inclusion of which only occurs due to corporate discernment in the value of a passage for expressing a truth about the British Liberal Quaker experience. Fifty-eight separate passages are included, in fourteen sections.<sup>132</sup> Certain lectures demonstrate the power of their

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<sup>132</sup> I include the specific passage number (for example, 2.03 is the third passage in the second chapter of *Faith and Practice*), the name of the Lecture's author, and the date of their Lecture. The sections in bold are the chapter titles.

**Approaches to God – Worship and Prayer**

2.03: Gorman, 1973

2.07: Green, 1952

2.29: Green, 1952

2.49: Green, 1952

2.64: Holdsworth, 1919

2.74: Gorman, 1973

**Yearly Meeting**

6.08: Wilson, 1949

**Membership**

11.02: Dunstan, 1956

**Varieties of Religious Service**

13.10: Braithwaite, 1909

**Quaker Funerals and Memorial Meetings**

17.16: Gorman, 1973

**Faithful Lives**

18.11: Rowntree, 1913

**Living Faithfully Today**

20.63: Brayshaw, 1933

**Personal Journey**

21.22: Graveson, 1937

21.27: Hetherington, 1975

21.28: Graveson, 1937

21.34: Gorman, 1973

21.35: Brinton, 1931

influence through their high number of inclusions: George Gorman's 1973 lecture was included five times. Along those lines, one scholar who has taken the Swarthmore Lectures seriously as theological resources is Martin Davie, who references several lectures in his study of Liberal

21.42: Brinton, 1931

21.44: Littleboy, 1917

21.66: Burnell, 1989

**Close Relationships**

22.05: Parker-Rhodes, 1977

22.06: Holdsworth, 1985

22.09: Steere, 1955

22.50: Burnell, 1989

**Social Responsibility**

23.06: Morland, 1919

23.44: Quaker Women's Group, 1986

23.47 McClelland, 1976

23.79: Graveson, 1937

23.101: Lampen, 1987

23.103: Lampen, 1987

**Our Peace Testimony**

24.12: Mendl, 1974

24.22: Mendl, 1974

24.24: Wilson, 1949

24.26: Lonsdale, 1953

24.28: Quaker Women's Group, 1986

24.30: Wilson, 1949

24.33: Lonsdale, 1953

24.35: Curle, 1981

24.43: Wood, 1962

24.46: Braun, 1950

24.57: Bailey, 1993

24.58: Wood, 1962

24.60: Mendl, 1974

**Reflections**

26.16: Eddington, 1929

26.19: Scott, 1980

26.21: Harvey, 1947

26.22: Barnes, 1960

26.28: Holdsworth, 1985

26.31: Gillman, 1988

26.39: Carter, 1971

26.50: Scott, 1980

26.52: Doncaster, 1963

26.56: Burnell, 1989

26.73: Gorman, 1973

**Unity and Diversity**

27.24: Eddington, 1929

27.26: Scott, 1980

**Sharing the Quaker Experience**

28.06: Jeffery, 1934

28.07: Dunstan, 1956

Quaker theology, *British Quaker Theology Since 1895*. He makes a close study of the theological content, or lack thereof, of the lectures, from the perspective of the impact that the lecturers have had on shifting Liberal Quaker theology towards a greater acceptance of secularism. He focuses his attention on examining the impact of three lectures: Maurice Creasey in 1969, George Gorman in 1973, and Janet Scott in 1980. Davie sees Scott's lecture as the most effective in bringing the Universalist perspective into the mainstream of Liberal Quaker theology.<sup>133</sup> I examine Scott's influence on Quaker Universalism in 4.3.b.

Davie is not alone in his assessment of the power of the lectures to influence Liberal Quaker thought. Many of the lecturers themselves recognise the impact that previous lectures made on their thought, and on Liberal Quakerism in general. Creasey cited H.G. Wood's lecture of 1920 as the main inspiration for Creasey's perspective on the extent to which the Christian Church understood Jesus and whether they were relevant in any way to expressing Jesus' message to the world.<sup>134</sup> D. Elton Trueblood, who delivered a lecture in 1939, made possibly the most insistent claims about the value of the lectures. Trueblood argued that the lectures were instrumental in developing Quaker thought, claiming that they were the 'closest approximation to an authoritative statement of Quakerism in the Twentieth Century'.<sup>135</sup> Trueblood singled out Arthur Eddington's 1929 lecture as carrying such import that not only was it the most read lecture to that point, but that it was also deeply influential on American Quakerism.<sup>136</sup> Finally, Trueblood argued that the significant re-evaluation of the concept of the Inner Light

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<sup>133</sup> Martin Davie, *British Quaker Theology Since 1895* (Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, Ltd, 1997), 218.

<sup>134</sup> Maurice A. Creasey, *Bearing, or Friends and the New Reformation* (London: Friends Home Service, 1969), 3.

<sup>135</sup> D. Elton Trueblood, *The People Called Quakers*, (Richmond, Indiana: Friends United Press, 1971), 289.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid*, 243-44.

contemporaneously extant was fuelled by the re-examination of the nature of God in lectures in the several years prior.<sup>137</sup>

Many lecturers express a deep respect for the lecture, and recognise its importance by noting, conversely, how ill-suited they might be to the task. John MacMurray notes that he is new to Quakerism, and is thus challenged to bear the burden of delivering a lecture that will have a significant impact in defining who Liberal Quakers are to the world.<sup>138</sup> E.B. Castle makes a similar plea for forbearance from his audience, acknowledging in good Liberal Quaker fashion that his life experience might be the sole credential for his delivery of the lecture.<sup>139</sup> Finally, Christine Trevett notes four lectures in the 1990s that were all definitive in marking the state of Liberal Quakerism in that decade, and were influential in changing Liberal Quaker perspectives on the growing trend of secularism in Liberal Quakerism in the previous decade.<sup>140</sup>

The lectures are the longest sustained theological conversation within Liberal Quakerism, with the widest variety of topics covered, and serve as the only intentional corpus of theological thought extant within the tradition. I argue that while specific lectures have had significant impact on the theology of Liberal Quakerism in general, many more lecturers have impacted the theology of other lecturers, demonstrating the existence of a fruitful theological conversation within the confines of the lecture itself. I have utilised the lectures as the main source for the material on Liberal Quakerism in this chapter, and continue to do so throughout the rest of this dissertation.

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid, 74.

<sup>138</sup> John MacMurray, *Search for Reality in Religion* (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1965), 1.

<sup>139</sup> E.B. Castle, *The Undivided Mind* (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1941), 102.

<sup>140</sup> Christine Trevett, *Previous Convictions and End-of-the-Millennium Quakerism* (London: Quaker Books, 1997), 42. It should be noted that I argue that recent lectures have moved towards a greater acceptance of the Christian heritage of Quakerism, and have argued for a greater integration of that heritage into the spiritual life and theological thought of Liberal Quakers.

I demonstrate below the usefulness of the Swarthmore Lectures for developing Liberal Quaker theology by utilising them to chart the evolution of Liberal Quaker theology from an exclusively Christian foundation towards one which engages with, and incorporates, Universalist frameworks in the pursuit of creating a dialogical Christian/Universalist dynamic theology. This is essential in order to place into context the need for incorporating non-Christian elements in Liberal Quaker theology which I argue in chapter three.

I argue that while Liberal Quakers have a strong foundation in Christian thought, they have demonstrated a strong Universalist tendency since the early twentieth century.<sup>141</sup> Liberal Quakers have demonstrated willingness to reconsider traditional Christian theological categories, and to either re-interpret them or cease using them if they are found to be inadequate for explaining the corporate theological experience of Quakers. This is directly related to the Liberal Quaker approach to the traditional sources of theology, explored above.

#### **1.4.a Liberal Quaker Theological Diversity: Christianity and Universalism**

In this section, I elucidate two main strands of thought in the Swarthmore Lectures concerning the relationship between Liberal Quakerism, Christianity, and Universalism. Within these two poles are nuanced differences, however, with relation to where Liberal Quakerism falls along a spectrum between explicitly Christian and Universalist. Universalist is understood in this sense to mean, as Quaker Universalist Ralph Hetherington explained, a ‘doctrine of universal salvation or redemption’.<sup>142</sup> Hetherington argues that in the context of Liberal Quakerism, Universalism stems initially from William Penn’s claim that belief that the ‘Light of Christ’ is

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<sup>141</sup> Ralph Hetherington, ‘A Theology of Quaker Universalism’, in *Quaker Universalist Fellowship*, 5 (1985), 15-22, at 15.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid*, 15.

present in all people everywhere, leading to enlightenment and salvation. Hetherington claims that this could then extend to all belief systems, where the Christian vision of God is not the only 'true' understanding of the nature, and framework, of God.

I argue that the earliest lecturers were explicitly Christian, and only recognised the Christian heritage of Quakerism. These lecturers viewed Liberal Quakerism as having an uncomplicated relationship to its heritage. By the midpoint of the twentieth century, however, Universalist ideas began to emerge. These ideas were not rejecting Christianity, however. Instead, they argued that while Quakerism has a Christian heritage, Universalist themes also have deep roots within the tradition and might be a more appropriate basis for a modern Liberal Quakerism.

Recent lecturers, however, have moved more towards what could be termed a 'Christian Universalism' which acknowledges Universalist themes in Liberal Quakerism while arguing that Christianity is the most appropriate theological basis and heritage for Liberal Quakerism based on Quaker history, theology, and practice. The variety of approaches to this question within the lectures is an important, because it allows the Swarthmore Lectures to serve as a resource upon which to build theological bridges between Christianity and Universalism in Quaker theology.

### *Christian*

The lecturers in the first half of the twentieth century who claimed that Liberal Quakerism is synonymous with Christianity stated so unequivocally. They envisioned Liberal Quakerism as a continuation of the Christianity of the early Friends, and as one branch of a worldwide Christianity. They often assumed that the distinctives of Liberal Quaker theology and

practice held the same place of importance for early Friends, citing evidence of the existence of such distinctives amongst early Friends and extrapolating value from such existence. This included a tendency to assume a direct correlation between Christian Liberal Quaker theological beliefs and the rest of Christianity.<sup>143</sup> These lecturers also assumed that these were universally-held beliefs amongst Liberal Quakers, and that the audience for the lecture was not likely to include those who disagreed with ‘the proper form of Quaker life’, nor those who did not believe in God.<sup>144</sup>

T.R. Glover was an early proponent of this view, stating in 1912 that the ‘living Christ’, the expression of Jesus resident within the world and each individual believer, has always been acknowledged by the entirety of the Christian Church as a proper theological construct in which to comprehend the work and person of Jesus.<sup>145</sup> Glover argued that the Christian Church, both broadly defined and understood, has always been constituted by people who felt drawn to Jesus, and sought to gain a ‘new life’ through aligning their lives and souls with Jesus and gaining union with others through Christ.<sup>146</sup> Glover stressed that the love of Jesus was one of the main aspects of Christianity. For Glover, this love was expressed in Jesus’ work of reconciliation between God and humans. However, Jesus was not solely responsible for work of reconciliation: humans needed to participate as well. Glover betrayed his Liberal Quaker leanings by affirming the rationality of Christian faith, stating that one can adhere to the Christian faith and

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<sup>143</sup> R. Duncan. Fairn, *Quakerism: A Faith For Ordinary Men* (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1951), 20, 21. Fairn argued that Quakerism rooted itself in what he understood to be the core beliefs of Christianity, which excluded some beliefs that others might consider essential, such as the substitutionary atonement. Fairn explained this disconnect by claiming that such beliefs were simply not consistent with Christian belief.

<sup>144</sup> William E. Wilson, *Our Response to God* (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1935), 74.

<sup>145</sup> T.R. Glover, *The Nature and Purpose of a Christian Society* (London: Headley Brothers Publishers Ltd., 1912), 43.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid*, 43.



acknowledge the challenges to faith presented by the scientific examination of the material world.<sup>147</sup>

William Wilson demonstrated in 1935 the development of this viewpoint from Glover's earlier lecture, arguing that the Quaker heritage was one of a broad theological and communal unity, using as evidence the lack of any 'radical or violent' changes or splits in its history. Wilson suggested that this results from a consistent Quaker emphasis on an inward-focused Christian faith that can be traced from the early Friends to the message of contemporary Liberal Quakerism.<sup>148</sup> Wilson argued that Liberal Quaker distinctives also all have their root in the theology and practice of early Friends. Wilson viewed the core of Quakerism as the experience of the God resident within the individual believer, which he termed both the 'light within' and the Spirit, both terms that he asserted were as understandable to the early Friends as to Liberal Quakers. This is stated in terms which assume the agreement of Wilson's audience, without much recognition of a minority view, reflecting the practice of this group of lecturers.

This assumption of overlapping synchronicity between Liberal Quakerism and Christianity was critiqued in such a way that the primary value of Liberal Quaker interpretation of Christianity was still paramount. These lecturers argued that as Liberal Quakers presented multiple visions of what it means to 'be Christian', not only was Christianity a more varied tradition than Wilson allowed, but also the existence of the entire spectrum of Christian belief within Liberal Quakerism therefore made it the most complete expression of Christianity. Typical of this view, Howard Collier claimed in 1936 that while Quakers could not abandon the term 'Christian', they must acknowledge that Quaker perspectives on essential Christian doctrines and beliefs, since the time of the early Friends, might not be shared by other

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<sup>147</sup> Ibid, 75.

<sup>148</sup> William E. Wilson, *Our Response to God* (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1935), 9.

Christians.<sup>149</sup> Far from abandoning the term, however, Collier argued that Liberal Quakers have the responsibility of reclaiming Christianity as a term encompassing a whole life ethic rooted in Jesus' life.<sup>150</sup>

In response to this perspective, and to an apparent rise of Universalist thought in Liberal Quakerism in the second half of the twentieth century, some lecturers sought to defend the central role of Christianity within Liberal Quakerism, while others opened space for a potential redefinition of both the meaning of Christianity within Liberal Quakerism, and of Liberal Quakerism itself. Representing the tension, Duncan Fairn stated in 1951 that Quakerism 'is Christian, or it is nothing', but did acknowledge, however, that there were those who felt excluded by his statement within Quakerism.<sup>151</sup>

Hugh Doncaster developed this approach further in 1963, when he argued that the Universalist position within Liberal Quakerism represented a challenging lack of theological specificity. He claimed that Liberal Quakerism had moved so far from any requirement of Christian belief that membership did not entail any theological commitment other than a 'vague, woolly liberalism' manifested in the concept of 'seeking'.<sup>152</sup> While Doncaster acknowledged that openness to, and tolerance of, differences in belief was a necessary corrective to the enforced theological monoculture of previous iterations of Quakerism, he argued that such openness as represented by the acceptance of Universalist positions threatened to dissipate anything vital about Liberal Quakerism into a constant state of syncretism in an effort to gain theological unity.<sup>153</sup> Doncaster's argument extended that critique further (reflecting the concerns of earlier

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<sup>149</sup> Howard E. Collier, *Towards a New Manner of Living* (London: The Swarthmore Press, Ltd., 1936), 53.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid*, 54.

<sup>151</sup> Fairn, *Quakerism*, 20.

<sup>152</sup> Doncaster, 25.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid*, 55.

lecturers) by making the claim that Quakerism was inherently Christian.<sup>154</sup> Doncaster was clear to assure that his claim, contra Fairn, was not that Quakerism was the ‘only’ true form of Christianity, but that it was the ‘most true’. The implications of this statement for Liberal Quakers who are not Christian were clear: according to Doncaster, the Light could only ever mean the Light of Christ, the ground of all Quaker experience of God is the experience of Christ, and that union with non-Christians, including Liberal Quakers, is not possible if such union is achieved at the expense of proclaiming the truths of Christianity.<sup>155</sup>

Maurice Creasey represented the second strand of this argument, potentially reflecting the Universalist theological development in Liberal Quakerism by the time he delivered his lecture in 1969. He began by claiming that that Early Quakers rooted their faith in Jesus Christ as the concrete and personal revelation of God.<sup>156</sup> He then argued that Liberal Quakerism is essentially Christ-centred, with the term ‘Christ-centred’ meaning that Quakers are rooted in the ‘main orthodox Christian tradition’, including giving priority to issues of conversion, evangelisation, and holiness.<sup>157</sup> While Creasey defined those terms based on the unique perspective that the Quaker tradition gives to them, he did not assume that denominational distinctives disqualify other Christians from claiming the name. Creasey also acknowledged that the term ‘Christian’ had been misused by both the wider Christian Church and by Quakers in order to separate and denigrate those who might not ascribe to the entirety of the orthodox Christian tradition, including Quakers.<sup>158</sup> Creasey argued that the essential role that Christ, and thus the Christian

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<sup>154</sup> Ibid, 59.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid, 55.

<sup>156</sup> Maurice A. Creasey, *Bearing, or Friends and the New Reformation* (London: Friends Home Service, 1969), 64.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid, 72.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid, 67.

identity, plays in Quaker life requires Liberal Quakers to attempt to rehabilitate the word, however.<sup>159</sup>

### *Universalist*

Despite the dismissals of the explicitly Christian lecturers, Liberal Quakerism has a tradition of respecting Universalism as both a constitutive aspect of Liberal Quakerism and as a necessary critique to the Christian heritage of Quakerism.<sup>160</sup> For some, the existence of an alternative theological perspective to Christianity is helpful, providing Christianity with a useful dialogue partner. Two lecturers typify this trend: Henry Cadbury and Janet Scott.

While not rejecting the vital importance of Christ for Liberal Quakers, Henry Cadbury recognised back in 1957 that the critiques of Christianity offered by Universalists and others have significant weight, and led some Liberal Quakers to consider the viability of using the term ‘Christian’ to encapsulate a religious expression which, Cadbury claimed, is often more open to diverse perspectives than others who claim the title ‘Christian’.<sup>161</sup> This is framed, however, in a vigorous defence of that relationship. Cadbury argued that the heritage of Liberal Quakerism is unequivocally Christian due to the overtly Christian environment of seventeenth-century England and the Christian upbringing of every early Quaker.<sup>162</sup> Cadbury strongly asserts that

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<sup>159</sup> Ibid, 67.

<sup>160</sup> The Quaker Universalist Group was founded in the United Kingdom in 1979, publishing the first edition of its journal, *The Universalist*, in that same year. The year is notable, as Janet Scott delivered her Swarthmore Lecture arguing for a greater recognition of Universalism in Liberal Quakerism in 1980. The existence of a particular group dedicated to Quaker Universalism, as well as an active journal, speaks to the existence of an active community of Universalists within British Liberal Quakerism at least by 1979, if not earlier.

<sup>161</sup> Cadbury, *Quakerism and Early Christianity*, 27.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid, 6.

Christianity is not conditional for Liberal Friends. Instead, Cadbury insists that Liberal Friends cannot reject that heritage as it is rooted deep within the Liberal Quaker ethos.<sup>163</sup>

Yet, Cadbury acknowledged the potential for a ‘non-Christian’ Quakerism within a strand of thought which argued that ‘Christianity’ was a contested term for both Quakers and other Christians. The result of this, Cadbury argued, might be that some reject the right of others to claim the title, including Quakers.<sup>164</sup> Cadbury chose to develop this further, wondering whether Quakerism and Christianity are actually synonymous. He argued that should Quakers place Quaker distinctives in one circle, and Christianity as Quakers understand it in another circle, the circles might not automatically align.<sup>165</sup> Cadbury suggested that Quakerism, as it had developed into a practice and an inclusive life ethic, might actually be a more inclusive circle than Christianity, if Christianity is understood to include some of the more restrictive Christian expressions.<sup>166</sup> Thus despite his own claim about this theological impossibility, Cadbury acknowledged the pragmatic possibility that one might consider oneself a Liberal Quaker, and not actually a Christian as well.

No other lecturer took up this line of thinking in a rigorous fashion until Janet Scott’s 1980 lecture.<sup>167</sup> This lecture represents the most consistent expression of the Universalist perspective in the entire sweep of the lectures, and the one which most completely addresses the critiques offered by Doncaster and others. Scott acknowledges the debate between Universalist and Christian visions of the Inner Light: that the Light is within all people irrespective of any

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid, 27.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid, 27.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid, 28.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid, 29.

<sup>167</sup> Carole Dale Spencer notes the importance of Scott’s Swarthmore Lecture on the continued development of a more praxalogical interpretation of Liberal Quakerism, which had begun early in the Twentieth Century. While previous iterations of this interpretation claimed that the praxis of Quakerism still rested within a Christian construct, Spencer notes that by 1980 Scott did not insist on Christianity as the primary consideration for being a Liberal Quaker. Carole Dale Spencer, ‘Quakers in Theological Context’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Quaker Studies*, eds. Stephen W. Angell and Pink Dandelion (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 153.

relationship that they might have with Jesus, and that the Inner Light is synonymous with the Light of Christ, respectively. She dismisses this debate on both Christian and Universalist terms, stating that the construct of the Light does not adequately explain the relationship between word and Jesus. Scott also claims that explaining the relationship of God to humans in explicitly Christian terms is dismissive of other religious traditions.<sup>168</sup>

Scott argues that Liberal Quakers have historically framed the debate between Christianity and Universalism as the question, ‘Is Quakerism Christian?’ She cites Rachel King in arguing that first, the argument that the early Friends linked the Light explicitly with Christ is incomplete, as it does not take into account the Universalism present within Fox's vision of the Light. Fox was therefore using inherited Christian terminology of Incarnation and salvation unnecessarily, for the construct of a universal Light unifying all of humanity does not take the Christian revelation, and its insistence on the specificity of Christ, into account. Scott argues that early Friends were Christian by default; as they were born into a world undergirded by Christian assumptions, the early Friends had little choice but to express their teachings using the language of Christianity.<sup>169</sup>

Scott claims that the debate within Liberal Quakerism between Christianity and Universalism incorrectly places the focus on the alignment of Quakerism with Christian belief and doctrine, however. Instead, she suggests that Liberal Quakerism should focus on developing a form of life which reflects the existence of God within each person, and the necessity to abandon ourselves to God.<sup>170</sup> This would entail a shift in the Quaker hermeneutic from viewing Quaker distinctives through Christianity to viewing Christian theology through the lens of

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<sup>168</sup> Scott, *What Canst Thou Say?*, 8. I give a detailed examination of the development of the concept, and term, of the Inner Light in chapter six.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid*, 8-9.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid*, 70.

Quaker experience.<sup>171</sup> Scott insists that this does not stem from an effort to denigrate any truth resident within Christianity. Instead, Scott continues, this reflects the need to respect ‘all human experiences of truth’, without adhering to any one truth-claim out of a sense of obedience to dominant structures of belief.<sup>172</sup> In this perspective, beliefs about Jesus held by individual Quakers, such as the Incarnation, matter little to the corporate experience of Liberal Quakers.<sup>173</sup> Instead, Scott insists, a recognition of the universal presence of God, even within criminals and ‘the lost’ forces humans to acknowledge that God upsets all concepts of human order, and that God calls humanity to release any claims to certainty inherent in theological doctrines and instead live a risky life entirely dependent on the movement of the Light. Christian doctrine, Scott asserts, is just another of a long line of certainties that separate Quakers from the freedom that the Light calls humans to live.<sup>174</sup>

### ***Post-1980 Trends***

The majority of recent lecturers, post-1980, view Quakerism as inherently Christian, yet define Christianity in Universalist terms and avoid making the kind of claims of Quaker uniqueness that Cadbury engaged in.<sup>175</sup> These lecturers acknowledge the existence of Universalism within Liberal Quakerism, and choose to engage with that tension by imagining a uniquely Liberal Quaker Christian Universalism. This is not to claim that these lectures fail to place Quakerism squarely within the Christian tradition, broadly defined. These lectures

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<sup>171</sup> Ibid, 69.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid, 27.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid, 67.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid, 70.

<sup>175</sup> One example of this phenomenon is Alex Wildwood's 1999 lecture, *A Faith to Call Our Own: Quaker Tradition in the Light of Contemporary Movements of the Spirit* (London: Quaker Home Service, 1999).

acknowledge both the reality and benefits of pluralism in Quakerism yet express extreme caution towards the corrosive effects that excessive pluralism has had on Quaker distinctives. Christine Trevett is representative of this stream, particularly with her insistence in 1997 that Quakerism does make certain truth claims and is resident within a certain faith heritage.<sup>176</sup>

Trevett recounts her surprise at the claims of other Quakers that the ‘life’ of Quakerism was paramount, superseding any actual belief structure inherent to Quakerism, and demanding an ‘unfettered tolerance’ of various spiritual paths within Quakerism. Through a long list of other religious traditions that she has encountered within the faith practice of Liberal Quakers, Trevett notes to what extent these other traditions fail to meet the ‘previous convictions’ of Quakers, and thus place those people outside of the admittedly flexible bounds of Liberal Quakerism. These traditions include practices that are actually contrary to the ‘life’ of Quakerism, such as the offering of ‘corn to the Goddess’ in a ritual in the meeting house, which Trevett notes violates Quaker beliefs about externals, priesthood, liturgy, and the absolute dependence on God over and above any human ritual expression.<sup>177</sup> She then questions whether this openness to ritual would extend to liturgy in other Christian traditions.

Trevett argues that no matter whether she might respect and gain wisdom from any number of other religious traditions, some extant within what she terms the pluralistic bounds of modern Liberal Quakerism, she is not actually a member of any of those other traditions, and Quakerism is not synonymous with them either.<sup>178</sup> This caution towards the benefits of pluralism and tolerance is echoed by Christine Davis, who argues that the current ‘spirit of openness’ in Liberal Quakerism is actually harming the ability of Quakers to find any sense of unity within

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<sup>176</sup> Christine Trevett, *Previous Convictions and End-of-the-Millennium Quakerism* (London: Quaker Books, 1997), 45.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid*, 86.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid*, 91.



the tradition anymore, and may actually be contributing to the destruction of Liberal Quakerism. While Davis acknowledges that her question might sound alarmist, she also expresses concerns that pluralism is contributing to an increased secularism in Liberal Quakerism, which will eventually undermine any religious aspect in Quaker belief and practice.<sup>179</sup>

In his 2009 lecture, Peter Eccles offers a possible way forward. He first acknowledges the challenges that many Liberal Quakers have with using the words ‘God’ and ‘Christ’. However, he also emphasises that, save removing every mention of either word in Liberal Quaker texts, these words are part of the Quaker heritage and must be dealt with in some form.<sup>180</sup> He argues that this challenge can only be resolved through the process of discernment, where Friends seek to determine how to order the ‘whole of life’ according to the desires that God, or the ‘Spirit of Christ’, has for humanity.<sup>181</sup> Eccles argues that by acknowledging the Christian heritage of Liberal Quakerism for the sole purpose of determining what form of life God desires, Liberal Quakers can honour their heritage without clinging to it. They can also focus on the practical emphasis on living a godly life that is seemingly so vital to Liberal Quakerism.

### ***Conclusion***

In this section, I argued that the Swarthmore Lecturers have generally acknowledged Christianity as a central aspect of Liberal Quakerism, while also demonstrating a strong Universalist strand. Liberal Quakers have demonstrated willingness to reconsider traditional Christian theological categories, and to either reinterpret them or cease using them if they are found to be inadequate for explaining the corporate theological experience of Quakers. In post-

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<sup>179</sup> Christine A. M. Davis, *Minding the Future* (London: Quaker Books, 2008), 56.

<sup>180</sup> Eccles, *The Presence in the Midst*, 7.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid*, 8.

1980 lectures, this has developed into a form of Christian Universalism, albeit a form that is both very open to the value of non-Christian religious teachings and which prefers to avoid making determinative theological statements.

## **1.5 Thesis Outline**

In both chapters two and three I utilise the following structure to place the two areas in dialogue: 1) develop theologies of the atonement, 2) examine hamartologies of division; 3) theologies of divine/human interdependence, including developing metaphorical models of divine/human interdependence; 4) finally, an examination of how these theologies apply to spiritualities of reconciliation.

In chapter two I first examine the role of violence in atonement theologies, with a focus on non-violent theologies of the atonement, as well as the Scapegoat theory of René Girard which has been instrumental for the development of recent theologies of reconciliation in Northern Ireland. I examine sin from the perspective of exclusion and abandonment, as well as examining systematic evil and sin through the theologies of the Powers and the Domination System. I will explain the contexts of the processes of exclusion in South Africa and Northern Ireland, through the structures of racism and sectarianism, respectively. This will set the parameters to view sin, in order to develop connections with Liberal Quaker theologians in chapter three. I develop theoretical components of a theological anthropology for theologies of atonement and reconciliation. This establishes the general outlines of a theological anthropology, including the symbols of interdependent God present in reconciliation theology.

In chapter three, I follow the same format as the previous chapter, following the intent to lay out a compare and contrast format between Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation and Liberal Quaker theology. As before, this includes examination of Liberal Quaker theological thought on: theologies of the atonement; Liberal Quaker Christologies and Pneumatologies of interdependence; and the metaphorical and theological language used to develop the imagery of 'the Light', the main metaphor utilised by Liberal Quakers to describe the close relationship between humans and the Divine.<sup>182</sup> I present 'the Light' as the main expression of the experiential theology of Liberal Quakerism in this chapter, with significant overlaps with Christian theology.

In chapter four, I summarise the main arguments of the thesis, and demonstrate the points at which I brought Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation and Liberal Quaker theology into conversation. I then discuss of the implications of this thesis for existing scholarship. Finally, I chart a path for future research.

## **1.6 Chapter Summary**

A review of previous work in Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation, and a brief overview of Liberal Quaker theology in Britain, has placed this work in historical and theological context. Primary concepts of Christian reconciliation theology, as an outgrowth of atonement theology, have been introduced, with a special focus on issues of conflict, division,

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<sup>182</sup> The imagery of the 'Light' has a complex history in Quakerism, especially when the diversity of the concept across all branches of Quakerism, throughout the history of Quakerism as a movement, is taken into account. For the purpose of this chapter, I will maintain a tight focus on how Swarthmore Lecturers understand the Light. A more thorough examination of the diversity of Quaker theologies of the Light would be a useful area of future research. I examine the Liberal Quaker vision of the interconnected human/divine relationship in much more detail in chapter two.

and interdependence. The areas where a Liberal Quaker reconciliation theology can be developed have been plotted, a thesis outline provided.

## Chapter 2 Christian Theologies of Interdependence and Division

### **2.1 Chapter Introduction**

This chapter examines multiple perspectives on the issue of interdependence and division, within human/human relationships, the divine/human relationship, and within the Divine. In Section 2.2 the role of violence within the main mode of atonement in Christian theology – the crucifixion – for the purpose of exploring theological responses to atonement which question the salvific necessity of violence for the divine/human relationship. This not only reflects the focus on examining theologies of interdependence which critique violent conflict, but also lays the foundation for examining the ‘Scapegoat’ theories of René Girard, which have been so instrumental in the development of a number of different theological responses to the situation of human division and ethnic conflict.

These various responses flow from an underlying hamartiology, or theology of sin: that human division, and its attendant exclusion of the ‘Other’, is a sin due to a theological anthropology of divine-human interdependence. In section 2.3 I examine the multiplicity of ways theologians of conflict have also examined the process of ‘othering’ from the perspective of evil and sin, both on a structural and a personal level. This includes Walter Wink’s structural theology of the ‘Powers’ and the ‘Domination System’, and Miroslav Volf’s theology of ‘Exclusion and Embrace’. I explain how these themes have been applied to complex situations of human division in two areas of significant twentieth-century ethnic conflict: South Africa and Northern Ireland. I chose these areas due to the profound impact Christian theologians in these areas have had on Christian theologies of division and interdependence.

In response to theologies of violence, conflict, and division, Christian theologians have developed theologies of interdependence, with a specific focus on themes which have emerged in response to twentieth-century theologies of division: the relationship between human and divine within Christ, the role of the Spirit in divine/human interdependence, and metaphors for framing the divine/human relationship. The metaphor of interdependence is thus utilised in this chapter to explain the means by which the Son and Spirit interact together to achieve the divine goal of reconciliation both within, and with, humanity. Towards this end, in section 2.4 I focus on Pneumatology, with an emphasis on the role that the Spirit plays in the atonement and developing interdependence with humanity. This includes an overview of the metaphorical theologies of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Desmond Tutu. In section 2.5, I bring these strands together to present a ‘spirituality of reconciliation’. This emphasis on Pneumatology, spirituality, and metaphorical theology also reflects the necessity of developing a dialogical framework with Liberal Quaker theology, which itself places significant importance on Spirit and metaphor.

## **2.2 The Role of Violence in the Atonement**

The emphasis on the body of Jesus in atonement theology extends to the act of Jesus dying on the cross. While there is a general consensus that the sacrifice on the cross and the attendant death of Jesus had some form of salvific meaning, there is little consensus on the efficacy and necessity of the violence of the cross itself for salvation. Two distinct solutions emerge: viewing the violence of the cross as necessary and inherent within the mechanism of atonement; and viewing the violence of the cross as an unfortunate, but not inherent, byproduct of Jesus’ work of redemption – not necessary but useful. I examine the main elements of each of

them in turn. I then examine the work of René Girard, which draws together many of the strands of theologies of division. As his work was highly influential in the development of several theologies of division which responded to ethnic conflict and structural violence (most especially theologies of division in Northern Ireland), it is necessary to examine his thought on the intersection of violence, Jesus, and the human person.

### **2.2.a – Critiquing the Necessity of Violence for the Atonement**

Representative of the argument that the cross has inherent salvific meaning, Karkkainen argues that reconciliation theology cannot ignore the violence of the cross, as it informs any reconciliation theology that places the greatest emphasis on the cross as the place where the salvific project of the Incarnation becomes real.<sup>1</sup> As the Biblical witness places the emphasis on the crucifixion, Karkkainen argues that violence is an inescapable reality and necessity of reconciliation. This does not mean that violence is allowable for humans, but it does both sacralise violence and claims that God uses violence to achieve the goal of reconciliation with humanity. The bulk of Christian theology would appear to agree with Karkkainen, with several theories of the atonement (‘Christus Victor’, ‘Satisfaction’, and ‘Scapegoat’) all placing the moment of reconciliation at the event of the crucifixion, and sacralising everything that surrounded it: suffering, sacrifice, and divine violence itself.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Karkkainen, *Christ and Reconciliation*, 321.

<sup>2</sup> I summarise theories of the atonement in chapter one, and explore the scapegoat theory in depth in the following section.

Robert Schreiter contends that Protestant theologies of reconciliations are arguably rooted in the atoning death on the cross, stemming from Paul's words in Romans 5:6-11.<sup>3</sup> Charles E. Hill concurs from the perspective of Reformed theology, strenuously affirming the centrality of the atonement to the reconciling work of God. Hill contends that upon comprehension of the entirety of 'the scriptural doctrine of the atonement', its paramount necessity for the atoning of human sin becomes incontestable.<sup>4</sup> While Schreiter, a Roman Catholic reconciliation theologian, concedes that Roman Catholic perspectives on atonement focus more on the love of God poured out into Jesus, Schreiter also argues that the blood and violence of the cross are both essential elements to recognising the vital importance of the atonement: that the non-violent God endured violence, and through such endurance of suffering, took into the person of Jesus the violence of human existence.<sup>5</sup>

Crucifixion was most certainly violent, both physically and mentally. Roman soldiers crucified people outside of the city walls, where any person passing by could harass them, and the crucified were also often forced to watch family members endure rape and other torture.<sup>6</sup> David Tombs, a reconciliation theologian who has focused considerable attention on the correspondence of state torture and violence in the crucifixion with twentieth-century ethnic conflicts and genocide, concurs: Tombs places great stock in the complete extent of the humiliation, emphasising the sexually humiliating aspects, including public nudity and genital mutilation. Tombs argues that by being so completely dehumanised, Jesus stands in complete

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<sup>3</sup> Robert J. Schreiter, *Reconciliation: Mission and Ministry in a Changing Social Order* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992), 14.

<sup>4</sup> Charles E. Hill and Frank A. James, III (eds.), *The Glory of the Atonement: Biblical, Historical & Practical Perspectives* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 24.

<sup>5</sup> Schreiter, *Reconciliation*, 47.

<sup>6</sup> Gerard S. Sloyan, *The Crucifixion of Jesus: History, Myth, Faith* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1995), 18.



solidarity with those who have endured violence in state-sponsored genocidal acts.<sup>7</sup> Thus, Tombs argues, the violence of the cross is an essential aspect of any reconciliation theology seeking to take reconciliation in situations of extreme violence seriously. Reports of modern-day torture present a similar picture of the humiliation and dehumanization of state-imposed torture and execution. Along these lines peace theologian William Cavanaugh argues that these forms of public torture, such as that endured by Jesus, can be understood to be a form of state-enacted liturgy, in which the body of the tortured is ritualised as the site of the state's power.<sup>8</sup> The dignity of the victim is completely stripped away, as is their humanity. All that remains for the person is the pain that they are immersed in – it is their only reality.<sup>9</sup>

Other theologians choose to make sense of the cross through the lens of the resurrection, stating that the resurrection is the completion of the victory over violence that was begun with the cross. Volf chooses to acknowledge the horrific violence of the cross as scandalous, while also arguing that the only truly Christian response to the cross is to accept the scandal in its entirety and accept that it is the most complete representation of God's 'kenotic' action in Jesus.<sup>10</sup> For Volf, this self-giving, kenotic act of Jesus is the only truly ethical way of living a life in complete obedience to Jesus.<sup>11</sup> Echoing Volf's terminology of 'embrace', reconciliation theologian Cecelia Clegg contends that the complete cycle of divine embrace must include the innocent death of Jesus, for it demonstrates God's reconciling telos for creation.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> David Tombs, 'Crucifixion, State Terror, and Sexual Abuse', in *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 53, no. 1-2, (1999), 89-109, at 102.

<sup>8</sup> William T. Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist: Theology, Politics, and the Body of Christ* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 30.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>10</sup> Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996), 26.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>12</sup> Cecelia Clegg, 'Between Embrace and Exclusion', in *Explorations in Reconciliation: New Directions in Theology*, eds. David Tombs and Joseph Liechty (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2006), 123-136, at 129.

Recently, however, there has developed an alternative perspective which questions all of these assumptions. This focus is led by feminist and peace theologians, including J. Denny Weaver.<sup>13</sup> They question the value of sacralising suffering and sacrifice, claiming that an emphasis on Jesus' suffering and sacrifice leads to the assumption that as Jesus is the complete model for human existence in Christianity, humans are thus supposed to suffer, sacrifice themselves, and endure violence quietly and humbly in order to live the most 'Christian life'. Feminist theologians and black theologians contend that this focus denies the reality of life for most of the oppressed, where suffering, sacrifice, and violence are evils that they are forced to wrestle with on a daily basis, and to sacralise such a reality would be to sacralise evil: something that these theologians simply cannot accept. Feminist theologian Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza suggests that atonement depoliticises the cross and obscures the real cause of the violence: Jesus' life of praxis.<sup>14</sup> Womanist theologian Delores Williams agrees, stating that atonement is silent towards the lives of minorities and those facing oppression.<sup>15</sup>

Peace theologians take a slightly different tack, arguing from the perspective that violence was merely a byproduct of the means of atonement itself, which was in fact the mysterious reconciliation of human nature and divine in the Incarnation. As humans suffer, are

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<sup>13</sup> Mennonite theologian J. Denny Weaver argues that reconciliation theology can bring all of these elements together, by incorporating elements of the Christus Victor theory of the atonement, theology of theosis, narrative theology, and liberation theology, into what he terms the 'non-violent atonement'. Weaver, *The Nonviolent Atonement*, 13.

<sup>14</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Jesus: Miriam's Child, Sophia's Prophet: Critical Issues in Feminist Christology* (New York: Continuum, 1994), 106.

<sup>15</sup> Delores S. Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness: The Challenge of Womanist God-Talk* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993). Liberation theologian Mark Taylor takes a slightly different tack, claiming that atonement theologies provide the violent and oppressors with religious symbols that validate their actions. Mark Lewis Taylor, 'American Torture and the Body of Christ: Making and Remaking Worlds', in ed. Marit Trelstad, *Cross Examinations: Readings on the Meaning of the Cross Today* (Minneapolis, Augsburg Fortress, 2006), 264-277.

sacrificed, and endure violence, so did Jesus, yet the same applies to every other aspect of human reality. This constitutes, therefore, a rejection of the centrality of violence in the atonement.<sup>16</sup>

Some theologians seek to get rid of the entire atonement paradigm altogether. The theologian of peace and moral injury Rita Nakashima Brock goes even farther, claiming that atonement turns God into a divine child abuser, and is thus inherently damaging.<sup>17</sup> Additionally, reconciliation theologian Stephen Finlan argues that whilst the doctrine of the Incarnation is essential to Christianity, atonement is, very simply, not essential for a theology to be understood as ‘Christian’. Finlan suggests that the Incarnation does not inevitably lead to any particular theology of the atonement, or even belief in atonement whatsoever.<sup>18</sup> These theologians, and others, come to the same conclusion about atonement theology, yet through a variety of overlapping and even contradictory perspectives.

This is not to claim that liberation, postcolonial, and peace theologians are universally sceptical about the capacity of the cross to provide meaning. Some theologians accept the claim that atonement theologies can reify the suffering and sacrifice of the cross into a sanctification of the suffering of actual people who are poor and oppressed.<sup>19</sup> Yet, they then claim that this incorrect application of the meaning of the cross does not allow us to throw away atonement theology, as much value still exists in the powerful witness provided by Jesus’ suffering and

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<sup>16</sup> This approach is captured by the work of Walter Wink, which I examine below. A third approach, that no matter that the Bible teaches violence, humans should not do so, is captured by Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer, *Saving Christianity from Empire* (New York: Continuum, 2005). He argues that we should choose the Jesus of non-violence over the God of violence.

<sup>17</sup> Rita Nakashima Brock, ‘And a Little Child Shall Lead Us: Christology and Child Abuse’, in *Christianity, Patriarchy, and Abuse: A Feminist Critique*, eds. Joanne Carlson Brown and Carole R. Bohn (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1989), 42-61.

<sup>18</sup> Stephen Finlan, *Problems with Atonement: The Origins of, and Controversy About, the Atonement Doctrine* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2005), 4.

<sup>19</sup> The Mennonite theologian Willard Swartley makes this argument, claiming that the effect of reading violence into the life of Jesus has been to deny his nonviolence, and to divinize contextual understandings of atonement, ensuring the continued subjugation and oppression for those who are on the margins of society, including women, the poor, and minorities. Willard M. Swartley, *Covenant of Peace: The Missing Peace in New Testament Theology and Ethics* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006), 394.

sacrifice, especially for those who seek to find God amidst suffering. Feminist ethicist Lisa Sowle Cahill claims that by focusing on the suffering death on the cross, a false emphasis is placed on death as the point of the Incarnation, as opposed to a focus on the unity which Jesus achieved between living God and humans, and the subsequent unity of God and humans made possible through the Incarnation. Cahill insists that this perspective allows for a much wider perspective on the Incarnation, which allows for the capacity of human divinisation (extant within the Eastern Orthodox tradition), an ethical perspective which brings all of human life within the scope of the reign of God (a central aspect of feminist/womanist/mujerista theologies), and a vision of the cross as the solidarity of God with ‘innocent victims of malign power’ (an aspect of liberation theologies, especially in Africa and Asia).<sup>20</sup> Postcolonial theologian Wonhee Anne Joh concurs, insisting on the capacity of the cross to hold the Korean concept of *han* (a multifaceted concept of suffering, pain, and resentment against injustice) alongside the concept of *jeong* (a radical, sacrificial form of love).<sup>21</sup> Along these lines, I argue that reconciliation theology can actually accept the violence of the cross without sacralising suffering and violence.

### **2.2.b The Scapegoat Mechanism and Redemptive Violence**

The Scapegoat theory of the atonement is based on the concept that Jesus was the perfect scapegoat, which revealed the lie that violence could be redemptive. By accepting the cross willingly, Jesus shined a light on the entire violent superstructure of human culture and eliminated the need to ever again depend on violence to bolster human community. In his theory, Girard develops a theology of atonement, a model of Biblical interpretation, all alongside a

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<sup>20</sup> Cahill, *Global Justice*, 212.

<sup>21</sup> Wonhee Anne Joh, *Heart of the Cross: A Postcolonial Christology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2006), xiv.

theoretical framework for understanding the development of human culture.

Girard states that humans are designed not only to imitate each other, but to engage in the specific type of desire of imitation, or mimesis. As humans imitate each other, they inevitably begin to desire what the other possesses, thus leading to conflict. Mimetic desire does not ever cease, so conflict never ceases. This will eventually lead to an explosion of violence which threatens society. At this point, humans developed a 'release valve' where mimetic desire, and the ensuing conflict, could be channeled towards one person/thing as the embodiment of the conflict, the scapegoat, and could thus unite the society temporarily, against the scapegoat. When the scapegoat is either cast out, or sacrificed, as the lie goes, society will achieve peace. Girard claimed that this is the 'founding lie' of human culture – that it is built on the perpetuation of violence. Religion was instituted in order to control, and to channel the violence that stemmed from mimetic rivalry by sacralising the violence of the scapegoat, and giving it structure and order. Satan, or the Power of evil, is the personification of the order and disorder of the 'founding lie'.<sup>22</sup> As Satan is the personification of the 'founding lie', then all human culture stems from Satan.<sup>23</sup>

Jesus, as the absolutely innocent victim, takes on the role of scapegoat in order to shake the foundations of the 'founding lie', and thus to defeat the power of Satan over humanity.<sup>24</sup> Once Jesus is nailed to the cross, meekly, innocently, and takes on all of the sacred violence of the scapegoat mechanism, his divinity is revealed, and his absolute innocence destroys the myth of the scapegoat and of sacred violence.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> René Girard, *The Girard Reader*, ed. James G. Williams (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1996), 206, 194.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, 203.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, 206.

<sup>25</sup> René Girard, *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World* (London: The Athlone Press, 1987), 174.

According to Walter Wink, the history of human society is replete with members of one society either dominating others, or attempting to defend themselves from domination.<sup>26</sup> This constant struggle over power has made violence an integral aspect of life, with the attendant growth of taxation to fund warfare, and the development of rigid and authoritarian hierarchies to maintain control. Violence was enshrined in human society, as a redemptive agent necessary for maintaining the structure of society.<sup>27</sup> Violence was essential to the creation stories of many ancient societies, including Babylon, where two Gods battle for control, and the body of the defeated God becomes the cosmos.<sup>28</sup> According to Girard, the perniciousness of this myth of redemptive violence is demonstrated by its universal appearance in Western culture through literature, movies, national myths, and in the basic ‘good defeats evil’ aspect of many children’s stories.<sup>29</sup> The success of this myth is not due to a vast, intentional, and evil conspiracy, but rather due to the overwhelming power of the values of the Domination System.<sup>30</sup> Humans uphold this myth due to inculturation: the use of violence by those in power (usually men) to impose order upon a hierarchical system where everyone else exists to obey and serve the system appears as the natural order for it is the only order that humanity has ever really known.<sup>31</sup>

The scapegoat is the mechanism through which the Domination System releases the tension that develops when order is imposed through violence, and also allows the system to direct blame away from itself and onto an innocent other.<sup>32</sup> Girard argued that Jesus was the final scapegoat in a long line of scapegoats, and that his death was used by the Domination System to

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<sup>26</sup> Walter Wink, *The Powers that Be: Theology for a New Millennium* (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 40. I examine Wink in more depth in section 2.3.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, 41.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, 46.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, 54. It should be noted that for Girard it also served as a conflict management system to stop humans from annihilating each other. It was therefore not a good system, yet it was not without some merit.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, 53.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, 47.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, 91.

silence him, and thus to halt the progress that Jesus had made to uncover the root of the myth of redemptive violence.<sup>33</sup> The death and subsequent resurrection defeated Satan, however, and forever unmask the entire Domination System for what it is.<sup>34</sup>

The theories of Girard were influential on the subsequent work of both Walter Wink and David Stevens. While Wink builds upon Girard's narrative and psychological foundations to inform a hamartiology of the Powers, Stevens utilises Girard to construct a framework for reconciliation. Wink argued that, by unmasking the root of the sacrificial system of redemptive violence and its dependence on the death or expulsion of the scapegoats, Jesus demonstrates the falsehood of the theology of substitutionary atonement: anything that brings violence into the life of the non-violent God is inherently false.<sup>35</sup> Stevens argued that this rests on the assumption that violence is a tool used exclusively by the Powers to maintain order, and as such is not a tool that God would ever require, or desire.<sup>36</sup> The entire system of exclusion, dominance, and scapegoating rests on violence, making exclusion the very antithesis of God.<sup>37</sup> Salvation maintains a non-violent character, as God did not demand a violent sacrifice, instead using the death as a means of defeating Satan, and thus the Domination System.<sup>38</sup>

Jesus indicted this system and developed an alternative 'Kingdom of God', an order free from domination and exclusion.<sup>39</sup> However the Powers are redeemed, their redemption is an essential aspect of the Kingdom of God.<sup>40</sup> This included every aspect of domination over another (economic, power, religious, and 'titles'), substituting an egalitarian order where all people were

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<sup>33</sup> René Girard, *I Saw Satan Fall Like Lightning* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001), 143.

<sup>34</sup> René Girard, *The Scapegoat* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 189.

<sup>35</sup> Wink, *The Powers That Be*, 80.

<sup>36</sup> David Stevens, 'Unmasking the God of Violence: The Work of René Girard', *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 77, no. 307 (Autumn, 1988), 315.

<sup>37</sup> David Stevens, 'The Social Thinking of the Protestant Churches', in *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 80, no. 319 (Autumn, 1991), 259-67.

<sup>38</sup> Girard, *I Saw Satan Fall Like Lightning*, 152.

<sup>39</sup> Wink, *The Powers That Be*, 64.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*, 32.

created by God to serve each other and God.<sup>41</sup> Their redemption entails a double liberation: of individuals from the Powers, and of the Powers from the Domination System.<sup>42</sup> This involves our surrender, a form of ‘death’ to pride, ego, and the need to remain in power over others.<sup>43</sup> This ‘death’ is coupled by a ‘rebirth’ to a life lived completely for the purpose of furthering the will of God.<sup>44</sup> Repentance is an essential aspect of this death.<sup>45</sup> Repentance allows us to be cured of the illusion of radical difference from others, including our enemies, through the rejection of the oppressive culture and values of the Dominance System.<sup>46</sup> When we are free from the lie that oppression and violence are essential to the maintenance of society, we are enabled to see the enemy as a child of God held captive by the system.<sup>47</sup> We are empowered to follow Jesus’ injunction to love both ourselves and our enemy.<sup>48</sup>

Stevens made an explicit link between Girard, nationalism, and the Irish conflict, claiming that the sacrifice of the 1916 Irish Rebellion was the ‘foundational violence of the Irish State’, and thus the foundational violence for the Republican cause. The rebellion linked Christian theology, martyrdom, and Celtic mythology into a potent new nationalist myth: the rising began on Easter Sunday, and the rebels were declared martyrs for the cause of re-unifying ‘Mother Ireland’.<sup>49</sup> Smith made a similar link, noting that Ian Paisley accused the British Government of betraying Unionists by acceding to Sinn Fein's political demands.<sup>50</sup> Paisley

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 65.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 35.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 95.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 97.

<sup>45</sup> Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace*, 116.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Wink, *The Powers That Be*, 172.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 171.

<sup>49</sup> David Stevens, ‘Unmasking the God of Violence’, 312.

<sup>50</sup> Ian Paisley was the founder of both the Free Presbyterian Church (FPC), as well as the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP). The FPC is a denomination of Presbyterianism, mainly located in Northern Ireland, which relatively small in number, but which has proven to be highly influential over theological and political thinking about the possible ethno-religious implications of retaining the political connection between Northern Ireland (as a separate political entity) and the United Kingdom. The DUP is an extant, and very powerful, political party in Northern Ireland, which



continued, declaring that Protestants needed to re-dedicate themselves to God's covenant, uniting God's covenant with Israel, the 'new covenant' enacted at the Last Supper, and the Solemn League and Covenant of 1643 into a sacred fight to maintain Protestant hegemony in Northern Ireland. For Stevens, the nation was now the idol that is worshipped.<sup>51</sup>

With nationalism, the rivalry of Girard's mimesis has been transferred to other nations.<sup>52</sup> The rise of nationalism in the eighteenth century reflects the diminished power of local categories of meaning, as industrialisation and economic systems combined to make 'nation-states' the dominant form of governmental structure.<sup>53</sup> Stevens argued that the attendant societal upheaval led society to create new structures of meaning that continued the old solution to maintaining peace: the scapegoat mechanism.<sup>54</sup> The 'sacred' scapegoat is now entire categories of people, sacrificed for the peace of the nation.<sup>55</sup>

The theories of Girard have been significant in the work of reconciliation theorists in Northern Ireland, most especially Duncan Morrow and David Stevens. Both served as the Leader of the Corrymeela Community,<sup>56</sup> and wove the concepts of scapegoating and the Domination

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has become one of the main political parties for the Unionist community in Northern Ireland. Through his double leadership of both the FPC and the DUP, Paisley made the explicit connection between the culture and theology of Protestantism, and the politics of Unionism. During the time of the Troubles, the nearly 40 year ethnic conflict in Northern Ireland in the latter half of the twentieth century, Paisley was by no means the only, or even main, spokesperson for the Unionist community; however, he was the main embodiment of a certain uncompromising strand of religious and political thought in Unionism which held retaining the Union to be an ancestral duty to both the Queen and God, a duty which they must never fail to uphold. T. Rees Shapiro, 'Ian Paisley Dies; Northern Ireland Leader Known for Anti-Catholic Rhetoric', *The Washington Post*, last modified September 12, 2014, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/obituaries/ian-paisley-dies-northern-ireland-leader-known-for-anti-catholic-rhetoric/2014/09/12/d02a04ee-5d72-11e1-a729-976314dc4592\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.c2807ad78215](https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/obituaries/ian-paisley-dies-northern-ireland-leader-known-for-anti-catholic-rhetoric/2014/09/12/d02a04ee-5d72-11e1-a729-976314dc4592_story.html?utm_term=.c2807ad78215).

<sup>51</sup> David Stevens, 'A Review of *Social Anthropology and Public Policy in Northern Ireland* by Hastings Donnan and Graham McFarlane', in *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 78, no. 312 (Winter, 1989), 423-24.

<sup>52</sup> David Stevens, 'Having a Place', in *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 76, no. 304 (Winter, 1987), 463-71, at 468.

<sup>53</sup> David Stevens, 'Nationalism as Religion', in *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 86, no. 343 (Autumn, 1997), 248-58, at 249.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*, 251.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, 249.

<sup>56</sup> The Corrymeela Community is a reconciliation community, formed in 1965 by Ray Davey and associates, and based in Northern Ireland. It was formed in the context of developing tensions between Protestants and Catholics within Northern Irish society, which eventually led to the civil war known as 'the Troubles'. Its members were those who desired to engage in dialogue. Davey had a vision of a reconciling community, a place of hospitality where all

System into the work of the Community. This has occurred mainly through the influence that these theories have had on the Community's thinking on the underlying cause of ethnic conflict, moving beyond materialist, political, ethno-religious, or even economic causes and instead adopting a perspective which emphasises the violent mechanisms which Girard claimed human societies utilise to create unity amongst groups, and leads to division from other groups in society.<sup>57</sup> It should be noted, however, that these theories are not accepted in their entirety by the Community. Morrow, in fact, argues that in Northern Ireland, this system does not work as perfectly as Girard outlined in large part due to the sheer number of scapegoats that exist in the country: he claims that they are simply far too numerous to ever be eliminated.<sup>58</sup> The unanimity that occurs after the destruction of the scapegoat is simply impossible, therefore, and thus the conflict will never end.<sup>59</sup>

Volf notes the innovation of Girard's insight into the use of scapegoating by oppressors. He then advances the most common critique made of Girard: that scapegoating cannot bear the explanatory weight for Christian theology and conflict that Girard assumed.<sup>60</sup> Smith extends this critique, claiming that Girard operates from a negative moral stance, focusing his attention on explaining the cause of immoral structures while failing to advance any positive moral theories on how to change those structures.<sup>61</sup>

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who desired reconciliation and dialogue were welcome. Corrymeela continues this work, viewing its reconciliation work as Christ's call for Christians to be committed to building 'the Kingdom [of God] – the new society', a vision of political and structural change where justice, peace, and reconciliation are woven into the fabric of society.

<sup>57</sup> David Stevens, 'Unmasking the God of Violence', 309.

<sup>58</sup> Duncan Morrow, 'For God and... Ourselves Alone?', in *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 78, no. 310 (Summer, 1989), 177-85, at 180.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 182. It should be noted, in contradiction to this critique, that the escalation of scapegoats could be a sign, from the Girardian standpoint, that the mechanism is breaking down. Thus, it could be argued that this result supports Girard's thesis.

<sup>60</sup> Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace*, 118.

<sup>61</sup> Geraldine Smyth, OP, 'Respecting Boundaries and Bonds: Journeys of Identity and Beyond', in *Explorations in Reconciliation: New Directions in Theology*, eds. David Tombs and Joseph Liechty (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2006), 137-56, at 140.

Gerry O'Hanlon claims that Girard failed to allow for any positive interpretations of human behaviour or nature.<sup>62</sup> O'Hanlon stresses that significant gaps arise in Girard's theory, such as any discussion of God's justice or any differential between the violence of paramilitaries and security forces; these are troubling oversights in a theory purportedly designed to make sense of ethnic conflict, conflict theology, and the question of peacemaking in such an environment.<sup>63</sup>

Seamus Murphy is sceptical of Girard's attempt to explain these disparate questions through the use of one, dominant, and unified theory.<sup>64</sup> He expresses sympathy for the desire for such a theory, especially for people faced with decades of seemingly intractable conflict that is impossible to comprehend. However, he eventually dismisses Girard's unifying project as dangerous, for it makes simple what is complex, and distracts theorists from spending attention attempting to comprehend the complexity.<sup>65</sup>

The scapegoat mechanism as re-imagined through the lens of the Northern Irish tradition has much to commend it. It places defeat of the Power/s at its core, where God engages the Power/s in a non-violent manner. It does not situate the entire action of the atonement on the crucifixion itself, but includes the resurrection as a necessary completion of the process. What cripples the scapegoat mechanism, however, is the same issue that cripples the other two theories: that the Incarnation is only essential for the crucifixion itself, and thus places all of the emphasis squarely on the violence of God. John Milbank critiques Girard on this, claiming that Girard emphasised God's violence while ignoring the possibility of God's hospitality to humanity.<sup>66</sup> Snyder Belousek critiques Girard on the entire thrust of his argument, claiming that

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<sup>62</sup> Gerry O'Hanlon, 'The Gods of Violence: A Response', in *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 77, no. 307 (Autumn, 1988), 322.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid*, 324-325.

<sup>64</sup> Seamus Murphy, 'Girard on Violence, Conflict and Culture: A Response', *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 78, no. 310 (Summer, 1989), 186-90, at 187.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid*, 190.

<sup>66</sup> John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1993), 395.

as Girard's theory offers one grand theory for evil – the scapegoat mechanism – his theory simplifies all of the nature of God to just one theory.<sup>67</sup> Either way, Girard was troublesome from the perspective of a non-violent reconciliation theology because while it absolves God of any responsibility for violence, it does require that Jesus be subjected to the full violence, suffering, torture, and death of the crucifixion, meaning that violence is still necessary for reconciliation.

### **2.3 Hamartologies of Division**

In this section, I outline several perspectives on the situation of human division, the violence which often attends such division, and the mechanisms which lead to the creation of, and maintenance of, these situations of division. Both political reconciliation theories, and the reconciliation theologies which have developed in tandem with them, take as their foundational principle that human conflict is rooted in division, most often manifested in ethnic division.<sup>68</sup> As a result, reconciliation theology places special attention on addressing the roots and causes of conflict, both in terms of conflict amongst humans, and between humans and God. This chapter examines these causes from the perspective of theologians and theological communities who have mainly focused on ethnic conflict, and the way that this conflict is manifested in the divine/human relationship.

The most basic argument of these theologies is that evil impacts humanity through sin. 'Sin' is defined as the exclusion of, and separation from, others, rejecting the unification that all humans experience through their interdependent relationship with each other, through the interdependent God located in all people. These theologians define 'evil' as impersonal, spiritual

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<sup>67</sup> Snyder Belousek, *Atonement, Justice and Peace*, 578.

<sup>68</sup> See section 1.2 for an explanation of these theologies.

forces who seek to create division amongst humans and between humans and God. For Wink in particular, these forces utilise the ‘Powers’ – institutions and structures created by God as essential aspects of human existence such as government and economic structures – to create situations of division and discord. These Powers are not themselves evil, yet due to their essential role in human society, evil forces inhabit the ‘Powers’, and twist them so that they are now incorporated into an overarching structure, termed the ‘Domination System’, designed to compel humans to create situations of division and violence against each other, including the use of the ‘scapegoat mechanism.’ Miroslav Volf explores these dynamics of division from a more personal lens, examining first the creation of the individual and the ‘other’, and the subsequent dynamics of conflict, exclusion, and embrace which frame the interactions between ‘others’. These paradigms explain different aspects of what is seen as an interconnected web.

In the following sections, I examine how these processes have developed in the specific contexts of South Africa and Northern Ireland. The matrix of these interconnected concepts has been examined to significant degree by theologians in the context of South Africa and Northern Ireland. Theological communities developed theologies to explain the conflicts in those areas, and to develop responses to the conflicts. In South Africa, the focus was race, while in Northern Ireland it was religious sect and culture.

I am specifically developing the theologies of division which developed in these contexts without reference to the practices and frameworks of reconciliation which developed. The practice of reconciliation, particularly in South Africa and Northern Ireland, developed along parallel, but different tracks to that of the theology, particularly due to the influence of secular post-conflict peacemaking and reconciliation theory and practice in these contexts.

### 2.3.a - The Domination System and Systemic Division

In his work, *The Powers that Be: Theology for a New Millennium*, Walter Wink offered a concise overview of his theology of the Powers, including a discussion of how his work on the Powers and the Domination System fit into the wider scholarship of theologies of conflict and division. Wink began his examination of the Powers by explaining the impact that worldview has on an individual, and a community, to first understand Christian theological concepts, and to then determine how these concepts will impact their behaviour patterns and the structures that define the life and meaning of an individual, and a community. Wink defined worldview in both negative and positive terms, rejecting more comprehensive definitions which claim that worldview is an overarching, dominant philosophy, theology or story which provides an explanation of human origins or upon which people can derive a sense of meaning or purpose in life. Instead, Wink argued for a structural vision, where worldview is the structures and foundations upon which myths, symbols, and systems of thought are built. Worldview is therefore the structure upon which the philosophies are built which give humans a sense of meaning. A worldview determines how a person will interpret events, and whether or not they will ascribe any theological meaning to the events.<sup>69</sup> Wink examined five theological worldviews as a means of examining the concept of the ‘Powers’: 1) ancient, 2) spiritualist, 3) materialist, 4) theological, and 5) integral.<sup>70</sup> He stated that all five worldviews are expressed in some form in

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<sup>69</sup> Wink, *The Powers that Be*, 14.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 15. According to Wink, these are the worldviews, in chronological order as they developed in human history: ancient, spiritualist, materialist, theological, and integral. The ancient views earth and heaven as distinct realms, both good, that are nonetheless interconnected, with every event that occurs on earth having a correspondence in heaven. This is the view of the Bible. The spiritualist views earth and heaven as distinct realms, yet while heaven is the realm of God, the creation is an evil, fallen place where one's spirit was trapped before being released back to heaven by death. This is the view prevalent in the second century CE, particularly in the Gnostic sects. The materialist views the earth and the physical world, all that be understood through the senses and reason, as the only plane of existence, thus rejecting any concept of heaven, God, or spirit. This view has existed in some form since at

contemporary thought, granting people the choice of which worldview to grasp onto.<sup>71</sup> This choice is crucial, for it allows people the opportunity to not only confront the material reality of warfare and conflict, and seek to resolve the conflict in a material fashion, but to also comprehend the existence of a spiritual plane, where ‘Powers’ exist, the inescapable institutions and structures that weave together the web of society.<sup>72</sup>

Wink contended that the Powers are neither inherently evil, nor inherently good, but instead exist as essential aspects of the creation that are some of the sources of good and evil.<sup>73</sup> The ancient worldview describes the Powers as both the institutions, and their spirituality.<sup>74</sup> An institution can thus be created to serve the common good, but develop a 'demonic' or benign character.<sup>75</sup> These unjust systems self-perpetuate through the use of violence. Utilising violence and evil means to fight violent and evil systems is thus a futile exercise.<sup>76</sup> The key to combatting the evil systems is to view the Powers as fallen entities that can finally be redeemed.<sup>77</sup> These Powers must also be viewed as possessing a material reality (the city government) and a spiritual reality (the personality or culture of the government).<sup>78</sup> Combatting the unjust Jim Crow<sup>79</sup>

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least the fourth century BCE, but became prevalent during the Enlightenment of the seventeenth century CE. The theological views earth and heaven as two separate realms, both good, that operate according to their own rules and can be understood best by only science and theology, respectively. This is the view of much modern theology, which developed in response to the materialist view. The integral views earth and heaven as an integrated whole, where the divine permeates all of creation in a pantheistic fashion, placing the 'heavenly realm' within the very order of creation. This is the view of liberation, feminist, progressive, and process theology, as well as reconciliation theology. Wink, *The Powers that Be*, 15-19.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, 22.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, 7. Examples for reconciliation include the segregation systems of Jim Crow in the American South, and Apartheid in South Africa, where the evil racism corrupted every institution of society, and self-perpetuated through the use of systemic and individual violence.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid, 31.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, 175.

<sup>79</sup> ‘Jim Crow’ is the term used to describe the system and structure of laws establishing the legal, economic, and social institutions of segregation based on race in a number of states in the American South. These laws were passed after the Reconstruction period in the United States – which followed the end of the Civil War and lasted until the formerly Confederate states were permitted to regain their status as equals with the Union states in the United States

institutions required fighting both the physical manifestations of the discriminatory and violent laws, and the evil spirit that was manipulating the Power of the government to its own purposes.<sup>80</sup> These impersonal Powers coalesce around a common set of ‘evil’ values into a network known as the Domination System, whose ‘spirit’ Wink called ‘Satan’.<sup>81</sup> These values are also idolatrous, in that they are orientated away from what God had willed for that Power upon its creation.<sup>82</sup> This point is key: the Powers were created by God in order to fulfil a role in the system of God’s creation.<sup>83</sup> They can be redeemed, and must be redeemed; the Church is the institution created by God to fulfill this duty on a human level.<sup>84</sup>

Wink was not alone in developing these themes. Volf places the emphasis away from ‘domination’ and towards ‘exclusion’ where the system dominates by excluding others.<sup>85</sup> Stevens emphasised the ambiguity of the Powers, cautioning, in particular, against depending upon using the political process to achieve the absolute justice and peace of the Kingdom.<sup>86</sup> René Girard developed these themes extensively in his work, focusing much of his attention on the methods that the system uses to self-perpetuate.<sup>87</sup> Girard also emphasised that while the Powers may be in thrall to Satan, they are only controlled by Satan; they do not ever become ‘satanic’.<sup>88</sup> Girard was particularly prolific in this area, developing the themes of: the scapegoat mechanism,

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Government – when Union troops departed the states and the state governments were permitted to craft their own laws again. The segregation system of Jim Crow laws lasted until the laws, and thus the system itself, were finally overturned in their entirety with the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. ‘The Civil Rights Act of 1964: A Long Struggle for Freedom’, *Library of Congress*, Accessed April 29, 2017, <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/civil-rights-act/epilogue.html>.

<sup>80</sup> Wink, *The Powers that Be*, 39.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid*, 27.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid*, 29.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid*, 33.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid*, 29.

<sup>85</sup> Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace*, 18.

<sup>86</sup> David Stevens, et. al, 'Breaking Down the Enmity: Faith and Politics in the Northern Ireland Conflict', in *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 73, no. 292 (Winter, 1984), 331-365, at 354.

<sup>87</sup> Girard, *I Saw Satan Fall Like Lightning*, 97.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid*, 98.



rivalry between people and the ‘mimetic’ tension that results, redemptive violence, the Satan, and the effect of Jesus’ death and resurrection on the Domination System.<sup>89</sup>

Wink stressed that the Powers are only oppressively evil due to the combined effect of the network of fallen Powers in the Domination System.<sup>90</sup> The Powers could be redeemed individually, and could thus be beneficial for the Kingdom; yet, as the Domination System inexorably draws them together, their most common manifestation is as ambiguous agents of ‘Satan’.<sup>91</sup>

### 2.3.b Exclusion of the Other

Miroslav Volf expresses this interaction in terms of exclusion and embrace.<sup>92</sup> Every time we ‘exclude’ others from relationship with us, we sin. Volf uses the terminology of sin in relation to exclusion for the express purpose of naming as sin actions and attitudes normally considered ‘virtues’.<sup>93</sup> Volf sees the Jewish ‘purity’ laws against sinners as virtues of holiness and purity gone horribly awry.<sup>94</sup> To exclude any Jew from fellowship due to a perceived transgression of purity would be to act as God; yet, Volf reminds us, only God possessed the right to pass judgment on humanity and its sinfulness.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> The most crucial of his works, in terms of their impact upon Christian theology in general, and reconciliation theology in particular, include: Girard, *The Scapegoat*; Girard, *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World*; Girard, *I Saw Satan Fall Like Lightning*; René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979); René Girard, *The One By Whom Scandal Comes In* (East Lansing, MI: The Michigan State University Press, 2014).

<sup>90</sup> Wink, *The Powers That Be*, 39.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid*, 36.

<sup>92</sup> Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace*, 29.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid*, 72.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid*, 73. Volf argues that the Jewish people had forgotten the communal nature of God’s desire for the holiness of the Jews. God did not desire some of the Jews as ‘lights to the nations’; Volf contends that God actually desired all Jews to serve as lights. Each Jew had the responsibility to aid every other Jew on the path towards holiness and right relationship with God.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid*, 140.

This love, for Volf, is expressed in his vision of open, vulnerable, and active love through the action of ‘embrace’. Volf bases his vision in the embracing love of God for the creation demonstrated in the mutuality of love within the Trinity, the outstretched arms of Jesus on the cross, and the open arms of the father embracing the Prodigal Son in Luke 15:11-32.<sup>96</sup> The *will* to embrace is understood as the search for reconciliation, which precedes any search for common understandings of truth, justice, good, or evil. Volf understands the *actual* embrace as full reconciliation, however, and thus cannot occur until these questions are resolved.<sup>97</sup> Embrace is thus both a process, and in a dynamic dialectic with the evils of exclusion.<sup>98</sup> The process involves several stages, moving from opening space for the other through to incorporating the other into the self in a non-dominating manner.<sup>99</sup> Each stage is joined with a concomitant

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid, 29. Luke 15.11-32 (NRSV) reads: Then Jesus said, ‘There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, “Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.” So he divided his property between them. A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and travelled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, “How many of my father’s hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.’” So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.” But the father said to his slaves, “Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!” And they began to celebrate. Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. He replied, “Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.” Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. But he answered his father, “Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!” Then the father said to him, “Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.”’

<sup>97</sup> Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace*, 29

<sup>98</sup> Ibid, 30.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid, 144.

movement towards justice and equalisation, resulting in an inversion of relationships across any hierarchies that exist within the embrace.<sup>100</sup>

David Stevens, a theologian from the Northern Irish context, emphasises the role of risk in embrace, the risk of losing one's identity in the embrace. He tempers Volf's position, insisting that the embrace must be seen as a bridge between two others who retain their identities while locating new points of commonality and union.<sup>101</sup> Joseph Liechty and Cecilia Clegg, theologians who engage with exclusion from the perspective of sectarianism in Northern Ireland, concur with Stevens stressing the need for maintaining open lines of communication with a dialogue partner, and a willingness to be changed by the encounter, without the expectation of profound change.<sup>102</sup> They stress that the embrace must be seen as a deliberate process.

Volf defines exclusion as a transgression against both 'binding' and 'separation'. The first excludes by cutting the binds of interdependence with others and with God, and instead claiming independence. The second, however, excludes by rejecting the uniqueness of the other, assimilating their concerns into the majority's concerns, and thus denying the place of the other in the bounds of interdependence.<sup>103</sup> Bosch concurs, stating bluntly that ignorance of someone's guilt in the process of exclusion might actually be the worst form of guilt, because such a level of ignorance can only occur when a person fails to recognise the existence of the other, or to even grant their perspective as having any worth.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid, 145.

<sup>101</sup> David Stevens, *The Land of Unlikeness: Explorations into Reconciliation* (Dublin, Ireland: Columba Press, 2004), 54.

<sup>102</sup> Joseph Liechty and Cecilia Clegg, *Moving Beyond Sectarianism: Religion, Conflict, and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland* (Dublin: The Columba Press, 2001), 318.

<sup>103</sup> Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace*, 67.

<sup>104</sup> David Bosch, 'Processes of Reconciliation and Demands of Obedience – Twelve Theses', in *Hammering Swords into Ploughshares-Essays in Honor of Archbishop Mpilo Desmond Tutu*, eds. Buti Tlhagale and Itumaleng Mosala (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1986), 141-54.

Volf suggests that these processes of exclusion – rejecting, excluding, marginalizing, violating, and hampering the full human expression of our brothers and sisters – are both sin and evil: sin because we are disobeying God’s commands to love our neighbour as ourselves, and evil because we are all bound in overwhelming structures of exclusion.<sup>105</sup> The implication of this for philosophies of separation based on racial, ethnic, or religious categories, and all of the attendant institutions, actions, and theologies, is that they are all, according to Volf, incontrovertibly and irredeemably evil.<sup>106</sup>

While the subjugation of one community by the other may have been the root cause of the current abandonment, both communities are culpable in perpetuating the separation.<sup>107</sup> Volf recognises that reconciliation from the sins of racism and subjugation can only occur in a situation of sharing the same physical space, over a meal or in worship.<sup>108</sup> Recognizing the bond that we all share in Christ is essential for accomplishing any reconciliation. This bond takes the form of our love for each other in Christ.<sup>109</sup>

Volf does not argue that Jesus sought to embrace sinful or evil behaviour, or to deny that humans were deserving of correction for their sinful behaviour or attitudes. Volf contends that Jesus instead sought to bring the ‘impure’ into fellowship in order to show the love of God towards them.<sup>110</sup> Jesus as Redeemer of Mankind sought the redemption and healing of all of humankind, which could only occur through the expression of love for all, and human love for God.<sup>111</sup> Clegg concurs, stating that by ‘embracing’ each other, we are ‘embracing God’.<sup>112</sup> There

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<sup>105</sup> Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace*, 92.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid*, 68.

<sup>107</sup> Miroslav Volf, ‘A Theology of Embrace for a World of Exclusion’, in *Explorations in Reconciliation: New Directions in Theology*, eds. David Tombs and Joseph Liechty (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2006), 22–33, at 25.

<sup>108</sup> Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace*, 85.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid*, 140.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid*, 73.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid*, 73.

is therefore an irrevocable link between humans and God, an interpenetration of the human and divine.

Liechty gently critiques the focus on ontological interdependence, insisting that an unsentimental sense of concern for another and a willingness to work for the other are essential aspects of reconciliation on a practical level. Liechty argues that it does not matter whether this sense of being for the other stems from idealism or realism, reconciliation will not occur without this sense.<sup>113</sup> Liechty also acknowledges both a human level, and a theological level, of forgiveness and absolution; yet, states that only the human level of forgiveness is relevant for reconciliation work in the political realm.<sup>114</sup>

Engaging these thinkers in conversation, therefore, might result in a series of moral statements. They would emphasise the social aspect of sin as exclusion of the other. Excluding ourselves from our fellow human in Christ would be to segregate ourselves from Christ, and to break relationship with God. To deny the full humanity of a fellow brother or sister in Christ would be to deny the full humanity of Christ. To create a separate social structure for a fellow sister in Christ would be to create a separate social structure for Christ. Human actions thus never simply harm individuals, as human action on both the physical and spiritual plane reflects the interdependence of human existence. Failing to act out of love towards the other is thus a failure to love God, as, in this paradigm, there is an irrevocable link between humans and God, an interpenetration of the human and divine. The implication is that all social systems based upon the exclusion of the other, including their attendant institutions, actions, philosophies and theologies, are all incontrovertibly and irredeemably sinful.

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<sup>112</sup> Clegg, 'Between Embrace and Exclusion', 127.

<sup>113</sup> Joseph Liechty, 'Putting Forgiveness in its Place: The Dynamics of Reconciliation', in *Explorations in Reconciliation: New Directions in Theology*, ed. by David Tombs and Joseph Liechty. (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2006), 59-68, at 67.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid*, 65.

### 2.3.c Exclusion based on Racism<sup>115</sup>

South Africa has a long and complicated history of racial oppression, with some groups acting as both oppressor and oppressed. Afrikaners, the cultural descendants of the first Dutch settlers, fall into this camp. This is reflected in the complexity with which Afrikaners reflect on their past. This is also reflected in the vigorous debate which occurs amongst South African theorists about the nature of the apartheid system, and the role that both church structures and Christian theology played in the creation and maintenance of the system. This is demonstrated in this section through the numerous instances where even opinions which concur generally will disagree in nuanced ways. There is no consensus view on racism in South African, except that it played a role in the development of the apartheid system. This confusion reflects the often atomised nature of ethnic conflict, which will force often highly fractured populations into an artificial unity.

Afrikaner cultural memory reflects this paradigm, through the multiplicity of perceptions of Afrikaner history and religious life. Ulrike Kistner argues that the Afrikaner communal narrative is partly marked by the lopsided defeat of the Zulu at the Battle of Blood River.<sup>116</sup> The victory that day confirmed Afrikaner feelings of superiority over the native Zulu population, helped feed a strong triumphalism and Afrikaner nationalism, and established the destructive

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<sup>115</sup> As noted above, this section outlines how theologies of division have played out in South Africa, and have influenced theologies of reconciliation and unity, which I outline below.

<sup>116</sup> December 15, 1838 is remembered as the Battle of Blood River, when Dutch Voortrekker settlers defeated an army of over twelve thousand Zulu warriors. Ulrike Kistner, *Commissioning and Contesting Post-Apartheid's Human Rights: HIV/AIDS, Racism, Truth and Reconciliation* (Munster, Germany: Lit Verlag, 2003), 16. In Afrikaner (the name ascribed to the Dutch settlers in the Afrikaans language) history, the day is termed the 'Day of Covenant', when the Voortrekkers made a covenant with God that, should the Voortrekkers defeat their enemies, they would build a church and hold the day sacred.

pattern of Afrikaner relations to all non-European groups for the next century and a half.<sup>117</sup> Wilhelm Verwoerd contends that this narrative is complicated by the suffering experienced by many Boers (an Afrikaner sub-group) due to the annexing of South Africa by the British, and the two Boer Wars (1880-1881, 1899-1902), during the second of which a significant portion of the Boer population were held in concentration camps.<sup>118</sup> Verwoerd argues that these two events cannot be understood apart from each other, stating that these two events led to the Afrikaner narrative of a persecuted people forced to defend itself from all dangers, especially the Zulu and other South African tribes.<sup>119</sup> Andre Du Toit concurs, arguing that this mix of fear of the Zulu 'other' and insistence on maintaining power in the face of vulnerability aided in creating a space for the racist apartheid system to develop.<sup>120</sup> This space was carved in all aspects of Afrikaner life, and by extension of their connection to the British community, into a pan-European cultural consciousness based upon the development of racial and cultural structures of superiority.

Nukhet Ahu Sandal contends that the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) was the most prominent religious tradition amongst Afrikaners during the twentieth century. This cross-cultural pollination ensured that the DRC was not immune from being influenced by this overarching racist structure.<sup>121</sup> An example of inherently racist attitudes in the DRC, according to Sandal, lay with the official DRC theology of separation based on racial categories. This

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<sup>117</sup> David Chidester, 'Stories, Fragments and Monuments', in *Facing the Truth: South African Faith Communities and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, eds. James Cochrane, John de Gruchy, and Stephen Martin (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1999), 132-41, at 143.

<sup>118</sup> Wilhelm Verwoerd, 'Towards the Recognition of our Past Injustices', in *Looking Back Reaching Forward: Reflections on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa*, eds. Charles Villa-Vicencio and Wilhelm Verwoerd (Cape Town, South Africa: University of Cape Town Press, 2000), 155-65, at 161.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid*, 162.

<sup>120</sup> André du Toit, 'Experiments with Truth and Justice in South Africa: Stockenström, Gandhi, and the TRC', in *Journal of Southern African Studies* 31, no. 2 (June, 2005), 419-48, at 419.

<sup>121</sup> Nukhet Ahu Sandal, 'Religious Actors as Epistemic Communities in Conflict Transformation: The Cases of South Africa and Northern Ireland', *Review of International Studies* 37, no. 3 (July, 2011), 929-49, at 940.

theology was given warrant by interpreting the Tower of Babel story (Genesis 11:1-9)<sup>122</sup> through the lens of the South African context, declaring that it was God's will for people to be treated differently as all people were created differently.<sup>123</sup> Wilhelm Verwoerd argues that this theology deliberately misinterpreted the Babel story, stating that while the Babel story did not establish any priority for one group over any other once they were separated by God, the DRC interpretation assumed white superiority. Verwoerd demonstrates this by stating that once separated, minority groups in South Africa were dehumanised, and essentialised into a category of 'black' based on the single difference of skin colour. Coupled with the fear of outsiders mentioned before, 'black' became 'other', which became 'bad', and eventually, lesser.<sup>124</sup> Leebaw concurs, arguing that by emphasising difference, the DRC gave legitimacy to a program of segregation as the logical next step. The DRC had thus become an agent of oppression.<sup>125</sup>

The American theologian Howard Thurman developed his understanding of racism in light of the similar situation of race-based segregation of the Jim Crow laws in the twentieth

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<sup>122</sup> In Genesis 11:1-9 the existence of human difference is explained as God's will, to ensure that humanity could never unite to such an extent as to supplant the need for worship of God. The DRC interpreted this passage to mean that not only was human difference an essential aspect of God's creation that was intended by God, but that human difference necessitated that humans were both kept separate (by force, if necessary) and ruled according to different laws. The DRC then mixed in theories of imperialism and white superiority, leading to the idea that white people had a religious duty to keep separate from black people, and had a natural authority to rule over black people, seen as inherently inferior. It should be noted that this interpretation does some significant injustice to the text itself: Genesis 11.1-9 reads: Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. And as they migrated from the east, they came upon a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. And they said to one another, 'Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly.' And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. Then they said, 'Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves; otherwise we shall be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.' The Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which mortals had built. And the Lord said, 'Look, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let us go down, and confuse their language there, so that they will not understand one another's speech.' So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. Therefore, it was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.

<sup>123</sup> Sandal, 'Religious Actors', 938.

<sup>124</sup> Wilhelm Verwoerd, 'Towards Inclusive Remembrance After the "Troubles": A Philosophical Perspective from within the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission', in *Explorations in Reconciliation: New Directions in Theology*, eds. David Tombs and Joseph Liechty (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2006), 103-22, at 117.

<sup>125</sup> Bronwyn Leebaw, 'Legitimation or Judgement? South Africa's Restorative Approach to Transitional Justice', *Polity* 36, no. 1 (October, 2003), 23-51, at 49.



century. Thurman's ideas are applicable here because they influenced the development of South African reconciliation theology. Thurman documented the evils of racism, most especially the racism inherent in the Christian Church in the United States. He presented a picture of a philosophy which is irredeemably evil, and which taints every aspect of human life that it touches. Racism's component evils all follow a gradual progression from a compromise of the values that give meaning to the lives of both the oppressed and oppressor to the eventual spiritual, mental, and even physical death of the oppressed and, in some cases, the oppressor. Thurman understood racism as a complete nullification of all life and block to the development of any sense of identity.<sup>126</sup> Thurman noted that the evils of racism are easy to locate in the institution of slavery, for slavery foisted the rather absurd deception of the non-existence and inhumanity onto persons that were, quite obviously, humans. This deception was therefore foundational to the relationship between slave and master. As Thurman noted, racism creates a rather odd, and toxic, co-dependency between slave and master. The slave only really existed in relation to his master, as a tool for serving the master.<sup>127</sup>

This relation of dependency actually backfires upon the master, however, for a master can only exist in the presence of a slave. The proliferation of the racist Jim Crow segregation laws attests to this fact. Instead of actually adhering to the stated intent of the U.S. Supreme Court's *Plessy vs. Ferguson* ruling (1896) – that laws which created a separate, but equal, situation were legal, the former slave masters created a situation where African Americans were placed, yet again, in a situation of servitude and dependency. The oppressor discovered that he could not maintain any sense of identity without his counterpoint, the oppressed black.

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<sup>126</sup> C. Anthony Hunt, 'The Search for Peaceful Community: A Comparative Analysis of the Thinking of Howard Thurman and Martin Luther King, Jr.', Ph.D. dissertation, Graduate Theological Foundation, 2001, 83.

<sup>127</sup> Clarice J. Martin, 'The *Haustafeln* (Household Codes) in African American Biblical Interpretation: "Free Slaves" and "Subordinate Women"', in *Stony the Road We Trod: African American Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Cain Hope Felder. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1991), 206-31, at 214.

The evil of segregation is a subtler form of non-existence, for it forces the oppressed to participate in a social structure which strips them of dignity in what could be considered analogous to ‘a million tiny cuts’. It constantly reminds the oppressed that while opportunity exists for some in society, it does not exist for them. Segregation then forces the oppressed into the humiliating position of having to explain to their children why not only the children, but the parent as well, are not worthy to engage the world on equal terms with the oppressor. In his *Letter from Birmingham City Jail*, Martin Luther King, Jr. responded to the charge laid against him and the Civil Rights Movement that they were acting impatiently in the face of a steady, yet slow, progress towards equality and integration.<sup>128</sup> King responded with a very lengthy list of the numerous and multi-faceted humiliations and injustices perpetrated against African Americans because of the system of segregation. King concluded by saying that after his interlocutors have been forced to deal with any of the humiliations listed, when they are ‘plunged into an abyss of injustice where they experience the blackness of corroding despair’, then they ‘will understand why [blacks] find it difficult to wait’.<sup>129</sup>

Thurman argued that racism twists the self-identity of all people in the society.<sup>130</sup> It brings hate and fear together into a toxic combination, where survival is the primary concern for the persecuted class.<sup>131</sup> The inherent power differential becomes normalised through the tacit acceptance of the situation by the oppressed, whose fear cripples them into inaction, and the oppressor, whose environment is designed around the assumption of superiority, and whose fear of the unknown power of the weak, insulates them from a sense of wrongdoing.<sup>132</sup> This

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<sup>128</sup> Martin Luther King, Jr, *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.* ed. James M. Washington (San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, 1986), 289.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid*, 293.

<sup>130</sup> Hunt, ‘The Search for Peaceful Community’, 83.

<sup>131</sup> Howard Thurman, *Jesus and the Disinherited* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1949), 34.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid*, 44.

acceptance gradually moves through racism as normal, as correct, as moral, as religious, and finally, as divinely ordained.<sup>133</sup> Separation leads to an inevitable lack of contact between oppressed and oppressor, hampering development of empathy between the groups and aiding in the development of bitterness and hatred.<sup>134</sup> Hatred of the other undermines the being of the other by hampering the capacity to view the other as equally human as oneself, leading to a desire to terminate the existence of the other.<sup>135</sup> This inherent threat of violence undermines any sense of security and trust that the oppressed might possess, thus strengthening the power that the system has over them.<sup>136</sup> Thurman argued that this process harms the oppressor as well, ‘essentialising’ their identity and culture to the single issue of oppression, and forcing them to carry their ‘Cause’ into all spaces that they inhabit.<sup>137</sup> Thurman argued that this essentialised categorisation denies the divine creation in both oppressed and oppressor.<sup>138</sup> According to Thurman, the Church had become a tool for society, and had become incapable of taking anything resembling a prophetic stand against the institutions of society, including the institutionalized racism of segregation.<sup>139</sup>

Allan Boesak, amongst others, agrees with Thurman’s understanding of racism and the Church. Boesak argues that the DRC was, by virtue of its racially-based core theology of covenant and division, a racist church.<sup>140</sup> Boesak has suggested that the most effective means of comprehending racism theologically would be to categorise it as sin, for it dismisses our common responsibility to respect human potential and goodness.

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid, 43.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid, 75.

<sup>135</sup> Howard Thurman, *The Luminous Darkness* (Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1989), 45.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid, 57.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid, 68.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid, 94.

<sup>139</sup> Thurman, *Jesus and the Disinherited*, 31.

<sup>140</sup> Allan Boesak, *Black and Reformed: Apartheid, Liberation, and the Calvinist Tradition* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1986), 103.

Boesak extends his critique beyond the theological, however, making the economic argument that racism denigrates the human person by forcing it to serve the capitalist system as an ‘object’.<sup>141</sup> Ndebele concurs, arguing that the process of capitalist objectification occurs through the mechanism of mutually dependent binary relationships where each party was defined exclusively by their role, and their place in the power structure of apartheid: master-servant, oppressor-oppressed, superior-inferior, white-black.<sup>142</sup>

Ulrike Kistner elaborates on these dynamic dichotomies, explaining that the first pole in the dualism was always positive, the second negative, and power always flowed from the second to the first: members of the second pole were instruments, invisible cogs in the racist system serving the needs of the white population only.<sup>143</sup> Kistner continues, stating that the racism of apartheid twisted every attempt at ‘equalising’ the separation, including the creation of separate ‘black affairs’ courts that were, by nature of their racially-limited mandate, effectively powerless and ineffective.<sup>144</sup> Racism is most pernicious when it becomes ingrained in the societal worldview to the extent that this objectified dynamic is forgotten, and its existence is denied.<sup>145</sup>

When the Quaker Douglas Steere undertook relief work during World War II, he discovered that while this dynamic might be quite obvious to others who enter the context of a society in an effort to ameliorate the effects of racism, the structures and attitudes of racism are so pernicious that they can begin to effect the perspectives of people who seek to combat racism.<sup>146</sup> Villa-Vicencio terms this ‘the capacity of apparently decent people to go to such a

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<sup>141</sup> Ibid, 103.

<sup>142</sup> Njabulo Ndebele, ‘Of Lions and Rabbits: Thoughts on Democracy and Reconciliation’, in *After the TRC: Reflections on Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa*, eds. Wilmot James and Linda van de Vijver (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2000), 143-56, at 147.

<sup>143</sup> Kistner, *Commissioning and Contesting Post-Apartheid's Human Rights*, 29.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid, 30.

<sup>145</sup> Ndebele, ‘Of Lions and Rabbits’, 146.

<sup>146</sup> Douglas V. Steere, *Where Words Come From: An Interpretation of the Ground and Practice of Quaker Worship and Ministry* (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1955), 12.

level where they can commit the most atrocious evil', referencing Hannah Arendt's oft-cited phrase, 'the banality of evil'.<sup>147</sup> In the context of Afrikaner culture, Bosch confesses that Afrikaner ideology was so rooted in the divine sanction narrative of Covenant Day, and its attendant theological rooting in Scripture, that many Afrikaners who might have disagreed with objectification based on other aspects, in other contexts, often felt a moral duty to uphold, and rightness in safeguarding, the separations between races in South Africa.<sup>148</sup>

Bronwyn Leebaw states that the main process of reconciliation in South Africa, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), focused on individual atrocities, as representative of wider, systemic issues.<sup>149</sup> This focus stemmed from the Commission's acknowledgment of the strong focus on human rights in the anti-apartheid movement.<sup>150</sup> Tinyiko Sam Maluleke criticised this approach, however, stating that the focus on the extreme nature of the individual acts overshadows the broader systemic racism, allowing those who did not commit atrocities the relative moral comfort of deniability.<sup>151</sup> Kistner notes that despite the outward appearance of control, the racist system held all people captive, including whites.<sup>152</sup> Boesak applies this logic to blacks, stating that the system warped black self-perceptions to the point where blacks internalised the racist dynamic into an inferiority complex which accepted that ontological

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<sup>147</sup> Charles Villa-Vicencio, 'Getting on with Life: A Move Towards Reconciliation' in *Looking Back Reaching Forward: Reflections on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa*, eds. Charles Villa-Vicencio and Wilhelm Verwoerd (Cape Town, South Africa: University of Cape Town Press, 2000), 199-209, at 203.

<sup>148</sup> Bosch, 'Processes of Reconciliation', 141-154.

<sup>149</sup> Leebaw, 'Legitimation or Judgement?', 50.

<sup>150</sup> R. Drew Smith, 'Ecclesiastical Racism and the Politics of Confession in the United States and South Africa', in *Race and Reconciliation in South Africa: A Multicultural Dialogue in Comparative Perspective* eds. William E. Van Vugt & G. Daan Cloete (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2000), 53-76, at 61.

<sup>151</sup> Tinyiko Sam Maluleke, 'The Truth and Reconciliation Discourse: A Black Theological Evaluation', in *Facing the Truth: South African Faith Communities and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, eds. James Cochrane, John de Gruchy, and Stephen Martin (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1999), 101-13, at 110.

<sup>152</sup> Kistner, *Commissioning and Contesting Post-Apartheid's Human Rights*, 29.

‘whiteness’ was in all ways superior to ‘blackness’.<sup>153</sup> In a sense, Boesak argues, black consciousness was twisted to accept racism, and thus, passively supported it.<sup>154</sup>

John De Gruchy acknowledges that the DRC claimed the official theology of superiority in difference, but disagrees that it was universally accepted throughout the DRC and the other English-speaking churches.<sup>155</sup> De Gruchy claims that there existed a minority tradition of dissent within the churches, which began in a very public fashion in 1968 with *The Message to the People of South Africa*, written by the South African Council of Churches.<sup>156</sup> *The Message* addressed reconciliation as a core message of the Gospel tradition, and repudiated the covenant theology of the DRC. Reconciliation theology has been one of the most significant aspects of theological reflection in South Africa for several decades, often at the level of ecumenical gatherings, and theological statements published by denominational committees.<sup>157</sup>

*The Message* was not without critics, however: Carl Niehaus contends that it was mainly recognised within the white church community, due to its greater focus on reconciliation than liberation.<sup>158</sup> It did not make a significant impact within the black church community. Sandal argues that this blindness to black church perspectives and voices led to the development of an alternative vision: the *Kairos Document*, written in 1985 by a group of black theologians, which both stressed liberationist and contextual theology, and was more reflective of the theological

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<sup>153</sup> Boesak, *Black and Reformed*, 16.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>155</sup> de Gruchy, *Reconciliation*, 2.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid, 33.

<sup>157</sup> John de Gruchy, James Cochrane, and Stephen Martin, 'Introduction: Faith, Struggle and Reconciliation', in *Facing the Truth: South African Faith Communities and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, eds. James Cochrane, John de Gruchy, and Stephen Martin (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1999), 1-11, at 4.

<sup>158</sup> Carl Niehaus, 'Reconciliation in South Africa: Is Religion Relevant?', in *Facing the Truth: South African Faith Communities and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, eds. James Cochrane, John de Gruchy, and Stephen Martin (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1999), 81-90, at 86.

response desired by black churches.<sup>159</sup> Black churches developed a much more racially aware theological perspective on the situation, reflecting the work of American theologians.

Black theology provides a liberationist, contextual perspective to South African theology.<sup>160</sup> It emphasises the obligation that the architects of apartheid had to the standards of justice laid out by Jesus.<sup>161</sup> Black theology serves as an alternative ‘public theology’ by emphasising the justice of God and the equality of every person.<sup>162</sup> Boesak argues that this alternative is necessary because theology in South Africa has been, in the experience of many black South Africans, linked with racism. Black theology emphasises the uniquely African experience as an intertwining narrative with Christian tradition and the Biblical narrative.<sup>163</sup> Barney Pityana explains that contextuality is shared with all liberation theologies, yet black theology has a specific focus on the denial of personhood inherent in the African colonial experience, seeking to restore the ‘full humanity of Black persons’.<sup>164</sup>

This emphasis on contextuality extends to the lived experience of Jesus and the life of the Church. As Jesus was an oppressed person living in the context of empire, his life has special meaning for those who are oppressed, especially as it demonstrates that through the person of

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<sup>159</sup> Sandal, ‘Religious Actors’, 941.

<sup>160</sup> I do not explore this topic in all of its permutations, save for an examination of *Ubuntu* theology below. The liberationist focus of reconciliation theology has its roots in the South African context, and as such does not fit the focus of this thesis. For an examination of the intersections between Quaker theology and South African reconciliation processes, see Gerard Guiton, *The Growth and Development of Quaker Testimony, 1652-1661 and 1990-1994: Conflict, Non-Violence and Conciliation* (Lampeter, UK: The Edwin Mellen Press, Ltd., 2005).

<sup>161</sup> Ebrahim Moosa, ‘Truth and Reconciliation as Performance: Spectres of Eucharistic Redemption’, in *Looking Back Reaching Forward: Reflections on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa*, eds. Charles Villa-Vicencio and Wilhelm Verwoerd (Cape Town, South Africa: University of Cape Town Press, 2000), 113-22, at 115.

<sup>162</sup> Sandal, ‘Religious Actors’, 939.

<sup>163</sup> Luke Lungile Pato, ‘African Theologies’ in *Doing Theology in Context: South African Perspectives*, eds. John W. de Gruchy and Charles Villa-Vicencio (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994), 152-161, at 159.

<sup>164</sup> Barney Pityana, ‘Black Theology’, in *Doing Theology in Context: South African Perspectives*, eds. John de Gruchy and Charles Villa-Vicencio (Ndabeni, Cape, South Africa: Rustica Press, 1994), 171-82, at 174. It should be noted that Emmanuel Katongele is a Ugandan Roman Catholic who is building reconciliation theology from an explicitly Christian perspective which acknowledges Black theology while also stressing the need for a more universal perspective to reconciliation rooted in the universal person of Jesus Christ. Emmanuel Katongele and Chris Rice, *Reconciling All Things: A Christian Vision for Justice, Peace and Healing* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2008), 25.

Jesus, God has an intimate awareness of the experience of oppression.<sup>165</sup> Boesak takes this argument further, claiming that the Bible presents a vision of Jesus that can only be fully comprehended from the side of oppression, as a ‘Black Messiah’.<sup>166</sup> Liberation occurs at the divine level, through Jesus, but also on the human level, through the community of the Church. James Cone argues that the outpouring of Jesus in the Holy Spirit on the Churches roots the liberation experience in the life of the Church.<sup>167</sup> Jean-Marc Ela goes further, arguing that the Church’s vocation of liberation requires that the Church be political, and be committed to radical structural change.<sup>168</sup> Black theology is only one of the tools black South African theologians have used to come to terms with, and to seek liberation from, racism, however. For the purposes of this dissertation, I will explore the interdependence theology of *Ubuntu* in much greater depth.

The Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) participated in this debate with its acceptance of the Belhar Confession in 1986 that apartheid was a mistake, a heresy, and harmed human dignity.<sup>169</sup> David Chidester suggests that while churches who were privileged, such as the DRC, participated in the national emphasis on reconciliation, their majority status hampered their ability to make any 'prophetic' claims about reconciliation.<sup>170</sup> De Gruchy suggests that, instead, reconciliation received its most sustained development in the *Kairos Document*.<sup>171</sup> While the *Kairos Document* dismisses the ‘state theology’ of apartheid, it also dismisses the ‘church theology’ of the mainline multi-racial churches, stating that their emphasis on unity and

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<sup>165</sup> Thurman, *Jesus and the Disinherited*, 28.

<sup>166</sup> Boesak, *Black and Reformed*, 11.

<sup>167</sup> James Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008), 130.

<sup>168</sup> Jean-Marc Ela, *African Cry* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1986), 87.

<sup>169</sup> Sandal, 'Religious Actors', 941.

<sup>170</sup> David Chidester, 'Stories, Fragments and Monuments', in *Facing the Truth: South African Faith Communities and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, eds. James Cochrane, John de Gruchy, and Stephen Martin (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1999), 136.

<sup>171</sup> de Gruchy, Cochrane, and Martin, 'Introduction: Faith, Struggle and Reconciliation', 3. The *Kairos Document* is a theological statement written in 1985 by a group of black Christian theologians, many of whom lived in, and served, communities in the Soweto townships of South Africa.



forgiveness ignored the necessity for justice, and forced the oppressed to participate in their own oppression, a sinful act.<sup>172</sup> The *Kairos* theologians rejected as sinful any act that failed to tackle the apartheid system directly.<sup>173</sup> De Gruchy suggests further that Christians have a core vocation to engage with the political system at all levels, and to critique any political institutions that engage in oppression.<sup>174</sup> He notes similarities in the ‘state theologies’ of Nazi Germany and South Africa, and advocates a ‘Confessing Theology’ similar to the theology espoused in the Barmen Declaration by the Confessing Church in 1936.<sup>175</sup> Confessing theology is rooted in a particular church tradition, creed, or confession, allowing current expressions of faith to be tested against the historical roots of the faith.<sup>176</sup> Applying such a critique to South Africa would aid in stripping the classic Reform confession of Jesus as Lord of the triumphalism that the DRC had applied in its colonial missionary endeavours.<sup>177</sup> This opens space for South African theology to remain rooted in the tradition of a radical Christ who is equally Lord to women, blacks, and non-Reform Christians.<sup>178</sup> This reflects the sense from theologians of reconciliation in South Africa

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<sup>172</sup> de Gruchy, *Reconciliation: Restoring Justice*, 35.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid*, 36.

<sup>174</sup> John W. de Gruchy, ‘Confessing Theology’, in *Doing Theology in Context: South African Perspectives*, eds. John W. de Gruchy and Charles Villa-Vicencio (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994), 170.

<sup>175</sup> John W. de Gruchy, ‘The Nature, Necessity and Task of Theology’, in *Doing Theology in Context: South African Perspectives*, eds. John W. de Gruchy and Charles Villa-Vicencio (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994), 11. The ‘Confessing Church’ was a response to the state-aligned (and thus Nazi-aligned) German Lutheran Church. The Confessing Church emphasised that the core witness and truths of the Christian witness and message were not directly aligned with any state entity or party, and instead was responsible to a God which was far greater than the state, which the Nazi state, specifically, was also beholden to. As the Nazi State saw itself as the one power which controlled all aspects of its citizen’s lives, including being the main conduit through which meaning and allegiance flowed, the Confessing Church was engaging in treason by claiming this stance. The most important public declaration for their message was the Barmen Declaration. Prominent thinkers in the Confessing Church included Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Karl Barth, and Martin Niemöller.

<sup>176</sup> de Gruchy, ‘Confessing Theology’, 163.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid*, 168.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid*, 168.

that reconciliation is a central Christian vocation, centred within the life of Christ, despite the regular failure of the Church to fulfill its vocation.<sup>179</sup>

Racism in South Africa, and the structures which both developed in response to it and then helped perpetuate it, had a profound impact on the South African consciousness, impacting every single aspect and level of society. This diffuse dispersion of racism, coupled with its perniciousness, meant that perspectives on its origins, its impact, and the best ways to eradicate it, were similarly diverse and dispersed across reconciliation theologians and theorists. Several key common themes emerged, however: the complex nature of South African history, particularly the sense of oppression in Afrikaner self-identity, complicated issues of race and oppression; all of the institutions of South African society were corrupted by racism, and aided in perpetuating oppression based on racial categories; while the American experience of race offered numerous lessons for understanding the development of racism in South African society, that experience could not be entirely grafted onto the South African experience without acknowledging that lack of structures of chattel slavery coupled with the Afrikaner colonial history led to a uniquely South African expression of racism; finally, that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was hampered from achieving systemic reconciliation by failing to focus on systemic racism. It is essential to explore the South African context in order to fully understand the *Ubuntu* interdependence theology which emerged from the context, explored in depth in section 2.4.

### **2.3.d Exclusion based on Sectarianism<sup>180</sup>**

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<sup>179</sup> Carl Niehaus, 'Reconciliation in South Africa: Is Religion Relevant?', in *Facing the Truth: South African Faith Communities and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, eds. James Cochrane, John de Gruchy, and Stephen Martin (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1999), 81.

According to Liechty and Clegg, sectarianism as it applies to the situation of ethnic conflict in Northern Ireland is: ‘a system of attitudes, actions, beliefs, and structures which arises as a distorted expression of positive human needs especially for belonging, identity, and the free expression of difference, and is expressed in destructive patterns of relating’. They contend that sectarianism most often involves religion, politics, and the mixture of both which contributes to the creation of an ‘other’ who is essentialised, and dehumanised.<sup>181</sup> Sectarianism creates a situation where the existence of the other is such a threat that it justifies the use of deadly violence in order to eliminate the danger to the self.<sup>182</sup> Liechty and Clegg suggest that this threat is felt at a foundational level, as ‘ancestral voices’ that are rooted in cultural history and are the birth right of every person born into that society.<sup>183</sup> While these powerful voices often demand obeisance, and can command violence, they are also capable of opening alternative perspectives for peace that have authority because they stem from the tradition.<sup>184</sup> This tradition is often referred to as ‘myth’, which Liechty and Clegg understand to be akin to a communal memory and tradition of interpretation of events in the past, and their impact on the current situation.<sup>185</sup> These myths tell truths about a community's experience, yet can also be reformed by viewing the myths through the process of historical analysis.<sup>186</sup> Sectarianism is often rooted in communal myths, and the belief that the past dictates the future; examining the past is a necessary step towards combatting sectarian attitudes.<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> As noted above, this section outlines how theologies of division have played out in Northern Ireland, and have influenced both theologies of division and reconciliation in Northern Ireland, which I outline below.

<sup>181</sup> Liechty and Clegg, *Moving Beyond Sectarianism*, 102-3.

<sup>182</sup> Clegg, 'Between Embrace and Exclusion', 126.

<sup>183</sup> Liechty and Clegg, *Moving Beyond Sectarianism*, 177.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid*, 178.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid*, 64.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid*, 66.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid*, 67.

Liechty and Clegg develop their theories in the context of sectarianism and ethnic conflict in Northern Ireland. They argue that religious difference is interwoven into Northern Irish culture, compounded by the lasting effects of British colonialism in Ireland.<sup>188</sup> Colonialism integrated feelings of superiority into the Protestant religious expressions on the island, reflected in the increasingly harsh approach that Protestant settlers from England and Scotland employed to maintain control over a mainly Roman Catholic Irish population that it viewed as barbaric and pagan.<sup>189</sup> This was compounded by virulent anti-Catholic attitudes amongst the settlers, particularly the Scottish Calvinists.<sup>190</sup> Sandal argues that Scottish and English colonisation was not equally spread throughout the island, however, and instead centred around Dublin and in the eastern half of the Province of Ulster, the northernmost of the four historical provinces of Ireland.<sup>191</sup> This created an uneven distribution of Anglo-Irish and 'native' Irish, resulting in a Protestant majority in Ulster and a Catholic majority in the rest of the island. Richards concluded that this challenging situation of economic and political inequality set the stage for the future conflict.<sup>192</sup>

Stevens argues that this politicisation of religion led to the eventual linkage of the Protestant church with Unionism and the Catholic with Nationalism, compounded by the privileges accorded members of Protestant churches and the Protestant community due to the fact that political power and economic resources were held in British, and thus Protestant, control.<sup>193</sup> O'Malley argues that this imbalance was worsened by the Partition of 1920, when the

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<sup>188</sup> Ibid, 72.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid, 73. Consedine argues that Ireland actually sustained a common set of laws and values for hundreds of years before English kings elected to involve itself in Irish affairs, during the Tudor Period of the Sixteenth Century, with the Plantation system.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid, 175.

<sup>191</sup> Sandal, 943.

<sup>192</sup> Leyton Richards, *Planning for Freedom* (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1943), 26.

<sup>193</sup> David Stevens, 'As We Enter A New Millennium', in *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 89, no. 354 (Summer, 2000), 163-69, at 163.

new borders of Northern Ireland, were purposely drawn to include a Protestant majority and a substantial Catholic minority.<sup>194</sup> Smith focuses on the Protestant response, claiming that the Protestant economic and political elites denied the Catholic claims of systematic inequality, and rejected any efforts to accept any responsibility for the situation.<sup>195</sup>

Stevens argues that the Catholic minority was deeply ambivalent about their new status, in large part due to their political and economic mistreatment at the hand of the Protestant majority.<sup>196</sup> He states that the Catholic response to this situation was initially non-violent, and consisted of mainly economic strikes and protest marches.<sup>197</sup> Sandal claims, however, that the violent response of the mainly Protestant police force, the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), opened space in the Catholic response for an already extant tradition of violent rebellion to re-emerge. Violent paramilitary groups gained support amongst Catholics, particularly the militant Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA), a group with a stated goal of reunifying Ireland into one Irish state.<sup>198</sup>

Stevens argues that the rise of the paramilitary movements paralleled dramatic social and cultural shifts in Northern Ireland, especially the diminished role that the Catholic Church played in the lives of Catholics, opening space for new organisations and ideals to fill the gaps left by the Church.<sup>199</sup> These new organisations took on a religious cast, blending religion and politics

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<sup>194</sup> Padraig O'Malley, 'Northern Ireland: A Manageable Conflict', in *The Irish Review* (1986-) no. 15 (Spring, 1994), 14-39, at 28.

<sup>195</sup> David Stevens, 'A Review of *Social Anthropology and Public Policy in Northern Ireland*', 326. As Stevens notes elsewhere, this indifference in Northern Ireland was coupled by a lack of awareness of the unrest and inequality of opportunity amongst minority populations in Britain during this time. David Stevens, 'A Review of *Tales from Two Cities* by Dervla Murphy', in *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 77, no. 308 (Winter, 1988), 482-84, at 483.

<sup>196</sup> David Stevens, 'A Review of *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference* by David J. Garrow', *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 78, no. 310 (Summer, 1989), 204-8, at 208.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid*, 207.

<sup>198</sup> Sandal, 'Religious Actors', 943.

<sup>199</sup> David Stevens, 'Shattered Churches? A Review of *The Churches and Inter-Community Relations* by Duncan Morrow; *The Northern Ireland Question: Myth and Reality* by P. Roche and B. Barton; *Blackmouth and Dissenter* by John M. Barkley; *The Price of Peace* by Cahal B. Daly; *Chains to be Broken* by Robin Eames; *What Are We At: Ministry and Priesthood for the Third Millennium* by Michael Casey; *Shattered Vows: Exodus from the Priesthood* by

into a virulent sectarianism that used the minority grievances and majority fears to fuel the conflict.<sup>200</sup> Southern argues that this confluence of events was the beginning of the violent thirty year ethnic conflict known as the ‘Troubles’.<sup>201</sup>

Scholars of the conflict focus on different aspects of the conflict, stressing various effects on Northern Ireland. Southern emphasises the longevity of the conflict as a key aspect, stating that it was, effectively a ‘manageable conflict’, due to the low levels of violence.<sup>202</sup> This manageability created a sense of permanence and intractability to the conflict. O’Malley agrees, arguing that the intransigence and indifference to resolving the conflict resulted from the concentration of actual fatalities – only 3,000 deaths, yet thousands of casualties – into specific locations, which lowered the sense of risk of physical violence for the majority of the population.<sup>203</sup> O’Malley suggests further that the ‘manageability’ of the conflict ensured that there was very little incentive to engage in the risk and challenge inherent in reconciliation.<sup>204</sup> This manageability, coupled with a fear of engagement, fuelled an apathy in the middle classes, who withdrew from the democratic process and thus de-legitimised any effort at political compromise.<sup>205</sup> Rolston asserts that this fuelled a reluctance to approach the conflict from the perspective of systemic reform, instead there were piecemeal reforms guaranteed to fail.<sup>206</sup>

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David Rice and Peter Connolly', in *The Irish Review (1986-)* no. 13, Autobiography as Criticism (Winter, 1992-1993), 172-77, at 175.

<sup>200</sup> Liechty and Clegg, *Moving Beyond Sectarianism*, 194.

<sup>201</sup> Neil Southern, 'After Ethnic Conflict: Religion and Peace-building in West Belfast', in *Irish Studies in International Affairs* 20 (2009), 83-101, at 89. 'The Troubles' is the name commonly given to the ethnic conflict that centred in Northern Ireland during the period of 1968-1998.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid*, 89.

<sup>203</sup> O'Malley, 'Northern Ireland', 17.

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid*, 18.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid*, 22.

<sup>206</sup> Bill Rolston, 'Dealing With the Past: Pro-State Paramilitaries, Truth and Transition in Northern Ireland', *Human Rights Quarterly* 28, no. 3 (August, 2006), 652-75, at 653.

O'Malley argues that the relatively small geographical area of the conflict ensured that the conflict touched every corner of Northern Irish life.<sup>207</sup> Despite the small area, Stevens contends that groups were able to grow increasingly segregated, physically, from each other.<sup>208</sup> He argues that this resulted in a lack of common purpose between the groups. Smyth agrees that segregation led to separation between the groups. She argues, however, that the separation lay in the widely divergent worldviews of the Protestant/Unionist and Catholic/Nationalist communities, which thus dominated the response of both communities to the conflict.<sup>209</sup>

O'Malley argues that Loyalist paramilitary violence and intransigence was fuelled by the fear of Catholic demographic and economic growth, and a resultant inverse decline in the power of the Protestant majority.<sup>210</sup> This is complicated further by an entrenched Loyalist intransigence.<sup>211</sup> Rolston suggests that Loyalists are reluctant to engage in any formal reconciliation/truth-recovery process due to a combination of Loyalist confidence in the 'truth' of their narrative of the conflict and a sense that any official recognition of a Republican narrative would undermine both the state and the narrative of Loyalism itself.<sup>212</sup> Stevens suggests that the British presence in Northern Ireland is a barrier to reconciliation as it supports the Unionist narrative that Republicans all seek a united Ireland, which would strip Unionists of their rights and place in society.<sup>213</sup> Ironically, Stevens asserts that Nationalists feel as if the government, bureaucracy, and justice systems are all irrevocably biased in favour of Unionists, effectively

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<sup>207</sup> O'Malley, 'Northern Ireland', 29.

<sup>208</sup> David Stevens, 'A Review of *Housing a Divided Community* by C.E.B. Brett', *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 76, no. 301 (Spring, 1987), 119-20, at 120.

<sup>209</sup> Smyth, 'Respecting Boundaries and Bonds', 138.

<sup>210</sup> O'Malley, 'Northern Ireland', 26.

<sup>211</sup> David Stevens, 'A Review of *The Politics of Frustration: Harry Midgely and the Failure of Labour in Northern Ireland* by Graham Walker', *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 75, no. 298 (Summer, 1986), 232-33, at 233.

<sup>212</sup> Rolston, 'Dealing with the Past', 665.

<sup>213</sup> David Stevens, 'The Protestant Idea of Liberty: Three Pamphlets', in *The Furrow* 37, no. 1 (January, 1986), 12-20, at 18.

shutting Nationalists out of any role in society.<sup>214</sup> Morrow suggests that this seemingly intractable divide between both sides is the effect of parties using scapegoating in order to achieve internal unity and to continue the conflict.<sup>215</sup> Morrow, finally, argues that Northern Ireland political life suffered from a lack of both strong democratic institutions in which to develop policy solutions and where all parties had agency and representation, and a justice system which all parties could trust.<sup>216</sup>

Wright contends that while reconciliation is the most complicated choice for peacemaking in Northern Ireland, and most likely to fail in the short-term, it is the only option available to achieve the stability necessary for democratic institutions to develop. Wright also gives credit to the Corrymeela Community, and its philosophy, for not only achieving reconciliation, but for providing the most effective perspective for understanding the conflict.<sup>217</sup> Stevens, a former leader of the Community, acknowledges that reconciliation is a challenging project with few guarantees for its success, however.<sup>218</sup>

The role that religion, and the institution of the church, played in the Troubles is a contested point. In their seminal work on sectarianism, Liechty and Clegg examine many of the trenchant theories, and critiques, of the role of religion.<sup>219</sup> After examining the work of several critics in depth, acknowledging the challenges presented by the binary 'Two Traditions' perspective, Liechty and Clegg return to their main thesis: chastened, this perspective remains

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<sup>214</sup> Stevens et. al, 'Breaking Down the Enmity', 336.

<sup>215</sup> Morrow, 'For God and... Ourselves Alone?', 81.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid, 181-2.

<sup>217</sup> Liechty and Clegg, *Moving Beyond Sectarianism*, 199. Smyth agrees with Wright about the importance of the Corrymeela perspective, linking the analysis of Wink and Girard on the relationship between religion and power (including mimetic rivalry, scapegoating, exclusion, and sacred violence) with the Northern Irish situation. She states that religion can provide a 'transcendent legitimisation', fuelling the cycle of violence. Smyth, 'Respecting Boundaries and Bonds', 140.

<sup>218</sup> David Stevens, 'A Comment on the SCM Response to "Breaking Down the Enmity"', in *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 76, no. 301 (Spring, 1987), 83-88, at 85.

<sup>219</sup> Liechty and Clegg, *Moving Beyond Sectarianism*, 30.



the most dominant divide, bridging all other divides of gender, race, economic class, age, region, and political leanings.<sup>220</sup> They find that many of the criticisms fail to take full account of the impact that the religious aspects of the Plantation had on laying the foundation for subsequent patterns of violence and oppression through rooting ethnic division into the fabric of Irish society, particularly in the North.<sup>221</sup> Liechty and Clegg argue that these approaches are reductionist in that they only view the surface impact that religion had on the conflict, during the period of the Troubles, while failing to take a comprehensive view of religious difference as a systemic problem.<sup>222</sup>

Liechty and Clegg contend that the conflict in Ireland has always been marked by a theological and sectarian cast.<sup>223</sup> They argue that sectarianism drives all difference between people and groups into the fundamental, boiling all complexity into a simplistic perspective on the conflict and its roots.<sup>224</sup> Religion is the main realm where this process applies, specifically in terms of reducing all aspects of religion to the intellectual propositions of doctrine. These can be debated, and found untrue. This means that the entirety of a community's religious experience can be, in theory, untrue, and unworthy of respect. Liechty and Clegg assert that ethnic conflicts are never rooted in any one cause, even religion, and instead should be viewed as complex, interconnected ecosystems where multiple strands combine to lead to a diffuse fog of violence and cause.<sup>225</sup>

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<sup>220</sup> Ibid, 36.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid, 47.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid, 54.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid, 71. They argue that the history of Irish rebellion (non-violent and violent) against British rule, stretching back to 1641, coupled with the memory of the violent repression of the British and the overwhelming shadow cast by the Battle of the Boyne in 1690, hardened resolve of the Anglo-Irish and Ulster-Scots to maintain control of Irish affairs. This resolve, coupled with the deep historical ties to the land that many modern Unionists have, has coloured Unionist perspectives of the conflict, strengthening Unionist willingness to fight to maintain the status quo of Unionist cultural hegemony in Northern Ireland. Liechty and Clegg, *Moving Beyond Sectarianism*, 77.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid, 53.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid, 48.

The reduction of all complexity to a series of 'either/or' choices implies that solutions to the conflict are simple.<sup>226</sup> This even applies to the sectarian system itself: Nationalists blame sectarianism on the creation of the Northern Irish state, thus removing the state removes sectarianism.<sup>227</sup> Others state that religion is itself the problem: as religious affiliation is a choice, one can choose to reject religion. This ignores the fact that religion and politics are integral aspects of one's upbringing and often irrevocably inform people's worldviews; changing one's faith or politics does not remove the core beliefs of one's childhood.<sup>228</sup> Sectarianism is also systemic, and thus protected from the challenge of individual change.<sup>229</sup> A sectarian institution can ignore the actions of one individual with good intentions as long as the rest of society does not openly confront the sectarian attitudes that allow the institution to continue to circumscribe the actions of every person who comes into contact with the institution.<sup>230</sup> Examples include the close connection between the Orange Order, a Protestant fraternal organisation which enjoyed status within Northern Irish society, and the Ulster Volunteer Force, a loyalist paramilitary group. Defence of the Protestant religion against nationalism and Catholicism was folded into the Orange Order's mission.<sup>231</sup> Thus, any person who worshipped in a building which also housed an Orange Order Lodge was participating in sectarianism, however passively.<sup>232</sup>

The pervasiveness of the sectarian system can blind people to its presence, and its impact on every aspect of their lives.<sup>233</sup> Basic human desires for safety, security, food, and shelter can be contaminated by years of conflict, leading to unconscious feelings of threat towards any person

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<sup>226</sup> Ibid, 42.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid, 41.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid, 114.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid, 110.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid, 109.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid, 112.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid, 115.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid, 116.

who is suspected to belong to the ‘dangerous other’.<sup>234</sup> Dehumanisation and separation become normalised.<sup>235</sup> Dehumanisation occurs when a person is defined solely by a single negative aspect of the ‘other’, usually with slurs.<sup>236</sup> Dehumanisation takes on systemic form when the power of the state or violence is used to impose rigid boundaries between groups, with especially negative consequences for the minority group.<sup>237</sup>

Conversely, this leads people to overlook crucial differences with ‘the other’, ignoring or denying the values and identity of the other group.<sup>238</sup> This is a ‘polite’ form of sectarianism which is difficult to recognise, for it involves attitudes and beliefs that hide the reality of difference. An example would be a republican who states that the conflict only has a British-Irish dimension, and northern Protestants are unfortunate pawns in the machinations of the British state.<sup>239</sup> This is an incomplete perspective, yet its power resides in how it serves the needs of one population. Assimilation is another aspect of overlooking, where the good intention of emphasising unity to dispel the power of negative difference actually ignores positive difference, and disrespects different cultural values.<sup>240</sup> These good intentions, when demonstrated to stem from sectarianism, however benign, can lead to a resignation about the possibility of ever resolving the conflict which can lead people to ‘give up’ on the struggle. This can blunt any efforts at combatting sectarianism, and is an example of the sectarian system defending itself.<sup>241</sup>

### **2.3.e Section Summary**

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<sup>234</sup> Ibid, 118.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid, 146.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid, 247.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid, 248.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid, 133.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid, 134.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid, 169.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid, 218.

This section outlined a number of different theological responses to the situation of human division and ethnic conflict. These various responses flow from an underlying hamartiology, or theology of sin: that human division, and its attendant exclusion of the 'other', is a sin due to a theological anthropology of divine-human interdependence. Theologians of conflict have also examined the process of 'othering' from the perspective of evil and sin.

The challenge faced by humans, and God, in this endeavour, is that these evil forces utilise the 'Powers', the very institutions and structures created by God as essential aspects of human existence such as government and economic structures, to create situations of division and discord. These Powers are not evil, yet are inhabited and controlled by evil, which deforms them so that they are now incorporated into the overarching structure of the 'Domination System'. This system is so embedded within human society that it inexorably compels humans to divide and be violent towards each other. This violence and division is presented as both essential, and good, through the use of the 'scapegoat mechanism'. This mechanism offers the potential of unity for formerly divided individuals/groups as the common effort of destroying the scapegoat allows the individuals and groups to form a sense of unity. It is inherently unstable, however, as it was formed upon the negative unity of destruction, which requires constant destruction in order to maintain its false sense of unity. Humans are thus trapped in inescapable situations of conflict and violence, through these various structures and systems.

Perhaps most destructive, violence and division are presented as if they are inherent aspects of the human experience. Racism and sectarianism are two significant examples of this trend. This process can occur along any line of possible human division, however, and is thus universally applicable to any situation of identity conflict. The hamartiology presented in this chapter is robust, and is similarly applicable outside of situations of violence and war. The next

section explores the response to the hamartiology presented in this chapter: theologies of interdependence.

## 2.4 Divine/Human Interdependence

Reconciliation theology examines the ontology of both the Son and the Spirit in order to achieve a ‘reconciling’ view of theological anthropology.<sup>242</sup> Reconciliation is rooted in the act of bringing back together what had previously been torn asunder. This involves action and being. Reconciliation theology also examines the actions of restoring relationship and the being of harmonious balance from the stance of the human/divine relationship. This involves a few major components: 1) living together in difference, in a place or setting where the dynamics of forgiveness, repentance, truth and justice all converge;<sup>243</sup> 2) accepting God's invitation to live fully in the life of God and sharing God's reconciling love with those around us;<sup>244</sup> and 3) developing a theological anthropology where a reconciling God brings all of creation into God's life, thereby reconciling humanity through God.

Christian reconciliation theology is thus inherently Incarnational as it is rooted in the reconciliation of the incarnate bodies of humans with each other, and with the Incarnate One,

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<sup>242</sup> The terms “Son and Holy Spirit” are traditional terms used to describe the forms of two of the three persons of the Trinity. Paul Jewett, ‘Noninclusive Language and the Trinity,’ in *The Christian Theology Reader*, ed. Alister McGrath (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 248-50, at 249. As Thistlethwaite states, the challenges presented by the terms are well-acknowledged, most especially the challenge inherent in such a monarchical and gendered term as Father. Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite, “‘I Am Become Death’: God in the Nuclear Age”, in *Lift Every Voice: Constructing Christian Theologies from the Underside*, eds. Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite and Mary Potter Engel (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1990), 95-108, at 100. I recognize these challenges, and wholeheartedly agree with those who seek to avoid such an obvious patriarchal gendering of the Trinity, with the inevitable patriarchal power-dynamic. I examine the benefits and challenges of other potential terms later in the chapter. However, at this point, I find it most convenient to retain the use of these traditional terms, simply to avoid confusion, until other, more suitable terms can be presented.

<sup>243</sup> Stevens, *The Land of Unlikeness*, 22-3.

<sup>244</sup> Michael Battle, *Practicing Reconciliation in a Violent World* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 2005), 4.

Jesus Christ. This means that reconciliation theology is often focused mainly on the role of Christ in the atonement, with the rest of the Trinity playing a less prominent role in the mechanism of atonement. Accordingly, Michael Battle, a theologian noted for applying the *Ubuntu* reconciliation theology of Desmond Tutu to Pneumatology, argues that this singular focus on Christ neglects the prominent role that the Spirit also plays in atonement.<sup>245</sup> Battle claims that an exclusive focus on only one aspect of the Trinity can hamper the development of a more robust theology that seeks to understand the panentheistic, reconciliatory God. This is due to the role that the Spirit plays in bringing creation into the life of God.<sup>246</sup>

This section establishes the main aspects of the two axes of relationship between the Divine and humans, as understood by atonement theology. I also focus on metaphors and theological categories that best align with Liberal Quaker theological anthropology, which as I argue in chapter three, is reliant upon the interplay between Christ and the Spirit. Therefore, I focus on the role that the Holy Spirit plays in these two axes. I argue that only a robust vision of divine/human interdependence, where humans are inextricably bound together through an interdependent relationship between the Divine and all of humanity, will suffice for theologies of atonement which seek to respond to the sins of division, ethnic conflict, racism, and sectarianism. I argue that understanding the interdependence of the Trinity, as well as the interdependence between divine and human, must involve a much greater role for the Spirit. To that end, in this section I explore four different models for divine/human interdependence: the dyad of Holy Spirit and Christ; Spirit Christology; the social community model of Dietrich Bonhoeffer; and the interdependence theology of *Ubuntu*, developed in light of the racist

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<sup>245</sup> Michael Battle, *Blessed are the Peacemakers* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2004), 117. I explore *Ubuntu* theology in greater depth below.

<sup>246</sup> Phillip Clayton, 'In Whom We Have Our Being: Philosophical Resources for the Doctrine of the Spirit,' in *Advents of the Spirit: An Introduction to the Current Study of Pneumatology*, eds. Bradford Hinze and D. Lyle Dabney (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 2001), 171-205, at 173.

divisions of South Africa. Finally, I establish areas of comparison to interdependence theologies in Liberal Quaker theology, which I explore in greater depth in chapter three.

#### **2.4.a Relationship between the Spirit and Christ**

As a multi-layered reality, any envisioning of the Spirit requires creativity, a respect for maintaining necessary boundaries between what can be stated with some certainty, and what must remain in the realm of the unknown.<sup>247</sup> David Rensberger argues that the *ruach*, or life-giving breath of God of Genesis 2:7, is the ‘Spirit of God’ that blows over the earth in Genesis 1:2, as well as the same Spirit that Jesus breathes over his disciples in John 20:22. Rensberger argues that the Hebrew writers understood *ruach* as an omnipresent breath that, once withdrawn, would take life with it.<sup>248</sup> Yet, the Bible speaks of the enveloping presence of God towards individual subjects, such as the caring, individual attention of God in Psalm 139.<sup>249</sup> The Biblical witness speaks of a God that is relational, yet also the transcendent underlying base of all existence. This indwelling of the Spirit in humanity, in specific, brings humanity to a place of wholeness, making life itself possible, and complete.<sup>250</sup>

Gavin D’Costa argues that the relationships within the Trinity are perichoretic. As D’Costa defines it, perichoresis is a ‘mutual indwelling’ that ‘properly emphasises the relational intimacy and unity that is both within the Trinity and also characterises God’s relations with

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<sup>247</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare*, 179.

<sup>248</sup> David K. Rensberger, ‘The Gospel According to John’, in *The Harper Collins Study Bible, New Revised Standard Edition*, ed. Wayne A. Meeks (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc, 1993), 2053.

<sup>249</sup> Clayton, ‘In Whom We Have Our Being’, 179. Psalm 139 emphasises the inescapability of God’s presence in human life (v. 7), where God is not only intimately involved in the formation of each human person in the womb (vv. 13-16), but is also involved in every thought and deed that any person will have or do throughout their life (vv. 1-6), including each person’s eventual death (vv. 8-12).

<sup>250</sup> Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God: The Doctrine of God* (London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1981), 125.

human persons, without the effacement or detracting from the distinctiveness of each and all persons, both human and divine'.<sup>251</sup> Each 'person' of the Trinity exists within one another, in a relationship of absolute interdependence, where each can only be completely realised by the presence and action of the other.<sup>252</sup>

The role of the Son was not understood, or interpreted, completely for some time after the death of Jesus, while the relationship between Jesus and Son took time to develop from 'the Son of God' into 'God the Son'.<sup>253</sup> Athenagoras of Athens represents a strand of thought amongst early Christians which relegated the Spirit to the status of a power that mediated God's will to humans, a grace that emanated from God, yet was not actually God. Athenagoras, around 177 CE, stated that the Spirit was 'an effluence of God, who flows from him and returns to him, like a beam of the sun'.<sup>254</sup> Irenaeus, a late second century theologian from Gaul, understood the Spirit as an aspect of the Trinity that was active in the realms of prophecy, educating about the nature of God. However, Irenaeus did not make the specific connection the Spirit was God.<sup>255</sup> Phillip Clayton argues that Tertullian, in the second century CE, was one of the first theologians to make the connection between Spirit and God – where the Spirit was a third participant in the life of God.<sup>256</sup> This did not create any specific role for the Spirit in the divine life, though.<sup>257</sup>

That question of the role of the Spirit in the divine life has exercised many theologians over the centuries. G. W. H. Lampe sums up the controversy in his 1977 publication, *God as*

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<sup>251</sup> Gavin D'Costa, *Sexing the Trinity: Gender, Culture and the Divine* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 2000), 31.

<sup>252</sup> Anselm Kyongsuk Min, 'Solidarity of Others in the Power of the Holy Spirit: Pneumatology in a Divided World', in *Advents of the Spirit: An Introduction to the Current Study of Pneumatology*, eds. Bradford Hinze and D. Lyle Dabney (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 2001), 414-41, at 432.

<sup>253</sup> G.W.H. Lampe, *God as Spirit: The Bampton Lectures, 1976* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 131.

<sup>254</sup> Athenagoras of Athens, 'On the Christian God', in *The Christian Theology Reader*, ed. Alister McGrath (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 178-9, at 178.

<sup>255</sup> Irenaeus, 'On the Trinity', in *The Christian Theology Reader*, ed. Alister McGrath (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 180-1, at 180.

<sup>256</sup> Clayton, 'In Whom We Have Our Being', 134.

<sup>257</sup> Lampe, *God as Spirit*, 213.



*Spirit*. Lampe explains the problem, especially for the patristics, as a questioning of how the Holy Spirit related to the two other aspects of the Trinity. If the Holy Spirit is God, yet ‘Holy Spirit’ and ‘God’ are not synonymous terms, this creates a problem of relations within the Godhead, with the Holy Spirit not having a specific relation to either the ‘Father’ or to the ‘Son’.<sup>258</sup> This seeming paradox necessitated some solution, for if the Spirit was actually God, yet not specifically Father or Son, then the Spirit was somehow some as yet not completely understood equivalent third aspect of God.

Theologians, such as Epiphanius of Constantia in the fourth century CE, continued to use Irenaeus’ language of ‘a ray emitting from the sun’ to describe how the Spirit emerged from the Father.<sup>259</sup> By the seventh century, however, John of Damascus said with confidence that the Spirit ‘proceeded’ from the Father. However, John could not decide whether it was appropriate to state that the Spirit ‘proceeded’ from the Father, or whether ‘generation’ was actually more appropriate.<sup>260</sup>

An important question was whether the Spirit was in a subservient position to only the Father, or subservient to both the Father and the Son. For example, Augustine suggested that the Father and Son were two poles of the Trinity, with the Spirit as the love which flowed between them.<sup>261</sup> Augustine noted that Scripture was ambiguous on the proper terminology of the Spirit, whether the Spirit was being or essence, or even whether the Spirit was divine.<sup>262</sup> Eventually, some consensus was reached that the Spirit was a subsistent being which was also fully divine.

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<sup>258</sup> Ibid, 220.

<sup>259</sup> Epiphanius of Constantia, ‘Panarion lxii 1’, in *Epiphanius Episcopi Constantiae Opera*, vol. 2, ed. W. Dindorf, (Leipzig: Weigel, 1860), 572.20-573.17.

<sup>260</sup> John of Damascus, ‘De Fide Orthodoxa,’ in *Patristische Texte und Studien*, vol. 12, ed. P. Bonifatius Kotter, OSB (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1973), 25.172-26.194.

<sup>261</sup> Augustine, ‘On the Trinity’, in *The Christian Theology Reader, Third Edition*, ed. Alister E. McGrath (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 194-198.

<sup>262</sup> Lampe, *God as Spirit*, 216.

As this was not specifically stated in the Scriptures, theologians acknowledged the extra-Biblical nature of the Spirit while also accepting that it made rational sense based on their experience of the Spirit.<sup>263</sup>

The relationship amongst the persons of the Trinity has not, to date, been settled with a universal consensus. The controversy surrounding the ‘filioque’<sup>264</sup> clause of the Latin version of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed is still extant, and still divides the Eastern and Western expressions of Christianity.<sup>265</sup> Within the boundaries of Scripture and tradition, contemporary experience has room to speculate other formulations of the relationships within the Trinity.

#### **2.4.b The Holy Spirit and Christ as Dyad**

The formulation of the Holy Spirit and Christ as Dyad has roots in the Eastern Orthodox tradition, where Son and Spirit are seen to be equally emanating from the Father, and are in a partnership in their interaction with humanity.<sup>266</sup> Their relationship is one of inextricable union, where the Son exists as Word speaking creation into existence, and the Spirit is the breath of the

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<sup>263</sup> Ibid, 217.

<sup>264</sup> 'Filioque: (Latin *and the son*) Phrase inserted into the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed (381) at the Council of Toledo (589) to say that the Holy Spirit proceeds from both Father and Son (“double procession”) in the Trinity. It was rejected by the Eastern church (1054) and was part of the reason for the East-West Church schism.' McKim, *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*, 105.

<sup>265</sup> The Creed in the Western Church states that the Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son, while the Creed in Eastern Orthodoxy does not have this addition. The history, and theology, of this controversy is very complex, and is as much based on a terminological confusion between Greek and Latin as it is on any true theological divide. As I am focusing on the fact that the hypostases interact with each other perichoretically on a level of absolute equality, and am not discussing the mechanism of the perichoresis itself, I will leave the complexities of that debate aside. Most importantly, for my argument, is that the doctrine of the Spirit has never been a closed one with a certain consensus amongst Christians, and thus, is open to continual interpretation and re-examination.

<sup>266</sup> Sergius Bulgakov, *The Comforter* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 179.

Word, giving creation life.<sup>267</sup> Mikhail Bulgakov argues that this union is both mysterious, yet also quite concrete and determinate. For, just as a word cannot be spoken without the breath used to carry it out of the mouth, the ‘speaking of creation’ simply cannot occur without the Spirit bringing life into the creation that is spoken into existence.<sup>268</sup> This construct speaks of a tension inherent in the dyad: the Son is both the speaker of creation as well as a part of it, while the Spirit gives life to the creation, and is life itself.<sup>269</sup> The dyad, as expressed in these passages, is pantheistic, as it is inextricably both transcendent and immanent.<sup>270</sup> Bulgakov states that the Last Discourse in John 13-17 is the best, most complete scriptural explication of the dyad, where the Son and the Paraclete act in a perfect tandem to bring humanity into relationship with God, presenting ‘an exceptionally clear doctrine of their dyadic bi-unity, bi-identity, bi-Comforterhood, where ‘the two hypostases are made transparent in divine love’.<sup>271</sup> In John, therefore, the dyad is presented as an inextricable relationship between two equal and complementary hypostases whose unity and independence are confirmed in the special nature of their relationship, through the action of the ‘Comforter’. Both Word and Spirit save; both Word and Spirit act as Comforter to humanity.

One of the major proponents of the dyadic construction was Yves Congar. Congar wrote several important works on the Holy Spirit, including the three-volume work entitled *I Believe in*

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<sup>267</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, ‘Ad Ablabium: quod non sint tres dei’, in *Gregorii Nysseni Opera*, eds. Werner W. Jaeger, Hermann Langerbeck, and Heinrich Dorrie, 3 vols. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), vol 3/1, 37-52.

<sup>268</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 179.

<sup>269</sup> In a rather creative move, Bulgakov suggests that the Prologue to the Gospel of John is in fact not a logology, but a description of the dyad in action, where the Spirit is active as a silent partner, as the “breath of the Word.” Ibid, 162.

<sup>270</sup> ‘Pantheism (Gr. *Pan*, “all”, *en*, “in”, and *theos*, “God”) Term coined by K.C.F. Krause (1781-1832) for the view that God is in all things. This view also sees the world and God as mutually dependent for their fulfilment. It differs from “pantheism”, which views God as all and all as God.’ McKim, *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*, 199.

<sup>271</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 166.

*the Holy Spirit.*<sup>272</sup> Throughout his career as a writer, Congar developed his thoughts on the Spirit from a systematic examination of Pneumatology to examinations of the Spirit in the realms of anthropology, soteriology, ecumenical relations, and ecclesiology.

Congar insisted that both Christ and the Spirit acted together to create unity in the Body of Christ, as a dyadic union. However, for Congar, this union was coterminous with the boundaries of the Church, or the body of Christian believers. The Holy Spirit is the Church itself, in its sanctifying role as structure, sacrament, and the work of the Church in the world through the actions of individual Christians.<sup>273</sup> Christ is both resident within the Church as Body of Christ, as the redeeming Incarnation, and the Head of this same Body of Christ as incarnated and embedded within the Church as the first amongst all persons within the Church.<sup>274</sup> According to Congar, Christ and the Spirit both play roles within the Church to bring all members of the body into union with each other and with God. The Spirit is the same in Christ and the members of the mystical body.<sup>275</sup> Christ is the 'form' of the Church, while the Spirit gives the Church 'life'.

The Spirit exists in the entirety of creation, even before any of it was redeemed by the actions of the Son. Yet, it is only accessible in its completeness when people are redeemed and join in the Body of Christ by joining in the Church.<sup>276</sup> Congar allowed that the Holy Spirit does act outside of the Church, but insisted that this only occurred as a result of the world being the arena of the Church. Congar was very insistent on this point, stating that the mission of the Church is to gather all truths, 'scattered and dispersed', and bring them united to God.<sup>277</sup>

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<sup>272</sup> Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit* (New York: Seabury Books, 1983)

<sup>273</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>275</sup> Groppe, *Yves Congar's Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 118.

<sup>276</sup> Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, 84.

<sup>277</sup> Groppe, *Yves Congar's Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 111.

Congar extended his vision of an ecclesiological Spirit towards a form of dispensationalism. In the dispensation of the Old Testament, the Spirit is the power that accomplishes the work of God to guarantee God's plan for Israel.<sup>278</sup> This did not include dispensing the full measure of grace to the Patriarchs, an action that would necessarily have to wait until the coming of the Christ.<sup>279</sup>

Congar stated that humans are changed by the Spirit into people of virtue who can avoid evil and thus be capable of having God dwell within.<sup>280</sup> Human transformation is therefore the special work of the Spirit, through the vehicle of the Church. However, claiming that the Spirit is solely responsible for a task does not involve a claim there is a break in the unity of the Trinity. Congar insisted that while each hypostasis has its own very specific role to play, no action of any of the hypostases can be attributed to itself independently of any of the other hypostases.<sup>281</sup> For example, the Paraclete aids the Spirit in its work of transformation by bringing about awareness of sin and softening human hearts for their eventual repentance and conversion.<sup>282</sup>

Congar argued that God's essence can only be glimpsed through God's presence. In this way, God's ontic reality is love, so God's presence in God's creation is the love of God. For Congar, unity between essence and person-hood is balanced with a was not fully realised in the present age. 'The full self-communication of God will take place only at the end of time in the beatific vision. The immanent Trinity is thus not fully revealed in the economic Trinity', where the economic Trinity is God as God has chosen to be present in the creation in this meantime.<sup>283</sup>

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<sup>278</sup> Ibid, 55.

<sup>279</sup> Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, 75.

<sup>280</sup> Ibid, 125.

<sup>281</sup> Ibid, 85.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid, 122.

<sup>283</sup> Groppe, *Yves Congar's Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 68.

Congar presents a model of the dyad of the Holy Spirit and the Christ as inextricably linked, reflecting the heavy emphasis of Orthodox thought on his writing.<sup>284</sup> Christology must account for the role of the Spirit in the life and glorification of Jesus Christ – a Pneumatological Christology.<sup>285</sup> Congar does not subsume the Spirit into simply an extension of the Christ, however. The Holy Spirit, for Congar, is actually the unifying force of the entire universe.<sup>286</sup> The Spirit is also the hypostasis that enabled the sanctification of the incarnate Son of God at conception, and resided within Jesus. Congar does not go so far as to state the Spirit is the form in which God took in the human/divine co-existence within Jesus, however; Congar simply states that the Spirit made Jesus' work possible, and entered the world through Christ.<sup>287</sup> After Christ's death and resurrection, the Spirit resides in us. Congar insists that the Church is also the Temple, for the Spirit must be active in us to aid us in being born again.<sup>288</sup>

Kizhakkeparampil contends that Congar actually limits the role and efficacy of the Spirit, calling it a 'limited Pneumatological Christology' that fails to acknowledge that the Logos was only effective because he was imbued with the Spirit in limitless measure. He argues that the Spirit can only fulfil the roles and actions that were first given form by Christ, whilst the members of the Church are actually disempowered from building up the life of the Body of Christ.<sup>289</sup> Paulet disagrees, stating that this critique only applies to Congar's early work, whilst in his later work he grants the Spirit a co-equal role with Christ in the animation of the Church.<sup>290</sup> Nichols argues that as Congar aged, the role of the Spirit in his work grew to such an extent that

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<sup>284</sup> Ibid, 47.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid, 73.

<sup>286</sup> Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, 224.

<sup>287</sup> Yves Congar, *The Word and the Spirit* (New York: Seabury Books, 1986), 92.

<sup>288</sup> Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, 67.

<sup>289</sup> Isaac Kizhakkeparampil, *The Invocation of the Holy Spirit as Constitutive of the Sacraments according to Cardinal Yves Congar* (Rome: Gregorian University, 1995), 146-148.

<sup>290</sup> Lucian Paulet, 'The Holy Spirit as the Principle of Ecclesial Unity in the Thought of Yves Congar', STL Thesis, The Catholic University of America, 2002, 115.

Congar's Pneumatology eclipsed his Christology.<sup>291</sup> Nichols contends that this growth did not come with an attendant development of philosophy and epistemology.<sup>292</sup> Kerr agrees, stating that Congar's thought never developed into a system of theology.<sup>293</sup> Paulet agrees, yet states that this misses the point, for the strength of Congar's approach is its organic fluidity, and thus applicability to a variety of contemporary questions.<sup>294</sup> I concur with Paulet, since reconciliation theology is an organic theology that seeks to adapt to a variety of situations of reconciliation and theological approach.

#### 2.4.c Spirit Christology

Theologies of reconciliation depend upon the development of an effective symbolic and metaphorical language. This echoes Yves Congar's defence of symbolic language, which he claimed was capable of enabling the comprehension of reality in its entirety at those times when rational concepts are forced to fragment reality in the attempt to explain reality exactly.<sup>295</sup> Symbols can thus straddle the divide between cataphatic and mysterious language, with regards to the symbolic construct of the Trinity.

Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation place great emphasis on the symbol of the Body of Christ as a locus for reconciliation, both with God and with others.<sup>296</sup> This is reflected in the ways which reconciliation theologians define the Body of Christ. Charles Villa-

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<sup>291</sup> Aidan Nichols, *Yves Congar, Outstanding Christians Series*, ed. Brian Davies OP (Wilton, CT: Morehouse-Barlow, 1989), 61.

<sup>292</sup> Nichols, *Yves Congar*, 202.

<sup>293</sup> Fergus Kerr, 'French Theology: Yves Congar and Henri de Lubac', in *The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology in the Twentieth Century*, ed. David F. Ford (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000), 105-117, at 117.

<sup>294</sup> Paulet, 'The Holy Spirit as the Principle', 118.

<sup>295</sup> Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, 4.

<sup>296</sup> I explore this in chapter one, in a review of Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation.

Vicencio suggests that while the Body is a metaphysical reality, it is more importantly a physical reality, where ‘authentic’ union with Jesus is only found by living a life of obedience to the call of Jesus to work amongst the poor.<sup>297</sup> Cecelia Clegg makes a similar claim, arguing that reconciliation begins with being reconciled to the actual human body of Jesus, who as an integrated person reconciled with God offers other humans the opportunity to be reconciled to God through being reconciled with other humans.<sup>298</sup> Michael Battle applies this logic specifically to racial reconciliation by placing ‘body’ in the form of the racialised body, claiming that through the universal body of Jesus all diverse, biological characteristics of human bodies become insignificant. Battle suggests that by making this turn, Jesus heals the human divisions based on ‘bodily’ characteristics, without negating the beauty of human diversity.<sup>299</sup>

Finally, Robert Gundry argues that while the Body of Christ is a symbolic reality, Christian theology insists that it is also a practical reality.<sup>300</sup> This image holds two realities in tension – particularity and corporate identity in Christ.<sup>301</sup> This apparent paradox holds together the corporate entity of Christ in which individuals communally grow into one body with the individuality of a human identity that is transformed through relationship with Christ without becoming fused to the identity of Christ.<sup>302</sup> The key concept is the centrality of the place of God in this connection for the individual person: it is only through God that either the physical or figurative reality can be understood.

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<sup>297</sup> Charles Villa-Vicencio, *Trapped in Apartheid: A Socio-Theological History of the English-Speaking Churches* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988), 198.

<sup>298</sup> Clegg, ‘Between Embrace and Exclusion’, 131.

<sup>299</sup> Michael Battle, *Reconciliation: The Ubuntu Theology of Desmond Tutu* (Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 1997), 73.

<sup>300</sup> Robert H. Gundry, *Soma in Biblical Theology, with Emphasis on Pauline Anthropology* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 230.

<sup>301</sup> Lampe, *God as Spirit*, 25.

<sup>302</sup> William Campbell, *Paul and the Creation of Christian Identity* (New York: T & T Clark, 2006), 155-6.



One tradition which specifically responds to these paradoxes of individuality and communality in the person of Christ interacting with the world is Spirit Christology. This perspective argues that God interacts with the creation as Spirit, and fully infused Jesus with the divine Spirit.<sup>303</sup> This vision aligns well with reconciliation theology's focus on Pneumatology and its insistence on viewing the work of Christ and the Spirit as a unified whole.

One recent trend in reconciliation theology, exemplified in the recent work of Michael Battle, has been to utilise Spirit Christology as a means of responding to the perceived absence of the Spirit, with an attendant focus on the interdependence amongst humans, and between humans and God. Battle is not alone in his use of Spirit Christology. Both Cahill and Karkkainen devoted chapters in their most recent books to the issue of Spirit Christology.<sup>304</sup> In her work, Cahill claims that as there is no experience of Christ that was not mediated by the Spirit, Christologies that take the human experience of the Incarnation seriously must take the Spirit seriously.<sup>305</sup> Thus, Cahill claims, Spirit Christology enables a spirituality and ethic focused on the poor and oppressed, as such would focus on the lived experience of Jesus amongst the poor and oppressed.<sup>306</sup>

James Dunn was a proponent of Spirit Christology, claiming that it filled a vital role as one of the diversity of Christologies necessary to achieve the most complete understanding of Christ.<sup>307</sup> This connects with Dunn's vision of a multiplicity of Christologies interacting to provide the most complete picture of Jesus. Spirit Christologies aided in this endeavour by

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<sup>303</sup> Lampe, *God as Spirit*, 13.

<sup>304</sup> Cahill devoted the fifth chapter of her book to an examination of the role that Spirit plays in salvation, justice- and peace-making, including an overview of Spirit Christologies, in Cahill, *Global Justice*. Karkkainen devoted chapter eight to an examination of the interplay between Logos and Spirit Christologies, in Karkkainen, *Christ and Reconciliation*.

<sup>305</sup> Cahill, *Global Justice*, 381.

<sup>306</sup> *Ibid*, 131.

<sup>307</sup> James D.G. Dunn, *The Christ and the Spirit: Volume 2, Pneumatology* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 79.

providing an explanation of the manner of God's relationship with Jesus as one where the Spirit of God was present within Jesus.<sup>308</sup> These theologians, amongst others, provide a link between Liberal Quaker theology and Spirit Christology due to the shared insistence present in both traditions of the necessity of focusing on the lived experience of God.<sup>309</sup>

Spirit Christology has been critiqued for its failure to maintain the emphasis both from the Biblical text as well as in Christian tradition on the specific, and unique, work of the Incarnation in the work of salvation. Jurgen Moltmann dismisses Spirit Christology on these grounds, claiming that it reduced the One God to one homogeneous substance, and failed to differentiate Christ as a uniquely distinct hypostasis.<sup>310</sup> Most other critiques of Spirit Christology are more circumspect, acknowledging the significant benefits of granting the Spirit a greater role in the life of Christ while also expressing concern that Spirit Christologies over-emphasise the role of the Spirit in the salvific role of the Incarnation. Congar expressed such a guarded approval, outlining a close relationship between Spirit and Christ where Christ interacted with the world in fashion unique to the mediation of the Spirit. However, for Congar, the Spirit was only the mediator of Christ's grace, and not of Christ's relationship with humanity.<sup>311</sup>

Karkkainen advances a complementary approach, where the traditional, Incarnational Logos Christology approach to reconciliation is complemented by the Pneumatological focus of Spirit Christology. Karkkainen claims that the most complete perspective on reconciliation necessitates using both Christological approaches. However, he disagrees with some Spirit Christology adherents who seek to 'replace' Logos Christology as the primary Christological

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<sup>308</sup> James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit: A Study of the Charismatic Experience of Jesus and the First Christians as Reflected in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 92.

<sup>309</sup> Other notable, and recent, theologians working on Spirit Christologies include Roger Haight, Charles Pinnock, Elizabeth Johnson, Paul Newman, and Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza.

<sup>310</sup> Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, 17.

<sup>311</sup> Groppe, *Yves Congar's Theology*, 58.

approach.<sup>312</sup> Karkkainen details what he sees as the shortfalls of the traditional ‘Logos’ Christology, most especially its potential over-shadowing of the role of the Spirit in conveying the particularity of human experience of the Incarnation.<sup>313</sup> He also stresses that Spirit Christology is more reflective of the Biblical text, especially the emphasis on the human experience of Jesus.<sup>314</sup> Finally, he credits Spirit Christology with providing more effective tools for speaking to specific contexts, especially those dealing with placing the experience of minority and oppressed voices in the Church in a more central place within the wider Christian community.<sup>315</sup> Karkkainen is critical of Spirit Christology when it seeks to replace what he sees as the central role of Jesus in salvation with the Spirit, which he argues is the main intent of the Spirit Christologies of G.W.H. Lampe and Paul Newman.<sup>316</sup> As noted below, this is a common critique of Lampe, and of Spirit Christologies in general.

I am focusing on the progressive, Anglican vision of Spirit Christology presented by Lampe in his book, *God as Spirit*, as opposed to the multiple other visions discussed above. This is due to the importance placed on Lampe’s construction of God as Spirit by Janet Scott in her 1980 Swarthmore Lecture, and thus the importance for Quaker visions of the role that the Spirit plays on the life of God.<sup>317</sup> Lampe rooted his argument in a core conviction of the Christian life: that Christ is the ground for, the example of, and the source of inspiration for, Christians trusting and hoping in God.<sup>318</sup> His Christology, however, works to resolve what he understood as the loss of the Spirit in an effort to comprehend the Christ-event.<sup>319</sup> Lampe’s argument follows two

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<sup>312</sup> Karkkainen, *Christ and Reconciliation*, 320.

<sup>313</sup> *Ibid*, 206.

<sup>314</sup> *Ibid*, 66.

<sup>315</sup> *Ibid*, 209.

<sup>316</sup> *Ibid*, 203.

<sup>317</sup> Scott, *What Canst Thou Say?*, 58.

<sup>318</sup> Lampe, *God as Spirit*, 14.

<sup>319</sup> *Ibid*, 23.

interconnected tracks: that Spirit Christology explains salvation in a far more convincing manner than Logos Christology, and that the Spirit is lost as a truly separate hypostasis in the sharp division between the hypostases that is at the core of Logos Christology.<sup>320</sup> Lampe's explication of Spirit Christology is helpful for reconciliation theology in that it takes the role of the Spirit seriously while also offering a vision for theosis that is both Pneumatological and Christological.

Lampe located God and Spirit parallelism in the Old Testament, where the Spirit is 'God's external outreach towards man with that of his immanent activity with the human personality', energising humanity.<sup>321</sup> At several instances – Psalms 33:6, Job 34:14-15, and Judith 16:14, in particular – both Word (as the breath of God) and Spirit seem to be parallel, giving rise to what Lampe argued is the false ascription of Logos as second hypostasis.<sup>322</sup> For early Christians, to experience God as Spirit was the same as experiencing the presence of God.<sup>323</sup> They experienced a human whose will and mind were united with God's will to the extent of expressing the 'characteristics of divine activity', without diminishing Jesus' human freedom.<sup>324</sup> This union of 'red hot fire and iron' is best understood through the hermeneutic of Spirit Christology, Lampe argued, since that hermeneutic allows for a more complete human freedom than the bind that Logos Christology places between a Jesus who is God, yet is also completely human.<sup>325</sup> Lampe also argued that Paul limited future comprehension of the role of the Spirit by placing the Spirit in the false role of a second mediator of God's outreach to the world, as a 'present Christ', limiting the full creativity of the Spirit in God's work.<sup>326</sup> Lampe

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<sup>320</sup> Ibid, 114.

<sup>321</sup> Ibid, 47.

<sup>322</sup> Ibid, 47.

<sup>323</sup> Ibid, 62.

<sup>324</sup> Ibid, 12.

<sup>325</sup> Ibid, 46.

<sup>326</sup> Ibid, 118.

claimed that viewing God as ‘the Spirit, who was present and acting in Jesus’ – and who is present today – provided a more satisfactory explanation of the continuing presence of God.<sup>327</sup>

Lampe argued that Logos Christology necessitates a ‘fresh divine initiative, discontinuous with the gradual process of creation itself’ with the intervention of a redeemer from outside the creation to ‘rescue and restore the work of God as creator’.<sup>328</sup> This separation actually places a gulf between God and creation, and between the hypostases themselves.<sup>329</sup> There is little place for the Spirit in a ‘redeemer’ soteriology.<sup>330</sup> Spirit Christology presents a different view of soteriology, however, one that is focused on God's creative activity in making the creation whole through the action of theosis.<sup>331</sup> In theosis, Jesus is the decisive point, ‘the pattern and archetype of personal union’ between the Spirit and humanity, in a process of divine creativity that continues on past Jesus through the action of the Spirit.<sup>332</sup> The entire dyad is thus at work in the entire process of salvation.<sup>333</sup>

Spirit Christology has been criticised for its effects. For example, Moltmann claims that the admirable effort to express the force and power of the Spirit in the ministry of Jesus serves to limit Jesus, sacrificing Jesus’ unique place in the Trinity in order to present the unity of the One God.<sup>334</sup> Brian Hebblethwaite makes a similar claim in a sustained critique of Lampe, centring his argument around the linked contentions that Lampe’s ‘God as Spirit’ is attempting to be Christian Unitarianism. As one of the core doctrines of Christianity is Trinitarianism,

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<sup>327</sup> Ibid, 33.

<sup>328</sup> Ibid, 36.

<sup>329</sup> Ibid, 141.

<sup>330</sup> Ibid, 23.

<sup>331</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>332</sup> Ibid, 115.

<sup>333</sup> Ibid, 113.

<sup>334</sup> Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, 132.

Hebblethwaite argues, Lampe has in fact stepped outside of the bounds of Christian theology.<sup>335</sup> Hebblethwaite does not dismiss Lampe entirely, stating that his arguments are rather clear and carry significant spiritual insight.<sup>336</sup> Hebblethwaite states that the crux of his argument against Lampe's expression of Spirit Christology is that it simply fails to provide an adequate alternative to doctrinal Christian Trinitarianism.<sup>337</sup> Hebblethwaite contends that Lampe fails to make an effective argument about the necessity to apply the issues of economy and coherence in the specific manner that Lampe chooses to. This is an issue of theological method for Hebblethwaite.<sup>338</sup> He argues that whilst he finds Lampe's efforts to find the most economical, and coherent, explanation of the interplay between God, Jesus, and Spirit to be a necessary pursuit, any reformulation of doctrinal Trinitarianism bears the burden of proof.<sup>339</sup> Hebblethwaite argues that in his rush to simplify the mysterious nature of the Trinity, Lampe has actually thrown away the most important reason why the Trinity is an essential doctrine in the first place: that the inter-relationship of the Trinity is the expression of God's love, and Unitarianism thus dismisses the centrality of love in the divine order.<sup>340</sup>

I find these arguments unconvincing from the perspective of theologies of atonement and reconciliation on two levels. First, Lampe is not dismissing the existence of the Son so much as explaining how the separate expressions of God are in fact united in the love of the Spirit. Second, the relationality of God is expressed in the relationship between the Incarnation, the Spirit, and the incarnated creation, a fact that neither Lampe nor Hebblethwaite denies. This follows Dunn's defence of Lampe. Dunn cautioned against dismissing Lampe based on the

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<sup>335</sup> Brian Hebblethwaite, *The Incarnation: Collected Essays in Christology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 126.

<sup>336</sup> *Ibid*, 127.

<sup>337</sup> *Ibid*, 128.

<sup>338</sup> *Ibid*, 130.

<sup>339</sup> *Ibid*, 132.

<sup>340</sup> *Ibid*, 136.

bounds of orthodox Christological models. Dunn argued that theology should follow the example of the early Christians by sustaining a conversation amongst a variety of alternative Christologies, amongst which Spirit Christology would be as valid as any other.<sup>341</sup> Whilst I do not accept Lampe's argument in its entirety, I find it useful as a framework for comprehending the role of the Spirit.

#### **2.4.d Bonhoeffer's Vision of Interdependence**

This section explores the theology of divine/human interdependence developed by Dietrich Bonhoeffer in his early academic work, with a special focus on the inherent social nature of the human person. Bonhoeffer stresses that this social nature means that humans are created by God to be in relationship with each other, and with God. This reflects the overall argument of this thesis: that the reconciliation of relationship amongst humans, and between humans and God, is a fundamental necessity for human flourishing.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer spent the entirety of his early academic career developing frameworks for divine/human interdependence for Christian theology. To explain the concept of divine/human interdependence, Bonhoeffer borrowed the concept of 'I-Thou' from his fellow German – and Jewish – philosopher Martin Buber. The 'I-Thou' relationship stands in contrast to the 'I-It' relationship: where the first is a holistic relationship of mutualism between two beings share a connection to each other based around 'love', which means being for the other.<sup>342</sup> The 'I-It' relationship, by contrast, rejects the authentic, personal encounter between two existent

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<sup>341</sup> Dunn, *Pneumatology*, 79.

<sup>342</sup> Martin Buber, *I and Thou* (Edinburgh, UK: T & T Clark, 1987), 24-5. The Reformed theologian William A. Dyrness presents a similar argument, with a focus on God's love being demonstrated through God being 'for the other' of humanity through the embodiment of God in the Incarnation. William A. Dyrness, *The Earth is God's: A Theology of American Culture* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991).

beings, and instead has the two beings treat each other as objects to be used, degrading the true dialogic encounter of 'I-Thou' into a monologue with the self. The relationship between the complete human that is 'I' and the complete human that is 'thou' can only exist if both rest in a state of being truly real. If either fails to be this, then they simply become an object, an it, that exists simply to hold whatever meaning someone desires to ascribe to it. Bonhoeffer calls this state of being an 'open-I', where the 'I' is actually not a consistent being, and is not rooted in anything stable or meaningful.<sup>343</sup> The 'closed-I', on the other hand, is actually the more integrated, interdependent person. The person is whole, and can interact with the other without completely losing the self in the process. The 'closed-I' is also more able to see God, both in themselves and in the other, for as they see themselves, and are integrated in themselves, they can see God in themselves.<sup>344</sup> As they do not have any fear of the other, they can also see God in the other. It is through the web of relationships between integrated persons that the collective person, and thus the collective God, exists.<sup>345</sup>

Josiah Young, III states that as an individual finds satisfaction in being a 'closed I', the more of an openness is realised to others. He asserts that when talking about 'closed I', Bonhoeffer is referring to those individuals with awareness of their 'undeniable integrities of their unique personhoods'.<sup>346</sup> Young's understanding of Bonhoeffer's views is that the 'closedness and openness' are seen as the 'collective person', which is only realised where there

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<sup>343</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *A Testament to Freedom*, ed. Geoffrey B. Kelly and E. Barton Nelson (New York: HarperOne Publishers, 1995), 68.

<sup>344</sup> *Ibid*, 69.

<sup>345</sup> *Ibid*, 62.

<sup>346</sup> Josiah Young III, *No Difference in the Fare* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1998), 62.



are individual persons.<sup>347</sup> The 'collective person' and the 'collective God' are, thus, interdependent.<sup>348</sup>

Bonhoeffer presents a vision of individual humans as social beings who are actually composed of three parts, or 'elements': God, person, and community, which Bonhoeffer refers to as the 'basic ontic relations of social being as a whole'. As social beings, therefore, humans cannot exist without those three elements, nor 'outside' of them. It is in relation to persons and personal community that the concept of God is formed.<sup>349</sup> One cannot speak of God without implying community as well as person, for neither community nor person exists without God, or without each other. Each person is therefore inextricably linked with both God and with every other person, for while God's existence is not dependent on community or persons, the individual person cannot really be said to exist without relation to her community or to God. The community lives within the person, and the person within the community, with Jesus Christ as the force which gives it purpose and meaning.

Bonhoeffer takes this a step further, however. As person cannot exist without God or community, nor can community exist without person and God, then the Church is crucial in some sense for Jesus as well. As Bonhoeffer claims, 'the social significance of Christ is decisive...He is only present in the Church, that is, where the Christian community is united for brotherly-sisterly love through preaching and the Lord's supper'.<sup>350</sup> Bonhoeffer presents here the classic Protestant 'marks of the Church', as defined by John Calvin: preaching of the Word of

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<sup>347</sup> Ibid, 63.

<sup>348</sup> Min, 'Solidarity of Others in the Power of the Holy Spirit', 419. Min offers a definition of interdependence: 'Interdependence ironically intensifies the struggle for liberation and competition, often pitting the oppressed against one another. On the other hand, interdependence also offers the challenge of living together with Others by together creating common conditions of living with dignity and meaning. Interdependence does not simply juxtapose or place diverse peoples side by side in blissful indifference to one another. It brings them into common political space where, like it or not, they have to find a way of living together'.

<sup>349</sup> Young, *No Difference in the Fare*, 53.

<sup>350</sup> Bonhoeffer, *A Testament to Freedom*, 57.

God and the proper administration of the sacraments. According to Bonhoeffer, the daily life and practice of the church are essential for Jesus to be present, and for humans to be able to 'see' and recognize God and God's work. Bonhoeffer is stating here that God can only be experienced in a communal way, through the daily interactions of individuals in community, worshipping God.

This framework of interdependence sets the paradigm for the existence of creation, therefore, where creation is interdependent with itself. This can only occur due to the communal nature of the creation, where through the Incarnation of Christ, all of humanity is created to be interdependent upon both God and on other humans. Both Christ and the Holy Spirit are active in bringing humanity into a full experience of the life of God. This occurs through a process of theosis, where the transcendent God immanently interpenetrates the entirety of creation, sanctifying it. The Spirit acts in concert with Christ, unifying all pieces of the sanctified creation into one, holy, communal person. The forces of division and difference examined in this chapter act violently, by undermining the interdependence of the divine/human and human/human relationship, and thus undermining the fabric of existence. Reconciliation theology insists that the Divine is continuously acting to repair the damage caused by the forces of violence and to thus re-assert the fundamental interdependence of all existence. Reconciliation theology posits a vision of the human person that is communal, where through these actions and being of God, each individual human is already reconciled to both God and other humans. The work of reconciliation is therefore both an act of human awareness, where humans live into their ontological reconciliation through a life of reconciling acts and mindset, as well as a divine act, where God bridges the divine/human divide through the interpenetration of the Divine throughout the entirety of the creation.

#### 2.4.e *Ubuntu* and the Interdependent God

This section explores the concept of divine/human interdependence, with a special focus on the *Ubuntu* theology of Desmond Tutu, a prominent liberation reconciliation theology. *Ubuntu* addresses many of the concerns of non-violent reconciliation theology, with a communal, interdependent ontology which reflects the communal, interdependent ontology of Liberal Quaker theology which I explore in chapter three. As such, I focus on *Ubuntu* here to demonstrate links between reconciliation theology and Liberal Quaker theology.

Tutu defines *Ubuntu* as a Southern African concept related to human interdependence: ‘a person is a person through other person’.<sup>351</sup> It is a common humanity which binds all persons together, where human survival, and happiness, are both dependent on being in relationship with others.<sup>352</sup> Tutu states that *Ubuntu* is a strong weapon against apartheid for it claims that no person is a non-entity, a complete rejection of the apartheid construct of the non-white non-person.<sup>353</sup>

*Ubuntu* is a difficult word to translate into English, mainly due to the differences in the foundational presumptions about the meaning of ‘personhood’ between English and Bantu, the Sub-Saharan language group from whence *Ubuntu* derives. *Ubuntu* is a complex construction that is rooted in the ontology of the languages commonly classed as ‘Bantu’, where ‘personhood’ cannot exist outside of its contextual relationship to others.<sup>354</sup> The root *-ntu* means both ‘human

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<sup>351</sup> Desmond Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness* (New York: Image Books, 2000), 35.

<sup>352</sup> Desmond Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God: The Making of a Peaceful Revolution* (New York: Image Books, 1994), 121.

<sup>353</sup> *Ibid*, 117.

<sup>354</sup> Michael Battle, *Ubuntu: I in You and You in Me* (New York: Seabury Books, 2009), 4.

being' and the 'being' of God, emphasising a relationship between the Divine and the human.<sup>355</sup>

Tutu has sought to find a common linkage amongst African and liberationist theologies, emphasising the relational imperative of reconciliation: that no person is completely human unless all are free to express their complete humanity.<sup>356</sup> Racism is sin, as it creates false hierarchies based on physical characteristics, amongst people who were all equally created in the image of an egalitarian God.<sup>357</sup> Tutu extends this critique to black theology, arguing that the ecumenical Bible presents an image of Jesus as liberator of all oppressed peoples, including black people.<sup>358</sup> Tutu calls for *Ubuntu*: a vision of radical human equality in interdependent relationship with an active, present God.<sup>359</sup> This is in contrast to what Tutu views as the particularist, divisive approach of the liberation theologies of many oppressed communities.<sup>360</sup>

Battle is an Episcopal priest who has become a key apologist of Tutu's work. In his definition of *Ubuntu*, Battle explains that in Sub-Saharan spirituality God's being and human beings are directly related.<sup>361</sup> Due to this, *Ubuntu* has a theological understanding of knowing all beings through the category of personhood.<sup>362</sup> He goes on to explain that the word expresses the idea that the humanity of an individual is best expressed in relationships with others; 'A person depends on other persons to be a person'.<sup>363</sup> Battle develops an understanding of the human person in *Ubuntu* where the human reflects the *imago dei* of God the Creator.<sup>364</sup> *Ubuntu* is thus

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<sup>355</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>356</sup> Battle, *Reconciliation*, 124.

<sup>357</sup> Ibid, 126.

<sup>358</sup> Ibid, 147.

<sup>359</sup> Ibid, 151.

<sup>360</sup> Ibid, 150.

<sup>361</sup> Battle, *Ubuntu*, 2-3.

<sup>362</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>363</sup> Ibid.

<sup>364</sup> Battle, *Reconciliation*, 144.

the interdependence of persons for the exercise, development, and fulfilment of their potential to be both individual and community.<sup>365</sup>

*Ubuntu* theology emphasises universal interconnection between the creation and a God who is both immanent and transcendent. In *Ubuntu* theology, God bridges these paradoxical states of being through a radical, communal interdependence.<sup>366</sup> *Ubuntu* theology is thus rooted in an understanding of God as collective, where human persons are woven together in an interdependent 'collective person' through the presence of God in each individual human. As a theology informed by both black theology and social justice theologies of the twentieth century, *Ubuntu* theology echoes Martin Luther King, Jr.'s expression of interdependence where he argued that no human being can be what they ought to be until their fellow humans are what they ought to be.<sup>367</sup> The fulfilment of an individual's potential is reliant upon the mutual fulfilment of the potential of the rest of creation, linking every individual with the rest of humanity through the presence of God.<sup>368</sup> This also reflects Howard Thurman's insistence that integration exists at the divine level without the necessity of human interaction, yet human interaction is necessary in order for humans to achieve integration within ourselves.<sup>369</sup>

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<sup>365</sup> Battle, *Ubuntu*, 52.

<sup>366</sup> Besides Tutu, Battle is the main scholar of *Ubuntu* theology, yet theology is by no means the only field in which *Ubuntu* is being used as a philosophical construct. *Ubuntu* has been applied to computer science (*Ubuntu* is an open source computer operating system-so named due to the cooperative nature of the open source model of software design), restorative justice concepts, African philosophy, political theory, foreign policy, as well as political reconciliation. The concept of *Ubuntu* underpinned much of the thought around the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in South Africa, and has become a common term used in South African public discourse to describe the approach and goals of the ongoing reconciliation project in South Africa. Luke Lingilo Pato contends that Tutu can be seen to reside within an African tradition of using *Ubuntu* as a theological construct, including John Mbiti from Kenya, Charles Nyamiti from Tanzania, Kwesi Dickson from Ghana, and Gabriel Setiloane from South Africa. Luke Lungile Pato, 'African Theologies', in *Doing Theology in Context: South African Perspectives*, eds. John W. de Gruchy and Charles Villa-Vicencio, 152-161 (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994), 156.

<sup>367</sup> Hunt, 'The Search for Peaceful Community', 214.

<sup>368</sup> *Ibid*, 214.

<sup>369</sup> Thurman, *Jesus and the Disinherited*, 89.

### *Communalism in Ubuntu*

Battle argues that the interdependence of *Ubuntu* is a rejection of the dominance model of human relationship inherent in Western individualism and the capitalistic economic system. Battle stresses that for Western Christians the loss of communalism as a counter-balance has permitted individualism to run rampant, and has created the situation where the human person becomes a commodified self, existing simply to serve the economic needs of the competitive market.<sup>370</sup> This commodification, for Battle, has created an ontology of the human person that is wholly dependent on the static qualities of rationality and will, ignoring the potential for mystery, irrationality, and indeterminacy to be present in ontologies of the human person. Battle contends, therefore, that the objectified, rational self is the apex of value.<sup>371</sup> This logical leap permits Western society to interpret the divine blessing of Genesis 1:28 as subduing, controlling and using the earth, as opposed to acting as God's steward, responsible for caring for the earth.<sup>372</sup>

*Ubuntu* theology also opens space for South Africans to reclaim the African vision of a harmony between the individual and the community, without falling to what some theologians consider the extreme anti-individualism of some expressions of African theology.<sup>373</sup> Allen Boesak argues that the communal self is held in such high regard in the African tradition that separation from the community can be viewed as akin to a form of metaphysical death even worse than physical death. This death occurs when others refuse to recognize a person's 'human-

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<sup>370</sup> Michael Battle, *Blessed are the Peacemakers: A Christian Spirituality of Nonviolence* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2004), 216.

<sup>371</sup> Battle, *Ubuntu*, 39.

<sup>372</sup> *Ibid*, 23.

<sup>373</sup> *Ibid*, 36. For the remainder of this section, I will refer to *Ubuntu* theology as simply *Ubuntu*, as the work of Tutu and Battle has appropriated the African philosophical concept of *Ubuntu* into a complete theological vision.

beingness', and thus cause rifts in the wholeness, or balanced health, of a person's life.<sup>374</sup> Okechukwu Ogbannaya claims that while African conceptions of communality do not conceive of any form of human existence disassociated from the communal unit, they also reject the Western construct that physical death severs the connection between the person and the community.<sup>375</sup> This is a double-edged reality, therefore; if a person is never without family and community, they are ontologically bound to identification with a specific communal reality.

*Ubuntu* is also an alternative to vengeance and retributive justice due to its insistence on recognising the impact that each act will have on the person; thus, retribution will hurt both the punished and the punisher.<sup>376</sup> Theo Sundermeier suggests that African communal identity is also a rejection of competitive individuality: while a key aspect of Western capitalism, it is also contrary to God's desire for interdependence.<sup>377</sup> Battle suggests that Tutu is well aware of the opposite challenge: of the community overpowering the individual and stripping her of her uniqueness.<sup>378</sup> The solution to this is found, again, in the emphasis on the *imago dei* in individual humans.<sup>379</sup> *Ubuntu* stresses, therefore, that the individual human cannot be separated from their community, and cannot compose an ethical system or moral framework without taking into account the impact of their choices on others. Yet, the community does not define the person, nor can it decide to stop acknowledging the inherent person-hood of the person as a form of exile.<sup>380</sup>

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<sup>374</sup> Boesak, *Black and Reformed*, 51.

<sup>375</sup> A. Okechukwu Ogbannaya, *On Communitarian Divinity: An African Interpretation of the Trinity* (St. Paul, MN: Paragon House, 1998), 4.

<sup>376</sup> Battle, *Reconciliation*, 44.

<sup>377</sup> Theo Sundermeier, *The Individual and Community in African Traditional Religions* (Hamburg, Germany: Lit Verlag, 1998), 176.

<sup>378</sup> Battle, *Reconciliation*, 145.

<sup>379</sup> *Ibid*, 42.

<sup>380</sup> Boesak, *Black and Reformed*, 51.

Battle argues that this interdependence is a rejection of Western dualisms, particularly the dualism of the ‘wholly other’ God and a sinful, broken humanity.<sup>381</sup> *Ubuntu* views the entire creation through the lens of the *imago dei* where God is the creator and sustainer of all of creation.<sup>382</sup> As God made it in God’s image, the creation must reflect the image of God. In this way, *Ubuntu* melds the diverse interconnectivity of humanity with the diverse interconnectivity of the divine Trinity. The result is a human identity where each unique, finite human is interconnected with all of humanity, as well as with the infinite Divine.<sup>383</sup> This interconnectivity is truly interdependent, as humans possess an innate desire that can only be fulfilled by human community coupled a deep relationship with the Divine.<sup>384</sup>

Living with *Ubuntu* requires that not only that one see the *imago dei* present in the other person, but act as if that other person *is* the *imago dei*.<sup>385</sup> This level of social harmony and communal fellow-feeling demands high levels of empathy, forgiveness and a willingness to continually see the innate human goodness in all people.<sup>386</sup> This last point is the key concept, for it states that *Ubuntu* theology denies the concept of absolute human depravity. Tutu stresses that reconciliation is only possible on the basis of restorative justice, which demands the highly positive *Ubuntu* understanding of human potential.<sup>387</sup> This ensures that *Ubuntu* celebrates and protects individual difference and uniqueness as a divine gift. *Ubuntu*, therefore, has much

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<sup>381</sup> Battle, *Ubuntu*, 53.

<sup>382</sup> Battle, *Reconciliation*, 4.

<sup>383</sup> Jean-Marc Ela, *African Cry* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1986), 90.

<sup>384</sup> Battle, *Reconciliation*, 5.

<sup>385</sup> *Ibid.* 5.

<sup>386</sup> Leebaw continues, relating how Tutu's vision of *Ubuntu* shaped the South African TRC: “Tutu would similarly associate the TRC with healing and forgiveness and he identified *Ubuntu* as the basis for restorative justice, defining both as involving a concern, 'with the healing of breaches' and 'restoration of imbalances.' Judge Madala argued that *Ubuntu* necessitates the recognition of the humanity of the perpetrator of even the most heinous offenses. Justice Mahomed wrote that *Ubuntu* expresses 'the ethos of an instinctive capacity of love towards one's fellow men...the joy and fulfillment involved in recognizing their innate humanity.' The judges further explained *Ubuntu* as connoting values of community, interdependence, reciprocity and, in the words of Judge Madala, a 'balancing of the interests of society against those of the individual.’” Leebaw, ‘Legitimation or Judgment?’, 40.

<sup>387</sup> Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, 54-5.



common cause with the human rights movement, with the key difference that *Ubuntu* stresses human diversity as a divine gift for the purpose of serving the entire community of the creation, and not as a good in and of itself.<sup>388</sup>

Interconnectedness builds upon first seeing the good in others, leading to seeing God in all of creation. This involves acknowledging that whilst persons may exist whose free will is so twisted that it has turned evil, they cannot disavow the good Spirit which resides within them.<sup>389</sup> Therefore, *Ubuntu* dismisses dualism.<sup>390</sup> In *Ubuntu* there is no gulf between the holy Divine and sinful creation as God is continually present, at all times and places, in the entirety of creation.<sup>391</sup>

Reflecting the concerns of reconciliation theology, in *Ubuntu* theology sin is separation from others. This separation involves a rejection of the unification that all humans experience with each other, in turn separating humans from God. Sin can be understood to deny the values which give shape and meaning to the community.<sup>392</sup> Sin is living according to one's own individual desires; loyal to self, as opposed to God.<sup>393</sup> God is communal, and as the creation reflects God, to sin is to deny one's place in the community of creation, and of God. This vision of sin does not seek to punish a fallen humanity. Instead, *Ubuntu* stresses that God desires reunion with the creation, bringing it into the divine life of the Trinity.<sup>394</sup>

### *Immanence and Transcendence in Ubuntu*

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<sup>388</sup> Ola Sigurdson, 'Is the Trinity a Practical Doctrine?', in *The Concept of God in Global Dialogue*, edited by Werner G. Jeanrond and Aasulv Lande (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005) 115–25, at 121. Sigurdson warns of the danger of making the Trinity into a democratic social program, because it would simply serve to continue the trend in Christian theology towards making God fit the dominant social paradigm.

<sup>389</sup> Corwyn Beals, 'Evil: The Presence of Absence', in *Good and Evil: Quaker Perspectives*, eds. Jackie Leach Scully and Pink Dandelion (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2007), 141.

<sup>390</sup> Battle, *Reconciliation*, 39.

<sup>391</sup> Battle, *Ubuntu*, 50.

<sup>392</sup> James H. Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990), 104.

<sup>393</sup> Cone, *A Black Theology*, 104.

<sup>394</sup> Battle, *Reconciliation*, 44.

*Ubuntu* theology views God as a transcendent reality, beyond all comprehension. Battle stresses that God does not require any revelation or evidence to demonstrate existence, as God is simply existence itself, the ontic core of reality.<sup>395</sup> God is neither bound to create in order to exist nor bound by human will. Dunn stresses this point from the perspective of the Holy Spirit, arguing that the Spirit will not be bound by any human construction or definition of how the Spirit should or should not act.<sup>396</sup> The liberty of action and will of the Holy Spirit extends to theosis, remaining transcendent even as it is inviting the human soul into its life.<sup>397</sup> The mystical tradition, as represented by the anonymous author of the book *The Cloud of Unknowing*, stresses this state of utter transcendence. The divine transcendence is immutable and must be accepted as it is, as it is beyond human reasoning.<sup>398</sup>

*Ubuntu* theology also stresses that God is continually immanent within Creation, present through all of the struggles of human existence.<sup>399</sup> This reflects Spirit theologians generally. D'Costa argues that God is made manifest in the fleshly bodies of humans, both Jesus' body as well as those of every single human that has ever existed.<sup>400</sup> Moltmann, however, claims that God's immanence within creation invites humans to engage in a reciprocal relationship with God, sharing in the divine love, as well as in a covenantal relationship rooted in the divine life.<sup>401</sup> For Moltmann, divine love is not the expression of a distant God. Instead, God loves as a means

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<sup>395</sup> Battle, *Blessed are the Peacemakers*, 113.

<sup>396</sup> 'There must be considerable liberty given to the Spirit...The religious person should neither expect any particular experience simply because it is unusual, nor suspect any particular experience simply because it is unusual; he or she must rather respect the whole range of spiritual experience as valid.' Dunn, *Pneumatology*, 54.

<sup>397</sup> Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, 89.

<sup>398</sup> 'For the perfect and unique Cause of all things must necessarily lack the possibility of comparison with the highest height, and be above all positing and negation. And his incomprehensible transcendence is incomprehensibly above all affirmation and denial.' *The Cloud of Unknowing* (New York: Penguin Books, 2001), 9.

<sup>399</sup> Lampe, *God as Spirit*, 208.

<sup>400</sup> D'Costa, *Sexing the Trinity*, 42.

<sup>401</sup> Jurgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God* (London: SCM Press, 1981), 3.

of crossing an impossible gap between humanity and God. God's ontic reality is a love which is immanent within a creation that God loves and suffers with.<sup>402</sup>

*Ubuntu* expresses the immanence of God through the human being. The human being is made in the image of God, and therefore is marked as *imago dei*. Humans are all the *imago dei*, and therefore see God in each other. Yet, as humans are only understood in relation to other persons, then *imago dei* is only understood in relation to others. Humans can only comprehend the acts of God in the world in relation to others. This viewpoint, incidentally, demonstrates the African roots of the African American Christian hermeneutic of personhood. Reflecting these roots, David Shannon states that 'the unity of the African American is with all humankind, both in creation and in redemption'.<sup>403</sup>

The immanent God is contextually immanent in particular people, in particular situations. Reconciliation theology shares many of the same emphases as black theology: the situational, contextual nature of theology,<sup>404</sup> the universal parenthood of God,<sup>405</sup> and the resultant ripple effects of every human action.<sup>406</sup> As opposed to black theology, however, *Ubuntu* theology stops short of adopting any secondary human characteristic, such as race or gender as its dominant hermeneutic.<sup>407</sup> Michael Battle stresses that constructing a method based on blackness in order to address traditional theology is inconsistent with the gospel. Tutu's promotion of the diversity of

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<sup>402</sup> Ibid, 151.

<sup>403</sup> David T. Shannon, 'An Ante-Bellum Sermon', in *Stony the Road We Trod: African American Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Cain Hope Felder (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1991), 98-126, at 101.

<sup>404</sup> Pityana, 'Black Theology', 174-5.

<sup>405</sup> Thomas Hoyt Jr., 'Interpreting Biblical Scholarship', in *Stony the Road We Trod: African American Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Cain Hope Felder (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1991), 17-39, at 33.

<sup>406</sup> Teresia M. Hinga, 'African Feminist Theologies, the Global Village, and the Imperative of Solidarity Across Borders: The Case of the Circle of Concerned Women Theologians', in *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 18, no. 1 (Spring, 2002), 79-86, at 85.

<sup>407</sup> Kelly Brown Douglas, *The Black Christ* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994), 109.

peoples through the character of the ‘baptized and faithful people of God’ is presented by Battle as a preferable approach.<sup>408</sup>

Establishing any secondary characteristic as normative would diminish the necessary stress on the one primary human characteristic of human as *imago dei*, creating another exclusive class. Reconciliation theology focuses on the paradox of the unique individual who is made uniquely to fit into the interconnected fabric of God’s creation.<sup>409</sup>

*Ubuntu* is indebted to both Anglican and Orthodox theology, reflected in the deep significance that the Trinity plays in the *Ubuntu* vision of God, as well as the influence that Eastern Orthodox theology played in Tutu’s Anglican theological training.<sup>410</sup> God, as Trinity, is a union of diverse persons which is both paradoxically different and in absolute and complete union in an indivisible Godhead.<sup>411</sup> The persons of the Trinity are inextricably related through love, where the Holy Spirit, the love that is God, is continually emptied from the Creator into the Son and back again. This kenotic reciprocity of emptying applies also to the creation.<sup>412</sup> *Ubuntu* uses an apophatic approach when examining the Trinity, saying little about the inter-relationship of the Trinity beyond the impact that the interdependent Trinity has on the creation.

### ***Congruence with Liberal Quaker Theology***

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<sup>408</sup> Battle, *Reconciliation*, 147.

<sup>409</sup> Battle, *Ubuntu*, 53.

<sup>410</sup> Charles Villa-Vicencio, ‘Christianity and Human Rights’, in *Journal of Law and Religion* 14, no. 2 (1999-2000), 579-600, at 593.

<sup>411</sup> Sigurdson, ‘Is the Trinity a Practical Doctrine?’ 122. Sigurdson continues: ‘The Trinity grants us a way of understanding non-contrastive difference as a theological reality, as an “original, harmonic difference.” Christian tradition should not see difference as a threat, for the “doctrine of the Trinity gives an alternative to agonistic difference”’.

<sup>412</sup> Battle, *Reconciliation*, 77.

*Ubuntu* theology has much similarity with the Liberal Quaker theological symbolism of divine/human interdependence. I examine this symbolism in both specifically Christian terms as well as in the Universalist metaphorical language of Light in depth in chapter three. Liberal Quaker Christology uses the metaphor of an interdependent divine presence within all of humanity known as the Light, ‘the Light Within’, the ‘Inward Light’, and the ‘Light of Christ’, amongst other names. The Light is an ambiguous construct, which can effectively be translated into whatever construct of the Divine held by the individual person. The ambiguity of the idea of the Light, in the one specific instance of finding a common language amongst divergent models of an interdependent Christ, is in fact a strength. The Light is a highly flexible concept that addresses both the individual and the interdependence of God, the creation, and humanity. The attendant theory, ‘That of God in Every Person’, also demonstrates universal and individual elements. The Light addresses the concept of otherness, as well as acting as an effective metaphor for explaining the mystical, interdependent God. I contend that the symbolic language of theologies of divine/human interdependence are more likely to be translatable to Liberal Quaker symbols and metaphors of an experienced interdependence between humans and the Divine, and are thus more helpful for the project of this thesis: to bring Liberal Quaker theological language into dialogue with the wider Christian tradition, and theologies of atonement and reconciliation.

#### **2.4.f Section Summary**

In this section, I examined the metaphor of interdependence in relation to human/divine, and divine/divine relationship, as a way of exploring the means by which the Son and Spirit

interact together to achieve the reconciliation. I placed special focus on the role of the Spirit in this process, laying groundwork for connecting the Spirit with theologies of interdependence in Liberal Quaker theology in chapter three. I argued that emphasising Pneumatology can bridge the gaps between strictly Christocentric interdependence theologies and the Universalist interdependence theology of the Light.

## 2.5 A Spirituality of Reconciliation<sup>413</sup>

As stated above, reconciliation theology makes the bold claim that God desires union with humanity, and that human ‘meaning’ and purpose stem from this union. I argue that God interpenetrates all of creation as Spirit, breathing over creation and animating all of existence. This reflects Sallie McFague’s claim that the Spirit resides within humanity, and connects humanity to all of creation through the presence of God.<sup>414</sup> This also reflects the Christian mystical tradition’s stress that the Spirit can only be comprehended in outline. When faced with the task of explaining the inter-relationship of the Trinity, Augustine was left without any words to use to describe the paradox of three in one.<sup>415</sup> He was eventually forced to use words that did

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<sup>413</sup> Portions of this section are adapted from my unpublished M.Phil thesis. Daniel Randazzo, ‘The Cloud of the Spirit: A Communitarian Ontology for Reconciliation Theology’, Master’s thesis, University of Dublin, 2010, 68-71.

<sup>414</sup> McFague envisions the entire universe, in particular the Earth, as God’s body. As she explains, ‘There is one obvious advantage to this model [the Body of God]: it allows us to think of God as immanent in our world while retaining, indeed, magnifying God’s transcendence. The model of the universe as God’s body unites immanence and transcendence. At once a powerful image of divine immanence, for everyone and everything becomes potentially a sacrament of God, it is also, through perhaps not as obviously, an image of divine transcendence.’ Sallie McFague, *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993), 20.

<sup>415</sup> Sigurdson, ‘Is the Trinity a Practical Doctrine?’, 120.

not express his complete meaning in order to avoid being reduced to complete silence on the issue.<sup>416</sup>

Meister Eckhart chose to permit the absolute paradox to remain in his description of the presence of the Divine in the soul, stating that ‘there is in the soul something which is above the soul, divine, simple, a pure nothing’.<sup>417</sup> This is a paradox of material immateriality, where the Divine can be a definable something, in the ‘something’ of the soul, yet also be pure nothingness. Faced with the abyss of the nothingness of God, Eckhart acknowledged that God may not ever be, in any definitive way, comprehensible in this life.<sup>418</sup> This is not entirely due to God's transcendence, although that plays a role. Eckhart claims that God may actually draw us to God with the promise of finding rest for the mind in the truth that only God can reveal. God will keep withdrawing away from the seeker, however, always remaining just out of reach, in order to stir up our enthusiasm for God.<sup>419</sup>

I contend that the interdependent Holy Spirit is a mystical reality. As such, the reality of the Spirit exists beyond common sense perception. It is a divine reality, and is paradoxical. It gathers the entire material world into union, yet is immaterial. This reflects much of the mystical tradition. Matthew Fox states that the mystical union between the world and the Spirit brings the immaterial Spirit into close relationship with the material world, without having the material diminish the immaterial.<sup>420</sup> Notto Thelle explains God's mystical reality in the language of God's essence and God's ‘energies’, where God's essence is transcendent, and thus beyond

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<sup>416</sup> Ibid, 120.

<sup>417</sup> F.C. Happold, *Mysticism: A Study and an Anthropology* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1970), 49.

<sup>418</sup> Rowan Williams, *The Wound of Knowledge: Christian Spirituality from the New Testament to Saint John of the Cross* (Cambridge, MA: Cowley Publications, 1990), 141.

<sup>419</sup> Ibid, 142.

<sup>420</sup> Matthew Fox, *A Spirituality Named Compassion: And the Healing of the Global Village, Humpty Dumpty, and Us* (San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco, 1990), 51. Fox says that the classical term for this omnipresence of God wherein God is in all and all is in God, is panentheism.

comprehension, whilst God's energies are present in God's actions. God's essence is the energy of creation.<sup>421</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer claimed that creation only exists because God's existence permeates it, and through the diverse unity of the Triune God, changing creation into the very image of Christ.<sup>422</sup> Delio contends that this mystical reality of divine permeation by the Holy Spirit is perhaps best defined as an endless ocean of love that is a community united to one another, and a mutual in-dwelling in the justice that is love.<sup>423</sup>

I argue that God constantly desires human engagement. According to Min, the ontic reality of the Spirit is relationship, both with the other hypostases of the Trinity as well as with humanity.<sup>424</sup> Thurman reminds us that for both God and humanity, this relationship brings joy, love, and strength only if humanity willingly engages in a truthful pursuit of interdependent relationship.<sup>425</sup> Min connects this interpenetrative relationship between the human and the Divine to reconciliation, stating that a true relationship leads to reconciliation on both the human/divine level, as well as on the human/human.<sup>426</sup> Human ontology is thus made complete, and whole, in the ontology of an interpenetrative Spirit.<sup>427</sup> Battle states that the communal ontology of God is meaningless without a corresponding spirituality of peacemaking and reconciliation, where blindness to the good in others will hamper union in the communal self.<sup>428</sup> As stated above, we can only become integrated individuals, with the attendant characteristics of power, control, and survival, when we rest in the peaceful, reconciled communal self.<sup>429</sup> Anthony Hunt suggests that

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<sup>421</sup> Notto R. Thelle, 'Relation, Awareness and Energy', in *The Concept of God in Global Dialogue*, eds. Werner G. Jeanrond and Aasulv Lande (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005), 48-62, at 58.

<sup>422</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2003), 287.

<sup>423</sup> Iliia Delio, *Clare of Assisi: A Heart Full of Love*. (Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2007), 5.

<sup>424</sup> Min, 'Solidarity of Others in the Power of the Holy Spirit', 417.

<sup>425</sup> Thurman, *Jesus and the Disinherited*, 109.

<sup>426</sup> Min, 'Solidarity of Others in the Power of the Holy Spirit', 417.

<sup>427</sup> Lampe, *God as Spirit*, 18.

<sup>428</sup> Battle, *Blessed are the Peacemakers*, 30.

<sup>429</sup> Min offers "solidarity" as an alternative construct to "communion." Min, 'Solidarity of Others in the Power of the Holy Spirit', 422.



our emotions and actions of division are actually counterproductive to our goals. He argues that the mystical consciousness required to become aware of the interconnectedness of God with the creation can only be developed in a community infused by a Pneumatological spirituality of peacemaking and reconciliation.<sup>430</sup>

Reflecting all of these concerns, I argue that a spirituality of reconciliation is Pneumatological, narrative, covenantal, hopeful, rooted in ‘place’, responsible, forgiving, and humble. I address each issue in turn.

A spirituality of reconciliation is *Pneumatological* because, as John Howard Yoder suggests, the community is embedded in the Spirit, and any rift in the community serves to divide the union of persons and Spirit in the Cloud. The work of the Spirit is integral to any effort at reconciliation.<sup>431</sup> This relates to the fact that a spirituality of reconciliation is also *panentheistic*. Panentheism deals with the fundamental paradox presented above: that God’s complete transcendence exists in relationship with God’s complete immanence.<sup>432</sup> The immanence and transcendence are neither aspects nor attributes of God; they are the very essence of God. Whilst this coexistence of two divergent constructs may appear a paradox, Phillip Clayton contends that it is this very paradox whose tension gives meaning to God’s panentheistic existence within creation.<sup>433</sup> He argues that God exists as the grounding of creation, that which the creation owes ontological dependence, for ‘no finite thing would exist...were it not for continuing divine concurrence’. This grounding comes with a necessary corollary: that the Spirit is embodied in the entirety of creation to such a full extent that the divine is ‘omni-present’

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<sup>430</sup> Hunt, ‘The Search for Peaceful Community’, 62.

<sup>431</sup> John Howard Yoder, *For the Nations: Essays Evangelical and Public* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1997), 232.

<sup>432</sup> Clayton, ‘In Whom We Have Our Being’, 197.

<sup>433</sup> *Ibid*, 196.

within every individual body of creation.<sup>434</sup> Clayton states that this actually creates a union between creation and Spirit, rejecting dualism.<sup>435</sup>

Through the interpenetration of the infinite, mysterious Spirit in the finite creation, God is made knowable to the creation, at least in part, allowing a human participation in the life of God on the level of human comprehension and time.<sup>436</sup> D'Costa reminds us that participation in the divine life does not entail actually becoming a divine hypostasis ourselves.<sup>437</sup> Lampe argued that panentheism necessitated a theotic soteriology, yet acknowledged that the 'perfection' inherent in theosis never removes human limitations.<sup>438</sup>

Aware of those limitations, Clayton has elucidated what he contends are the six themes of a panentheistic Pneumatology: 1) 'Spirit or person is the basic category, not substances', 2) 'the Spirit always involves relationships with an other', 3) 'Spirit always involves the notion of community', 4) 'Spirit is involved in constant change and response', 5) God is not separable from the world, yet the distinction between Creator and created is always maintained, and 6) this distinction is between perfect holiness and human imperfection.<sup>439</sup>

A *narrative* perspective understands all human life as communal, and all community as narrative. Narrative sees the self as a narrative, as embedded in the story of a community, which undergirds the self with a web of meaning.<sup>440</sup> A spirituality of narrative takes strength from the paradox of the interdependent God, finding in the Spirit a correlative and affirming narrative of

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<sup>434</sup> Ibid, 194.

<sup>435</sup> Ibid, 190.

<sup>436</sup> Ibid, 194.

<sup>437</sup> D'Costa, *Sexing the Trinity*, 29.

<sup>438</sup> Lampe, *God as Spirit*, 111.

<sup>439</sup> Clayton, 'In Whom We Have Our Being', 202-3.

<sup>440</sup> Stanley Hauerwas and William H. Willimon, *Resident Aliens: Life in the Christian Colony* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1989), 77.

diversity that reflects the diversity and confusion of human existence.<sup>441</sup> Stanley Hauerwas states that this diversity provides us with ‘skills appropriate to the conflicting loyalties and roles we necessarily confront in our existence’.<sup>442</sup> This diversity is also essential to the self, for the self can only be constructed from the building-blocks of communal life.<sup>443</sup>

Narrative is not only about the togetherness of human community, and the ties which bind it together. Instead, Hauerwas argues that by disciplining human wants to be in congruence with the true story of Jesus Christ, and by living into the story together as a community, humans gain the resources to lead truthful lives. Any togetherness gained in the community is a byproduct of living faithfully with the story of Jesus.<sup>444</sup> The main focus of narrative spirituality is on integrating the life of Christ into the life of the community, with togetherness and reconciliation deriving from being rooted in Christ, and through Christ, rooted as well in the Cloud.

A spirituality of reconciliation is *covenantal*, for all reconciliation is based upon God's promise of blessing and caring for the life of the community. Doug Gwyn explains that the covenant is God's unconditional promise to restore wholeness to the world. This promise is both unavoidable, as it is rooted in God's will; it is also conditional, however, for God's will must find its answer in the human will, which is conditional.<sup>445</sup> This paradox of conditionality continues the paradoxical nature of the interpenetrative union of God.

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<sup>441</sup> Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, 58.

<sup>442</sup> Stanley Hauerwas, *The Hauerwas Reader*, ed. John Berkman and Michael Cartwright (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 245.

<sup>443</sup> Hauerwas and Willimon, *Resident Aliens*, 78.

<sup>444</sup> *Ibid*, 78.

<sup>445</sup> Douglas Gwyn, *The Covenant Crucified: Quakers and the Rise of Capitalism* (London: Quaker Books, 2006), 8.

God promises *shalom* for the entire creation.<sup>446</sup> Community occurs through the harmony and peace of God, and is healed through the reconciling presence of God in the creation.<sup>447</sup> Covenant is the promise of God to maintain relationship with humanity. Gwyn contends that the fullness of this covenant can only be experienced when humanity is completely committed to relationship with God.<sup>448</sup> Covenant is integral to reconciliation for it gives humanity the *hope* for the future. Hope gives humanity a reason to remain patient, and thus, the strength to continue seeking unity with God through reconciled community.<sup>449</sup>

A spirituality of reconciliation is *rooted in 'place'* in that as all relationships occur in the place of the community, reconciliation between divided people must occur in the context of a 'place'. Place has contextual meaning, and is thus narrative. David Stevens even suggests that reconciliation is itself a 'place', where, in the words of Psalm 85:10, the necessary materials for communal relationship all meet: mercy, justice, righteousness, and peace. The interplay between these four core aspects of communal life is reconciliation.<sup>450</sup>

William Schweiker suggests that reconciliation is *responsible* for it takes responsibility for ensuring that justice, peace, breaking cycles of violence, and ending poverty are realities for all of creation in the Cloud of the Spirit, both in the present and for all future generations.<sup>451</sup> Reconciliation is thus also political, seriously engaging in the active pursuit of social change.

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<sup>446</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>447</sup> Lampe, *God as Spirit*, 177.

<sup>448</sup> Gwyn, *The Covenant Crucified*, 8

<sup>449</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>450</sup> David Stevens, *The Land of Unlikeness: Explorations into Reconciliation* (Dublin, Ireland: Columba Press, 2004), 31.

<sup>451</sup> William Schweiker, 'A Preface to Ethics: Global Dynamics and the Integrity of Life', in *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 32, no. 1 (Spring, 2004), 13-37, at 32.

This sense of a political responsibility is based on the claim that all of life is good, with the attendant demand that life is respected and given the opportunity to thrive.<sup>452</sup>

Reconciliation is *forgiving* since forgiveness is the only way to open the way for the Spirit to heal the broken relationships in the community. Robert Schreiter stresses that forgiveness is essential, and has its roots in Christ. Reconciliation cannot occur through purely human effort, therefore. It is rooted in a willingness to overcome enmity and suffering through allowing God's mercy to fill our hearts.<sup>453</sup> Forgiveness is one of the actions of the interdependent God, for it seeks to reintegrate the unique individual while also reconciling the victim and the offender.

A spirituality of reconciliation must be *humble*, for only by approaching reconciliation with humility will we have the perspective necessary to ask the Spirit to guide us to seek forgiveness, and to grant it, for the good of the community of God.<sup>454</sup> This humble perspective opens people to accept responsibility for each other, and for the opportunity presented in humble forgiveness. Yoder speaks of this process as one of 'binding and loosing', reflecting the communal process of reconciliation described in Matthew 18:15-18. This implies that we have a responsibility for each of us to hold the other in the community accountable to the commitment that we each have made to the community, including the commitment to abide by the standards of the community. This process is not in any way designed to punish, exclude or alienate, but as Yoder describes it, the intention of the procedure is reconciliation. The personal nature of this exchange brings about the confirmation, or even modification, of the rules of the community. Yoder states that the 'binding and loosing' of Matthew 18 'has something to say to the way we

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<sup>452</sup> Min, 'Solidarity of Others in the Power of the Holy Spirit', 438.

<sup>453</sup> Schreiter, *Reconciliation*, 43.

<sup>454</sup> Ilia Delio, *Franciscan Prayer* (Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2004), 117.

think today about decision-making in the context of faith'.<sup>455</sup> Human lives thus have communal significance and consequence, as well as communal support and succor.

In this section, I posited a spirituality of reconciliation, reflecting the main themes I examined in this chapter. The components of this spirituality include: Pneumatology, narrative, covenant, hope, a sense of 'placeness', responsibility, forgiveness, and humility.

## **2.7 Chapter Summary**

This chapter outlined a number of different theological responses to the situation of human division and ethnic conflict. These various responses flow from an underlying hamartiology of human division which claims that conflict and division are sins due to a theological anthropology of divine-human interdependence. I also examined the metaphor of interdependence in relation to human/divine, and divine/divine relationship, as a way of exploring the means by which the Son and Spirit interact together to develop relationships of interdependence. I placed special focus on the role of the Spirit in this process, laying groundwork for connecting the Spirit with theologies of interdependence in Liberal Quaker theology in chapter three.

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<sup>455</sup> John Howard Yoder, *The Priestly Kingdom: Social Ethics as Gospel* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 27.

### **Chapter 3** **Liberal Quaker Theologies of Interdependence and Division**

#### **3.1 Chapter Introduction**

The experience of God is the primary basis for any Liberal Quaker theological construct. Primary does not mean exclusive, however, a distinction that multiple Liberal Quakers have made sure to parse. The experiential nature of Liberal Quaker theological development can often lead to a significant variety in the level of adherence to Christian theological statements on the individual level. As discussed in chapter two, theologies of atonement and reconciliation present a vision of an interdependent God who brings healing to the division in the human community, and the conflicts which result. Liberal Quakers have similar visions of an interdependent God who seeks to unify and heal humanity, as this chapter demonstrates; this correspondence between Liberal Quaker and theologies of atonement and reconciliation opens an avenue for dialogue between their visions of hamartiology, the Divine, and theological anthropology.

In this chapter, I examine the Liberal Quaker theology of sin and evil, which is marked by diversity of perspectives on the nature of good and evil and the definition of ‘sin’. Alongside this diversity is a generally shared vision of the human response to evil and sin: humans are inherently ‘good’ due to an interdependent union with the Divine, which if developed, can move towards a form of ‘perfection’. This is similar to the interdependence theologies described in chapter two. Evil is thus not inherent in the human person and must be fought as a foreign element to the rightful order of creation.

This theological perspective is a demonstration of the hybridity in Liberal Quaker theology between ‘continuing revelation’ and a respect for historic Quaker theology. Underlying this dialogue is the aforementioned human goodness and the role that the Inner Light plays in creating, and transforming, human goodness. I argue that the interdependence of Liberal Quaker theological anthropology leads to a uniquely Quaker understanding of harmony amongst people. This harmony can counteract the sinful structures of division and violence which lie at the heart of the network of ‘othering’ described in chapter two. I argue that Liberal Quaker theologies of sin and interdependence therefore comprise a native Liberal Quaker theology of atonement and reconciliation.

Admittedly, the diversity of approaches to these issues is due to the thematic breadth of the Swarthmore Lectures, coupled with the fact that they have been delivered annually since 1908. This wide scope could potentially hamper any effort to say anything meaningful about Liberal Quaker theology as a whole; yet, closer examination demonstrates that the lecturers not only approach similar questions, but also do so in similar fashions with an effort at dialogue with previous lecturers. This is especially true for Trinitarian theology. I argue that this diversity is actually valuable, for not only does it provide multiple points of dialogue with Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation, it also allows for a wide variety of new avenues of exploration with extant reconciliation theologies and the creation of new ones. I explore this question in greater detail in the examination of metaphorical theologies of the Light later in this chapter, when I examine areas of overlap with Universalist theologies of the Light.

Reflecting the framework established in chapter two, in this chapter I examine Liberal Quaker hamartologies of sin/evil, and theologies of divine/human interdependence. This includes developing a uniquely Liberal Quaker perspective on five areas: atonement theology,



hamartiology and division, Christology (including the Incarnation and the relationship between Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit), the metaphorical interdependence theology of the Light, and a Liberal Quaker eschatology and spirituality of reconciliation. This perspective emphasises the experience of God as the primary means of not only being in relationship with God, but also the primary means of structuring an epistemological framework through which to comprehend the nature and work of the Divine.<sup>1</sup>

### **3.2 Theologies of the Atonement**

Liberal Quakerism views the passion, crucifixion, death, and resurrection of Jesus – and any potential salvific consequences of these acts – through two different threads: an assertion of the drawing of humanity into full participation in the divine life effected by the crucifixion and a rejection of any salvific uniqueness of Jesus. This represents the twin strands of Christianity and Universalism within Liberal Quakerism. Swarthmore Lecturers have focused on both strands, yet without the same depth and attention given to the theological anthropology of Jesus.

The lecturers view the cross as an example of Jesus' obedience to God's desire to live a completely human life, including powerlessness before the powers and institutions of Earth. Several lecturers chose to emphasise that Jesus demonstrated the vulnerability of God. Hoyland

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<sup>1</sup> As I note in chapter one, when I use the term 'Liberal Quakerism', I am referring to Quakerism as it is understood and expressed in Britain Yearly Meeting and the Quaker context that Swarthmore Lecturers are responding to when they discuss theological and ethical categories and concepts. Related to this, 'Liberal Quaker theology' is the term used in this dissertation to refer to the theological categories and concepts which are rooted in the context of BYM. Swarthmore Lecturers do not often provide explanations for the theological terms that they use, which argues for a sense amongst Lecturers that each individual Lecturer assumes that the understanding they have of the terms is actually the common understanding of the meaning of these terms, categories, and concepts. This is an admittedly debatable point, especially in the diverse theological context of British Quakerism; however, for the sake of this dissertation, and as I am basing my work upon the understanding presented by the Swarthmore Lecturers, I will use the term 'Liberal Quaker theology' to refer to the tradition which the Swarthmore Lecturers assume when they refer to 'Quaker theology'.

addressed this concern through a careful argument where he vigorously rejected the inherent value of violence in the economy of salvation, while also arguing that the extreme nature of crucifixion demonstrated an essential aspect of God's love through Jesus' willingness to participate in such an act.<sup>2</sup> Hoyland then argued that the violence of the cross makes the philosophical constructs of Christian theology applicable to the pain and suffering endured by humanity on a constant basis.<sup>3</sup> The power of this example proves the necessity of the cross for Hoyland. This is not a defence of the necessity of violence, per se; rather, the necessity lies in presenting an example of God standing in solidarity along with the defenceless and oppressed.<sup>4</sup> Brinton made a similar argument, stating that the cross is the ultimate proof of God's self-abnegation and powerlessness. As opposed to viewing the guiding hand of God placing Jesus on the cross for the specific purpose of Jesus' suffering and death, Brinton argued that the humble acceptance of the cross demonstrates God's non-violence.<sup>5</sup>

Some lecturers emphasise the paradoxical power demonstrated by the voluntary sacrifice on the cross. Richards stated that while Jesus was completely obedient in his abnegation of power, his choice was still a completely free one.<sup>6</sup> He could have walked away before he was captured, yet he freely chose to live a complete human life.<sup>7</sup> Barnes makes a similar argument: through this demonstration of weakness, Jesus actually showed the true nature of power and what a strong man actually looks like.<sup>8</sup> Barnes suggested that Jesus demonstrates strength by

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<sup>2</sup> John Hoyland, *Light of Christ* (London: The Swarthmore Press, Ltd., 1928), 43.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 41.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 43.

<sup>5</sup> Howard H. Brinton, *Creative Worship* (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1931), 85.

<sup>6</sup> Leyton Richards, *Planning for Freedom* (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1943), 68.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 70.

<sup>8</sup> Kenneth Barnes, *The Creative Imagination* (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1960), 38.

defeating his temptations, including his temptation to flee that harried him while he was praying the Garden of Gethsemane.<sup>9</sup>

Other lecturers address the concepts of the Powers and the scapegoat. These are elements shared with theologies of atonement and reconciliation, as demonstrated in chapter two. Jocelyn Burnell examines the cross through the lens of the scapegoat mechanism.<sup>10</sup> She refers to the suffering servant motif of Isaiah, the theme that the Hebrew Bible uses to examine the manner through which God will deliver the Israelites.<sup>11</sup> Punshon argues that the cross is an example of spiritual warfare between God and the Powers of evil.<sup>12</sup> He stresses the necessity for Quakers to move beyond their aversion to envisioning God as a spiritual warrior. While Punshon acknowledges that the form of warfare demonstrated by the cross is not violent, it is forceful, and it takes the reality of evil seriously.<sup>13</sup> His argument has special resonance for the dialogue between Liberal Quaker theology and theologies of atonement and reconciliation, in that he places Liberal Quaker theology directly within the context of Christian hamartiology.

Hughes represented a strand within the lectures which emphasised the particularity of the cross and of Jesus. The cross, for Hughes, must be viewed through the lens of particularity, or else it faces becoming an abstraction without any social implications. Paradoxically, Hughes argues, the particularity of the cross welcomes all of humanity into the divine life through the sacrifice of the particular incarnate human.<sup>14</sup> The mystery of the Incarnation is that, through the

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 40.

<sup>10</sup> S. Jocelyn Burnell, *Broken for Life* (London: Quaker Home Service, 1989), 17.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 18.

<sup>12</sup> John Punshon, *Testimony and Tradition: Some Aspects of Quaker Spirituality* (London: Quaker Home Service, 1990), 83.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 87.

<sup>14</sup> Hughes, *The Light of Christ in a Pagan World*, 70.

bridge of Jesus, all of humanity was crucified through the suffering of the one particular human.<sup>15</sup>

Janet Scott is a notable exception. Scott devotes considerable attention to rejecting the particularity of Jesus. Scott suggests that the universal presence of God within humanity dictates against any necessity for a particular salvation event.<sup>16</sup> She thus finds the model of Jesus as saviour to be deficient, claiming that it is rooted in an inadequate concept of both God and humanity.<sup>17</sup> Scott explains this through the contrast between being saved ‘from’ something, as if God needs to rescue humanity from all pain, and being saved ‘to’ engage in a life lived in complete engagement with God, including living amidst the pain and suffering of the world in solidarity with the other.<sup>18</sup>

Though the lecturers express two different perspectives towards the relationship between the Cross and atonement theology – a rejection of any positive statements about violence in the life of God and an assertion of the drawing of humanity into full participation in the divine life effected by the entire series of events – these perspectives do not, in fact, conflict. Lecturers make the choice whether to emphasise one strand or to incorporate them together, depending on their perspective towards the Incarnation, and whatever overall point they are seeking to make. It should be noted that lecturers, and Liberal Quakerism in general, do not focus significant attention on developing an atonement theology. Lecturers who acknowledge that the cross had a role to play in the drama of Jesus seem willing to simply accept that there is, in fact, a connection. They are more interested in the implications of the connection, especially in terms of ethics. This approach would likely fall within the non-violent atonement branch of theologies of

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 68.

<sup>16</sup> Scott, *What Canst Thou Say?*, 41.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 48.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 44.

atonement and reconciliation and would provide an interesting dialogue between the Biblical theology of the non-violent atonement theorists and the experiential theology of Liberal Quakerism.

### 3.3 Hamartiologies of Division

Modern Liberal Quaker theology of good and evil places the divine presence within every human as its central tenet, with an attendant positive view of human goodness and performative understanding of evil as both systematic and acted.<sup>19</sup> This matrix of perfection – a free gift of union with the Divine that makes all people ‘good’ and that must be lived into – is the general understanding of Quaker visions of the human response to evil and sin for many Quaker theologians. The close union of God and humanity suggested by the theology of perfection leads, I contend, to a uniquely Quaker understanding of harmony amongst people as a response to the separation and segregation from the ‘Other’ that theologies of atonement and reconciliation argues is at the heart of conflict.

In this section, I develop a Liberal Quaker hamartiology, founded upon the correspondence between ‘sin’ and the structures of division which divide humans and render them incapable of developing their innate, God-given ‘goodness’, thus disrupting the human potential for interdependent harmony amongst humans and between humans and the Divine. I approach this from the perspective of addressing the nature of human ‘goodness’, the potential for ‘perfection’, and the ways that this potential is disrupted. I examine modern perspectives on

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<sup>19</sup> Margery Post Abbott, 'Mental Illness, Ignorance, or Sin? Perceptions of Modern Liberal Friends', in *Good and Evil: Quaker Perspectives*, eds. Jackie Leach Scully and Pink Dandelion (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2007), 83-96, at 94. Abbott is not a Swarthmore Lecturer. However, as her work is one of the rare attempts at developing a ‘systematic’ Liberal Quaker theology, her work provides an interesting counterpoint to the theology developed in the Swarthmore Lecturers.

sin in early Quaker theology in order to develop a sense of how modern Liberal Quakers understand the history of their theology. I examine the development of the Liberal Quaker understanding of human goodness, while recognising the spectrum of approaches. I then present a critique – from within Liberal Quaker theology – of this theology human ‘goodness’.

### **3.3.a Modern Quaker Perspectives on Sin in Early Quaker Theology**

The relationship between good and evil and the role of human agency in response are both perspectives rooted in Quaker history and experience. They are a direct relationship between the Divine and the human, and they are both a reflection of humanity’s capacity to decide how to deal with God’s gift of grace, as well as a marked emphasis on good and evil as acts both to be performed and participated in.<sup>20</sup> The continuous presence of a theology of perfection has been connected with these elements since their beginning as a movement.<sup>21</sup>

Perfection, in the sense of the early Quakers,<sup>22</sup> related to the charismatic gift of God becoming immanent within each person, filling the person with divine grace to the point where neither sin, nor the evil that caused it, could gain a foothold within the person’s soul.<sup>23</sup> Spencer argues that George Fox failed to develop a systematic theology of perfection, instead rooting it in the experiential mysticism of union with Christ. This union was comprehensive for Fox, uniting all of creation, as well as every individual human, to each other through their shared union with

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<sup>20</sup> Pink Dandelion, 'Introduction', in *Good and Evil: Quaker Perspectives*, eds. Jackie Leach Scully and Pink Dandelion (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2007), 3-14, at 14.

<sup>21</sup> Carole Dale Spencer, 'Early Quakers and Divine Liberation from the Universal Power of Sin', in *Good and Evil: Quaker Perspectives*, eds. Jackie Leach Scully and Pink Dandelion (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2007), 43-58, at 47.

<sup>22</sup> Friends often use the term ‘early Friends’ to refer to the first period of Quaker preaching, generally lasting around a decade (from 1647-1657) which was marked by a loose collection of people who preached a similar set of beliefs about the immediacy of God’s presence and the necessity to directly experience God in worship.

<sup>23</sup> Spencer, 'Early Quakers and Divine Liberation from the Universal Power of Sin', 45.

God.<sup>24</sup> Fox was not alone in this experience of union with God and its attendant perfection. Spencer quotes a passage from Edward Burrough (1634-1662), an early Quaker preacher, who states that people may be forgiven of their sins, be ‘freed from the body of sin and death’ and be made perfect through joining with the Body of Christ. Burrough adds that the person must also ‘press after perfection, and to overcome the Devil’. Burrough’s understanding of perfection, according to Spencer, is a paradoxical unearned gift from God that must be sought after and lived into through the actions of one’s life.<sup>25</sup>

Gwyn suggests, however, that the early Quaker approaches to sin, in particular the approach to Original Sin were multivalent.<sup>26</sup> He argues that George Fox did not accept any vision of sin that was passed through human generations. For Fox, God was an active presence in each human who chose to be convinced by the truth of Christ.<sup>27</sup> This would suggest that Fox did not accept predestination, as the universal presence of God amongst the believers would lead to a universal election for humanity. Gwyn argues that this does not preclude a human tendency to sin, however.<sup>28</sup> Gwyn's vision of Fox as apocalyptic preacher emphasises Fox's view that Satan was the root of all evil, and thus of all sin. Gwyn suggests that Fox caps Satan's power to ensnare humans to sin, however, claiming that humans can decide to accept God and thus free themselves from the bondage to sin. Gwyn contends that, according to Fox, humans were not inherently evil, nor was evil an eternal reality entirely separate from God.<sup>29</sup> While God's ontological reality was goodness, and can create goodness, evil was a temporally rooted denial of the goodness of God and would cease to exist once God ended time.

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 49.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 55.

<sup>26</sup> Douglas Gwyn, 'George Fox's Witness Regarding Good and Evil', in *Good and Evil: Quaker Perspectives*, eds. Jackie Leach Scully and Pink Dandelion (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2007), 31-42, at 38.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 33.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 38.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 41.

While perfection is still a central tenet of Quaker theology, the meaning of perfection has changed for modern Quakers, reflecting a movement away from Original Sin and towards a life where the Holy Spirit's presence in one's heart is visible in the entirety of one's life, especially one's actions.<sup>30</sup> This is reflected in the way that Fox's hamartiology impacted William Charles Braithwaite's understanding of sin, especially through Braithwaite's emphasis on human goodness and his silence on the role of Satan in evil. Braithwaite argued that the early Quakers rejected Calvinistic concepts of inescapable human depravity, instead acknowledging their experience of the Inward Light and the inner perfection that the divine Light granted them. Braithwaite viewed the perfection as a charismatic divine gift, or grace, that nonetheless necessitated a concomitant commitment to active improvement of the believer's form of life.<sup>31</sup>

Numerous other Swarthmore Lectures have expressed this two-prong theology of perfection. Yet, not all lecturers remain silent on the full implications of the Fox's emphasis on sin and evil. William Wilson emphasised the importance of conversion from sin for early Quakers, stating that they viewed 'perfection' in terms of conversion. The conversion process began when the sinner gives herself completely over to God in the form of 'surrender', and completes when she receives complete forgiveness from God.<sup>32</sup> Full conversion did not open the door to a complete antinomianism, where the perfection of the sinner meant that any act was sinless in the eyes of God.<sup>33</sup> Instead, Wilson argues that George Fox simply rejected the view that God's forgiveness was simply a rescue from hell; Fox insisted that forgiveness led

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<sup>30</sup> Abbott, 'Mental Illness, Ignorance, or Sin?', 95. Abbott writes elsewhere that she rejects the view of sin as an evil present within people. Instead, she advances a construct of sin as spiritual and mental illness, with 'salvation' from sin as a return to health. Margery Post Abbott, *To Be Broken and Tender: A Quaker Theology for Today* (Portland, OR: Western Friend/Friends Bulletin Corporation, 2010), 23.

<sup>31</sup> William Charles Braithwaite, *Spiritual Guidance In the Experience of the Society of Friends* (London: Headley Brothers, 1909), 35.

<sup>32</sup> William E. Wilson, *Our Response to God* (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1935), 35.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, 33.



inexorably towards a complete surrender to Christ.<sup>34</sup> Wilson implied that this process was still valuable for modern Liberal Quakers and should not be ignored. Similarly, John Punshon argued that early Quakers viewed the world through the perspective of conflict between evil forces and the goodness of God, with only Christ having the power to defeat evil. Punshon suggested that early Quakers viewed this conflict to occur also in the human heart, where submission to the inner Christ would perfect the person and give them the strength to fight evil.<sup>35</sup>

Generally, lecturers choose to either see the historical heritage of early Quakerism as a place to locate similarities with their own viewpoint or as an exemplar to follow as a means of spiritual and ethical formation as a Liberal Quaker.

### **3.3.b Sin and Goodness in Modern Liberal Quaker Theology**

Abbott argues that Liberal Quakers hold many views of salvation, with some denying its necessity due to the strong Quaker assertion of human goodness.<sup>36</sup> Some lecturers link salvation exclusively to the Christian theology of atonement and sin, such as John Hughes in 1940.<sup>37</sup> Other lecturers seek to emphasise the modern Quaker rejection of the theology of Original Sin and human depravity, such as Gerald Priestland in 1982.<sup>38</sup> A common point amongst Liberal Quaker views is the emphasis on individual salvation presented in many Christian views of salvation runs contrary to the Liberal Quaker emphasis on social ethics over personal ethics.<sup>39</sup> Social ethics, in this context, relates to social justice issues, including the structural basis of poverty and

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 29.

<sup>35</sup> John Punshon, *Testimony and Tradition*, 24.

<sup>36</sup> Abbott, 'Mental Illness, Ignorance, or Sin?', 87.

<sup>37</sup> Hughes, *The Light of Christ in a Pagan World*, 82.

<sup>38</sup> Priestland, *Reasonable Uncertainty*, 60.

<sup>39</sup> Abbott, 'Mental Illness, Ignorance, or Sin?', 88.

war, while personal ethics relates to issues of personal sin. This is reflected in the Quaker understanding of evil and sin as the absence of, or separation from, God.<sup>40</sup>

Gerald Priestland extends this vision to include rejection of God and what Priestland understands as the highest good, the love of God. Priestland thus emphasises the freedom of choice offered to humans by God, the freedom to either accept or reject God.<sup>41</sup> For Priestland, God's love involves a willingness to allow humans to abandon God. John Hughes agrees, stating God has taken the risk that humanity may reject God, and even seek to destroy God's efforts at defeating evil.<sup>42</sup> This occurs because sin has a cosmic power, a 'wildness' that rejects any surrender to God or even to any human desire for goodness.<sup>43</sup> Since all that is sin was at one time the good creation of God, and since God is present in humans as the Light, Hughes suggests that sin causes humans to place themselves in the role of God. According to Hughes, therefore, evil stems from the perverted human desire for absolute power as a rival to God.<sup>44</sup> Sin is so powerful, in fact, that only the scandal of the cross and Christ's sacrificial love and abdication of power, could ever defeat the evil rival for God's power.<sup>45</sup>

William Aarek flips the focus of sin, away from absence and towards fellowship and true relationship. 'True relationship', for Aarek, involves the harmony between developing and maintaining the relationships with both God and the community of people. Humans, Aarek argues, are unavoidably communal creatures, born into community with both God and humans.<sup>46</sup> Sin is thus an inherent break in fellowship, as absence would simply be impossible. Fellowship

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 89.

<sup>41</sup> Priestland, *Reasonable Uncertainty*, 43.

<sup>42</sup> Hughes, *The Light of Christ in a Pagan World*, 81.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 79.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 81.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 82.

<sup>46</sup> William Aarek, *From Loneliness to Fellowship: A Study in Psychology and Quakerism* (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1954), 38.

thus necessitates ethical action towards the other, for any action that harms the other breaks the bonds of fellowship and would thus constitute sin.<sup>47</sup>

Helen Sturge suggested that the presence of God within the person is the only means for humans to achieve any sense of inner harmony. This harmony is achieved by submission to the divine will, which aligns human desires alongside the divine desire, and gives the human passions a purpose and a direction.<sup>48</sup> Brain, however, understood the conflict not as between an unbending will and the overpowering inner Christ, but rather as a contest between a complete faith in a distant God who dispensed grace at will and the ethical works of a person forced to improve the world on their own. He termed this a ‘synthesis between the partial truths’ of an intrinsically evil human nature stained by Original Sin and a humanism devoid of any divine power.<sup>49</sup> The synthesis lay with the immediate presence of the Light within each individual person, which made grace an available gift for those who sought to be good in an evil world.

Earlier lecturers distinguish between the human capacity for good and an inherent human ‘goodness’. E. B. Castle stated that Fox’s experience of human evil during the English Revolution gave him and fellow early Quakers a very robust sense of human sinfulness and evil.<sup>50</sup> Castle made a clear distinction between the concepts of something fundamentally good in humanity, such as the presence of God, and the fundamental goodness of humanity.<sup>51</sup>

Liberal Quaker views on evil began to shift when Howard Brinton argued for an understanding of evil as less powerful and overwhelming than earlier views. Abbott argues that Brinton's rejection of evil as a separate, malignant power significantly influenced modern Quaker

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 41.

<sup>48</sup> Helen M. Sturge, *Personal Religion and the Service of Humanity* (London: The Swarthmore Press, Ltd., 1923), 41.

<sup>49</sup> Brain, *Man, Society, and Religion*, 75.

<sup>50</sup> E.B. Castle, *The Undivided Mind* (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1941), 32.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 33.

views, with many modern Quakers holding to Brinton's view that humans can choose to overcome evil.<sup>52</sup> This reflects a recent trend in the lectures, such as Helen Steven in 2005, to reassess atonement theology in light of a more positive view of human goodness.<sup>53</sup>

John MacMurray agreed that humanity has the capacity to overcome evil; yet, he shifts the focus away from Brinton's emphasis on human will to God's will. MacMurray claims that while humans may struggle against God's will for a time, God will eventually prevail, due not to God's power, but to the nature of humanity. As every human has 'that of God' inside, so to wrestle with God is to wrestle with oneself, which MacMurray deems a fruitless endeavour.<sup>54</sup> Simon Fisher offers a perspective of evil rooted in the language of theologies of atonement and reconciliation. He claims that through solidarity with other humans and through a life fully lived in what Fisher terms the 'Spirit of Truth and Love', humanity has the power to overcome the Powers that inhabit humanity and the structures of society.<sup>55</sup>

Emphasising human 'goodness' can have unintended consequences. Rachel Muers argues that Liberal Quakers generally dismiss Castle's distinction, arguing that the Quaker emphasis on 'that of God in everyone' can lead modern Quakers to avoid claiming that any one person was intrinsically evil. They instead choose to view that persons are able to avoid being impacted by the inherent evil of the acts that they do. Thus, the ethical value of the act is somehow held at a remove from the person.<sup>56</sup>

In distinction from the general trend in recent lectures, Alex Wildwood rejects this avoidance of the language of 'sin' and 'evil', yet acknowledges that the avoidance is present

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<sup>52</sup> Abbott, 'Mental Illness, Ignorance, or Sin?', 91.

<sup>53</sup> Pam Lunn, *Costing Not Less than Everything: Sustainability and Spirituality in Challenging Times* (London: Quaker Books, 2011), 55.

<sup>54</sup> John MacMurray, *Search For Reality in Religion* (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1965), 45.

<sup>55</sup> Simon Fisher, *Spirited Living: Waging Conflict, Building Peace* (London: Quaker Books, 2004), 118.

<sup>56</sup> Rachel Muers, "'It is Worse to Be Evil than to Do Evil': Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Challenge to the Quaker Conscience", in *Good and Evil: Quaker Perspectives*, eds. Jackie Leach Scully and Pink Dandelion (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2007), 173-82, at 174.

throughout Liberal Quaker theology and culture, both due to a sense of discomfort at what are seen as ‘corruptions’ of the terms and an overdeveloped sense of human goodness.<sup>57</sup> Amidst that discomfort, Wildwood stresses the necessity of a robust vision of sin that includes separation from, and harm done to, others, God, and oneself both in profoundly damaging ways, such as murder, and seemingly insignificant ways, such as dismissing one's own goodness as a loved member of God's creation.<sup>58</sup>

Liberal Quakers are well within the stream of theologies of atonement and reconciliation by acknowledging the presence of a fundamentally good God within humanity. Liberal Quakers and theologies of atonement and reconciliation both acknowledge the presence of evil in the Powers and structures of the world and in their impact on human actions and response to evil. Liberal Quakers are also in full agreement with theologies of atonement and reconciliation when they seek to develop a robust sense of human sinfulness as abandonment, separation, or rejection, as both Wilson and Wildwood explicate. Finally, Liberal Quakers and theologies of atonement and reconciliation agree that humanity and God exist in an interdependent relationship. What differentiates Liberal Quaker theology – and makes it an excellent resource for theologies of atonement and reconciliation in terms of approaching the question of human sinfulness versus human goodness – lies with the continuous Liberal Quaker insistence on the impact that the presence of God within humanity makes upon the human response to evil.

Liberal Quaker theology makes the bold claim that evil and sin cannot overcome God's will for humanity, due to the fact that God's presence within humanity is inexorable and will eventually convert every human heart towards the goodness of God. This theology could be critiqued from the perspective of human will and autonomy, for if God's presence within

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<sup>57</sup> Alex Wildwood, *A Faith to Call Our Own: Quaker Tradition in the Light of Contemporary Movements of the Spirit* (London: Quaker Home Service, 1999), 66.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid*, 67.

humanity will eventually prevail over any human desire for evil, what autonomy does God really grant the human will? MacMurray provides the most complete response to this critique by rejecting the claim that the human will actually desires evil. Instead, as humans are created by God, they respond to the call to seek harmony between themselves and God, and between themselves and other humans.

Michael Battle calls this call the ‘spirituality of non-violence’, the act of being for the other. This spirituality is also termed ‘shalom’, which Battle contends is the state which results when the human physical and spiritual form are both held in ‘composite unity’ with the divine will to such an extent that humans will be ‘deified’ into the non-violent form of God.<sup>59</sup> Should a person choose to work against God’s will, thus separating themselves from relationship with God and entering a state of sin, Battle argues that the sinner will find themselves working against the structure of the universe, which has been crafted in the image and plan of God.<sup>60</sup> This is redolent of the Liberal Quaker vision of the interdependence of God’s inner presence and humanity. This is also reflective of what Lloyd Lee Wilson terms ‘Quaker gospel order’, or the harmony that results when Quakers live in accordance with their testimonies and the divine will.<sup>61</sup>

This does not suggest a naïveté towards the human struggle between the temptation to do evil and the need to do good.<sup>62</sup> Three lecturers directly address the issue of evil within the realm of peacemaking, each emphasising different aspects of this necessity. Wolf Mendl suggested that this struggle exists on both the divine and human plane, with greater interdependence amongst humans in community often acting to spur tension between people, rather than resulting in

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<sup>59</sup> Battle, *Blessed are the Peacemakers*, 21.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid*, 56.

<sup>61</sup> Lloyd Lee Wilson, *Essays on the Quaker Vision of Gospel Order* (Burnsville, NC: Celo Valley Books, 1993), 4.

<sup>62</sup> Wolf Mendl, *Prophets and Reconcilers: Reflections on the Quaker Peace Testimony* (London: Friends Home Service, 1974), 4.

greater harmony.<sup>63</sup> Curle suggested that this tension can be utilised in a creative manner for peacemakers, through the continuous search for balance and harmony between people.<sup>64</sup> Finally, Fisher asserts that peace work is, at its core, a communal endeavour amongst humans and God to restore the wholeness, health, and harmony that are the true human experience.<sup>65</sup>

### 3.3.c Critique

Beals argues that the Quaker focus on fundamental human goodness is short-sighted. He claims that situations of genocide demonstrate that evil definitely ‘exists’ in some form.<sup>66</sup> Beals presents two visions of evil: the substantive, where evil is a real substance, separate from the goodness of God in a dualistic fashion; and privation, where evil is the absence of good. Beals rejects the substantive because, while it recognises George Fox's statement that evil could be ‘felt’ and it grants evil a powerful reality that can be battled, it also opens the question of how an entirely good God can create an evil substance nearly equivalent in power to that of God.<sup>67</sup> The privation view, however, allows for an entirely good God whose creations create evil by twisting the good purpose of God's creation towards the rejection of God's goodness and light.<sup>68</sup> Beals dismisses the critique that this view ignores the reality of evil by arguing that all evil beings are simply twisted wrecks of beings originally created good by God.<sup>69</sup> Beals defends this view of

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 54.

<sup>64</sup> Curle, *True Justice*, 45.

<sup>65</sup> Fisher, *Spirited Living*, 6.

<sup>66</sup> Corwynn Beals, 'Evil: The Presence of Absence', in *Good and Evil: Quaker Perspectives*, eds. Jackie Leach Scully and Pink Dandelion (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2007), 141-152, at 141.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, 142.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, 143.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 145.

evil by re-visiting incidents of genocide to find humans who possessed some aspect of good and love, yet who somehow found themselves performing acts of profound evil.<sup>70</sup>

Several lecturers extend this critique as well. Kenneth Barnes critiqued the Quaker tendency to be self-adulatory in the face of Quaker ‘perfection’, stating that this stemmed from a reputation for goodness and good deeds that may actually mask an inherent arrogance and lack of humility towards those who struggled with ‘sin’ and the challenges of being ‘good’.<sup>71</sup> Adam Curle concurs, stating that Quakers can fall into the temptation to either receive credit for past ‘goodness’, or else strive to achieve constant moral perfection through deeds. Curle stresses that the inner presence of God already guarantees human perfection, requiring no human response but gratitude.<sup>72</sup>

I agree with the insistence on taking evil seriously, especially in light of the profound evils of racism, sectarianism, and their attendant ethnic conflict. While I acknowledge that humans might not be entirely and ontologically evil, theologies of atonement and reconciliation cannot accept a vision of fundamental human goodness without a corresponding acknowledgement, as Hughes makes, of the human capacity to perform acts of great evil.

### **3.4 Liberal Quaker Christologies**

Liberal Quaker thought has focused much of its attention on developing alternative models to explain the relationship between God and humans, with a special focus on the Light.<sup>73</sup> This includes focusing significant attention on the person of Jesus and his existence as the Christ.

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 149.

<sup>71</sup> Kenneth Barnes, *The Creative Imagination* (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1960), 77.

<sup>72</sup> Curle, *True Justice*, 25.

<sup>73</sup> Eccles, *The Presence in the Midst*, 69.



In Liberal Quaker thought, however, the relationship between the aspects of God has not often been defined with any specificity following the Quaker insistence on ambiguity when it comes to defining God. Martin Davie views this tendency critically, concluding that Liberal Quaker thought abandoned traditional Christian theology at its very beginnings with the work of Edward Grubb, an early Liberal Quaker theologian. Davie terms what he understands to be orthodox Christianity as ‘the core of conviction’, claiming that Grubb’s avoidance of explicitly Trinitarian language in Grubb’s explication of ‘the threefold manifestation of God’ placed Liberal Quaker outside of the ‘person’ Trinitarianism of the Nicene Creed. According to Davie, this was due to Grubb’s unwillingness to assign distinct personality to the Godhead, for it not only led to tritheism, but also made explicit aspects of the inner workings of God that are simply unknowable.<sup>74</sup>

This aversion to explicitness in developing a Trinitarian theology is the mainstream of Liberal Quaker theology, however, despite Davie's protestations. G. K. Hibbert rejected the need for any more explicit statements about the Trinity other than a recognition that God has personality, a view that he finds in the absence of an explicit Trinitarian theology in the New Testament.<sup>75</sup> Leyton Richards dismissed any Trinitarian speculation just as quickly, stating that it need not be of greater concern than to simply acknowledge that the Trinity represented the Godhead in perfect unity.<sup>76</sup> Richards did not dismiss the Trinity entirely, yet found its

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<sup>74</sup> Martin Davie, *British Quaker Theology Since 1895* (Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, Ltd, 1997), 134. It should be noted here that Davie makes the mistake of assuming an explicit, exclusive, and widespread Trinitarian emphasis in Early Quakerism. While many Early Quakers did hold to recognisably Trinitarian views on the nature of the divine, this was not the view held by all Early Quakers, and certainly not in the clear delineations between the persons of the Trinity that Davie seems to assume. Rosemary Moore even makes the claim that George Fox viewed God as a quarternary, with four aspects of the Godhead. She bases this claim on Fox's affirmation that ‘the Father and the Son, and the Spirit of truth, and that of God in every one's Conscience shall bear witness unto us’. Moore, *The Light in their Consciences*, 109.

<sup>75</sup> G.K. Hibbert, *The Inner Light and Modern Thought* (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1924), 60.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, 42.

significance solely in how the inter-relationality of the Trinity represents the inter-relationality of humanity, and thus how the Trinity establishes a social reality of human interdependence.<sup>77</sup>

Brenda Heales and Chris Cook root this ambiguity firmly in the apophatic tradition, claiming that such a tradition would avoid making any claims about God other than the experience of the ‘ultimate apophasis’, which is not multiple, but unified.<sup>78</sup> Janet Scott acknowledges the apophatic as well, yet from the stance of critique. She states that the Trinity is only useful as a means of coming to terms with a multi-valent God; the specifics of the Trinitarian doctrine are flawed due to their dependence on outmoded Hellenistic philosophical models.<sup>79</sup> Scott makes the claim, contra Richards, that the Trinity must therefore be discarded in an attempt to develop new ways of explaining the experience of God.

These expressions of Christology reflect the focus on interdependence present in the other expressions of Christology and interdependence extant in theologies of atonement and reconciliation that I have examined in this chapter and in chapter three. The challenge for developing a common theological anthropology for theologies of atonement and reconciliation, I argue, lies in the lack of a common metaphorical language amongst the theological perspectives that I have collated above.

I argue that the flexibility inherent in Liberal Quaker theology allows for multiple interpretations of the key Christological questions of theologies of atonement and reconciliation, which I will examine in the succeeding sections: the Incarnation and the relationship between Jesus and humanity, the atonement and its relationship to the crucifixion, and the role of the Holy Spirit in the life and work of Jesus. I argue that there are multiple points at which Liberal Quaker Christology and Pneumatology can have dialogue with these same themes in theologies of

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<sup>77</sup> Richards, *Planning for Freedom*, 43.

<sup>78</sup> Cliff Heales and Cook, *Images and Silence*, 74.

<sup>79</sup> Scott, *What Canst Thou Say?*, 49.

atonement and reconciliation. These are avenues which will benefit from significant future examination. While they all present essential elements upon which theologies of atonement and reconciliation vision of interdependence must be based, I suggest that Liberal Quaker visions of God, specifically in relation to Christology and Pneumatology, are flexible and multi-valent enough to enfold these elements under a common language.

### **3.4.a Jesus as Incarnation**

Swarthmore Lecturers have expressed a range of perspectives towards the relationship between Jesus the man and Jesus the Incarnate God. Generally, lecturers have moved chronologically, from assuming that their audience accepted Incarnational theology, even if in a mode heavily influenced by the Liberal Quaker emphasis on the humanness of Jesus, towards an assumption that their audience was likely to hold a variety of views towards Incarnational theology, even outright rejection. This has led to a somewhat reactionary tone in recent years, where lecturers have questioned whether Liberal Quakers are in the process of losing something vital by abandoning the historic Quaker acceptance of Incarnational theology.

The desire for creativity in envisioning God that typifies Liberal Quaker expressions of the *experience* of God also typifies Liberal Quaker Christology. This creativity, I contend, leads Liberal Quaker Christology to be more speculative, and therefore less systematic, than Christology in other Protestant traditions. Only a few Swarthmore lecturers deal with issues of Christology in depth, while most deal with Christology from the perspective of the author's personal experience. Jesus is often referred to in passing, as an aspect of a greater point that the lecturer is seeking to make. This oblique approach appears to stem either from an assumption of

a common language of Christology between the lecturer and the audience, or simply because the lecturer was dealing with a topic that did not need to address Christology. I argue that over time, the lecturers move from an assumption of a common belief in Jesus as saviour, Incarnation and the unique Liberal Quaker perspective of Jesus as Spirit, towards a latter period when the lecturer was not able to make any assumptions about the Christology.<sup>80</sup> This trend applies to those lecturers who addressed Christology directly and in-depth; I argue that the tone of the lectures moves from instruction about the common Liberal Quaker Christological language towards one of apologetics for perspectives that run the spectrum from traditional Christological language towards Universalism.

I argue below that an interesting trend that emerged at the turn of the twenty-first century is a return to language reminiscent of the Quaker Christology of the early lectures. I am uncertain whether this reflects any intentional shift on the part of the lecturers to reclaim explicitly Christian language for Liberal Quakerism; if so, it could reflect a response to a desire within Liberal Quakerism as a whole to reclaim such language.

In 1912, T. R. Glover delivered a substantive examination of Jesus as the Incarnation. Glover stated unequivocally that the doctrine of the Incarnation, the teaching that Jesus was both God and human, is an essential element of Christian faith and is irrevocably connected to the doctrine of the redemption. Glover made the claim that Christian theology universally declares

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<sup>80</sup> An early example of this recognition of the lack of unity around Christological belief in the audience occurred in Henry Cadbury's lecture in 1957, where he acknowledges that many Friends are likely to have been significantly influenced by 'non-Christian religions', enough that British Friends should consider engaging with 'non-Christian religions' in a more systematic way. By 1969, Maurice Creasey felt compelled to acknowledge that there existed within contemporary Quakerism a 'sympathy' for what he termed 'secular or religionless Christianity' which prioritised action over prayer, and dismissed any distinction between secular and sacred. Harvey Gillman typifies this caution with labelling Quakerism as explicitly Christian or explicitly non-Christian with his long excursus on the benefits and drawbacks of both positions, ending in this inconclusive sentence: 'I do believe that there is a power which is divine, creative and loving, though we can often only describe it with the images and symbols that rise from our particular experiences and those of our communities'. Cadbury, *Quakerism and Early Christianity*, 33; Maurice A. Creasey, *Bearing, or Friends and the New Reformation* (London: Friends Home Service, 1969), 48; Harvey Gillman, *A Minority of One: A Journey with Friends* (London: Quaker Home Service, 1988), 81-2.

that God suffered on the Cross and died for the purpose of the salvation of humanity.<sup>81</sup> Glover stated this as if it is an uncontroversial fact, choosing to spend more time addressing the implications of this reality for the Church and humanity. Glover contended that the doctrine of the Incarnation and ‘the spectacle of Him who died for the slave as well as the free man’ has motivated humanity to embody the values of compassion towards the other and care for the vulnerable more than any other symbol.<sup>82</sup>

Glover argued that this effect has been achieved through the power of both the example of Jesus and of his story, reflecting a Quaker emphasis on the use of personal story as the most effective tool to teach others about the way of life that most embodies Christian teaching. He illustrated this through a long narration of the manner in which the disciples first meet Jesus, and began to study Jesus through a close reading of his life.<sup>83</sup> Glover termed this ‘study in the school of Jesus Christ’, which Glover argued will begin to develop in each person an instinctive awareness of the manner of life that Jesus requires of his followers.<sup>84</sup> Glover emphasised obedience to Jesus Christ, claiming that while Jesus might be in relationship with each of his followers, Jesus requires obedience to his teachings.<sup>85</sup> Glover did not acknowledge any other worthwhile interpretations of Jesus’ message, stating that this truth is extant in both the doxologies of the New Testament and in the seriousness that Christians throughout history have taken the message.

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<sup>81</sup> T.R. Glover, *The Nature and Purpose of a Christian Society* (London: Headley Brothers Publishers Ltd., 1912), 38.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid*, 42.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid*, 51

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid*, 58

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid*, 58

Edward Grubb approached Christology in 1914 from the perspective of examining the personality of Jesus as both incarnate human and as Christ.<sup>86</sup> Grubb examined this question with the assumption that all Quakers concur that Jesus was a person who existed and who was divine, stating that the Quaker desire to ‘do its work in bearing witness to the world of the truth of God’ is irrevocably linked with the Quaker call to help people who are struggling ‘into the sure anchorage of Christian faith’.<sup>87</sup> This faith, Grubb contended, is rooted in the ‘two facts’ of the person and life of Jesus Christ, as well as the experience of the disciples and the new life which their encounter with Jesus had drawn them.<sup>88</sup>

Grubb viewed these facts as both outward and inward truths, respectively, which he claimed were blended by the authors of the New Testament into a unified theory of a Godman.<sup>89</sup> Grubb took issue with the manner in which theories about Jesus developed from dynamic questions derived from some direct experience with Jesus into what he viewed as the attempt by the authors of the historical creeds to develop a uniform answer to which all Christians must believe entirely or be labelled a heretic. Grubb viewed this as the deleterious impact of ‘creedalism’ upon the spiritual experience of the believer, reflecting the Liberal Quaker aversion to definitive creedal statements.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Edward Grubb, *The Historic and Inward Christ: A Study in Quaker Thought* (London: Headley Brothers Publishers, Ltd., 1914), 7. G. K. Hibbert approached Christology from the perspective of personality as well, focusing on the controversy over the use of *ousia* and *hypostases*. Hibbert argues that the imprecision of these terms argues against taking them seriously as definitive statements about God's nature. G.K. Hibbert, *The Inner Light and Modern Thought* (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1924), 61.

<sup>87</sup> Grubb, *The Historic and Inward Christ*, 15.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid*, 16.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid*, 20.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid*, 23.

Instead, Grubb shifted the focus towards the personality of Jesus as human and centered on his human psychological struggles with temptation and emotion.<sup>91</sup> Grubb contended that such a focus provides the most useful approach for Christians, including Quakers, to comprehend and have faith in Jesus, and thus to live into what Grubb considers the most essential aspect of the Christian life: union with Christ through obedience to Jesus' will for our lives.<sup>92</sup>

Harry T. Silcock approached Christology from the perspective of personality in 1927 by examining the ways that Jesus' personality could be seen as a universal personality, accessible to any person who seeks to gain a better understanding of the divine life. Silcock contended that this desire is 'everywhere and always the deepest hunger of the human heart', whether that human may or may not be aware of such a desire.<sup>93</sup> Silcock used the examples of statements made to this effect by two unnamed people, a Catholic and a Hindu.<sup>94</sup> Silcock also quoted an unnamed 'mental specialist' who makes the case that the form of Quaker worship is the most efficacious for those who are 'mentally unstable and diseased'. Silcock's tone betrayed an assumption that his audience would agree with his statements, claiming that one would be amazed by the 'widespread openness to the personality of Jesus Christ' across the world.<sup>95</sup> Silcock acknowledged that his audience should probably not assume 'too much' from his statements, and then cited the book *The Christ of the Indian Road* by Stanley Reed, which Silcock claimed describes a 'quiet turning towards Jesus Christ'.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid, 51. T. Edmund Harvey expresses a similar view, stating that understanding Jesus's human struggles gives humanity the comfort that God is united with them in their struggles through life. T. Edmund Harvey, *The Long Pilgrimage: Human Progress in the Light of the Christian Hope* (Harrogate, UK: Robert Davis, 1921), 35.

<sup>92</sup> Grubb, *The Historic and Inward Christ*, 83.

<sup>93</sup> Harry T. Silcock, *Christ and the World's Unrest* (London: The Swarthmore Press, Ltd., 1927), 9.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid, 29.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid, 32.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid, 34.

Silcock expressed a deep faith in the power of Jesus' personality to effect significant change in people and institutions.<sup>97</sup> Statements about the efficaciousness of the belief in Jesus to combat great evil reflect Silcock's performative Christology. Jesus achieved this, Silcock contended, by creating a new model for the Messiah that emphasises the values of compassion, non-violence, and solidarity with the oppressed.<sup>98</sup> This model of life is thus the most efficacious for Christians to follow in order to resolve social ills. Silcock's optimism towards the Christian message – and the Quaker reflection of that message – is not unique amongst Liberal Quakers or reconciliation theologians, however. In 1928 John Hoyland claimed that Quakers must have a 'final and ultimate standard of character', will, and the power of love, which for Hoyland is Christ.<sup>99</sup> John Hughes stated that Jesus Christ is the foundation of all Western history, and is the absolute best human lens through which to understand God.<sup>100</sup> Konrad Braun claimed in 1950 that Christ revealed love in the most complete way possible, placing it as the 'central power of religious experience and life'.<sup>101</sup> Richenda Scott was still able to claim in 1964, without any hint of doubt, that Quakerism had always been rooted in the Christian way of life, and that Jesus of Nazareth was the 'utmost expression of the infinite and eternal reality of God' that the human person could ever experience.<sup>102</sup>

George B. Jeffery's 1934 lecture represented a more cautious stream of Liberal Quaker thought as it relates to Jesus and the Incarnation. While Jeffery stated that the Christian Church is most able to follow God's will when it asserts that Jesus is both human and divine, he then contended that the Church is often unable to express the clearest message as to the relationship

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid, 43.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid, 50.

<sup>99</sup> Hoyland, *Light of Christ*, 43.

<sup>100</sup> Hughes, *The Light of Christ in a Pagan World*, 60.

<sup>101</sup> Konrad Braun, *Justice and the Law of Love* (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1950), 15.

<sup>102</sup> Scott, *Tradition and Experience*, 61.



between these two elements of Jesus Christ. Jeffery claimed that the Church has historically focused greater attention on both aspects at different times, to the detriment of the other aspect.<sup>103</sup> Jeffery insisted that a delicate balance must be maintained between the different aspects, a balance which is proclaimed with a sense of humility.<sup>104</sup> As these are questions that touch on the inner life of God, Jeffery insisted on humbly acknowledging the human incapacity to know them with such certainty as to proclaim them with the passion that Silcock employed.

Jeffery approached the question of what Jesus as Incarnation means for Quakers through the perspective of doubt and uncertainty. He expressed a sense of respect for Jesus' human nature and sought to dim the enthusiasm of Christian statements about Jesus' miraculous power, omniscience, and certainty in his own mission.<sup>105</sup> Jeffery found such a perspective of great help when seeking to be in relationship with Jesus and learn from his message, for it emphasised Jesus' epistemological and relational accessibility. Jeffery termed this a 'simple way', reflecting the Quaker emphasis on simplicity, especially as regards theological statements.<sup>106</sup> He strenuously rejected the theological insistence on examining Jesus' life and words for meaning, insisting that finding oneself in the story of Jesus is a much more effective tool to understand Jesus.<sup>107</sup> This narrative approach reflects Glover's, with an added emphasis on the importance of relating to Jesus in a personal way and living a life modelled directly on Jesus' life.<sup>108</sup> Jeffery accepted that this personal approach may result in the loss of certainty about the truth claims of Christianity, yet he dismissed those as unnecessary, even idolatrous.<sup>109</sup> Jeffery claimed that the

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<sup>103</sup> George B. Jeffery, *Christ, Yesterday and Today* (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1934), 11.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

most complete faith in Jesus is a faith in his person, accepting the paradoxes completely.<sup>110</sup> It is important to note here that Jeffery utilised a tone that, while less certain than others, assumed that the audience would not disagree with his fundamental point about faith in Jesus Christ.

Maurice Creasey was one of the first lecturers to deal with the presence of Quakers who might express doubt in the divine nature of Jesus Christ. In 1969, he sought to defend 'Christo-centrism' as the valid outlook for Quakers, as opposed to a more universal 'Theo-centrism'.<sup>111</sup> Through a long recitation of arguments made against the Christian perspective, including the argument that Christianity was narrow, exclusive, and elitist, Creasey stated that Christianity need not be defined, nor limited, by any of these traits.<sup>112</sup> He referred to the Quaker flexibility towards theology and aversion to adhering to creedal statements that were immune to further revision or revelation.<sup>113</sup>

Creasey was speaking to an aversion to certainty amongst Quakers in both the content and the value of the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation and its attendant claims about the divine nature of Jesus. George Gorman alluded to this aversion in 1973, stating that while the life and death of Jesus represented for him the ultimate demonstration of the power and creativity of love, he felt compelled to assert that Quakerism in general has 'always hesitated to confine their respect and admiration for' Jesus' life in particular, and its authority for Christians in general, in any creedal statement. Gorman suggested that this was due to the possibility for any dogmatic statement to confine the enormous power of the message and life of Jesus. Instead, Gorman

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid, 58.

<sup>111</sup> Creasey, *Bearing, or Friends and the New Reformation*, 69.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid, 85.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid, 80.

insisted, Quakers are left free to develop their own interpretations and assign their own meaning to the divinity and status of Jesus.<sup>114</sup>

Gerald Priestland responded to this vague aversion to truth claims about Jesus in his 1982 lecture. He addressed the issue directly, stating that while many Quakers assume that Liberal Quakerism avoids making any doctrinal or dogmatic statements, the presence of such statements in the contemporary edition of *Christian Faith and Practice* – the anthology of theological, moral, and administrative statements which guides British Quaker life – demonstrates the falsehood of such claims.<sup>115</sup> He defended the place of doctrinal statements in the life of a religious community, stating that such statements root the tradition in a particular place and ‘truth’.<sup>116</sup> Priestland argued for a respect for the existence of specific certainties that simply cannot be argued around.<sup>117</sup> This includes his argument that Quakers cannot claim that a person cannot know for certain whether Jesus was, in fact, the Incarnation of God. Priestland contended that either Jesus demonstrated that he was the Son of God or he didn’t, and this is not something that can be left in the realm of uncertainty, as it would lead to a very ‘strange’ and illogical view of God.<sup>118</sup> Certainties, Priestland argued, give people not only a place to return when the surrounding culture changes according to its own internal logic and values, but also a tradition to push against and to challenge, something that secular culture could never offer.<sup>119</sup>

Priestland made a spirited defence of several Christian doctrines that had not received substantive attention for decades. While addressing the Incarnation, Priestland acknowledged that the particularity of Jesus was indeed a stumbling block for many. He dismissed any attempts

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<sup>114</sup> Gorman, *The Amazing Fact of Quaker Worship*, 67.

<sup>115</sup> Priestland, *Reasonable Uncertainty*, 13.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid*, 33.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid*, 41.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid*, 53.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid*, 64.

at turning particularity into damnation of non-Christians, yet also dismissed the Universalist concept of several particular Incarnations throughout history as both illogical and unnecessary.<sup>120</sup> Priestland argued that the most effective approach to dealing with the particularity of Jesus was through the Quaker doctrine of ‘that of God in everyone’. The particularity of the human experience demands a particularity to the divine relationship to humanity, Priestland argued.<sup>121</sup>

Helen Stevens represented a possible turn back towards positive truth claims about Jesus, while still acknowledging the potential benefit of keeping a Universalist perspective in mind. In her 2005 lecture, she noted her feelings of discomfort when others asked her if she had come to a place of certainty about Jesus as saviour.<sup>122</sup> She then remarked on the potential limitations of that aversion, reflecting that she may have reacted to the language itself, which made her uncomfortable, as opposed to the claims that such language represented. She re-engaged with the Gospels and related her astonishment at the power that the Incarnation granted her by bringing her completely into the life of God through the human life of Jesus.<sup>123</sup> She argued that the full participation in the life of Jesus that the Incarnation offers grants humans the ability to engage in a life of compassion, love for the uniqueness of the other, and non-violent social change.<sup>124</sup> Stevens did not insist on recognising Jesus as one of many other unique people of God; instead, she stated quite clearly, using traditional Christian language, that Jesus was indeed the Messiah.<sup>125</sup> The next year, Susan and Roger Sawtell addressed the issue of claiming Christocentrism in a religious society that numbers Universalists amongst its members. The Sawtells

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid, 54.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid, 58.

<sup>122</sup> Helen Steven, *No Extraordinary Power: Prayer, Stillness and Activism* (London: Quaker Books, 2005), 83.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid, 82.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid, 91.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid, 82.

stated clearly that the Incarnation was an essential element of their faith journey and that they were challenged by the divisions amongst Quakers on this subject.<sup>126</sup>

Subsequent lecturers have chosen to either grant Jesus a special place in Quaker theology or have chosen not to address the issues of Christo-centrism or the Incarnation. Should future lecturers elect to address the issue of the Incarnation, the themes presented in past lectures provide a helpful template: focus on the human aspects of Jesus and how the divine aspects are influenced by interaction with the human; emphasise a narrative approach to theology, including rooting theology in one's own experience of Jesus; and couch it all in a recognition of the necessity to avoid making exclusivist and prescriptive claims upon all Liberal Quakers, while insisting that the values of Liberal Quakerism have historically been expressed most clearly through a recognition of the vital importance of Jesus to Quakerism.

### **3.4.b Spirit Christologies**

Liberal Quakerism expresses an interchangeability between Christ and Spirit in its language, due to the insistence that God takes the form of Spirit, whether the Spirit of Christ or the Spirit of a universal consciousness. The imprecision around the language delineating Spirit from Christ is reflective of the insistence on founding theology upon the base of experience, and formulating theology in the language of the individual. As Liberal Quaker experience of the Spirit and of Christ is sometimes challenging to differentiate, any subsequent theology would also be ambiguous about the difference between them.

Liberal Quakers tend to accept the position that the Spirit moved within Jesus in complete union, where Jesus' will, as the Logos, was that of God. Brinton argues that Christocentric

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<sup>126</sup> Susan Sawtell and Roger Sawtell, *Reflections from a Long Marriage* (London: Quaker Books, 2006), 91.

Liberal Quakers base their Christology on the Logos of Johannine theology, where Jesus completely embodies the divine life, a life lived as Spirit.<sup>127</sup> Trinitarian thought is present here, yet intentionally outlined in very imprecise terms. A minute from Yorkshire Quarterly Meeting represents this imprecision, claiming that Jesus demonstrated 'the divine life humanly lived and the human life divinely lived'.<sup>128</sup> This perspective certainly exists in Christian theology, yet as I discussed in chapter three, it creates the challenge of defining the unique role of the Spirit and of Jesus in God's relationship to humanity. The imprecision of Liberal Quaker theological language about this relationship leads to a wide spectrum of approaches to the relationship: emphasising the fluidity between Jesus and 'Spirit'; developing a form of Liberal Quaker Spirit Christology which hinted at the possibility of a conflation between Christ and Spirit; an examination of the implications of this Jesus/Spirit on humanity; a critique of Jesus/Spirit as inconsistent and confusing, as related in Liberal Quaker experience; and finally, a recognition of the inherently apophatic nature of this entire line of inquiry.

### *Fluidity within Jesus/Spirit*

This lack of precision extends to the lack of a clean and clear division between the actions of Jesus the Logos and Jesus the Spirit. As Moore relates, this has deep roots in early Quakerism. Moore notes the confusion that the imprecision of Quaker language created for other theologians, particularly relating to the Quaker construction 'that of God'.<sup>129</sup> Quakers were faced with explaining whether this construction represented a fourth hypostasis, particularly as

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<sup>127</sup> Howard Brinton, *The Religious Philosophy of Quakerism: The Beliefs of Fox, Barclay and Penn as Based on the Gospel of John* (Wallingford, Pa.: Pendle Hill Publications, 1973), 66.

<sup>128</sup> Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain, *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 26.56.

<sup>129</sup> Moore, *The Light in their Consciences*, 109.

Quakers insisted ‘that of God’ was not specifically the Father, Son, or Holy Spirit, yet was somehow representative of all three. Moore argues that for Quakers, this vague concept was almost analogous to the action of the Holy Spirit in the person. It was not the entirety of the Spirit, but was somehow the action of the Spirit moving within the person.<sup>130</sup>

William Littleboy was emblematic of this aversion to specificity, stating unequivocally that Quakers ‘dare not dogmatise on the manner of the Parousia’. Littleboy then appears to reject his previous statement and outlines a realising eschatology where the Spirit is both the ‘very self’ of Christ and a separate emanation active in a post-resurrection world.<sup>131</sup> This demonstrates an ambiguity latent in Liberal Quaker theology, rooted in the line that Liberal Quakers straddle between apophatic and cataphatic theology. Liberal Quakers insist that they experience God as both appearing to inhabit all spaces, while also remaining mysteriously unknowable.

Rufus Jones made a link between Jesus Christ and what Jones terms the ‘Divine Spirit’. Jones appeared to subscribe to a procession theory of the Spirit, claiming that the ‘real presence’ of Jesus exists as the Spirit, continually emanating from Jesus into the lives of people and demonstrating God's care for all of creation.<sup>132</sup> Jones claimed that the most important and central tenet of Quakerism is this theme of the ‘real presence’ of Christ in the Spirit. This imprecision in early Swarthmore Lecturers became a subsequent theme, such that lecturers are generally vague as to the relationship between the persons of the Trinity, or even whether ‘Trinity’ is the most accurate way to describe the different ways that God exists and interacts with humanity.

### *Spirit Christology*

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid, 109.

<sup>131</sup> William Littleboy, *The Day of Our Visitation* (London: Headley Brothers, 1917), 18.

<sup>132</sup> Rufus Jones, *Quakerism: A Religion of Life* (London: Headley Brothers, 1908), 17.

William Charles Braithwaite claimed that the Spirit is defined by its relationship to Christ, using the term 'Christ's Spirit' to describe the form that God takes when God is seeking to guide humanity towards living into the pattern of Jesus' life.<sup>133</sup> Braithwaite appeared to suggest that the Spirit was fully present in Jesus as the Incarnation, and then was imparted upon the world during Pentecost.<sup>134</sup> Most lecturers accept this vagueness as an inherent aspect of a mysterious God and do not seek to define the relationship between Jesus and Spirit any further than to state that they do, in fact, have a close relationship. This aversion to specificity reflects the Quaker experience of a mysterious, interconnected relationship between the incarnate Jesus and the Spirit and the Quaker insistence on leaving that mystery doctrinally undefined. This interconnection between Jesus and Spirit places Liberal Quaker tradition in conversation with Spirit Christology and would appear to establish Liberal Quaker Christology as a form of Spirit Christology.

Carl Heath placed two potentially contradictory theological statements about the Spirit and Jesus together, stating that Quakerism must see 'the Spirit of the Living God, Christ the Incarnate Love, suffering and dying and being crucified again'.<sup>135</sup> Heath claimed that the Spirit is both a separate expression of an active God and the Incarnation itself. Richenda Scott made a similar argument, stating that 'the life which was in Christ, the Holy Spirit, can still lay hold of human lives and transform them'.<sup>136</sup> Jesus and Spirit, in these constructions, could be interpreted to be the same divine expression. This definitional ambiguity is representative of the lecturers and their approach to the issue of Jesus' relationship to the Trinity. The lecturers demonstrated a

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<sup>133</sup> Braithwaite, *Spiritual Guidance in the Experience of the Society of Friends*, 99.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid*, 28.

<sup>135</sup> Carl Heath, *Religion and Public Life* (London: Woodbrooke Extension Committee, 1922), 83.

<sup>136</sup> Scott, *Tradition and Experience*, 70.



paradoxical insistence on explaining in both specific and metaphorical terms the inexplicable experience of a Spirit who exists as both emanation and as distinct 'person'.

Hibbert strives to bridge this gap by first acknowledging that the New Testament offers conflicting visions of the relationship, either a modified form of adoptionism or the high Christology described in John 1. Faced with this confusion, and acknowledging the significant challenges for Quakers present in both positions, Hibbert seeks to transcend the debate by claiming that resolving the relationship between Spirit and Christ is not essential in order to know Christ and live a Christian life, as Hibbert understands it.<sup>137</sup> Interestingly, while Hibbert calls upon Christians to stop concerning themselves with the development of theological constructions of Christ and the Spirit, he accepts his own inability to extricate himself from the debate. Hibbert accepts that it is essential to come to terms with certain aspects of God's relationship to humanity in order for Jesus' life and death to have any meaning.<sup>138</sup> Thus, Hibbert claims, Quakers must engage in this debate reluctantly, with great humility, and a recognition that any answers will be partial and potentially false.

### *Jesus/Spirit and Humanity*

Beatrice Saxon Snell argues that the exact natures of Jesus and the Spirit, and the divisions in their activities and roles within God, are unimportant in the face of the much more important issue of how Jesus and the Holy Spirit impact the lives of humans.<sup>139</sup> As Snell relates, the method of apprehending these two aspects of God is far less important than apprehending them in the first place, allowing them to guide human behaviour towards peaceful action.

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<sup>137</sup> Hibbert, *The Inner Light and Modern Thought*, 58.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid*, 62.

<sup>139</sup> Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain, *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 26.77.

Distinctions amongst the Godhead are unimportant for Liberal Quakerism's reflection on the meaning of God, for all is God and Spirit in a unity. John Hughes presented this vision differently by emphasising the panentheistic implications of this grand unity. Hughes presented an expansive and interdependent vision of the Spirit as the unifier of all of creation. Hughes argues that the Incarnation of God within the creation draws all of the creation into unity God.<sup>140</sup> This action occurs first through the immanent drawing in of the entire universe into the 'One Spirit' of God, and then by the 'irradiation' of the transcendent Spirit of God out into the universe.<sup>141</sup> In this way, the ontology of the human person in Christocentric Liberal Quakerism is based on a Pneumatological God who is in mystical union with all of the creation.

### ***Inconsistency and Confusion***

Early Quakers were forced to wrestle with a particularly challenging paradox in the movement of the Spirit: they were committed to the complete freedom of the Spirit to do as the Spirit willed, yet they were also just as committed to the 'abiding consistency' of the Spirit. Gwyn argues that this meant that Quakers were often faced with a situation where the Spirit inspired them to believe something that appeared inconsistent with what the Spirit had inspired other Quakers to believe.<sup>142</sup>

Modern Liberal Quakers are faced with the same challenge. The Liberal Quaker response is most often to place both inspirations at the heart of the meeting and to attempt to come to an understanding of the meaning of the new inspiration through the use of silence, prayer, and a highly attuned system of discernment practices. Heales and Cook argue that Liberal Quakers do

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<sup>140</sup> Hughes, *The Light of Christ in a Pagan World*, 67.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.* 67.

<sup>142</sup> Gwyn, *The Covenant Crucified*, 240.

not always come to a position of unity or comfort when dealing with such situations of paradox, and they have even permitted issues to remain unresolved. They note that this stems from the necessity to ‘test the promptings’ of the Holy Spirit against one’s own reason, as well as the reason and experience of others in the meeting. When ‘promptings’ come from the reasoned movement of the intellect and not from a mind kept ‘low’, and apparently intellectually humble, Heales and Cook argue that the prompting might not actually stem from the Spirit.<sup>143</sup>

### *Apophatic*

This focus on paradox and inconsistency suggests a profoundly apophatic strain in Quaker theology. This aversion to reflect with any specificity on the nature and action of the Spirit seems strange in light of the profoundly Pneumocentric aspect of the Liberal Quaker experience of God and the consistent use of Spirit language to narrate that experience. As George Gorman argued, Liberal Quakers often emphasise that any theological statement about the nature of God must prioritise reflection on the interplay between the manifestations of the Spirit in silent worship and the process by which the Spirit draws humanity into greater union with God and God’s will.<sup>144</sup> This interplay of the Spirit and humanity is an experienced reality first, which is then imperfectly slotted into an area of theological inquiry. As one Friend relates, this feeling is most often experienced intentionally, especially during Meeting for Worship.<sup>145</sup> An account

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<sup>143</sup> Heales and Cook, *Images and Silence*, 25.

<sup>144</sup> Gorman, *The Amazing Fact*, 71.

<sup>145</sup> 'When I go to MFW [Meeting for Worship] I am reaching inwards and outwards towards what is beyond the Silence. This sometimes feels like reaching towards another dimension; one which is always there, but which I am not always aware of and don't always pay attention to. (For shorthand, I sometimes refer to this as 'God'.) In a gathered meeting I sense that those present are doing this also; worshiping thus with others helps me become more fully present and aware of being in the Presence. There's a sense of being in love with, and loved by what's beyond the silence. Sometimes there is something I bring consciously to hold in the silence – perhaps someone who needs upholding or an issue that needs to be dealt with. I hold this in the silence, and then let go. Sometimes it feels as if,

from another Friend speaks of the meeting as an expression of the universal conscience, reflecting the Universalist strain of Liberal Quakerism.<sup>146</sup>

The experience is not often a product of daily existence, instead occurring as the gathered meeting welcomes in the divine presence in silence. Liberal Quakerism recognizes that the Spirit is always present, yet humanity is not able to fully comprehend and recognize the presence in the busyness of daily existence. Scott argues that the gathering together is essential, therefore, to reconnect with the Spirit and to reflect on the morals and ethics of daily existence that stem from the mystical union with the Spirit.<sup>147</sup> The experience of unity in meeting also serves to remind Friends in a very palpable way that the Spirit brings all of creation into unity with God.

### 3.4.c Section Summary

In this section, I examined Trinitarian theology from the perspective of Liberal Quakerism, with a particular focus on the means by which Liberal Quakers use the experience of God as a means for developing theology. I argued that Liberal Quakers balanced their unique theological anthropology of God as an experienced reality, immanent within creation and

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just for a moment, something crosses from beyond the silence.' Pink Dandelion, *The Liturgies of Quakerism* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2005), 90.

<sup>146</sup> 'I send my 'aura,' 'essence,' 'spirit' outwards, expanding to join the general 'conscience collective.' I stay with that until someone ministers (or not). If there is ministry, I use that as a focus for my energy, if it 'does not speak to my condition,' i.e., I am out of synch with it, I focus on the person that was led to minister and 'send' love. If I cannot be 'gathered,' i.e. settle down my thoughts, I read from *Faith and Practice* until I find something to link to. I always have *Faith and Practice* with me in Meeting. When I first attended meeting, I read more. My relationship with 'God' has strengthened through this time and recently I have been able to 'pray.' What happens for me is that I feel (not always) that the barriers between us and God are thinned in Meeting, that we can be attuned to each other and each other's needs and through ministry and shared silence tended. I send thanks to God for this. I feel attending Meeting brings me nearer to God and this stays with me.' Dandelion, *The Liturgies of Quakerism*, 89.

<sup>147</sup> Scott, *What Canst Thou Say?*, 3.

interdependent upon the creation, with the traditional Christian theological anthropology categories of the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Atonement, and the Holy Spirit.

Liberal Quakers recognise the transcendence of God beyond creation as an inherent aspect of what could be considered divinity, yet due to their emphasis on the epistemological primacy of direct religious experience of the Divine, Liberal Quakers stress the immanence of God within the creation to a much greater degree. This stress on immanency colours their view of the Christian anthropological categories, causing them to place greater emphasis on anthropological theories of interdependence, immanence within the creation, and intimate love of the creation than on theories of the transcendence of the 'wholly other', distance from the creation, and stern judgement of human sinfulness.

This emphasis on immanence, coupled with their deliberately conceptual experiential theology, influences the types of models of God which Liberal Quakers find most compelling. The Liberal Quaker construction of an intimately incarnate Christ and the universal immanence of the Holy Spirit are models rooted in metaphor, deliberately left open to re-interpretation and re-evaluation. This metaphorical approach to the construction of models of God finds its most complete expression in the construction of Quaker metaphors of Divine/human interdependence, which I address in the following section.

### **3.5 Divine/Human Interdependence in Liberal Quaker Metaphorical Theology**

In this section, I demonstrate the diversity of Christian Liberal Quaker metaphorical interdependence theologies of the model of 'Light', in an effort to argue that Liberal Quaker

theological constructs can be translated to Trinitarian models in theologies of atonement and reconciliation, specifically using these constructions: Incarnation, Christ, and Holy Spirit.

I explore five different constructions of the model of 'Light' that Liberal Quaker theology developed in the Swarthmore Lectures, which have implications for the creation of Universalist reconciliation theologies: divine interdependence, mystical experience, truth, salvation, and beauty. This translation will provide a specific link between Liberal Quaker theological constructs and theologies of atonement and reconciliation through the metaphorical theology of the Light and open space for linking Christian reconciliation imagery with that of Universalism. By placing Universalist visions of Light within a framework of models of God, I contribute to the translation of Christian models of Light with Universalist ones, opening space within Liberal Quaker theology for new visions of a Universalist theology of atonement and reconciliation.

### **3.5.a Light as Incarnation**

Liberal Quakerism assumes the greatest possible divine immanence within the creation, an Incarnation which infuses every particle of the creation. Liberal Quakers are not in unity about the implications of this, however. Some Liberal Quakers claim that this leads to an inherent goodness and sacredness of the entire creation, with the corollary that humanity must therefore be inherently good. Other lecturers insist on chastening that view, acknowledging the human potential for both evil and good. In this construction, the Light is active in the process of human transformation, striving to guide humanity towards both a greater awareness of the presence of the Light, and of the ethical consequences of that presence. Liberal Quakers view this intimate guidance to be the truest expression of human freedom, for it allows humans to

develop faith in the presence of the Light on their own terms. This doctrine is not universally praised within Liberal Quakerism; critique most often accuses the doctrine of being far too vague to be of any use in the development of an active faith. This construction has three main elements and attendant schools of thought: the process of human perfectibility, the value of poetic subjectivity in comprehending this process, and the human experience of this process. These are considered in turn.

### *Human Perfectibility*

In an early lecture, William Charles Braithwaite argued that the universal witness of Quakers has been that the ‘Spirit of God’ is best expressed, in terms of its Incarnation within the creation, in the ‘spirit of man’, Braithwaite’s term for the human soul. The early year, 1909, should be noted, as this demonstrates that this idea has its roots early in Liberal Quaker theological development. This ‘spirit of man’ is described as being designed within the human person to be the perfect avenue through which the Light can be brought into relationship with humanity.<sup>148</sup> In Braithwaite’s designation, humanity is thus created to be in relationship with the Light, and is made whole through the union of Light and human.<sup>149</sup> Braithwaite viewed this inevitable union between God and humanity as the result of the continuous improvement of the human condition, reflecting the Liberal Quaker concept of human perfectibility and continuous evolution.<sup>150</sup> Braithwaite assumed that humanity has the responsibility to respond to this invitation. The initiative for acceptance must come from humanity, as the Light has already done

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<sup>148</sup> Braithwaite, *Spiritual Guidance In the Experience of the Society of Friends*, 81.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid*, 88.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid*, 87.

all of the work that it is capable of doing to invite the human into relationship without going one step too far and creating that relationship unilaterally.<sup>151</sup>

Henry Hodgkin asserted that this inherent capacity for unity with the Light is actually a ‘potentiality’, an active response of the human person to the initiative of God towards humanity. Hodgkin argued that this doctrine was developed by the early Quakers in response to their own experience of such a response from their souls to God. Hodgkin argues that the insistence on such a potentiality resulted from the early Quakers’ strong reaction against the doctrine of total human depravity, a doctrine whose falsehood the Quakers realised due to their experience of their own goodness.<sup>152</sup> Hodgkin argues that this same experience amongst Liberal Quakers informs their hopefulness that each person can be inspired to reach out to, and thus to experience, the same Spirit of God as the early Quakers experienced.

In response to his own difficulties with the growing acceptance of this perfectibility anthropology, William Thorpe revisited H.G. Wood's critical view of the Liberal Quaker doctrine of the universal Light in his 1968 Swarthmore Lecture.<sup>153</sup> It should be noted that this critique was delivered in the context of Thorpe’s lecture of the growing acceptance of humanism in Liberal Quakerism. Thorpe argues that Wood could not accept that the presence of the ‘Inner Light’ within the human would inevitably lead to the perfectibility of the human condition. Wood considered this to be an unfortunate valorisation of the human condition, especially of the expansive capability of the human reason that resulted from the Liberal Quaker belief in the human capacity to reason itself into union with the Light.<sup>154</sup> Thorpe argues that Wood would

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid, 81.

<sup>152</sup> Henry T. Hodgkin, *The Missionary Spirit and the Present Opportunity* (London: The Swarthmore Press, Ltd., 1916), 90.

<sup>153</sup> Thorpe’s commentary refers to: Herbert G. Wood, *Quakerism and The Future of the Church* (London: The Swarthmore Press, Ltd., 1920).

<sup>154</sup> William H. Thorpe, *Quakers and Humanists* (London: Friends Home Service Committee, 1968), 16.



only acknowledge a chastened vision of the ‘inward Light’, which required the graceful action of God in order to come to its full development within the human person. For Wood, this aversion to human perfectibility resulted from both his intense awareness of the extent of human sinfulness and his insistence that faith in Christ be the necessary avenue through which the human gained any sense of union with God.<sup>155</sup> As a result, Thorpe argues that Wood rejected the equating of the Inner Light and the ‘Christ within’. Wood instead insisted that the Inner Light is the spirit of humanity seeking union with Christ.<sup>156</sup> In this, Wood agreed with Braithwaite's vision of a humanity created to be in relationship with God. Both Wood and Thorpe chastened that vision, however, insisting on a greater level of human sinfulness and separation from God than Braithwaite would accept.

Despite Thorpe's argument for the value of Wood's chastened view of human nature, Beth Allen argues that the ‘design of our creation’ concept has become the dominant strand within contemporary Liberal Quakerism. Allen stresses that this concept is both hopeful about the possibility of human perfectibility and rooted in a positive view of human goodness.<sup>157</sup> Allen argues that this inherent ‘God-shaped hole’ within humans gives humanity the ability to respond to God's invitation for relationship. This design has epistemic significance for humanity, Allen asserts, in that it provides the means of having a complete knowledge of the ontological reality of human existence: an existence foundationally marked by relationship with God.

### *Poetic Subjectivity*

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid, 18.

<sup>157</sup> Allen, *Ground and Spring*, 24.

While the lecturers cited may not be in union about the nature of the ‘potentiality’, as Hodgkin terms the element within humanity that desires relationship with God, they do appear to be in unity about the universality of the Light which reaches out to itself. A school of thought exists within the lectures which plays with this concept, arguing that as individual humans are uniquely subjective, it would be most appropriate to state that the universal Light interacts with individual humans by means of a ‘light’ unique to that specific individual. In this construction, ‘light’ would mean the truth of that individual human’s experience of God. This view takes the subjectivity of human experience seriously.

In that vein, T.R. Glover argued that a light comes to each individual from God, analogous to the individual lights of a string of lamps at a railway station. While all of the lamps cast out ‘light’, which when combined with the other lamps creates a unified light for the station, each lamp is still casting out its own individual ‘light’, which could be said to be unique to that one specific lamp. Glover insisted that one can confirm one’s light is the ‘real light’ from God by comparing their light to that of others. Yet, Glover argued that God has many lights, all of which may serve to illumine the truth of God in ways that might seem confusing and contradictory when compared to each other.<sup>158</sup>

By this, Glover related the Liberal Quaker sense that ‘truth’ was not the reserve of one tradition, and that there are in fact many equally valid perspectives on ‘truth. This is still an extant perspective, as Christine Davis used very similar language in a recent lecture when claiming that each individual must follow ‘the Light which is’ in each person. She asserted that

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<sup>158</sup> T.R. Glover, *The Nature and Purpose of a Christian Society* (London: Headley Brothers Publishers Ltd., 1912), 8.

God gives each person what could be termed an individual task and that God grants each person their own 'light' with which to illuminate their path towards achieving that task.<sup>159</sup>

The ambiguity of this poetic language means that Glover and Davis could be interpreted to say that, in fact, the Light is not universal and does not unite humanity in an interdependent whole. That would be an incomplete reading of Glover and Davis' metaphorical use of 'light'. It appears that they are instead explicitly recognising the inevitably subjective experience of the Light that each individual human will have.

### ***Human Experience of the Light***

Other lecturers engage with the universality of the Light by focusing on the unity that this universality creates between subjective humans. In this construction, the universal nature of the Light is experienced subjectively by each individual human, yet the commonality of the experience of a universal transcends human individuality, thus creating unity. Lecturers approach this construction mainly through the use of experiential theology.

Hugh Doncaster emphasised the element of unity between God and humanity, arguing that Liberal Quaker experience has demonstrated that unity with the Light is available to all who seek such unity.<sup>160</sup> This experiential theology of human unity is developed through the experience of unity in worship, yet may not be initially obvious to plain observation. Doncaster acknowledged that the individual experience of Liberal Quakers can sometimes lead a person to proclaim an understanding of a truth that the rest of the gathered community of Quakers may not have experienced, demonstrating that spiritual unity does not immediately lead to a unity on the

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<sup>159</sup> Christine A.M. Davis, *Minding the Future* (London: Quaker Books, 2008), 48.

<sup>160</sup> Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain, *Quaker Faith and Practice* (London: Britain Yearly Meeting, 1994), 26.65.

plane of lived human reality. Doncaster stressed, however, that the spiritual unity of all humans in the Light will eventually bring humans into unity on the lived plane, and that those who are consistently in disunion with the rest of the group may not actually be in true pursuit of unity within the group.

G.K. Hibbert hinted at the belief that the presence of the Light within the human person can lead to human perfection, both through the influence of the perfect God within the human person and through the mechanism of the Light's guidance of human behaviour towards the divine ideal. Hibbert asserted that God's Incarnation within the human person is actually a necessity. Hibbert argued that as God's love for humanity demands relationship, God must therefore become incarnate in order to grant humanity the 'inward experience' necessary to provide complete awareness of the joy that can come through relationship with God. This inward experience, Hibbert argued, is far more effective in converting the human desire for God than any outward doctrine could ever be. This direct experience of God occurs whenever humans experience anything that lifts them out of their mundane existence and compels them towards compassionate behaviour towards others. Hibbert suggested that these experiences occur at the point where God and humanity are in relationship, the point where humans are 'most truly human', and are thus made perfect by their relationship with God.<sup>161</sup> Hibbert asserted that these experiences, and the perfection that results, can only occur due to the action of the Light within the human person.<sup>162</sup>

Hibbert made the rather paradoxical claim that the presence of the Light within the human person grants the human the ability to either deny the relationship with God, and thus to sin, or to seek relationship with God, and thus to be made perfect in God. This occurs due to the

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<sup>161</sup> G.K. Hibbert, *The Inner Light and Modern Thought* (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1924), 55.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid*, 12.

divine efforts towards converting the human heart to seek relationship with God, as described above. Hibbert asserted that God desires true relationship with humanity, a relationship chosen by humanity and pursued as a result of the human desire for such a relationship and simply due to some divine command which would compel humanity into relationship.<sup>163</sup> This introduces the element of choice into the divine/human relationship. Hibbert made the rather logical claim that a choice can only be truly said to be a ‘choice’ if it is made freely, and without compulsion. Thus, Hibbert contended, the Light has the task of guiding the human person towards relationship with the Light. As this relationship involves a human decision, ethical choices result which not only impact humans but the rest of creation as well.<sup>164</sup>

E. B. Castle agreed with the view of the Light as an active force, terming the Light a ‘catalyst’. The ‘catalytic action’ of the Light inspires human action through the power of the love God has for humanity and which flows from God to humanity through the action of the Light reaching out to humanity.<sup>165</sup> Castle asserted that the Light is thus a guiding force, both inspiring humans towards change and actively pushing humanity towards relationship with each other through the active re-direction of human conduct towards others.

Shibley Brayshaw agreed that the Light guides human behaviour and sentiment, yet cautioned against forgetting the necessarily communal element of the action of the Light. Brayshaw asserted that the guidance given by the Spirit is actually a communal guidance, due to the presence of each individual in the wider spiritual community of the Light. This communal nature of the spiritual community ensures that individual judgement does not become the ‘supreme arbiter of right and wrong’. Brayshaw claimed that viewing the Light as communal

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid, 27.

<sup>165</sup> E.B. Castle, *The Undivided Mind* (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1941), 42.

event and presence ensures that the Light is shared amongst all people in the community both as a communal experience and a gift from God to the individual.<sup>166</sup>

The lecturers are united in their acceptance of the Liberal Quaker doctrine of the Light as God's presence within the human person, an 'incarnate' presence which has the capacity to bring the human person into greater levels of relationship with the God. A spectrum exists within the lecturers about the capacity of that Light to influence humanity, depending upon the potential of human nature to be 'improved', or even 'perfected'. Thorpe and Wood represent a minority perspective, which argues for a chastened view of human nature where human sinfulness creates a barrier with God which only the incarnate Christ could overcome. Thus, Wood in particular would argue for an equation of 'Light as Incarnate' with 'Light as Christ'. The majority view, however, argues for a positive view of human nature which can be perfected by the presence of God, meaning that the Light opens space for humanity to develop a fully interdependent relationship. This is significant because it claims that the incarnate presence of the Light within the human person works in partnership with the inherent human potentiality to improve and to reject sin in a continuous effort to heal division among humans, and between humans and God. Thus, this vision of the Light makes the claim that the partnership with the incarnate Light confers upon humans the capacity to overcome, and to heal, sin. Humans are thus active agents in their own reconciliation with each other and in their atonement with God.

### **3.5.b Light as Christ**

Liberal Quakers have a variety of ways of interpreting the relationship between the Light and Christ. Liberal Quakerism is notably ambiguous about the form that Christ, Spirit, and Light

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<sup>166</sup> Shipley N. Brayshaw, *Unemployment and Plenty* (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1933), 120.

take, their functions, and the nature of their relationships with each other. As Christ relates to the Light, Liberal Quakers are more comfortable framing the relationship in the manner of the metaphor of Christ as the incarnate Spirit of God than in the more explicitly Christological constructs of the early Quakers, such as the Light of Christ, Inward Christ, or Seed of Christ. The Swarthmore Lecturers discuss the relationship between Light and Christ either through their interpretation of what the 'Light of Christ' metaphor meant to early Quakers, or through their interpretations of the Light as synonymous with the Spirit of Christ. The lecturers express views that run the spectrum from explicitly Christological through a Universalist Christ Spirit, to a Universalist re-envisioning of Christ as incarnate event where 'Christ' is representative of the presence of God within the flow of human events. This variety reflects the diversity of Liberal Quaker Christology in general.

Hugh Doncaster presented the most explicitly Christological, and also most straightforward, construction of the Light as Christ. Doncaster asserted that the inward light is most closely related in character to Jesus Christ. Whether this is termed the Light of Christ or the Christ Within, Doncaster argued that the Light is effectively Christ, and nothing else. Doncaster dismisses any vision of the Light as the light of conscience. He also asserted that the Light is universal, and the same for all people, at all times, dismissing any construction which would argue for a unique light for each individual.<sup>167</sup> The Light is Christ, Doncaster stated unequivocally. Doncaster argued that it is only in Christ that people can gain a complete sense of the character of the Light, and through that Light, gain any sense of the character of human existence.

John Hoyland used explicitly Christological language in his construction of the Light as Christ, yet his construction was much more complex than Doncaster's, and he integrates a

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<sup>167</sup> Hugh Doncaster, *God in Every Man* (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1963), 4.

critique of the cross alongside a creative imagining of the crucifixion of the Light. Hoyland established that the Light was crucified on the cross, asserting therefore that Jesus Christ is the Light. Hoyland argued that the cross is the place where the goodness of the 'Light Divine' does battle with the forces of evil and 'truthlessness' who desire to blot out the Light. Through the power of the cross, however, the Light conquers all dark and 'filthy things'. Hoyland made an interesting turn at this point, however, constructing a 'Spirit of the Cross' which represents the power of the 'Divine Light of Christlikeness' in its most complete and perfect manifestation.<sup>168</sup> This Spirit of the Cross is the means by which humanity may do battle with evil, and the means by which humans may inspire others to join in bearing the Spirit of the Cross to build the world which the Light desires by aligning themselves with the Cross Spirit. Hoyland asserted that the Spirit of the Cross is an eternal power existing in each individual human, which can thus inspire every human to recognise the value of self-sacrifice in the purpose of achieving the will of God. The Light, in this construction, is both the specific performative act of self-sacrifice of Christ on the Cross and the universal spirit of self-sacrifice typified by the performative act of the cross.

Hoyland was still within the bounds of Christian theology with this construction, however, for it sounds remarkably similar to the later atonement theologies of René Girard and J. Denny Weaver.<sup>169</sup> Girard and Weaver both focus their Christologies on the 'spirit of sacrifice' in Jesus' willingness to die, and the salvific implications of that willingness to bear the violence of the cross. Yet, Girard and Weaver, along with Hoyland, reject any value given to the cross itself, or to the violence which stems from it. Instead, they all emphasise the capacity for the crucified Christ to engage in non-violent battle with evil, subverting both the violence of the cross and all subsequent violence.

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<sup>168</sup> Hoyland, *Light of Christ*, 63.

<sup>169</sup> Girard's and Weaver's atonement views were both discussed in chapter two.



Grubb envisioned the Light as Christ metaphor through the lens of the Spirit. Grubb asserted that humans gain a direct, individual experience of the ‘inward Christ’ as Light. This ‘Divine Word’ influences human behaviour through its presence at the core of human existence. This also occurs through the personal presence of the ‘Holy Spirit’ of Christ in the souls of each Christian believer. This is a rather complicated, and confusing construction. Grubb appeared to assert the interpenetration of the Holy Spirit, Christ, the Light, and even an ambiguous construct of ‘God’ as divine presence while asserting that they are somehow all expressions of the same ‘Light’. Grubb explained that this vision of God can only come through the direct experience of God, which is unique to Liberal Quakerism.<sup>170</sup> Grubb also asserted that without the witness of Liberal Quakers to the inexplicable experience of the interpenetrative God, Liberal Quakerism would simply be one amongst any number of other Christian sects. Grubb did assert, however, that Liberal Quakerism would simply be a small ‘ethical society’ without the testimony of the importance of the historic Jesus as the revealer of God. Grubb thus argued that Liberal Quakerism must, by necessity, be a ‘Christian’ community, even as he developed an overlapping construct of Christ as both Light and as the Spirit of Christ.<sup>171</sup>

Damaris Parker-Rhodes introduced the construct of the ‘Cosmic Christ’, a vision of Christ within as both the truth of human interdependence with God, and the Incarnational place where God is immanent within the entire universe.<sup>172</sup> This is a construct of Christ as a universal figure which gathers all of the universe into interdependent relationship with him. Parker-Rhodes argues that this construct of the Light as a Cosmic, Universal Christ takes a positive view of the

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<sup>170</sup> Grubb, *The Historic and Inward Christ*, 72.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid*, 73.

<sup>172</sup> Damaris Parker-Rhodes, *Truth: A Path and not a Possession* (London: Friends Home Service Committee, 1977), 34. This reflects the work of Matthew Fox, and his work on Cosmic Christology and interdependence theologies, most notably his book *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ: The Healing of Mother Earth and the Birth of a Global Renaissance* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1988).

transformative power of human goodness, while not denying the necessity for Christ to be active in fostering the kind of mystical relationship between Light and humanity which will facilitate the transformative spiritual experience of unity with God.<sup>173</sup> Parker-Rhodes is using explicitly Christian language, reminiscent of the tradition of Christian interdependence theologies.<sup>174</sup>

Perhaps not surprisingly, all of the lecturers who elaborate their perspectives on the metaphor of Light as Christ emphasise that this is not a metaphor of exclusion, where this ‘Christ’ is only open to those who profess a belief in Jesus as Saviour. For these lecturers, ‘Christ’ is itself a symbolic construct which represents the unique Incarnation of God within the human person of Jesus. Lecturers lie along a spectrum of what the symbol ‘Christ’ means, from Doncaster who asserts that the Light is the Christ universally present within all humans, to the somewhat ill-defined Spirit Christology of Grubb, where Christ is a special locus for the Spirit of God which is already present within all people, at least in some degree. The value of this diversity is that it echoes the diversity of Christological perspectives within theologies of atonement and reconciliation regarding the interdependence of the Incarnation, ‘Christ’, and humanity.

### **3.5.c Light as Holy Spirit**

The model of Light as Holy Spirit is not developed in much detail in the lectures; instead, what is defined as ‘Spirit’ is most often assumed to be the same as what is defined as ‘the Light’. As noted above, this partly reflects the lack of a sustained theological development of the Holy Spirit in Liberal Quakerism. It also reflects the Liberal Quaker emphasis on Pneumo-presentism,

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<sup>173</sup> Parker-Rhodes, *Truth: A Path and not a Possession*, 34.

<sup>174</sup> This is discussed in detail in chapter two.

with an amorphous 'Spirit' representing the Divine that is immanently present throughout creation. This 'Spirit' can be understood as the Holy Spirit incarnated in the creation, and thus inherently the form of God that Liberal Quakers mean when they refer to the mystical experience of God. The lecturers develop a variety of different language models to express this interplay between Holy Spirit and Light, demonstrating the potential for both Christian and Universalist conceptions of Spirit in Liberal Quaker theology: the Light is the Divine present within the human soul; the Light and the Holy Spirit are fundamentally different; and the Inner Light is the Holy Spirit.

***Light is the Divine Present Within the Human Soul***

John Hoyland was very imprecise with his construction of the Spirit. He stated that God is the 'personal Spirit' of truth, goodness, and beauty, yet does not define the boundaries of any of these terms. He then stated that the Light is the likeness of God present in the creation, while also being the 'fruits of His Spirit', which create the likeness of God within humanity. This likeness, which is the 'Light', exists in the form of individualised, personal 'spirits' within each person participating in the same truth, beauty, and goodness as the Holy Spirit. Hoyland argued that humans are able to perceive the presence of the Light within others when they perceive truth, beauty, and goodness emanating from their person, in the same fashion that the Light shines out from the person.<sup>175</sup> In this construction, therefore, the spirits within each person are aspects of the Holy Spirit, while the Light is the likeness of God incarnate within each human soul. This begs the question: does the human soul have different aspects of God incarnate within itself, and if so, is God split in some fashion, presenting different aspects of God to each human soul?

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<sup>175</sup> Hoyland, *Light of Christ*, 34.

John Hughes presents a more straight-forward construction than Hoyland, stating that the Inner Light is the Incarnation of God within the human person. In addition, Hughes argues that God can effect the conversion and salvation of each human through the ‘operation of the Holy Spirit’ within each human soul.<sup>176</sup> This construction presents the same issue as Hoyland, however: is the human person separate from the human soul, with the Inner Light incarnate in the former and the Holy Spirit actively present in the latter?

### ***Fundamental Differences Between Light and Holy Spirit***

Dunstan presents a similar construction to Thompson, affirming that the Inward Light is the doctrine of the intimate and ‘immediate guidance of the Holy Spirit’. Dunstan dismisses that this intimate presence of God within the human person allows for any pantheistic interpretations, however. He asserts that the doctrine of the Light does not grant divinity to humanity, nor does it immediately confer upon humans the perfect goodness of God. Dunstan firmly states the Light is simply the means of perceiving the guidance and presence of the Holy Spirit, which is God present in the world.<sup>177</sup>

Dunstan is the only lecturer to make such a claim, however. Doncaster makes the opposite claim, stating that the majority of Liberal Quakers equate the Holy Spirit and the Light, yet maintain both terms in order to appeal to different audiences. Doncaster claims that the Holy Spirit is considered to be the more explicitly Christian term and applies to the work of God in the world since the earthly life of Jesus. Doncaster assumes with this construction that, for Christians, the expression of God termed ‘Holy Spirit’ entered the world during the Pentecost

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<sup>176</sup> Hughes, *The Light of Christ in a Pagan World*, 65.

<sup>177</sup> Edgar G. Dunstan, *Quakers and the Religious Quest* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1956), 22.

event. Doncaster then argues that Liberal Quakers question this assumption, stating that Liberal Quakers are unwilling to dismiss the possibility that God worked in the human person before the historic event of the Pentecost in the same manner as the Holy Spirit is testified to work in the human person after Pentecost. Doncaster uses the example of Jeremiah, arguing that the prophetic voice was clearly inspired by the work of the Holy Spirit, yet Doncaster's understanding of Christian theology limits his ability to use such terminology. The distinction between 'Holy Spirit' and 'Light' is thus fundamentally important, Doncaster asserts, leaving Liberal Quakers little choice but to continue to utilise the construction of 'Light' instead of 'Holy Spirit'.<sup>178</sup>

### ***The Inner Light is the Holy Spirit***

Some lecturers do not have the same need to parse out those differences, however, instead choosing to equate all three terms using the method of listing them consecutively, leaving the sentence construction to make the argument of their equivalence. Silvanus Thompson represents the Liberal Quaker confusion regarding the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Light. He stated that the human soul possesses a faculty with which the person can perceive the intimate presence of God and sense the guidance of God.<sup>179</sup> Thompson then stated that the Inner Light is simply another term for the doctrine of intimate presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit.<sup>180</sup> In this construction, it is not immediately clear whether the Light is the means of perceiving the guidance and presence of the Holy Spirit, whether the Light and Holy Spirit are both present within the human soul and act together to guide the human person, or whether the

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<sup>178</sup> Doncaster, *God in Every Man*, 9.

<sup>179</sup> Thompson, *The Quest for Truth*, 108.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid*, 109.

Holy Spirit and the Light are different expressions of the same reality, where the Spirit is the existence of God beyond the human person and the Light is the ‘face’ that the Spirit shows to the human soul in order to translate the divine existence into a form that the human soul can comprehend. This parsing of the different roles of the Holy Spirit and the Light ends as soon as it begins, however, with no more said on the subject by Thompson.

Richenda Scott stated that the Light ‘is Christ, or the Holy Spirit, the power and grace of God’. Richenda Scott was unconcerned about distinctions between the terms and therefore implicitly disagreed with Dunstan, arguing that the Light is God, and not an avenue for accessing the presence of God.<sup>181</sup> Janet Scott makes the same claim of equivalence with her statement that ‘this Spirit, of Light, or God, reaches out’ to each person directly.<sup>182</sup> By using the conjunction ‘or’, Janet Scott acknowledges that the terms could have different definitions. Peter Eccles, however, dismisses such a concern, listing them in such a fashion where their equivalence is assumed. In the context of an argument about the human ability to experience the Divine, Eccles terms the Divine ‘God, the Holy Spirit, the Inner Light’.<sup>183</sup>

Earlier lecturers saw a need to express distinctions between the terms to either ensure that the distinctiveness of the Holy Spirit was not subsumed by the Light. Recent Liberal Quaker theological development, represented by Janet Scott and Eccles, sees no reason for such distinctions. These terms now have no discernible definitional difference and refer to the exact same phenomenon: the immanent existence of God within the human person.

### 3.5.d Light as Divine Interdependence

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<sup>181</sup> Scott, *Tradition and Experience*, 71.

<sup>182</sup> Scott, *What Canst Thou Say?*, 4.

<sup>183</sup> Eccles, *The Presence in the Midst*, 64.

The strong emphasis on interdependence between the Divine and the creation in the metaphorical theology of the Light lends itself well to being adapted as an alternative model of divine interdependence for theologies of atonement and reconciliation. Interdependence between humans, and between humans and God, is the essence of reconciliation, in that interdependence provides the impetus for pursuing the practical work of healing on the human level. Theologies of atonement and reconciliation also places a strong emphasis on the experience of inter-relationship between God and humanity, developing theologies of interdependence such as *Ubuntu* theology and Spirit Christology based on the human experience of inter-relationship with the Divine through prayer and the practical realities of living. The openness and flexibility of the metaphor of 'Light' would be assets as theologies of atonement and reconciliation seeks to develop contextual theologies for ethnic conflicts around the world. A notable trend within Liberal Quakerism is to interpret the early Quaker vision of Light as one that emphasises the theological aspect of human union with God through a Light of Christ which is accessible to all, and the ethical aspect of a responsibility to care for each individual human due to the presence of 'that of God' within them. This generally falls into two themes: Light as Ethical Influence, and the Shift from Light of Christ to Universal Light.

### ***Light as Ethical Influence***

Dandelion suggests that the shift in terminology from the 'Inward Light' of earlier Quakerism to 'Inner Light' gave greater impetus towards this re-evaluation and opened space for Liberal Quakers to take the idea of God present within the person to its logical conclusion of an

innate human goodness.<sup>184</sup> This effectively led to Liberal Quakerism moving towards an understanding of the Light as an innate aspect of humanity. The implication for those who take the ethical influence view is that this human goodness has an inevitable impact on human action.

Russell Brain was representative of the ethical view. In the midst of quoting Rachel Hadley King, Brain claimed that George Fox assumed that the Light was always available to all people, at all times, should they simply desire to receive the Light into their hearts and experience the joy of unity with all other people through the same Light.<sup>185</sup> Brain then claimed that this assumption of universal union through the divine Light had inevitably ethical consequences. Brain rested his entire claim on his assumption that Fox's insistence that the experience of discovering God through worship of God would lead to the conversion of the individual person and their rejection of 'Sin and Unrighteousness'.<sup>186</sup> The Liberal Quaker view of sin as communal in nature, and righteousness as linked to social betterment is present here, especially in the easy link between 'Sin and Unrighteousness' and ethics.

Wilson stated the link between presence and action explicitly by internalised the action of the Light within the human person, claiming that the presence of the Light could serve as a means of reforming the inner life of each person.<sup>187</sup> Wilson argued that this 'inner cleansing' is the main function of what he terms the 'Inner Light', effectively privatising the experience of God and drafting the Light in the Liberal Quaker mission of continual human self-improvement.<sup>188</sup>

Richenda Scott made the same argument, with an added acknowledgement of – and justification for – Liberal Quaker theological imprecision when speaking about the Light.

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<sup>184</sup> Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 132.

<sup>185</sup> Brain, *Man, Society, and Religion*, 72.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid*, 71.

<sup>187</sup> William E. Wilson, *Our Response to God* (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1935), 13.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid*, 17.



Richenda Scott argued that the Light is an expression of the ‘objective reality incarnate in the human being’, a minimum aspect of the ‘absolute’ that had been granted to all people.<sup>189</sup>

Richenda Scott claimed that this expansive and indeterminate term arose from the experience of Quakers struggling to translate their overlapping and ill-defined experience of the different aspects of God in an all-encompassing terminology.

Henry Cadbury took an expanded perspective on the imprecision surrounding theology of the Light. He included both the language of Christian experience about God and the imprecision of Christian language about the experience of God throughout Christian history. Cadbury argued that this consistent inconsistency in the language of lay people, and of those not involved in the crafting of Christian doctrine, allows for a similar inconsistency in Liberal Quaker constructions of the experience of the Light.<sup>190</sup> As such, imprecision is not only unavoidable in Liberal Quaker theology, but imprecision is also a demonstration of the inherent Christian roots of Liberal Quaker theology. This both reflects the Liberal Quaker aversion to the precision of systematic theology as well their insistence, echoed by Edgar Dunstan, amongst others, on crafting a theology primarily interpreted through the lens of human experience.<sup>191</sup>

### ***The Shift from Light of Christ to Universal Light***

Phyllis Mack argues that early Quakers felt a strong sense that the ‘community of Friends formed one single living organism’.<sup>192</sup> Liberal Quakerism, with its expanded, universal, vision of human and divine interdependence, has the potential to envision the entire community of

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<sup>189</sup> Scott, *Tradition and Experience*, 11.

<sup>190</sup> Cadbury, *Quakerism and Early Christianity*, 36.

<sup>191</sup> Dunstan, *Quakers and the Religious Quest*, 21.

<sup>192</sup> Phyllis Mack, *Visionary Women: Ecstatic Prophecy in Seventeenth-Century England* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992), 209.

humanity as forming one single living organism. This expansive Light creates a fellowship amongst those willing to listen to the Spirit moving through their consciences, and to grow accordingly into union with that Spirit. Following these ideas to a Universalist conclusion, Edward Grubb was one of the earliest twentieth-century Quaker thinkers to develop a Universalist framework of the Light. His theological thought utilised the imprecision of Liberal Quaker Trinitarian constructions of the Light to develop Universalist models of the Light which were both Christian and Universalist. I argue that he lay foundations which could be further developed in the creation of explicitly Universal models of Light.

In his work, *Authority and the Light Within*, Grubb built upon the foundation laid by George Fox and Robert Barclay, viewing the incarnate Christ as a bridge, where the Incarnation brings the eternal Light of God into the life of humanity.<sup>193</sup> Grubb locates this vision of Christ as bridge in the high Christology of the Gospel of John, where the Johannine Christology reconciles two apparently conflicting visions, that of an ever-immanent Light which has always been deeply embedded within the creation, and of an ever-transcendent Light of Christ which has always existed in a plane beyond the creation.<sup>194</sup> Grubb acknowledged that Logos Christology had successfully brought the two aspects into an ‘indissoluble union’.

Grubb did not accept that Logos Christology is the only way of bridging this gap, however. He advanced a form of Spirit Christology by stating that the Holy Spirit is equivalent

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<sup>193</sup> Edward Grubb, *Authority and the Light Within* (London: James Clarke and Company, 1909), 115.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid, 121. ‘Johannine’ Christology is a construction of Christology developed from the vision of Jesus as presented in the Gospel of John. This vision is termed ‘high Christology’ (as opposed to ‘low Christology’ such as is found in the Gospel of Mark), as it places strong emphasis on Jesus’s divine nature. A ‘high Christology’ does not ignore or dismiss the human nature of Jesus (Docetism), it simply emphasises the importance of, and focuses greater attention on, the divine nature of Jesus. The high Christology of John is placed at the very beginning of the text, where John 1:1 claims that Jesus (representing a very explicit expression of ‘Logos’, or ‘Word’, Christology) is the eternal Word of God, present with God since the beginning of creation. John 1:2 repeats this claim, and John 1:3 claims that all of existence came through the Jesus, as the Word of God. This does not reject the human nature of Jesus so much as simply not mention it. The Gospel of John relates aspects of Jesus’s humanity later in the text, including his capacity for suffering and human emotion (the terseness of John 11:35 – ‘Jesus wept’ – is one notable example). Yet, this strong emphasis on divinity is why this gospel is noted for its high Christology.

to the immanent life of God within humanity, including the human life of Jesus.<sup>195</sup> Grubb disagreed with the early Friends, therefore, seeing in John a union of God with humanity that existed since the beginning of creation. Grubb felt that every ‘self-conscious and reasoning being, who is truly a person’ possesses the Light Within as an innate aspect of their nature.<sup>196</sup>

Grubb acknowledged that many people do not appear to act as if they possessed much, if any, of the divine Light within themselves. Grubb stated that as God is indivisible and omnipresent in equal measure everywhere, all people must thus possess equal endowment of the Light. The key for Grubb lay with the extent to which each person lives with, and obeys the guidance of the Light.<sup>197</sup> Humanity is a partner with God, where the Light is translated into the ‘light of God’, guiding humanity, only when humanity allows God to bring humanity into union with God.<sup>198</sup> Grubb argued that humans must accept that the Inner Light resides within us and act accordingly. This was not a question of salvation for Grubb, however, as he stated that humans have the potential to be in union with God and only gain existential loneliness by rejecting God's offer of partnership.<sup>199</sup> Grubb equated sin with separation from God, stating that sin promises a 'higher individuality' to people, raising them to the level of God.<sup>200</sup> This echoes the witness of theologies of atonement and reconciliation regarding sin as separation and superiority.<sup>201</sup> The implications for liberal individualism in Grubb's construction of sin are clear: by seeking one's

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<sup>195</sup> Grubb, *Authority and the Light Within*, 125.

<sup>196</sup> At times, Grubb seems to conflate the Light Within and a ‘Universal Consciousness’: ‘The “Light Within” is the outcome of that Divine element in man, that spark of the Universal Consciousness, which makes him a self-determining agent, and not a mere creature of impulse...It is the presence of this Divine faculty in man that has produced the Conscience, and has been the cause of its gradual illumination’. Ibid, 107.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid, 69.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid, 62.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid, 97.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid, 97.

<sup>201</sup> I examine this in section 2.3, with a special focus on separation and superiority.

own individual desires, separated from the Universal Consciousness of the Light Within, humans actually lose grip on the thing that makes one a human: the relationship with God.<sup>202</sup>

Grubb began to examine the connection between the presence of the Light in each human and any attendant moral and ethical consequences of such a close relationship. Grubb framed the Light as a guide to ‘conscience’, where conscience is that sense within humanity that itself guides humanity towards the good. As Grubb states, the Light has a more expansive plane than that which is granted to the word ‘conscience’. However, Grubb stated that the function of conscience is to remind humans of their obligation to uphold moral duties of a common life, and not simply to uphold one's personal, individual obligations to those who directly impact their life.<sup>203</sup>

Two lecturers demonstrate how these themes could be developed further. Thomas Hodgkin examined similar themes, describing the conscience as a ‘hearing ear’, which guided the person toward right action through the perceptible guidance of the Holy Spirit in their life, thus making a direct link between the conscience and God.<sup>204</sup> Brinton made this connection more explicitly moral, stating that the Light is both the source of knowledge of good and evil and all religious truth, while also serving as the universal source of power to act on that knowledge. Brinton argued that unity with and obedience to the Light are the main actions that humans can perform in the pursuit of their salvation.<sup>205</sup> According to Brinton, the Light uses the Conscience

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<sup>202</sup> Thomas Hodgkin spoke in very similar terms: ‘He invites us to be fellow-workers with Him, and delights in our willing service; but if we stand aloof, and say “we will not work in Thy vineyard, we prefer to lounge idly in the marketplace”, He leaves us to our stupid isolation...It is all very well to glorify the privilege of humanity in having the opportunity of hearing a Divine Voice, and perceiving a heavenly inward Light; but, unless we obey that Voice, and follow that Light, we wander and stumble in the darkness.’ Thomas Hodgkin, *Human Progress and the Inward Light* (London: Headley Brothers, 1911), 43.

<sup>203</sup> Grubb, *Authority and the Light Within*, 105.

<sup>204</sup> Hodgkin, *Human Progress and the Inward Light*, 43.

<sup>205</sup> Howard Brinton, *Friends for 300 Years* (Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 1964), 44.

as a means of connecting to the person in order to bring the person into union with God and with God's will for humanity.

I do not claim that the shift in an understanding of the Light from the exclusively Christian perspective of the early Quakers to the expansive, Universalist perspective of the Liberal Quakers is a corruption of the theology of the Light, nor that this shift might speak to a truth about the universal accessibility of God and the ethical implications that stem from such accessibility. As shown in previous chapters, Liberal Quaker experiential theology is one aspect of a stream of experiential theologies with Universalist implications. This chapter argues that the Liberal Quaker vision of the Light is a robust model of God that places exclusively Christian language of the form of God and the nature of human relationship with God alongside Universalist language of the same.

In terms of the interdependence models of God presented in theologies of atonement and reconciliation,<sup>206</sup> the Liberal Quaker vision of the Light is unique in its ability to speak to both Christian views of Christ/Spirit and to Universalist visions of 'the Divine nature'. The universal interdependence of the creation within the universal Light is the most inclusive model of God present in theologies of atonement and reconciliation, and thus can serve as a useful alternative to the exclusively Christocentric models present in other reconciliation theologies. The mystical construction of the concept of the Light creates possibilities for the healing experience of reconciliation to the other to be recognised in theologies of atonement and reconciliation.

### **3.5.e Light as Mystical Experience**

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<sup>206</sup> I examined these models in chapter two.

The experience of the Light is often termed a ‘mystical’ experience. While ‘mystical’ is generally understood to be connected to the direct, unmediated experience of interaction with the Divine, the ‘experiential’ nature of interacting with an ill-defined divine presence lends both the term and the language used to describe the ‘mystical’ experience with a marked imprecision. Dunstan, for example, described the experience of the ‘Inward Light’ as mystical experience of the close and intimate awareness of the presence of God, for he equated Light with God. He failed to give more framework to this experience beyond that it occurred and that God was fully present.<sup>207</sup> Curle, however, acknowledges the ultimately ‘irrational’ and unprovable nature of the mystical experience of the Inner Light. He then attempts to explain that his awareness of the experience of the Light strikes such a ‘deep chord within’ himself that he has not found any rational argument against the mystical existence of the Light that effectively counteracts the power of his experience.<sup>208</sup> The experience is thus its own definition, provides its own proof, and offers its own definition. Interestingly, while the experience is inherently subjective, and while lecturers admit that it is indescribable, there is a notable commonality about the language used to describe the experience. The experience is also most commonly described as occurring during certain events: meeting for worship, in the midst of meditation, or as a transcendent moment when present in nature. The concept of the ‘mystical’ in Liberal Quaker understanding is rather complex, however, without one commonly accepted meaning. Following Rufus Jones’ influence, early lecturers spoke of the mystical in terms of the direct individual experience of God. Critical re-assessment of this definition has eventually developed, and instead emphasised the corporate experience of God.

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<sup>207</sup> Dunstan, *Quakers and the Religious Quest*, 25.

<sup>208</sup> Curle, *True Justice*, 11.

### ***Individual***

Those who define mysticism as the direct experience of God place great value in the mystical experience, stating that mysticism is not hazy, vague, or peripheral to the Christian tradition.<sup>209</sup> Mysticism is therefore a central aspect of Christianity with a specific definition and practical implications.

Harry Silcock echoed this understanding, defining the mystical approach to experiencing God as a practical one, in particular due to the experience of direct guidance from God implicit in the Liberal Quaker model of experiential worship. Silcock argued that the close connection to God gained through a mystical approach strengthens the person to then go out into the world and do the work of ministry.<sup>210</sup> Silcock emphasised that ‘mystical’ in Quaker tradition has never been in any way related to the esoteric or to the mysterious.<sup>211</sup> ‘Mystical’, in this construction, could thus be defined as anything related to the direct experience of God within the human person, what has been alternately termed ‘spiritual experience’.

### ***Corporate***

Liberal Quakers generally accept the definition, and find meaning in being termed ‘mystical’. Kenneth Barnes, in particular, considered the definition appropriate for what he understands to be the core aspect of Liberal Quaker witness, the emphasis in Liberal Quakerism on gaining a direct experience of God.<sup>212</sup> Barnes quoted the work of Evelyn Underhill on

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<sup>209</sup> Jones, *Quakerism: A Religion of Life*, 19.

<sup>210</sup> Harry T. Silcock, *Christ and the World's Unrest* (London: The Swarthmore Press, Ltd., 1927), 61.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid*, 12.

<sup>212</sup> Barnes, *The Creative Imagination*, 91.

mysticism to serve his argument that significant similarities exist between the internalised, meditative forms of prayer of both Liberal Quaker meeting and other ‘mystical’ traditions, such as Buddhism. Barnes was critical, theologically, of the emphasis on the individual in the ‘mystical’ experience. Barnes argues that whilst Quakerism has always emphasised the necessity of responding to the spiritual experience by doing practical works of service in the world, the emphasis on the spiritual above ‘concrete symbols of faith’ such as Scripture, sacraments, or a consistent teaching ministry fostered a dualistic sense amongst Liberal Quakers. This dualism, Barnes argued, led to a self-affirming idea amongst Liberal Quakers that one’s own individual experience of God is always more ‘true’ than the corporately-defined visions of other religious traditions. Barnes suggested that this led to the proliferation of a variety of visions of God that Barnes considered insufficient, including ‘esoteric philosophies’.<sup>213</sup>

Neave Brayshaw shared Barnes’ enthusiasm for the categorisation of Liberal Quakerism as ‘mystical’, yet critiqued the emphasis on the individual experience of God to the detriment of the corporate spirituality that, in Brayshaw’s estimation, would curb the worst excesses of individualism and harness that spiritual energy towards the service of corporate action. Brayshaw argued that by crafting a ‘hard individualism’ rooted in the individual spiritual experience of ‘forceful, self-reliant’ people who utilise their spiritual energy for their own solitary purposes, as opposed to channeling any energy towards the corporate body, Liberal Quakerism paradoxically starved itself of the spiritual energy necessary to perform the kind of work that Brayshaw argued God calls upon Liberal Quakerism to perform.<sup>214</sup> Henry Cadbury made a similar argument, but from the perspective of Liberal Quakers who might explain their experience of God as direct, yet

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<sup>213</sup> Ibid, 90.

<sup>214</sup> A. Neave Brayshaw, *The Things That Are Before Us* (London: The Swarthmore Press, Ltd., 1926), 28.



would abjure the tag of ‘mystical’.<sup>215</sup> Cadbury represented what was, at that time, a relatively tiny strain in Quakerism, which has recently developed into a significant minority perspective: that of non-theist Quakers, who are sceptical that ‘spiritual’ experiences had anything beyond a physical manifestation.<sup>216</sup>

Heales and Cook offer a metaphorical construction of the mystical as experience of God, where metaphor serves to define in creative and mysterious language the indescribable human experience of God. The subjectivity of metaphorical language is an inevitable outgrowth of the inherent unknowability of the subjective, mystical experience of God. Heales and Cook insist that the use of metaphor reflects the human side of the mystical experience. God is not only mysterious, however; Heales and Cook note that God is also experienced as intimately immanent with the creation.<sup>217</sup> The mystical experience, therefore, is not inherently mysterious; it is simply experienced as mysterious due to human subjectivity.

I argue that the use of metaphorical language to describe the mystical experience can be practical and communal: practical because it effectively translates subjective experience in a portable fashion that other people can understand and find meaning within; communal because it offers to the community an outline of an individual experience and allows the community the opportunity to determine whether it appropriately communicates the communal experience and understanding of God.

### **3.5.f Light as Truth**

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<sup>215</sup> Cadbury, *Quakerism and Early Christianity*, 42.

<sup>216</sup> David Boulton and Os Cresson, ‘The Making of a Nontheist Tradition’, in *Godless for God's Sake: Nontheism in Contemporary Quakerism*, ed. D. Boulton (Cumbria, UK: Dales Historical Monographs, 2006), 87-100, at 87.

<sup>217</sup> Clift Heales and Cook, *Images and Silence*, 45.

Liberal Quakers place great emphasis on truth, both as a personal expression of integrity and a formal construction of that which is most aligned with the will of God, which is thus the essence of ‘truth’. The Light is seen as that which is most ‘true’, as it is the ground of divine existence. As such, the Light is also viewed as the only proper lens through which to interpret the ‘truthfulness’ of any belief, act, or experience.<sup>218</sup> The subjective nature of human experience leads Liberal Quakers to accept that truth might have different expressions for individuals. This multivalency of truth does not dictate a multivalency of the Light, however; Liberal Quakers argue that the Light is a unity which paradoxically presents itself in different forms to different people. The subjective ‘truth’ of each person's experience is only granted ‘truth’ through its root in the objective ‘truth’ of the Light. The Light can thus be understood to be either the base upon which all truth is rooted or a subjective multivalence of individual ‘truth’.

### ***Base of Truth***

Scott argues that Liberal Quakers root their belief in the truthfulness of the Light in the universal proclamation of the experience of such truth by Quakers throughout history and in the current experience of Liberal Quakers of that same truth. Scott contends that the Light has consistently been used as the basis of authority amongst Quakers due to the consistent experience that the Light can be trusted to be the ‘truth’.<sup>219</sup> This reflects the Liberal Quaker insistence that all theological statements be drawn from, and be responsible to, the experience of both the individual Quaker and the Quaker community.

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<sup>218</sup> Paul Anderson develops this idea further in relation to the congruence of ‘truth’ and Christ, where Christ IS truth. Paul Anderson, ‘On Seeking the Truth (And Being Found By It) – A Christocentric Double Search’, in *Befriending Truth: Quaker Perspectives*, ed. Jeffrey Dudiak (Philadelphia, PA: Friends Association for Higher Education, 2015), 182-95, at 183.

<sup>219</sup> Scott, *What Canst Thou Say?*, 7.

Herbert Wood declared that this inherent ‘truthfulness’ of the Light demonstrates the efficacy of using the Light as the means of discerning the truthfulness of belief and experience. Wood cautioned that this does not extend to any assumptions of universal spiritual truths based on the existence of a universal Light. Wood insisted that as the Light is immanent within human experience, and as human experience is constantly shifting to new circumstances, then the Light also shifts in terms of its response to what might be discerned as ‘truth’ in a new circumstance. The Light is the universal ‘truth’ of an incarnate God which is universally accessible, yet Wood argued that this form of universal truth does not in any way imply that certain ‘truths’ can be determined to be true at one time, and thus determined as true for the remainder of time. ‘Truth’ must constantly be re-evaluated in the context of human subjective experience and temporal context. Wood contended that this process of re-evaluation occurs as a dialogue between the gathered wisdom of humanity throughout time, the insights of people in the current situation, and the Light.<sup>220</sup> Certain ‘truths’ may consistently be determined to be ‘true’, and thus be worthy of trust.<sup>221</sup> Wood insisted, however, that even these ‘truths’ must be re-evaluated through this dialogical process of discernment.<sup>222</sup>

Castle presented a rather simple and straight-forward vision of the Light as the means of discerning truth. Castle expressed faith that the Light will provide any guidance, comfort, or correction that any person might desire. In this construction, the Light acts as a spiritual resource to aid humanity in its confusion as to the rightness of any behaviour or belief. The Light is more than simply a sounding-board for Castle, however. The Light is the loving presence of God within the human person. Castle argued that humans can become finely attuned to the guidance of the Light and can achieve such a sensitive self-awareness to the thought-processes which

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<sup>220</sup> Wood, *Quakerism and The Future of the Church*, 78.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid*, 79.

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid*, 79.

guide human behaviour that humans can be guided by the Light towards a greater level of perfection. This sensitivity is not simply granted to the human person as a result of the immanence of the Light. Humans must do the work necessary to temper their pride through the application of a healthy dose of humility and empathy for others. Castle argued that once humans are able to care for the other and to humbly accept the guidance of the Light, then they will develop the sensitivity necessary to be led by the guidance of the Light.<sup>223</sup>

### ***Multivalency of Truth***

Gerhart Von Shulze Gaevernitz argued that the ‘sensitivity’ to the Light described by Castle is subjective to the individual person, where the Light is broken into multiple rays which then fall on individual people. He asserted that, when each individual ‘light’ is expressed in communion with the other ‘lights’, the combined ‘light’ will represent the unified ‘Light’. He equates these individuated ‘lights’ to the individual experience of ‘truth’, where each person has their own ‘truth’ as one piece of the unified ‘truth’ of the Light.<sup>224</sup> This emphasis on the subjectivity of the experience of God and of truth reflects a significant strand in Liberal Quaker theology and as such is not unique to von Shulze Gaevernitz. He did not assume that this individuation is inherent to human nature, however. He separated himself from other Liberal Quaker thinkers by emphasising that individuation of ‘truth’ and ‘light’ is only a response to the Fall of humanity. Liberal Quakerism places little emphasis on the doctrine of Original Sin and even less emphasis on the doctrine of the Fall. As noted above, however, von Shulze Gaevernitz had a strong sense of sin, especially social sin.

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<sup>223</sup> Castle, *The Undivided Mind*, 37.

<sup>224</sup> Gerhart von Shulze Gaevernitz, *Democracy and Religion: A Study in Quakerism* (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1930), 23.

Light as the lodestar of Truth ultimately depends on how one defines Light and on how one defines the ‘God’ which Light is the ‘truth’ of. This imprecision and openness can be helpful for developing Universalist conceptions of truth. I argue, however, that other Christian traditions might be heartened to see the presence of von Shulze Gaevernitz’s expression of Truth within Liberal Quakerism and might find at least a strand of common theology with which to dialogue with Liberal Quakers in the field of theologies of atonement and reconciliation.

### **3.5.g Light as Salvation**

The salvific significance of the Light for Liberal Quakers falls along two tracks: the Light as liberator from the oppressiveness of human sinfulness, both as self-imposed guilt about human weakness and from literal imprisonment and torture; and the Light as divine warrior against the forces of evil in both the spiritual and physical planes. Salvation is thus, for Liberal Quakers, a question of liberation from evil and violence as opposed to the traditionally Christian soteriological views of salvation from a tormented after-life. Liberal Quakers may be concerned with spiritual forces, but only as they deleteriously impact the present condition of life, and transfer their spiritual evil to a physical evil of oppression, violence, abuse, and the systematic evils of racism, misogyny, and economic inequality.

Adam Curle argues that the Light provides a counter-balance to the oppressive messages of worthlessness and guilt that pervade so many aspects of culture, especially regarding human sinfulness. The effect of these messages, Curle argues, is to destroy the human spirit and to eventually become the evil monsters that these voices, both interior and exterior to the human mind, claim that humanity is, at its core. These messages lead humans to forget that the Light

resides at the core of humanity and the immeasurable love of God for all of creation resides at the core of the Light. Feeling ourselves bereft of the love of God, or the inherent worth that stems from such powerful love, Curle argues that humans choose to fill the hole with lies about the inherent superiority of some humans above others. This is truly a lie, as human superiority makes no sense in the context of the equal, immanent presence of God within each individual human. Curle suggests, therefore, that the Light liberates humanity from the necessity to prove their worth by some ultimately flawed human definition, and as a corollary, casts away the dark emptiness of worthlessness by filling each human with the love of God, regardless of any metric of worth.<sup>225</sup>

Following on his emphasis on social sin relating to Truth, Gerhart von Schulze Gaevernitz developed a model of the Light as liberator of humans from the evils of oppressive social sin, and as liberator for the imprisoned. Social sin, for von Schulze Gaevernitz, is a nexus of oppression, rooted in the pursuit of power and money. Von Schulze Gaevernitz envisioned a long flow of money through banks, the hands of labourers, and oppressive taxation, all feeding the wars of nationalist governments, finally resting in the hands of war profiteers. This social vision of sin has a strong echo in liberation theology, with an obvious socialist critique of capital. Von Schulze Gaevernitz acknowledged that this powerful nexus of oppression can be overwhelming and may lead humans to apathetic resignation in the face of its implacable power.<sup>226</sup> The Light, von Schulze Gaevernitz argued, provides a means of liberation from this imprisonment through action to redeem the social order and a strong and consistent effort to redeem the souls of the

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<sup>225</sup> Curle, *True Justice*, 24.

<sup>226</sup> von Schulze Gaevernitz, *Democracy and Religion*, 88.

humans enmeshed by this order. The Light's immanence is thus transcendent, as it seeks to reform the entire system even as it is held captive by the system.<sup>227</sup>

von Shulze Gaevernitz did not envision that the Light is physically involved in the breaking of physical chains. Instead, von Shulze Gaevernitz argued that the Light strengthens those who are imprisoned and oppressed through the immanent presence of the Light within each human soul.<sup>228</sup> When a person rests on the Light for support in desperation, the Light gives that person a 'liberty of Spirit' through the love of God flowing through the Light into the person.<sup>229</sup> He suggested that this flow of love breaks the oppressive power of the chains, and defeats the purpose of the imprisonment, which is to destroy the spirit of the imprisoned person. This form of salvation finds its echo in the Gospel messages of freedom to captives and the prophetic messages of freedom from oppression.

This vision of the Light has direct implications with theologies of atonement and reconciliation, especially relating to salvation from the network of sinful exclusion of the other, evil present within societal structures, and the false message of redemptive violence developed in relation to theologies of atonement and reconciliation in chapter two, and Liberal Quaker theology above. This model of God deserves much more attention and development as a potential area of commonality between Christian and Universalist reconciliation theologies.

### **3.5.h Light as Beauty**

John Hoyland developed a unique construction of the Light as Beauty, both in its specific, physical forms and as the ground of all 'Beauty' with beauty as a foundation construct

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<sup>227</sup> Ibid, 91.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid, 88.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid, 89.

inherent in the creation relating to the perfection imparted on the creation by the perfect ‘Beauty’ of the Light.<sup>230</sup> He described the Light as the ground of all beauty, which is expressed in humanity through the love of God for the creation and through the joy present in the experience of the immanent presence of the Light.

Hoyland wove a complex metaphor of Light as the point from which all beauty and truth emanates. He began by stating that the love of God is the greatest ‘truth’, and thus the ground of all ‘truth’, where everything that can be understood to be ‘true’ is only true insofar as it serves the divine purpose of spreading the love of God throughout all of creation. Hoyland applied this comparison between the specific and the general with both beauty and goodness, claiming that the love of God is the ground of all ‘beauty’ and ‘good’, where everything that can be said to be ‘beautiful’ and ‘good’ derives that characteristic from the essence of pure ‘beauty’ and ‘good’, the love of God.<sup>231</sup>

In this construction, humans are granted the ability to recognise such individual expressions of truth, beauty, and goodness due to an innate human ‘faculty’ to recognise their core essence, the ‘shining Light of Christlikeness’, in these individual expressions.<sup>232</sup> This faculty with recognising the Light applies to all aspects of the creation, including nature. Hoyland suggests that humans recognise the core ‘Light of the Divine beauty and joy’ emanating through the material expressions of trees, mountains, etc. The Light is what is truly shining, however, and humans can be enlightened to the point of recognising the Light illuminating the material. This applies to the illumination of the intellect or artistic endeavours; Hoyland argued that thinkers and artists can access the ‘Light of the beauty of God’ and express it through their theories and art. Hoyland argues that the joy these thinkers and artists feel as the result of their

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<sup>230</sup> Hoyland is the only Swarthmore Lecturer to develop this construction.

<sup>231</sup> Hoyland, *Light of Christ*, 37.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid*, 57.



efforts is the supreme joy itself, mediated through its expression in their individual experience of such.<sup>233</sup>

Hoyland argued, therefore, that these creators are sharing in the ‘Divine activity’ of creation, just as humans share in the ‘divine activity’ of joy, truth, and goodness when humans are joyous, truthful, and good. Hoyland suggested that humans are gathered into the Light by sharing in the aspects and activities of the Light.<sup>234</sup> The Light in this construction is analogous to a Platonic form, where the Light is the form of all things and everything that humans experience of the creation is a shadow of its form, which is itself a shadow of the form of the Light.<sup>235</sup> This final metaphor demonstrates the value of the diversity and imprecision of Liberal Quaker theological thought for bringing Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation together with nascent Universalist reconciliation theologies. Hoyland’s ‘shining Light of Christlikeness’ is a very similar argument to the one that Hoyland applied to his construction of Light as Christ. This dual applicability of Liberal Quaker theology to both Christian and Universalist themes, coupled with the imprecise nature of that same language allows for Christian themes and language to be translated into Universalist language, while not denying the core truths of either.

### **3.5.i Divine/Human Interdependence in Ham Sok-Hon's Theology**

In this section, I examine the interdependence theology of Ham Sok-Hon as an example of one way that Liberal Quakers have explored the intersections between theologies of conflict and division, theologies of reconciliation, and the slippery boundaries between Christian and Universalist metaphorical theology within Liberal Quaker theology. Similar to the development

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<sup>233</sup> Ibid, 58.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid, 59.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid, 57.

of *Ubuntu* theology from the lived experience of division within a society, the ‘reunification theology’ of Ham Sok-Hon reflects both the irremovable contextuality of the Korean situation of division as well as the ways that theologies can utilise the flexibility of metaphor to apply universal theological constructs to bridge theological and contextual divides. It should be noted that while Ham's work is an example of one way to develop Liberal Quaker theology in these areas, its very contextuality demonstrates that his model cannot simply be applied directly in every setting Liberal Quakers might require theologies of division and reconciliation. The value of Ham's work is demonstrating potential avenues where other theologies could use these broadly applicable tools in other settings.

Ham Sok-Hon was a Korean who became a convinced Friend<sup>236</sup> after a series of interactions with American Friends,<sup>237</sup> specifically Howard Brinton.<sup>238</sup> Reflecting the impact that the Swarthmore Lectures have had on the development of Liberal Quaker theology, Ham specifically mentioned the influence that Kenneth Boulding's 1970 Swarthmore Lecture had had on his understanding of Liberal Quaker thought and ethics.<sup>239</sup> He was an intellectual, who devoted his life to Korean reunification based upon what he understood as the necessary and complete reformation of the spiritual life of the Korean people, and as such, his ideas and example are considered the forerunners of both Korean Reunification Theology and *minjung* theology, two of the most influential recent Korean Christian theological constructs.<sup>240</sup> He

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<sup>236</sup> ‘Convinced Friend’ is the terminology used by Quakers to describe someone who converts to Quakerism, while someone born into a Quaker family and raised in a Quaker community is called a ‘birthright Friend’.

<sup>237</sup> The term ‘Friend’ and ‘Quaker’ are used interchangeably, referring to the same idea: of, or relating to, the thought, theology, writings, structures, and people associated with the historical and contemporary manifestations of the Religious Society of Friends.

<sup>238</sup> Jiseok Jung, *Ham Sokhon's Pacifism and the Reunification of Korea: A Quaker Theology of Peace* (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2006), 182.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid*, 185.

<sup>240</sup> Jung dedicates an entire section (4.3) in his book on Han to describing the impact that his ideas had on the development of both of these theologies, including the specific theologians who have helped fashion these theologies. Jiseok Jung, *Ham Sokhon's Pacifism and the Reunification of Korea*.

engaged with the same questions that theologies of atonement and reconciliation deals with (what creates conflict and division on both the political and theological planes, and how does God respond to the divisions which result amongst humans and between humans and God). He brought Christianity, Universalism, and Liberal Quakerism together into a unique expression which reflected his context, and which could also be translated to other contexts of division and reconciliation. These are the areas where his ideas could be ‘translated’ (both figuratively and literally: very few of his writings have been translated from Korean) to: the role of human sinfulness in creating division; the false promise of redemptive violence; the role of the cross in atonement; divine/human interdependence and the role of the ‘Inner Light’; the role that the dynamic God plays in ‘continuing revelation’; and Christian Universalism. I explore these briefly in turn.

Ham first became politically aware during the thirty-five-year period of Japanese occupation of Korea. Han viewed the occupation as the complete subjugation of the Korean national identity under a foreign culture, as he viewed the Korean nation as possessing a discernible existence, including a body, personality and a soul.<sup>241</sup> He termed the Korean soul *han*, which he understood to mean ‘great one, and ‘oneness’.<sup>242</sup> This oneness applied to the entire Korean peninsula, not only to the people who inhabited the land and the culture they developed, but to the land itself. In this, he expressed a similar conflation of land and people made in Northern Ireland.<sup>243</sup> God was present in both the land and the people, thus linking all aspects together into both a cosmic and earthly reality: as in, the actual land of Korea was infused with the presence of God. Thus, any political or theological rupturing of the people (such as the

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<sup>241</sup> Park Jae Soon, ‘Ham Sok Hon’s National Spirit and Christian Thought’, in *An Anthology of Ham Sok Hon*, Ham Sok Hon (Seoul, South Korea: Samin Books, 2001), 193-235, at 203.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid*, 199.

<sup>243</sup> I discuss this connection in chapter two.

partition of Korea into North and South Korea in 1948) went against the will of God.<sup>244</sup> In this way, he examined the role of human sinfulness in creating division.

In response to the partition, both Korea developed mutually antagonistic political philosophies, communism and democracy. Both societies developed policies of unilateral reunification, where reunification would only occur on the basis of either system completely replacing the other.<sup>245</sup> In South Korea, this led to a development of a Christianity dependent upon democracy which valorised the use of violence both in defence of the democratic system, and in its potential imposition upon North Korea in any future reunification. Ham saw this as embracing the false promise of a form of redemptive violence which both literally and figuratively imprisoned the people.<sup>246</sup>

Ham viewed the people (who he termed *minjung*) as oppressed by any and all ‘statist’ systems, as they are all based upon the subjugation and oppression of the *minjung*.<sup>247</sup> The *minjung* were the mass of the poor and oppressed who were only pawns in the power schemes of the statist systems. In their suffering, the *minjung* were self-sacrificial peacemakers who embraced the non-violent unity of Christian pacifism as the true liberation.<sup>248</sup> In this, *minjung* were akin to Christ on the cross, in that *minjung* suffering was redemptive.<sup>249</sup> Their rejection of the violence of statism and embrace of non-violence would lead eventually to the reconciliation/reunification of Korea.<sup>250</sup>

Their only liberation came through enlightenment to their true nature as *ssial*, which Ham defined as an interdependence between the individual and the community, where both were

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<sup>244</sup> Jung, *Ham Sokhon's Pacifism*, 207.

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid*, 209.

<sup>246</sup> Ham Sok Hon, *The Anthology of Ham Sok Hon*, (Seoul, South Korea: Samin Books, 2001), 119.

<sup>247</sup> Jung, *Ham Sokhon's Pacifism*, 210.

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid*, 150.

<sup>249</sup> Soon, 'Ham Sok Hon's National Spirit', 207.

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid*, 208.

essential to the other. *Ssial* was dependent upon the divine/human interdependence both rooted in the Korean soil and in the insistence that the ‘ordinary people’ were actually carriers of an inner ‘seed’ of God within themselves.<sup>251</sup> This reflects both Ham’s Liberal Quaker belief in the Inner Light and ‘that of God’, but also his Christian understanding of the immanent Incarnation within the human person.<sup>252</sup> Once Ham became aware of the concept of the Inner Light, he used it in an imprecise, metaphorical fashion to describe his understanding of the presence of God within the human. This idea was placed in continuous dialogue with *ssial*, where *ssial* was the human side of the interdependent relationship, while Inner Light was the divine side.<sup>253</sup> This continuous, imprecise dialogue reflected the dynamic nature of a God who was ever-evolving, ever becoming. God was the paradoxical absolute being (which he termed ‘neither existent nor nonexistent...which transcends everything’) who was also the radical presence within the creation which both created, and was the creation.<sup>254</sup> This dynamic and paradoxical changelessness/ever-changing was continuously revealing itself to the creation. For Ham, this led directly to his unique form of Universalism which reflected its rootedness in the ‘place’ of Korea, in that it held all aspects of Korean culture and identity in tension: in a sense, Ham’s religious beliefs were an attempt to reconcile within himself all of the disparate elements of Korea: Christian, Western, Eastern, Taoist, and Buddhist.<sup>255</sup> Thus, Ham saw Korea as a plane upon which all ideas and beliefs could commingle and be translated to each other. In this way, Ham could be said to be striving to place Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation

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<sup>251</sup> Jung, *Ham Sokhon’s Pacifism*, 162.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid*, 164.

<sup>253</sup> Kim Sung Soo, *Ham Sok Hon: Voice of the People and Pioneer of Religious Pluralism in Twentieth Century Quakerism, Biography of a Korean Quaker* (Seoul, South Korea: Samin Books, 2001), 181.

<sup>254</sup> Soon, ‘Ham Sok Hon’s National Spirit’, 210.

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid*, 221.

alongside the diversity of Korea culture and identity and thus craft Universalist theologies of atonement and reconciliation.

Despite the high degree of ‘translatability’ of his ideas to both theologies of atonement and reconciliation of Liberal Quaker theology, his ideas have heretofore not made much of an impact beyond the specific context of Korean Christianity. As this dissertation is focused on bringing Liberal Quakerism (specifically the ideas present in the Swarthmore Lectures) in dialogue with the field of theologies of atonement and reconciliation (with a special focus on the South African and Northern Irish constructions of theologies of atonement and reconciliation), I will not examine Han’s ideas and their implications for Quaker theologies of atonement and reconciliation further. It should be noted, however, that subsequent constructions of Quaker theologies of atonement and reconciliation would benefit from taking Han’s work into consideration, especially due to the potential implications of his work for continuing the research I begin in this dissertation with bringing both non-Western interdependence theologies (such as *Ubuntu* and *minjung/ssial*) and Universalism into conversation with theologies of atonement and reconciliation.

### **3.5.j Section Summary**

In this section, I examined the different constructions of the Light as framed within the Swarthmore Lectures, towards the end of constructing a Liberal Quaker theology of divine interdependence for theologies of atonement and reconciliation. I demonstrated how these images directly related to the main elements of Liberal Quaker theology: ‘continuing revelation’, human ‘goodness’, Trinitarian theology, atonement theology, interdependence theology, and

experiential theology. I also explored a test case for applying these numerous strands in situations of lived conflict and division. In the next section, I develop a general framework for exploring how Liberal Quakers do the work of application of theological metaphor to lived experience.

### **3.6 Divine Immanence: Liberal Quaker Eschatology and Spirituality**

The flexibility demonstrated by the variety of metaphorical models of the Divine and divine/human interdependence explored in the previous sections of this chapter, along with the potential for developing new models, is an asset for any future engagement between Liberal Quaker theology and the diverse fields of theologies of atonement and reconciliation, in light of the importance of bridges within the reconciliation tradition. This is demonstrated by the bridge that theologies of atonement and reconciliation attempt to make between the lived experience of people in situations of conflict and division, and Christian theology. Liberal Quaker theology bridges such divides within its own tradition and shares with theologies of atonement and reconciliation a similar emphasis on the interdependent divine/human relationship. This flexibility, particularly due to its creative use of metaphor, allows Liberal Quaker theology to offer new ways of conceptualising the interdependent relationship to Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation. This includes the potential for an engagement between explicitly Christian theologies of interdependence to new Universalist theologies of interdependence through the two categories of metaphor: the Light in Christian Reconciliation, and the Light in Universalist Reconciliation. In a Liberal Quakerism that is increasingly open to non-Christian

theological models and reflection, and thus increasingly divided over issues of theology this provides necessary bridges across these divisions.

Reflecting the emphasis on lived experience within, and the spirituality of, Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation, in this section I explore how Liberal Quakers apply their theologies of divine presence and interdependence within their lived experience and spiritual lives. I discuss the main elements of a Liberal Quaker view of the Kingdom of God as an extension of the Liberal Quaker experience of God as a direct reality. I first give an overview of the Liberal Quaker view, including an examination of the role of time, lived reality, and hope in shaping the Liberal Quaker perspective. I then examine the areas in which their perspective overlaps with political theologians who examine the Kingdom of God.

The Liberal Quaker experience of God as a present reality extends to their understanding of the Kingdom of God as a present reality. This reality is embodied in the community of Quakers, particularly in their lives and in the Quaker insistence on an ethic derived from lived experience, as opposed to derived from a doctrinal formulation.<sup>256</sup> Rufus Jones argued that the Kingdom is realised, in that it exists through the presence of God in each person.<sup>257</sup> For some Liberal Quakers, the focus on God's immanence leads to a diminished insistence on the necessity of an eschatological reality outside of the present moment, as the eschatological promise of union with God is not required when God is already in union with creation in the present time.<sup>258</sup>

Jones' construction of a 'realised eschatology' is somewhat controversial. William Littleboy argued that the Kingdom is not as fully realised as Jones claimed, as evil and suffering

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<sup>256</sup> Hughes, *The Light of Christ in a Pagan World*, 76.

<sup>257</sup> Rufus M. Jones, *The Nature and Authority of Conscience* (London: The Swarthmore Press, Ltd., 1920), 22.

<sup>258</sup> Howard Brinton, *The Religious Philosophy of Quakerism: The Beliefs of Fox, Barclay and Penn as Based on the Gospel of John* (Wallingford, Pa.: Pendle Hill Publications, 1973), 64.



still exist in the world.<sup>259</sup> Instead, Littleboy presented a vision of a ‘realising’ eschatology which is still rooted in the present temporal reality for Liberal Quakers. The bridge between the realised-ness of God's immanent presence in the world and the realising-ness of a broken world is the hope that, through God and the actions of humans, the world can achieve a reconciled state.<sup>260</sup> This is a dual reality: the Kingdom as an ‘ultimate goal’ is transcendent, and dependent on God's actions; yet, the stages that must be followed to bring about the Kingdom are both immanent in history and dependent on human agency. George Jeffery took an Incarnational approach, rooting the duality of eschatology specifically within Jesus’ person, where Jesus human aspect reflected the present immanence of the Kingdom, while his divine aspect reflected the ultimate transcendence of the Kingdom. Jeffery argued that, just as Jesus was unable to separate the twin elements of the Kingdom, humanity cannot either.<sup>261</sup> While the Kingdom depends on human agency, it will only come into fruition through the will of God.

Scott provides a more recent, more Universalist perspective on the Kingdom. Scott argues that an eschatological viewpoint can bring about a ‘radical discontent’ for the present state of the world and foster either a complacency towards the inevitability of God's action to improve the world or an apathetic acceptance of the present. Scott argues that while we can have hope in the grace of God to achieve a future reconciliation, we cannot allow ourselves to become complacent in awaiting the action of the Divine.<sup>262</sup> Humans must take responsibility for their role in the process of bringing about this future.

Pink Dandelion argues that the intimate relationship earlier Liberal Quakers shared with a Divine – who was both immanent and transcendent – has changed into an intimate relationship

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<sup>259</sup> Littleboy, *The Day of Our Visitation*, 34.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid*, 20.

<sup>261</sup> George B. Jeffery, *Christ, Yesterday and Today* (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1934), 31.

<sup>262</sup> Scott, *What Canst Thou Say?*, 31.

with a Divine who is immanent to such an extent that some 'liberal-Liberal Quakers' accept some form of self-divinity.<sup>263</sup> This loss of relationship with a transcendent has translated into a loss of future eschaton, or even, for some, a loss of an eschatological perspective altogether.<sup>264</sup>

Dandelion argues that this leads to a dominant present, where all of time exists now, and where every individual moment is considered what is real and is infused with the immanence of the Divine. If all of time is the present, and God is intimately immanent in the creation that is always present in the now, then Dandelion questions whether this opens the door for the Divine to take any form that meets someone's present experience and for any belief or theology that flows from that experience.<sup>265</sup> Unity in the group must be rooted in something other than common belief, especially common beliefs that depend on any vision of the transcendent, whether any sense of end-time or transcendent God.<sup>266</sup> This claim has a great impact on a Liberal Quaker theology of the Kingdom of God, for it would mean that the Kingdom is completely present now, or may not even involve a 'Kingdom', or a 'God'. If true, then this perspective must be seen as hopeless, for it does not allow for any future state of the world which is better than the current state, nor for the hope that such a future state could ever be made to exist, whether through human agency, divine agency, or a combination of both.

Notably, this is not a new perspective, as John Hughes advanced a similar argument previously. Hughes argued that the loss of the insistent language of a God actively invested in bringing about an apocalyptic Kingdom would lead to a loss of urgency in the necessity for change. The radical in-breaking of the Kingdom quietly calls for gradual 'social adjustment' and

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<sup>263</sup> Pink Dandelion, *The Liturgies of Quakerism* (Hampshire, UK: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2005), 6.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid*, 71.

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid*, 116.

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid*, 115.

the eventual fading away of the passionate drive for change that fuelled Christian social action in the past.<sup>267</sup>

I would argue that while this perspective may reflect a general trend in current Liberal Quaker thinking on time, this does not need to be the accepted trajectory of Liberal Quaker Kingdom thought. Instead, a renewed focus on the Liberal Quaker theological heritage can lead to a development of an eschatological sense of hope. The current focus in the academic study of Quaker theology on the theology of the early Quakers, especially their apocalyptic viewpoint, is not entirely without precedent in Liberal Quakerism. George Jeffery, William Littleboy, and Henry Hodgkin are all examples of early twentieth-century Liberal Quakers who utilised the apocalyptic language of early Quakers and their focus on the Kingdom of God to develop theologies of presence, hope, and a strong social ethic. Present-day Liberal Quaker thinkers echo these earlier Quakers in their development of theologies of hope to face the challenge of facing a broken world and seeking to bring about the Kingdom in the form of peace and healing. In the twenty-first century, Simon Fisher explains that the hope that things can improve in the future is the one essential element in the practice of peacemaking in post-conflict situations. Both belief in a future better than the present and hope that such a future is possible are essential elements in giving people the strength to push past the overwhelming oppressiveness of the current situation and to take a risk on an uncertain future.<sup>268</sup>

Hauerwas contends that the Kingdom of God as preached by Jesus through both action and words informs a social ethic, and that much can be learned about the nature of the Kingdom through the example of Jesus. This is similar to positions held by Liberal Quakers, as noted above. Hauerwas insists that a view of the Kingdom as ethical framework divorced from a view

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<sup>267</sup> Hughes, *The Light of Christ in a Pagan World*, 76.

<sup>268</sup> Simon Fisher, *Spirited Living: Waging Conflict, Building Peace* (London: Quaker Books, 2004), 101.

of the Kingdom as eschatological reality is incomplete, and therefore doomed to be unfulfilling.<sup>269</sup> He does recognise that there does not exist a coherent scriptural view of the temporal framework of the Kingdom, and acknowledges that the Kingdom is both present and future reality.<sup>270</sup> Future is ill-defined, however, and Hauerwas allows that the ‘future’ of the Kingdom could occur in both the temporal, human future and in some reality defined by God’s expansive awareness of time. The Kingdom would only develop through the initiative of God, and thus would occur in a manner and on a timeframe that God alone would comprehend completely.

Hauerwas argues that the Incarnation gives humanity a foretaste of how the story of the Kingdom would play out. In this, Hauerwas finds common cause with Liberal Quakers. Hauerwas states that Jesus demonstrated the immediacy and nature of God's kingdom through his actions, teachings, and even through his body itself on the cross.<sup>271</sup> Jesus thus provides the primary exemplar for the Kingdom, meaning that to view the world eschatologically is to view the world through the lens of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.<sup>272</sup> Those who live as followers of Jesus are people living in the last days, as literally ‘eschatological people’.<sup>273</sup> This Kingdom rejects the boundaries between people created by the values of the empire, instead insisting on a radical community with one's enemies and those who require forgiveness. The Kingdom also demands total devotion, and a complete release of all measures of security, including wealth, possessions, or power. The Kingdom only exists in a life lived in complete

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<sup>269</sup> Stanley Hauerwas, *A Community of Character: Towards a Constructive Christian Social Ethic* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), 44.

<sup>270</sup> Stanley Hauerwas, *The Peaceable Kingdom: A Primer in Christian Ethics* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983), 82.

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid*, 73.

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid*, 83.

<sup>273</sup> *Ibid*, 85.

solidarity with the oppressed. Hauerwas calls this complete commitment a life of ‘discipleship’, which is simply ‘extended training in being dispossessed’.<sup>274</sup>

Robert Schreiter suggests that a spirituality of reconciliation requires what he terms a ‘post-exilic stance’, reflecting the creation of a new society after Israel’s return from exile in Babylon.<sup>275</sup> The new society will be chastened from the experience of exile, and will thus impart a humble and compassionate sense on the outlook of those seeking to be reconciled. ‘Post-exilic’ implies an eschatological perspective, as the new society formed from the reconciliation of the returnees is both realised due to the reality of their return, but is also realising due to the inherent incompleteness of the new society and the necessity to continually form the society. David Stevens concurs, adding that this eschatological edge forms reconciliation into a quest whose final destination—complete reconciliation—will always be just over the edge of the horizon, and thus be always realising and never realised.<sup>276</sup> De Gruchy summarises this perspective by stating that the community of God, the Church, is the new society, which is always both reconciled to God and reconciling the world to God through its witness and work.<sup>277</sup>

These perspectives all reflect Liberal Quakerism’s insistence on rooting the plane of reconciliation in the dual perspective of the experience of the immanent God, present amongst the creation, and the work of the community of Quakers which results from that immanence. Scott terms this sharing ‘the task of God’, where humanity becomes the mediators through whom God’s love for, and solidarity with, the creation becomes known, and through whom God’s reconciliation takes on practical shape.<sup>278</sup> I contend that a Liberal Quaker theology of

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<sup>274</sup> Ibid, 86.

<sup>275</sup> Schreiter, *Reconciliation*, 73.

<sup>276</sup> David Stevens, *The Land of Unlikeness: Explorations into Reconciliation* (Dublin, Ireland: Columba Press, 2004), 40.

<sup>277</sup> de Gruchy, *Reconciliation*, 55.

<sup>278</sup> Scott, *What Canst Thou Say?*, 46.

reconciliation, therefore, requires that the Kingdom of God be the place where the experience of God becomes a lived experience of performing the act of reconciliation in the world. This would necessitate both a return to previous Liberal Quaker thinking on the Kingdom and an engagement with the Kingdom thinking of political and reconciliation theologians – all of whom share with Liberal Quakers an emphasis on a very active social engagement for the achievement of a peaceful and just world.

This experiential theology presents Liberal Quakerism with several implications in terms of this engagement with the ‘world’. Liberal Quakers have a dynamic understanding of experience, which encompasses the human relationship with both the ‘outer world’ and the ‘inner world’. These two worlds combine to give human experience a dialogic emphasis. Thus, in this construction, humans do not simply passively receive experiences from the sensory input from the world, but they also interact with the environment. This applies to the human experience of God, meaning that we are also in dialogue with God through our experiences of the world, and of God. Liberal Quakers apply a few key caveats to this understanding. First, there is no one authoritative experience for all humans: this experience is both individual and communal, and the individual must be interpreted through the communal. Second, the experience is a-rational, meaning that Liberal Quakers reject the valorisation of the rational interpretation over the emotional and spiritual experience.

Liberal Quakers demonstrate a strong preference for experiencing the presence of God ‘unmediated’ by any other human interpretations of the experiences. This has included a rejection of priests, sacraments, and explicit theological formulations which might bracket the experience in such a manner as to cut off ‘unruly’ experiences, or those which do not conform to the established norms of such experiences. This is not a view not without its critics, even

amongst Liberal Quakers, as some have found sacraments helpful.

The Liberal Quaker view of the Kingdom of God is that it is an extension of the Liberal Quaker experience of God as a direct reality. Kingdom is a current and present reality, thus experience of God is a current and present reality. This is demonstrated in a very embodied fashion in the community of Liberal Quakers, in the very bodies of the gathered community itself. This reflects the Liberal Quaker emphasis on lived ethics, as opposed to an ethic derived from doctrine.

There is some debate over how optimistic Liberal Quakers should be towards the extent of God's union with the world. This is not to claim that Liberal Quakers reject evil and suffering in the world; instead, their acceptance of such evil compels them to act towards the elimination of suffering in the current world, as opposed to waiting for the next world to achieve liberation from evil and suffering. Thus, Liberal Quakers place a high level of importance on human agency and responsibility over the world.

The challenge of this focus on what is termed the 'dominant present', where all of time is now and where the optimism of Rufus Jones towards the human capacity of union with the Divine has led, is that Liberal Quakers will wind up lacking any sense of urgency to achieve any of these 'Kingdom' goals. While this is what has happened within Liberal Quakerism – though not for all Liberal Quakers, it should be noted – it doesn't need to remain the case for future Liberal Quaker kingdom theology. A further engagement with reconciliation and political theologians who share the Liberal Quaker insistence on social engagement with an eye towards the achievement of just and peaceful societies, along with a re-examination of previous Liberal Quaker Kingdom theology, would prove to be very fruitful for the Kingdom theologies of both theologies of atonement and reconciliation and Liberal Quakerism.

### 3.7 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I developed the ways Liberal Quakers utilise their experience of God as their main resource in developing their perspectives on the relationship between God and humanity and the models they use to explain that relationship. I argued that Quakers explain their experiences of an interdependent God using the language of metaphor, with a particular focus on the creation of models to illustrate these experiences of divine interdependence. I demonstrated the imprecision of Liberal Quaker theology and the influence that these untranslatable experiences has on the development of the theology and its resulting imprecision. I argued that the models which result are thus also imprecise, and very diverse in the aspects of experience they illustrate. I explored the Liberal Quaker ‘experiential epistemology’: theological statements about God must reflect Quaker experience of God. These statements reside exclusively within the language of metaphor, where the question of explicit ‘truth’ is not at issue. Liberal Quakers argue that while there might be a universal truth about God, there could just as easily not be, and if it existed, it would only be found in the human experience of God. Only in that crucible can ‘truths’ about God be found to have merit, or even be proven.



## **Chapter 4**

### **Comparative Theologies in Dialogue**

#### **4.1 Chapter Introduction**

In this chapter, I conclude the thesis by summarising the key findings from the preceding two chapters, exploring and analysing the interplay between Liberal Quaker theology and Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation, outlining the original contribution to knowledge that this thesis makes and exploring the implications of this for previous and future scholarship.

#### **4.2 Summary of Chapter Findings**

In chapter one, I provided a definition of Christian theologies of reconciliation and atonement and established the means of identifying the elements which differentiate reconciliation theology from political reconciliation. I explained the context of political reconciliation and demonstrated how reconciliation theology developed as a theological response to, and engagement with, political reconciliation. I demonstrated the dialogic nature of Christian theologies of reconciliation and atonement, being rooted in the context of continuous engagement with the diverse field of peacemaking. I argued that Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation should be in dialogue with other traditions. I outlined the main elements of Liberal Quaker theology, including their religious distinctives and approaches to theological categorisation and inquiry. These included a discussion of the role that Christian

theology has played both historically and contemporaneously, in Liberal Quaker theological thought, in conversation with the development of a strong Universalist tendency in Liberal Quakerism since the early twentieth century. I argued that Liberal Quakers have demonstrated a strong willingness to reconsider, or even dismiss, traditional Christian theological categories if they are found to be inadequate for explaining the corporate theological experience of Quakers, experience given the highest priority amongst the traditional sources of theology. I argued that the emphasis on experience stems from the Liberal Quaker concept of ‘continuing revelation’, which often leads to a sense of impermanence as regards theological statements. Reflecting this, I created a format for building a Liberal Quaker theology with categories that can dialogue with reconciliation theology, utilising the Swarthmore Lectures as theological tools. I plotted the potential directions that I would follow in order to create a new hybrid theology, a Liberal Quaker reconciliation theology.

In chapter two, I outlined the main arguments presented by theologians of division and reconciliation theologians about the roots of conflict, how it is manifested, and the effects of conflict. I explored the definitions of evil and sin which are most often used in theologies and theories of conflict and division. I focused on the concept of the ‘Powers’ and the attendant scapegoat mechanism, developing the ways that these ideas impact divine and human reconciliation. I developed a definition of sin based on the avenues through which divine-human interdependence are interrupted, especially the categories of race and sectarianism so often present in ethnic conflict. I outlined the main points of the theological anthropology of interdependence between God and humans that is the root of Christian theologies of reconciliation and atonement. I examined the themes and metaphors of divine-human interdependence in Christian theologies of reconciliation and atonement with a focus on

explaining the means by which the Son and Spirit interact together to achieve the divine goal of reconciliation both within, and with, humanity. I then examined the main approaches taken by Christian theologies of reconciliation and atonement to explain the interdependent, and reconciliatory, relationship between the Spirit and Christ. I argued that the emphasis in reconciliation theology on Pneumatology can provide a bridge between strictly Christocentric interdependence theologies, such as the Pauline theology of the Body of Christ, and the Universalist interdependence theology of the Light.

In chapter three I examined Liberal Quaker perspectives on trinitarian theology, focusing on the use of experience as the means for developing theology. This demonstrated areas of overlap in Trinitarian theology between Christian reconciliation theology and Liberal Quaker theology as a way to develop a theology of atonement and reconciliation in Liberal Quakerism. I argued that Liberal Quakers have developed anthropology of God which stresses experience, immanence, and interdependence. I examined ways in which this aligns with categories of Trinity, Incarnation, Atonement, and Holy Spirit. I linked this alignment with Liberal Quaker rejection of other Christian theological perspectives which emphasise the transcendence of God as the 'wholly other', a God who is distant from the creation and sits in stern judgement of human sinfulness. I argued that this, in turn, leads to an emphasis on interdependent models of God. I examined the metaphorical and theological language utilised by Swarthmore Lecturers to describe their understanding of the Liberal Quaker imagery of the Light. I demonstrated the links between Christian theologies of interdependence and the Liberal Quaker metaphorical theology of divine/human interdependence, and I presented the Light as the main expression of this interdependence in the experiential theology of Liberal Quakerism. I outlined the main metaphorical threads of 'interdependent Light' running through the Swarthmore Lectures. I

described the theological and conceptual frameworks used to develop each of these main images, all of which are related to the main elements of Liberal Quaker theology.

By successfully bringing Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation and Liberal Quaker theology into dialogue, I have both expanded the reach of both fields and have opened avenues for future scholarship to continue this work. I have also brought Liberal Quaker theology into dialogue with Christian systematic theology and, as such, have opened avenues for further, mutual engagement between Christian theology and Liberal Quaker theology. Finally, by demonstrating that the categories of two different theological traditions can be made to be mutually translatable, I have opened new avenues for theological dialogue both within Christianity and in inter-religious dialogue with non-Christian traditions.

#### **4.3 Analysis: Placing Comparative Theologies in Dialogue**

In this dissertation I have begun the work of translating the language of Liberal Quaker theology to that of Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation. The challenge with the work is not a dearth of materials in both traditions specifically focused on issues of division, conflict, sin, anthropology, interdependence, and the use of metaphor to describe all of these issues; instead, the problem lay with 1) the lack of any engagement by Christian theologians of atonement and reconciliation with Liberal Quaker theology, and 2) the lack of any systematisation of Liberal Quaker theology such that it would be possible to easily engage in dialogue. However, as demonstrated above, the overlapping peculiarities of Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation and Liberal Quaker theology demonstrate that not only do they

share similar approaches and ethical underpinnings, but also that these similarities mean that they are uniquely suited for engagement and even integration.

The framework presented here notes the core theological categories upon which an effective dialogue can occur, focused towards finding common elements between the traditions by developing a common language to describe the roles that these categories play in their respective traditions. That focus on common language is not unique to this dissertation, as other Liberal Quaker theologians have engaged in similar pursuits. The specific elements towards which this focus is applied here is unique, however, especially the emphasis on further developing extant systematic frameworks in the Liberal Quaker tradition.

Yet, I must note that this work comes with the recognition that the thesis bears the burden of two structural challenges. The first is that there is not a single, coherent field of ‘Christian reconciliation theology’, but rather a wide array of ‘Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation’. This means that any work seeking to develop dialogue would need to establish very specific areas of comparison, such as was established here. Reconciliation theology as a separate expression of political theology (as opposed to the specific branches of atonement theology, which deal mainly with human salvation and not with peacemaking post-conflict), is a relatively new field. As discussed in chapter one, there are multiple strands to the field, without a coherent sense of which strands are more determinative for the boundaries of the field. This is a result of the highly contextual nature of the field of political reconciliation, having developed in response to the increasingly diffuse nature of conflict in the latter half of the twentieth century, where violent conflict shifted from huge set-pieces between nation-states towards a more diverse mix of traditional conflict and limited guerrilla-style engagements and terror attacks with small, armed groups. The theology and ethics of war and peace, most especially the ethical constructs

and resultant theologies of just war and pacifism, were not effective in making sense of these new paradigms. Theologies of reconciliation developed alongside structures and paradigms of political reconciliation, as religious leaders were often the ones most active in peacemaking in the contexts of these new conflicts. Thus, many of the most important theologians in the field are responding to specific contexts, such as South Africa, Northern Ireland, and the Balkans. Their theological responses most often reflect their theological traditions and communities, and thus might deal with different concerns than others respond to.

Commonalities have emerged across these contexts, as I noted above. I suggest that much more work could be done to solidify these commonalities as core elements of the field, while maintaining the flexibility to respond to context which is inherent in contextual theology. These elements in Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation reflect their main concern: to examine how God breaks down divisions and repairs relationships. Focusing on that, I argue, is an effective first step in overcoming the limitations presented by the diversity of this 'field'.

The second structural challenge is that, as Liberal Quakerism has historically shied away from establishing any systematic frameworks for organising its theological thought, any attempt at dialogue with Christian theology that is fundamentally systematic (categories such as atonement, anthropology, Christology, and sin being the very definition of systematic theology) would require developing systematic frameworks with which to organise Liberal Quaker theology. As noted above, Liberal Quaker theology is diverse and highly individualistic. There have been few attempts to lay out the core elements of Liberal Quaker theology in a systematic manner, especially as they relate to the categories of another Christian theological tradition. Even *Faith and Practice* hints at core elements without explicitly laying them out. This is, admittedly, placed in higher relief by the variety and scope present within the Swarthmore Lectures. Most

importantly, no other scholar of Liberal Quaker theology has sought to develop these elements in one place, using the Christian theological categories which I utilised in this dissertation: theological source, experience as a theological source, belief as a theological category, the role of Scripture, sin and evil, Trinity (with a special focus on Christology and Pneumatology), atonement, Incarnation, and divine-human interdependence.

These are core elements of Christian systematic theology, and by demonstrating ways which these elements exist in Liberal Quaker theology, I argue that the categories of Liberal Quaker theology can actually be engaged as a form of Christian systematic theology. This is a controversial move within Liberal Quakerism, as noted above: the implication is that systematic theology, due to its emphasis on developing categorical systems of theological meaning based around already established terminology, cannot correlate with the insistence within Liberal Quaker theology on openness to change based upon experience and subsequent aversion to established theological categories and terminology. I argue that this is based upon a flawed understanding of systematic theology which assumes that it is neither creative with its categories nor open to continuous interpretation. In truth, systematic theology is an approach to developing theological meaning just like any other theology. It is as creative and open to interpretation as the theologians who engage with its frameworks and categories are. This dissertation provides one potential framework for translating the terminology and categories of Liberal Quaker theology to those of systematic theology. In that vein, in this section I make this comparison explicit. I lay out a comparison between the theological areas examined in this thesis: atonement, hamartiology, Christology/Pneumatology, and metaphors for divine/human interdependence. I examine areas where these traditions have evolved over time. Finally, I chart ways that they could evolve both farther apart, and closer together.

### 4.3.a Comparative Theological Elements

This thesis sought to answer the question whether Liberal Quaker systematic theologies of division and interdependence could be developed through engaging in dialogue with Christian systematic theologies of division and interdependence, specifically within the framework of Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation. I affirm that the answer is yes, but a qualified yes.

I affirm that Liberal Quaker systematic theologies of division and interdependence *can* be developed through engaging in dialogue with Christian systematic theologies of division and interdependence because elements key to Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation – atonement, hamartologies of division, Christology/Pneumatology, and metaphors of divine/human interdependence – all exist within Liberal Quaker theological thinking, and widely enough to be able to fairly gauge trends across Liberal Quakerism as a whole. I chose these specific foci as they reflect the main theological foundation of Liberal Quaker theology: that each person has the presence of God within, expressed through the metaphorical construct of the Light, and can have direct experience of this relationship. This has determined the course of Liberal Quaker theology, reflecting its focus on the interdependence between God and humanity as well as on the ways this relationship gathers humans into interdependent relationship. I argue that any development of Liberal Quaker theology must thus engage with issues of division and interdependence. I therefore focused on the most pertinent Christian theology of division and interdependence: theologies of atonement and reconciliation. In the same vein, I examined the aspects of Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation which reflect the consequences of



having a metaphorical construct of divine interdependence at the foundation of Liberal Quaker theology. These include the ways that humans create division amongst themselves, and the means that God employs to heal that division at both the human level and the Divine.

Dialogue depends upon common issues with which to dialogue about, thus I argue that the existence of such commonalities is at least demonstrative of the potential for the development of a Liberal Quaker systematic theology of division and interdependence which can engage in the wider field of Christian systematic theology of division and interdependence. Yet, I argue further that the dialogue is necessary from the perspective of Christian systematics due to the existence of the rich metaphorical interdependence theology of the Light. The Light is not only demonstrably translatable to theologies of division and interdependence due to its dependence upon the mutually translatable theological concepts explored above (atonement, hamartologies of division, and Christology/Pneumatology), but is also translatable to the Christian metaphors of divine/human interdependence explored above and even expands upon those metaphors, all within a helpfully expansive metaphorical landscape.

I need to qualify my yes, however, due most specifically to the inherent tendency of Liberal Quaker theology to avoid systematisation, as well as the rather fluid nature of Liberal Quaker conceptions of the Divine. The circumstances of Liberal Quaker theology ensures that the project of dialogue between Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation and Liberal Quaker theology requires a willingness on both sides to adopt a different stance towards the meaning of definitional categories, and the relative importance of the specific elements of the dialogue. As I demonstrate in my comparison below, Liberal Quaker theology not only has a potentially rather different understanding of the definition of theological concept from the definition I outline in my examination of Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation, it

may place relatively less importance on that aspect of its theology. For example, there is a vast gulf in the attention paid to the role of the crucifix in the atonement between Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation and Liberal Quaker theology. This is not to claim that it lacks import for Liberal Quaker theology so much as to argue that the Liberal Quaker theologians who concern themselves with examining the crucifixion focus little attention on defining *why* the crucifixion is important, and instead simply acknowledge that it *is* important and move on. By comparison to the relatively perfunctory manner with which the crucifixion is examined, the various definitional elements of the Light are examined in significant detail, and expand upon the metaphors for divine/human interdependence present within Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation. The dialogue is therefore inherently conditional: it must occur under the condition that all parties accept that any agreement on the meaning and importance of core concepts may continuously be a journey without destination.

### ***Atonement***

Christian tradition has begun any theology of atonement with an examination of the crucified Christ, and then explored the role, and salvific necessity of, violence for the divine/human relationship. As demonstrated in section 1.2.a.1, Christian theology has devoted considerable attention to the atonement, focusing on the role of the crucifixion and death of Jesus played in the essential reconciliation of humans to God, and the means that the crucifixion, death, and resurrection utilised to effect such reconciliation. Christian tradition developed several schools of thought on these questions, each with its own hermeneutical frameworks for conceptualising evil, sin, and the necessity of Jesus' death for the process of atonement. As I

noted in both sections 1.2.a.1 and 2.2, the cross always means *something* in the process of atonement for Christian theologians. The issue lies with what it actually *means*, and what the implication of that meaning might be. The wide array of perspectives limits the ability for any perspective to claim that any *one* theology of the atonement was determinative for Christian theology as a whole. Certain communities engaged in political reconciliation have generally accepted one perspective on atonement as more representative of their experience of atonement than others, such as the emphasis that the Corrymeela Community places on the scapegoat mechanism of René Girard. These communities have generally shied away from dismissing other conceptualisations of the atonement, however, instead mainly claiming that one speaks to their situation. This reflects the highly contextual nature of political reconciliation work by religious actors.

Liberal Quakerism does not focus significant attention on developing an atonement theology. That being said, any theological statements Liberal Quakers make about atonement reflect the theological variety present with Christian theologies of the atonement. Liberal Quakerism views the passion, crucifixion, death, and resurrection of Jesus – and any potential salvific consequences of these acts – through two different threads: an assertion of the drawing of humanity into full participation in the divine life effected by the crucifixion and a rejection of any salvific uniqueness of Jesus. This represents the twin strands of Christianity and Universalism within Liberal Quakerism. Any statement on the role of the crucifixion in the atonement, even a rejection of its importance, is still a theological statement, so Liberal Quakerism therefore has both a positive and negative theology of the atonement.

An important distinction, however, is that every theology of the atonement is read through an underlying rejection of any positive statements about violence in the life of God. This

is coupled with an assertion that humanity is drawn by God into full participation in the divine life effected by the entire series of events. I argue that these perspectives do not conflict. The fluid nature of Liberal Quaker theology demonstrates itself in the fact that Liberal Quaker theology avoids making a specific claim about the meaning of the Incarnation, the crucifixion, or even if the resurrection ever occurred. Lecturers who acknowledge that the cross had a role to play in the drama of Jesus seem willing to simply accept that there is, in fact, a connection. They are more interested in the implications of the connection, especially in terms of ethics. This approach would likely fall within the non-violent atonement branch of theologies of atonement and reconciliation and would provide an interesting dialogue between the Biblical theology of the non-violent atonement theorists and the experiential theology of Liberal Quakerism.

### *Hamartiology*

In section 2.2 I examined Christian hamartologies of division and conflict with a special focus on examining theologies of interdependence which critique violent conflict, laying a foundation for examining the development of a number of different theological responses to the situation of human division and ethnic conflict. Hamartiology within Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation generally claims that human division, and its attendant exclusion of the 'Other', is a sin due to a theological anthropology of divine-human interdependence. Theologians of conflict have also examined the process of 'othering' from the perspective of evil and sin, both on a structural and a personal level. There is general agreement amongst theologians of atonement and reconciliation that humans experience division and conflict. Reflecting the contextual nature of many of these theologies, however, there is a wide array of

ways of conceptualising and framing the violence which often attends such division and the mechanisms which lead to the creation of, and maintenance of, these situations of division. Both political reconciliation theories, and the theologies of atonement and reconciliation which have developed in tandem with them, take as their foundational principle that human conflict is rooted in division, most often manifested in ethnic, racial, or sectarian division.

As a result, Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation place special attention on addressing the roots and causes of conflict, both in terms of conflict amongst humans, and between humans and God. There is some overlap between these hamartiologies, most particularly a recognition of the role of the Powers in creating oppression, division and conflict. The importance of the Powers to these theologies rests upon this primary recognition: hamartiologies of division are inherently structural and systematic. This recognition results in this consequence: any situations of division and conflict (even amongst individuals), no matter their origin, stem from an inherent distortion of the underlying structures and systems of creation. This is not to say that every conflict results from an ethnic, racial, or sectarian division. Within this framework rests its attendant ontology, however: if conflict and division result from distortions to the systems and structures at the heart of creation, then creation is itself designed to be in harmony, and humans are designed to be interdependent. Sin is therefore division, and healing from sin requires healing from division and returning to a state of interdependence.

If Christian hamartiologies of division and conflict begin from conflict and seek to understand its cause, Liberal Quaker hamartiologies of division and conflict begin from an ontology of human interdependence, harmony, and perfection and seek to understand how harmony is fractured by conflict. Liberal Quaker hamartiology roots its ontology in its assumption of the divine presence within every human, with an attendant positive view of human

goodness and performative understanding of evil as both systematic and acted. This core of perfection is a free gift of union with the Divine that makes all people 'good' and that must be lived into. The close union of God and humanity suggested by the theology of perfection leads to a uniquely Quaker understanding of harmony amongst people as a response to the separation and segregation from the 'other' that theologies of atonement and reconciliation argues is at the heart of conflict.

The focus on human goodness and perfectibility means that Liberal Quaker hamartiology, as opposed to Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation, places far less attention on the nature, cause, and meaning of sin within the structure of the world. Liberal Quakerism is also conflicted about the usefulness of 'sin' as a theological framework, claiming that focusing on sin distracts attention from the potential within human perfectibility, if harnessed and cultivated, to end division and conflict. This reflects the general Liberal Quaker aversion to statements of theological certitude, yet there is a specific aversion to the emphasis on individual salvation presented in many Christian views of salvation. Liberal Quakers claim that a focus on sin can simply be a focus on personal sin, and personal ethics. This would run contrary to the Liberal Quaker emphasis on social ethics over personal ethics. Social ethics, in this context, relates to social justice issues, including the structural basis of poverty and war. A Liberal Quaker understanding of sin would be summed up as the absence of, or separation from, God. Liberal Quakers will attempt to discern the causes of God's absence or separation, and will oftentimes locate that cause within the consequence of the broken structures and systems of the world. In this, they are aligned with Christian theologians of atonement and reconciliation. Yet, where they differ is that while individual Liberal Quakers might linger on the theological import of sin and division, generally they are either seeking to locate solutions for the practical consequences of

division or are focusing on healing the relationship amongst humans and between humans and God. This reflects the significant emphasis on Liberal Quaker theology on the interdependence theology of the Light.

***Metaphors for Divine/Human Interdependence: Christology/Pneumatology***

In response to theologies of violence, conflict, and division, Christian theologians have developed theologies of interdependence, with a specific focus on themes which have emerged in response to twentieth-century theologies of division: the relationship between human and divine within Christ, the role of the Spirit in divine/human interdependence, and metaphors for framing the divine/human relationship. The metaphor of interdependence is thus utilised to explain the means by which the Son and Spirit interact together to achieve the divine goal of reconciliation both within, and with, humanity. In section 2.4 I focused on Pneumatology, with an emphasis on the role that the Spirit plays in the atonement and developing interdependence with humanity. I examined four different models for divine/human interdependence: the dyad of Holy Spirit and Christ; Spirit Christology; the social community model of Dietrich Bonhoeffer; and the interdependence theology of *Ubuntu*, developed in light of the racist divisions of South Africa. This emphasis on Pneumatology, spirituality, and metaphorical theology also reflects the necessity of developing a dialogical framework with Liberal Quaker theology, which itself places significant importance on Spirit and metaphor. The models I chose do not encompass the entirety of Christian theological frameworks for understanding divine/human interdependence; in fact, they barely scratch the surface of the universe of different conceptualisations, even within Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation. These models reflect minority perspectives

within the Christian tradition generally, and Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation specifically, in that they focus on Pneumatology. The vast majority of models of God within Christianity focus on Christology, the composition and meaning of the Trinity, and the role of Christ within the Trinity.

Liberal Quaker thought has focused much of its attention on developing alternative models to explain the relationship between God and humans, with a special focus on the Light. This includes focusing significant attention on the person of Jesus and developing an overarching concept of God as Spirit. In Liberal Quaker thought, however, the relationship between the aspects of God has not often been defined with any specificity following the Quaker insistence on ambiguity when it comes to defining God. This aversion to explicitness in developing a Trinitarian theology is the mainstream of Liberal Quaker theology. Instead, Liberal Quaker Christology and Pneumatology generally focuses on how that understanding of God can move Liberal Quakers towards a greater understanding of the inter-relationship of humans and God. Thus, Christological engagement within Liberal Quaker theology focuses on either Jesus as Incarnated human, the prime demonstration of the human perfectibility through relationship with God, or on the relationship between Jesus and the Spirit God. The desire for creativity in envisioning God that typifies Liberal Quaker expressions of the *experience* of God also typifies Liberal Quaker Christology. This creativity leads Liberal Quaker Christology to be more speculative, and therefore less systematic, than Christology in other Protestant traditions.

Liberal Quaker theology is the inherently flexible. This allows for multiple interpretations of the key Christological questions of theologies of atonement and reconciliation: the Incarnation and the relationship between Jesus and humanity, the atonement and its relationship to the crucifixion, and the role of the Holy Spirit in the life and work of Jesus. There exist multiple



points at which Liberal Quaker Christology and Pneumatology can have dialogue with these same themes in theologies of atonement and reconciliation. These are avenues which will benefit from significant future examination. They all present essential elements upon which a theology of atonement and reconciliation vision of interdependence must be based. Yet, Liberal Quaker visions of God are flexible enough to enfold these elements under a common conceptual umbrella: the metaphor of Light.

***Metaphors for Divine/Human Interdependence: The Light***

Liberal Quakerism assumes the greatest possible divine immanence within the creation, an Incarnation which infuses every particle of the creation. While Liberal Quakers agree to the general underlying sense of this statement, they are of widely varying opinions about the implications of this, however. The challenge Liberal Quakers encounter is whether they can actually claim that divine immanence leads to an inherent goodness and sacredness of the entire creation, with the corollary that humanity must therefore be inherently good or whether this view fails to acknowledging the human potential for evil. In general, however, the Light understood as active in the process of human transformation, striving to guide humanity towards both a greater awareness of the presence of the Light, and of the ethical consequences of that presence. Liberal Quakers view this intimate guidance to be the truest expression of human freedom, for it allows humans to develop faith in the presence of the Light on their own terms. Liberal Quakers admit that this construction is vague, yet fail to agree whether the vagueness is a flaw to be mended or an inherent feature to be praised. I argue that both are true: the Light is a flexible concept which

can aid in the further development of metaphorical interdependence theologies in both Christian and Universalist theological frameworks.

To that end, I explored eight constructions of the model of ‘Light’ present within Liberal Quaker theology. Three of them can be directly translated to Trinitarian models in theologies of atonement and reconciliation: Incarnation, Christ, and Holy Spirit. Five of them have implications for the creation of Universalist reconciliation theologies: divine interdependence, mystical experience, truth, salvation, and beauty. This is the point where the comparison between Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation and Liberal Quaker theology can go no further, for there simply is not a corollary to Light within the metaphorical theology of Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation. It can transcend metaphorical constructions of Christ and Spirit, and provide a specific link between Liberal Quaker theological constructs and theologies of atonement and reconciliation through the metaphorical theology of the Light. Yet, it can also open space for linking Christian reconciliation imagery with that of Universalism. By placing Universalist visions of Light within a framework of models of God, this thesis contribute to the translation of Christian models of Light with Universalist ones, opening space within Liberal Quaker theology for new visions of a Universalist theology of atonement and reconciliation.

#### **4.3.b Christocentrism within Theologies of Atonement and Reconciliation**

As mentioned above, Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation have formed in response to contexts where the primary theological actors working with the categories of reconciliation were overwhelmingly Christian. As such, these actors developed their contextual

theological responses in light of their Christian convictions. Enough of these actors developed such responses in various contexts that a field has emerged where certain common elements are shared across the spectrum of responses. A main commonality has been Christocentrism, where the language used to explain the divine/human interdependence that typifies reconciliation theology has been mainly related to the Christ. This has led to an emphasis on viewing every element of reconciliation through a Christ hermeneutic. A key example of this is the Corrymeela community and its use of the scapegoat mechanism described by René Girard to explain the cause of violent conflict in society and the necessary soteriological role of Christ in destroying the power of that mechanism. This is not only an emphasis within reconciliation theology, but it is also endemic to atonement theologians. As I discussed in chapter two, atonement theology is overwhelmingly focused on Christ as the main, and most vitally important, element within the entire drama of atonement. The most recent work by J. Denny Weaver (whose non-violent atonement I examined in chapter two) focuses entirely on Christological atonement theologies and the debate between them about the role of violence in atonement. Weaver actually fails to mention the Holy Spirit even once in his work.<sup>1</sup> Michael Gorman's recent work, *The Death of the Messiah and the Birth of the New Covenant*, claims to advance atonement theology in a new direction by returning to an ancient concept of 'covenant', linked to what Gorman terms 'cruciformity': being formed by the cross. This unique expression of atonement theory is certainly new to the field; yet, it follows the main trend of the field by placing the main work of atonement on the actions of the Christ on the cross, with the Spirit as a side player whose role

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<sup>1</sup> Weaver, *The Nonviolent God*.

only emerges after the resurrection.<sup>2</sup> This is also reflected in the importance placed upon God's *shalom* and the covenant, which I examined in chapter one.

This primary focus is disrupted by theologies such as Spirit Christology, which places the Spirit and the Christ on a footing as equal partners in both the Incarnation and the creation and maintenance of the interdependent relationality of God and humans. It is also disrupted by the existence of a hybrid theology such as Liberal Quaker theology working with the categories and concerns of reconciliation theology in order to create a reconciliation theology unique to its own context. I demonstrated that Liberal Quaker theological categories can be brought into dialogue with the categories of reconciliation theology and can be translated in such a way that the Christ is removed from the centre of reconciliation theology. This reflects movement within other traditions to decentre the Christ, mainly dealing with efforts to place a greater emphasis on the Spirit.<sup>3</sup> A key example of this is Grace Ji-Sun Kim's efforts within postcolonial theology to re-imagine Christian theology from the perspective of Pneumatology.<sup>4</sup> The emphasis on Pneumatology and the use of less overtly Christocentric metaphorical theology such as the Light fits well within these efforts and necessitates a re-examination of reconciliation theology along the lines of a greater openness to non-Christocentric theological language.

As noted above, Daniel Philpott argues that religious traditions are very active participants in reconciliation processes, both as actors and as crafters of the paradigms themselves. Philpott notes how these processes have worked in Christian, Jewish, and Muslim communities, including a discussion of the theological and ethical resources brought to bear by

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<sup>2</sup> Michael J. Gorman, *The Death of the Messiah and the Birth of the New Covenant: A (Not So) New Model of the Atonement* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2014).

<sup>3</sup> An example of this is Lisa Sowle Cahill's attempts to give equal weight to the Holy Spirit in the peacemaking efforts of the Trinity. Cahill, *Global Justice*.

<sup>4</sup> Grace Ji-Sun Kim, *Embracing the Other: The Transformative Spirit of Love* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2015).

each community. This follows work by other theologians, most notably Marc Gopin, whose writing has centred on developing a uniquely Jewish perspective on reconciliation theology.<sup>5</sup> Not only is this work not exhaustive in its examination of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, but it also does not deal with these questions in non-Abrahamic traditions. The theological frameworks would obviously be different in these other traditions; yet, theologies of interdependence could be fruitfully examined and then placed in dialogue with Christian theologies of interdependence. To date, these conversations have not followed this format, and have instead brought people from multiple faith backgrounds into dialogue specifically about the practices of peace, while avoiding substantive discussions about theology, particularly anthropology. A notable recent example is *Interfaith Just Peacemaking*, which brought together 27 authors to discuss the Just Peace paradigm, a key element of religious engagement with political reconciliation. While the authors briefly discuss the theological basis behind their specific response to each of the Just Peace practices, they exist alongside each other, without any mutual engagement or attempts at building a common theological understanding.<sup>6</sup>

#### **4.3.c Christocentrism within Liberal Quaker Theology**

The seeming avoidance within Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation of inter-religious theological engagement is a notable difference with Liberal Quakerism, however. As noted above, Liberal Quaker theology has long been marked by a divide between people who hold Christian theological beliefs and those with Universalist ones. In recent decades, this

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<sup>5</sup> Marc Gopin, *Between Eden and Armageddon: The Future of World Religions, Violence, and Peacemaking* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

<sup>6</sup> Susan B. Thistlethwaite (ed.), *Interfaith Just Peacemaking: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Perspectives on the New Paradigm of Peace and War* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012).

diversity has expanded to include those who hold Jewish, Buddhist, Pagan, and even non-theist beliefs, and those who have found ways to hold on to Liberal Quaker beliefs and identity along with those of another religious tradition.<sup>7</sup> This theological diversity has made a major impact on Liberal Quaker theology, leading to a general move, within British Quakerism especially, away from hewing to the historical Christian distinctives present within Liberal Quakerism when Liberal Quakerism emerged as a unique expression of Quakerism. I discussed this with my examination of the Universalist/Christianity debate within Liberal Quakerism, yet there is still so very much to explore with this trend.

This has a specific contextual salience, however, demonstrating its rooting within the specific context of the theology of Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM). Much of the research in Liberal Quaker theology has a general British-American bias, reflecting the strong historical ties between British Quakerism and Quakerism in the United States. This is reflected in the strong impact that both the *Faith and Practice* and the theology of BYM still have on Liberal Quakerism in the United States. This is compounded by the demographics of Liberal Quakerism: the majority reside in either the United States or the United Kingdom. This means that most of the Liberal Quakers writing theology reside in either a United States or a British context. This contextual bias has a significant impact on the form of Liberal Quaker theology demonstrated in the current scholarship, potentially silencing perspectives which fall outside of the parameters of that bias. Liberal Quaker theology is, of course, present in every context in which Liberal Quakers are present, and the theology that has been written from these other contexts demonstrates the rich variety of theology across the Liberal Quaker world. Exploration of theology in the numerous other geographic contexts where Liberal Quakers reside would provide

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<sup>7</sup> As noted above, some recent intersections between Liberal Quakerism include: Rhiannon Grant (Paganism and the philosophy of Wittgenstein); and Jung Jiseok (the work of Ham Sok Hon to bring Christianity, Confucianism, and Taoism together); and the work of Stuart Masters and Alex Wildwood.

a much more complete picture of Liberal Quaker theology and provide valuable avenues of theological dialogue within Liberal Quakerism.

In my examination of the approach of the Swarthmore Lectures to Christian theological language, I discovered a recent move away from the trend towards Universalism which had appeared to be forecasted by certain Lecturers – and assumed by others – during the latter half of the twentieth century. This move away from Christian categories does reflect a trend across Liberal Quaker theology; yet, I demonstrated that it is neither comprehensive (where all Christian categories will eventually be entirely unwelcome in Liberal Quaker theological language), nor is it inevitable (where Liberal Quaker theology is inexorably sliding away from Christian theological language). Instead, I found that Liberal Quaker theology strives to find balance between giving voice to the multiple new theological languages entering Quaker theological discourse, while holding close to the Christian roots which have given, and continue to give, structure and meaning to the core Liberal Quaker theological elements. This balance provides an intriguing new framework for inter-religious dialogue both within and outside of the community of Christian theology. It also provides an interesting case study on the benefits and challenges of doing such work, especially within one's own tradition. My work demonstrates that Liberal Quaker theology is not actually moving away from Christian theological categories and language; instead, it is recognising the value of Christianity, while also stressing the necessity of reframing Christianity in such a way that works with the new form of theology which is emerging within Liberal Quaker theology.

This balance extends to the lack of a uniquely 'Liberal Quaker' hermeneutic for Scriptural exegesis, in part due to the aforementioned Liberal Quaker discomfort with engaging in exegesis on any one specific traditions Scripture, let alone that of Christianity. As 'continuing revelation'

interacted with the decrease of importance of Christianity within the Liberal Quaker theological imaginary, Scripture came to be increasingly viewed as a vitally important document, but important due to its historical, not spiritually determinative, value. This reflects the later developments of Liberal Quaker values and beliefs, where the Holy Bible was not the centrally important document against which all Liberal Quakers must gauge their experience of the Divine. This should be understood as a significant development from early Liberal Quaker thought, as demonstrated by the way that the earliest Swarthmore Lectures assume the Christian Scriptures as determinative for all Liberal Quakers. This evolution presents an intriguing vision of a post-Scripture Liberal Quaker theology, which must be examined in order to assess what role the Scriptures might have in such a future.

It is still an open question whether Liberal Quaker theology will remain recognisably Christian. Yet, I argue that Liberal Quakerism is not shedding itself of its Christian emphases and foundations. Liberal Quakerism in the United States has provided some interesting examples of this trend, including the work of George Amoss. His work is mainly online, where he has developed a *Quaker Faith and Practice for the Twenty-first Century*. Amoss retains traditional Quaker Christological language, while also interpreting that language through the lens of both Liberal Quaker theology and his unique vision of non-theism within Liberal Quakerism. Amoss does this in a way that respects and reflects the experience of both theism and non-theism.<sup>8</sup> He develops a construct of the Light as an experience to reside within, which will result in both individual and communal transformation. He utilises Christian language to describe the experience of Light and the manner of the resulting transformation, without actually claiming any ‘Christological’ meaning.

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<sup>8</sup> George Amoss, “Faith and Practice PDF Available”, Postmodernquaker.wordpress.com. <https://postmodernquaker.wordpress.com/2016/02/21/faith-practice-pdf-available/>, accessed August 4, 2016.



In British Liberal Quakerism, Alex Wildwood engages in similar questions from the perspective of Universalism, as discussed in chapter three. His recent work develops models for bridging the Christian heritage of Liberal Quakerism with the developing elements within the tradition of Universalism rooted in the experience of God. He co-authored with Timothy Ashworth the book *Rooted In Christianity, Open to New Light: Quaker Spiritual Diversity*, which emerged from a project with British Quakers seeking to understand the language Liberal Quakers used to explain their experience of God.<sup>9</sup> Wildwood reflects the Liberal Quaker emphasis on ‘continuing revelation’ through his emphasis on remaining open to re-evaluating one’s understanding of God, especially in light of the evolution of Liberal Quaker theology.<sup>10</sup> As noted above, Wildwood insists on retaining a rooting in a Christian heritage, in that it is necessary to place experiences in a Quaker context.

#### **4.3.d Evolution of Systematic Theology**

Spirit Christology is a minority approach to Christology within Christian theology. It presents a rather different perspective on Christology and Pneumatology from that of Logos Christology, and as such presents a different priority on the role of the Spirit than Logos Christology. By placing such a distinct emphasis on the role and importance of the Spirit, this perspective presents a number of interesting opportunities for engaging with reconciliation specifically, and theology in general, on the questions of theological anthropology, atonement, and the Incarnation. Spirit Christology allows for a much more defined, expansive role of the

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<sup>9</sup> Alex Wildwood and Timothy Ashworth, *Rooted In Christianity, Open to New Light: Quaker Spiritual Diversity* (London: Pronoun Press, 2009).

<sup>10</sup> Alex Wildwood, *A Faith to Call Our Own: Quaker Tradition in the Light of Contemporary Movements of the Spirit* (London: Quaker Books, 1999).

Spirit in the interdependent relationship between humanity and the Trinity than other Christologies. This is seen most particularly with the Incarnation, where the Spirit extends the metaphysical Incarnation of the Christ to the rest of the creation in a continuous stream, constantly renewing the Incarnation of God with the creation. This does not render the Christ immaterial in the work of the Incarnation, rather, it places the Christ on par with the Spirit in the work of the Incarnation. As theologies of interdependence depend upon a vision of a continuously present and active God within the life of the creation whose own life is woven in an embrace with that of the creation, Spirit Christology provides an intriguing alternative to Incarnational theologies where the Christ is the main originator of the Incarnation.<sup>11</sup>

This alternative responds well to the high priority placed upon theologies of interdependence in reconciliation theology due to the pervasive interpenetration of the Divine within the creation inherent in such an active vision of the Spirit. A greater emphasis on Spirit Christology would not only expand the parameters of Christology, but would also expand the potential perspectives on the nature, and role, of the Incarnation, Spirit, and Christ within Christian theology. Demonstrating how Spirit Christology could be an effective paradigm for exploring reconciliation theology in Liberal Quakerism expands the possibilities for all future confessional reconciliation theologies.

It must be noted that after the loss of the central role of Christianity within Liberal Quakerism, a re-examination of theological anthropology is necessary. While I charted an avenue for the creation of a Liberal Quaker reconciliation theology, this vision is rooted within the Christianity of reconciliation theology as it is currently framed. In this dissertation, I

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<sup>11</sup> This reflects the *minjung* theologies of Korean theologians. I examined the work of Ham Sok Hon in chapter three, and his role in the development of *minjung* theology. A key thinker in this field, Anselm Kyongsuk Min, seeks to root the actions of Spirit in the work of the *minjung*, and thus to develop a pneumatological liberation theology. Anselm Kyongsuk Min, *The Solidarity of Others in a Divided World: A Postmodern Theology after Postmodernism* (Edinburgh, UK: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2004).

examined Liberal Quaker Christology from the perspective of its relation to the categories of Trinitarian theology that were of most import to the interdependence focus of reconciliation theology. These three categories – Incarnation, atonement, and Spirit Christology – exist in Liberal Quaker theology, yet they are not the main concerns. Pneumatology, it could be argued, is more foundational to Liberal Quaker anthropology, particularly through metaphors of divine/human interdependence. This is due to the significant import placed upon the experience of God, a category in which Liberal Quaker theology views the Spirit playing the main role. Due to the evolution of Liberal Quakerism from exclusively Christocentric to only partially so, and reflecting a recent trend towards examining the Spirit in greater detail in Christian theology, Liberal Quaker theology would benefit from further development of its Pneumatology.<sup>12</sup>

This would involve a re-examination of the theology of Light as well. Liberal Quaker theology relies heavily on the Light as the main theological metaphor for the divine relationship with humanity. Its complexity is represented in the fact that it can be said to have evolved, and also remained consistent, in light of the aforementioned evolution of Liberal Quaker theology. The Light has evolved into a highly flexible metaphor which can encapsulate Christocentric, Pneumocentric, and Universalist theological categories. This metaphor is thus endowed with significant resources upon which to build a complex metaphorical theology. This flexibility has significant benefits, yet also drawbacks: while it can serve as a catch-all theological term for Liberal Quakers, it is unclear whether it can bear the full weight of the theological diversity of current Liberal Quaker theology. While the Light would seem to be an inherently interdependent vision of human/divine relationality, this assumption must be tested in light of the new

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<sup>12</sup> This includes the work of postcolonial theologians such as Grace Ji-Sun Kim, whose work on the relationship between Spirit and chi is strikingly similar to Liberal Quaker expressions of Spirit and the Light. Grace Ji-Sun Kim, *Embracing the Other: The Transformative Spirit of Love* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2015).

theological and anthropological perspectives which have entered the conversation of Liberal Quaker theology. In other words, when a Christian uses the Light to mean the ‘Light of Christ’, does that really mean the same thing as when a Universalist uses the Light to mean the non-specified ‘Light as Divine’? Further exploration of Liberal Quaker theology must contend with this question.

#### **4.4 Original Contribution**

The main focus of the original contributions in this dissertation must, by necessity, lay with contributions to the field of Liberal Quaker theology due to two factors: Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation are already well developed and this dissertation focused mainly on gathering the elements most aligned with Liberal Quaker theology to establish points of dialogue; and the fact that, as established above in chapters one and three, there are qualities inherent in Liberal Quakerism which have limited the development of a systematic theological tradition in the same vein as much of the systematic confessional theologies of the Christian tradition. These are the two areas where I have made original contributions to the field: 1) utilising the Swarthmore Lectures as tools to create a systematic Liberal Quaker theology, and 2) constructing a metaphorical theology of interdependence utilising the Light.

#### ***Utilising the Swarthmore Lectures as Tools to Create a Systematic Liberal Quaker Theology***

As discussed in chapter one, Liberal Quakerism does not have a main corpus of texts from which it derives its core concerns, methodologies, or teachings. Instead, it has one generally

accepted main text, the *Faith and Practice*, which includes extracts from well-known Quaker writers along with a selection of core teachings listed in question form and content written specifically for the book. These are all categorised by themes, which cover the main ecclesiastical concerns of the yearly meeting. These themes outline both the main beliefs and stances of the community and those considered marginal.

This format reflects the autocephalous nature of Liberal Quaker belief, where individual belief is strongly shaped by interaction with the Quaker meeting and wider community, yet is free to develop according to the mind and experience of the individual. Theology is thus a highly flexible endeavour, open to continual re-interpretation and free from the boundaries of established doctrine set by a core set of texts or ecclesial authority. This has led to a strongly individualistic approach to Liberal Quaker theology, where no Liberal Quaker can claim any sense of authority over Liberal Quaker theology as a unified tradition. The challenge of this freedom is that it can be quite difficult to engage in a sustained, systematic development of Liberal Quaker theology, especially in dialogue with the wider Christian tradition, because theology could use any text or texts which are meaningful to the experience of the individual, even if they don't engage with theological categories that exist, or are translatable, to those utilised by theologians in the wider field of Christian theology.

The Swarthmore Lectures thus present an opportunity to locate Liberal Quaker theological reflection within a specific set of texts whose intention is to address contemporary Liberal Quaker thought. These texts are an incredibly valuable resource because they have never been utilised in such a comprehensive manner. As noted above, individual lectures have been referenced in Liberal Quaker writings, and specific lectures have proven highly influential for Liberal Quaker thought. Yet, no one has previously attempted to use them in a comprehensive

manner, developing them as a source for systematic theological thought. The opportunity presented by the Swarthmore Lectures is significant, as they reflect over a century of Liberal Quaker thought on an array of issues through the primary lens of theology.

In this dissertation, I demonstrated the how the lectures could be utilised to develop constructive theology in dialogue with other theological traditions. I also demonstrated how Liberal Quaker theology has developed over time, showing how the Lectures chart such changes. While Martin Davie noted the implications of the 1980 Swarthmore Lecture on Liberal Quaker theology, no other scholar has looked at the Lectures as a whole to chart such changes as the move from explicit Christocentrism to the co-existence of Christocentrism and Universalism within Liberal Quakerism. I have demonstrated that Liberal Quaker theology must not fail to take the Swarthmore Lectures into account. As I utilised the Swarthmore Lectures almost exclusively in my development of the theology in chapter three, this is a theology rooted in the theological resources present within the Swarthmore Lectures. Thus, it is a theology *of* the Swarthmore Lectures.

### ***Constructing a metaphorical theology of interdependence utilising the Light***

Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation depend upon the use of metaphorical language in explaining a core theological concept: the interdependent relationship between God and humanity. While interdependence also involves systematic theological categories, the idea of interdependence is conveyed most often through the use of metaphor and poetic devices. This reflects the challenge of explaining something that is inherently mysterious, in that it is rooted in the apophatic mystery of the life of God. It also reflects a long tradition in Liberal Quaker

theology of using metaphor and other poetic devices as a means of attempting to explain the rather inexplicable experience of relationship with the Divine on both the physical and metaphysical planes of existence.

This dissertation is the first time that the metaphorical interdependence theology of the Light has been brought into dialogue with the interdependence metaphors of Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation theology. This is also the first time that the full extent of the language and theology of Light presented in the Swarthmore Lectures has been developed in any comprehensive fashion. This expands the language which can be used to describe interdependence to include the rather expansive metaphorical resources of the Light. The majority of extant interdependence metaphors in reconciliation theology involve explicitly Christocentric theological categories and language, while nearly all are rooted in Christian theology. As non-Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation have not been developed into a separate field in any other tradition, the dominance of Christian theological categories makes sense. By focusing on the Light and its attendant theology, Universalist theological categories are now open to exploration within the avenue of theologies of atonement and reconciliation.

#### **4.5 Implications for Existing Scholarship**

By bringing Christian theologies of atonement and reconciliation and Liberal Quaker theology into dialogue, I engaged a few major aspects of both fields which my work either directly contradicted or offered new interpretations to, both of which necessitate that these areas be re-examined in light of my work. This re-examination falls more heavily on Liberal Quaker

theology, as I more directly challenged the assumptions of Liberal Quaker theology due to the fact that this work was engaging in a more constructive process with Liberal Quaker theology. This includes a re-examination of the role of the systemic in Liberal Quaker theology and the applicability of the Swarthmore Lectures to Liberal Quaker theology.

### ***The assumed lack of a systematic element in Liberal Quaker theology***

Theologians have avoided examining Liberal Quaker theology in a systematic way due to a complex set of factors, as examined above. Much of this is related directly to Christian theologians' general disinterest in Liberal Quaker theology, which inevitably meant that the vast majority of the theologians engaging in Liberal Quaker theology are Liberal Quaker theologians.<sup>13</sup> These theologians, it must be noted, have generally shown little interest in examining their confessional theology from a systematic fashion.<sup>14</sup> Other structural elements inherent to Liberal Quaker theology made such an examination difficult as well, most especially the emphasis on continuing revelation and experience as the primary theological source. The first led to an aversion to the creation of doctrine, while the latter led to an aversion to examine the experience of Liberal Quakers from any outside, imposed theological categories which did not emerge from the experience of worship. Thus, the failure to engage in Liberal Quaker theology systematically results from a lack of action rather than a barrier inherent within Liberal Quaker

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<sup>13</sup> Stuart Masters is engaging in an attempt to bring Liberal Quaker theology, Wesleyan theology, and Anabaptist theology into dialogue with his blog *A Quaker Stew*. He demonstrates the significant overlaps between these traditions, while charting areas of potential dialogue between them. Stuart Masters, *A Quaker Stew*, <http://aquakerstew.blogspot.com/>, accessed August 4, 2016.

<sup>14</sup> An example of this is Alex Wildwood, whose theological examination is mainly in spirituality and whose recent work in ecotheology is decidedly experiential. Jo Farrow and Alex Wildwood, *Universe as Revelation: An Ecomystical Theology for Friends* (London: Pronoun Press, 2013)



theology, which would bar such an engagement.<sup>15</sup> This dissertation not only examines the underlying theological reasoning behind both of these key aspects of Liberal Quaker theology, it also demonstrates that these aspects can be examined productively from a systematic perspective. I have provided an avenue for doing so, which necessitates dealing with Liberal Quaker theology on its own terms, placing aside the assumed need within Christian theology that either Scripture or Tradition are the only true foundations upon which to build a theology. Thus, Christian theology must now re-examine its assumptions about the primacy of certain theological sources over others.

### ***The applicability of the Swarthmore Lectures to Liberal Quaker theology***

This dissertation demonstrates that the Swarthmore Lectures are a rich resource for building Liberal Quaker theology, especially reconciliation theology. The comprehensiveness of the Lectures, however, demonstrates that they can be used in a similar, systematic fashion to develop Liberal Quaker thought in other avenues. The Lectures present an interesting record of over a century of Liberal Quaker thought on a wide array of topics which can be examined from multiple angles. Taken chronologically, they demonstrate the evolution of Liberal Quaker thought on either a set topic or on a more general trendline. As a mirror opposite, they can be examined categorically or thematically, where certain main categories or themes are chosen and tracked chronologically through the Lectures, demonstrating the evolution of Liberal Quaker

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<sup>15</sup> Pink Dandelion makes a similar argument in his recent Swarthmore Lecture, *Open for Transformation: Being Quaker* (London: Quaker Books, 2014). He claims that Liberal Quakerism has the potential to provide a more cohesive communal understanding of its identity and structure if it rooted itself in the *Quaker Faith and Practice*. His work examines the reasons for the Liberal Quaker aversion to specificity, and has critiqued it. Notable examples of his critiques of Liberal Quaker theological tendencies include his argument that Liberal Quakers have a liturgical structure, and that they have a 'behavioural creed'. Pink Dandelion, *The Liturgies of Quakerism* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2005); Pink Dandelion, *A Sociological Analysis of the Theology of the Quakers: The Silent Revolution* (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1996).

thought on these categories. I have taken both of these approaches in this dissertation. They can be examined from the perspective of world events, where one can see if the Depression, World Wars, or the various social revolutions have impacted either the approach towards or perception of Liberal Quakers to certain ethical and theological issues. A corollary approach would be the one taken by Martin Davie in relation to the 1980 Swarthmore Lecture by Janet Scott, where a researcher examines whether individual Lectures are the culmination of the evolution in Liberal Quakerism on certain topics, and whether they then went on to influence future Lectures, or even Liberal Quakerism as a whole. Both Davie and I have demonstrated that the Lectures are an invaluable resource for understanding Liberal Quaker thought, and can be productively examined from multiple angles. Liberal Quaker thinkers must now take the Swarthmore Lectures into account when examining Liberal Quaker thought.

#### **4.6 Implications for Future Scholarship**

The scope of this project, and of the claims that it makes, means that there are potential implications for both theologies of atonement and reconciliation and Liberal Quaker theology. As noted above, this dissertation creates new avenues of theology to explore from that interaction. This is due to the rich potential for development in the concept of theosis, as well as applying the Swarthmore Lectures to Liberal Quaker theology.

##### ***Expanding upon use of theosis in theology, specifically reconciliation theology***

Theosis is not a new theological perspective in Christian theology, yet it has received a significant amount of attention in recent scholarship relating to its implications for expanding

Protestant theological perspectives on both Christology and soteriology. As discussed in chapter two, theosis also presents alternatives to traditional Protestant atonement categories. I note Protestant here, as theosis is a core Orthodox teaching, while Roman Catholicism has a modified version with divinisation. Protestant theology is the only Christian theology which does not engage with theosis on a substantive level, instead emphasising the separation between humanity and God. Protestant constructive theologians such as Veli-Matti Karkkainen have examined the implications of taking theosis seriously within a Protestant context, and I have extended that work to include its impact on reconciliation theology. So very little has been written about theosis within either Protestant theology in general or reconciliation theology in particular that there is a notable opportunity for continuing, and expanding the scope of, these examinations within Christian theology.

***The Swarthmore Lectures as areas of research into Liberal Quaker thought***

As discussed above, the Swarthmore Lectures are now essential areas of inquiry for Liberal Quaker theologians. I argue that an especially productive engagement with the lectures is possible in the main areas that have interested the lecturers: ethics, theology, ecclesiology, spirituality, worship, the experience of God, and political views and activism. Every lecture has dealt with some combination of at least three of these areas. The emphasis on these topics demonstrates where the priorities of Liberal Quakers have laid for the past century, and where the most significant fault lines have developed.

Quaker Studies examines Liberal Quakerism from multiple lenses, yet it has placed significant emphasis on using historical and sociological techniques and approaches. The

Lectures are ripe for such examination, due to both their length and their focus on responding to issues of contemporary import for Liberal Quakers. Applying these dual lenses to the Lectures would enrich understanding of both the internal dynamics of Liberal Quakers and their response to their historical context.

#### **4.7 Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, I have summarised and discussed the key findings from the previous chapters, outlined how this dissertation provides a highly original contribution to the fields of Liberal Quaker theology and theologies of atonement and reconciliation, and have drawn out the implications of this contribution for existing scholarship and future research. These contributions include: utilising the Swarthmore Lectures as tools to create a systematic Liberal Quaker theology, and constructing a metaphorical theology of interdependence utilising the Light. These contributions have implications for both existing as well as future scholarship. These include: a re-examination of the role of systematic theology in Liberal Quaker theology; strong evidence of the applicability of the Swarthmore Lectures to Liberal Quaker theology in general; and finally demonstrating the rich potential of developing the concept of theosis in more avenues, specifically theologies of atonement and reconciliation.

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